

# Stop Smoking SF

# Stop Smoking Guide

This is a translated adaptation of the document “Guía Para Dejar de Fumar” developed by Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable and colleagues, which is in the public domain (National Institutes of Health, 2002).  
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# Why Should I Quit?

Review the Personal Health Effects of Smoking and Common Reasons for Quitting to come up with your own list of reasons to quit. Personally meaningful reasons will help get you through the challenges of your quit attempt.

## **Common Reasons for Quitting:**

*Make your reasons personal and specific.* Example: If you're quitting to save money, figure out how much you'll save in a year. What could you do with this money? Make this a goal you'll work towards.

Put your list of reasons where you'll see it every day, like your bathroom mirror, the steering wheel of your car, on flashcards or your device.

Review common Health, Economic, and Personal reasons for quitting.

## **Personal Health Effects**

Cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, many of them toxic, such as carbon monoxide, cyanide, formaldehyde, nicotine and lead. The poisons in cigarettes can produce:

### *Lung Cancer and other cancers.*

Smoking cigarettes is the main cause of lung cancer. It also causes cancers of the mouth, esophagus, throat, stomach, pancreas, bladder and cervix.

### *Heart Attacks.*

Nicotine in cigarettes makes the heart work faster and causes problems in its functioning. Cigarettes can also produce heart attacks by obstructing arteries in the heart.

### *Stroke.*

Cigarette toxins produce strokes by obstructing arteries in the brain.

### *Emphysema*

Smoking causes lung diseases such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, which make breathing more difficult and deprive the body of oxygen.

### *Stomach Ulcers.*

Nicotine makes digestion difficult causing stomach ulcers, and excessive acidity after eating.

### *Osteoporosis, or bone weakness.*

Cigarettes impair the body's ability to use calcium correctly, increasing the risk of osteoporosis or weakness of the bones, which results in fractures in older people.

### *Lower fertility and sexual drive.*

Cigarettes lower fertility and sexual drive in both men and women.

### *Abortion.*

Cigarettes can cause spontaneous abortion in pregnant women.

### *Addiction.*

Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

### *Dental problems.*

The tar in cigarettes stains teeth, promotes cavities, and produces problems with gums that can cause teeth to fall out.

### *Tiredness and Headaches.*

Carbon monoxide from cigarettes results in tiredness and headaches by lowering the amount of oxygen reaching the brain.

## **Health Reasons for Quitting**

### **Personal Health**

*Improve my health immediately.* your bronchial tubes and lungs will clean themselves making breathing easier.

Breathe better: have less nasal congestion and fewer colds.

Cough less

Avoid the Personal Health Effects of Smoking.

Review the Timeline of Health Benefits after Quitting.

## **Health of Others**

Your smoking threatens the health and well-being of people around you, even if they don't smoke.

### *The unborn child:*

Pregnant women who smoke (or are exposed to cigarette smoke) are at a higher risk of having babies with physical defects and problems with speech and intellectual development. They can also have babies with low birth weight, who tend to become ill more frequently.

### *Children:*

Children who breathe cigarette smoke from adults who smoke get more pneumonia, colds, ear infections and respiratory diseases. Children of smokers learn to smoke by watching adults and many become smokers themselves when they grow up.

If you die young, you will leave your children and grandchildren without your moral and economic support.

### *Other persons:*

People who live or work with a smoker have increased risk of lung cancer, heart attacks and other diseases.

Smoking can lead to many family arguments because of problems with smoke and health concerns for all. Illness due to cigarettes keeps smokers from fulfilling family obligations.

### **Timeline of Health Benefits:**

The benefits of quitting start right away and keep getting better the longer you stay quit.

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- Within **20 minutes**  
Blood pressure drops towards normal; Heart rate drops 5 to 12 beats per minute; your hands and feet get warmer.
- Within **eight hours**  
The oxygen level in your blood rises and the carbon monoxide level drops to normal. Smoker's breath disappears.
- Within just **24 hours**  
Your risk of a heart attack decreases.
- Within **48 hours** or two days  
Your nerve endings start to recover. Your ability to taste and smell improves.
- Within **3 days**  
Nicotine leaves your system and breathing becomes easier.
- Within **2 weeks to 3 months**  
Your circulation improves, exercising becomes easier and your lung function increases up to 30%.
- Within **1 to 9 months**  
Cilia regrow, cleaning your lungs and reducing infection. You'll have less coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Your energy increases.
- **1 year** later  
Your risk of a heart attack attributable to smoking drops by 50%.
- **2 to 3 years** later  
Your risk of heart attack attributable to smoking is virtually gone.

- **5 years** later  
Your risk of mouth, throat and esophageal cancer is half that of a smoker.
- **10 years** later  
Your risk of developing lung cancer is almost as if you had never smoked.

*Possible Discomfort:*

During the first few days of quitting, some people experience:

- nervousness
- insomnia (difficulty sleeping)
- irritability
- poor concentration
- headaches
- dizziness
- stomachaches
- cough
- constipation

These problems are normal as your body frees itself of nicotine and other toxins. They'll disappear within a few days. Just think: the health benefits are worth it!

### **Economic Reasons for Quitting**

*Stop spending on cigarettes:* if you smoke a pack a day, it could cost over \$1,000 per year.

*Save on medical expenses* due to smoking.

*Save on health and auto insurance.* Avoid starting fires.

### **Personal Reasons for Quitting**

*Take care of my loved ones.*

Provide a better example to others.

Improve relations with loved ones and live many years to appreciate them.

*Improve my physical appearance*

Eliminate bad breath; Have a nicer taste in my mouth; Have fewer wrinkles on my face; Get rid of yellow stains on my teeth and fingers; Avoid burn holes on my clothes.



# How Can I Quit?

## **Follow a Timeline**

*Pick your Quit Date.* Give yourself at least a week, but no more than 30 days. We recommend between 1-2 weeks from now. Having a set date increases your chances of actively quitting.

### *Pick a Meaningful Day*

Pick a day that's meaningful to *you*. The beginning or end of the week; a holiday; your birthday or the birthday of a loved one.

### *Don't Wait for a Perfect Time*

*Reduce Your Consumption:* Throw away your cigarettes and don't buy more. If you smoke 20 or more cigarettes a day, or are highly addicted, try getting down to 10 cigarettes a day or less before quitting completely.

*Smoke 2 or 3 fewer cigarettes than the day before.* Use the Cigarette Tracker every time you smoke. If you forget to record some cigarettes, update your cigarette count at the end of the day. You can even update your count for the previous day. It's important to be aware of your smoking behaviors if you want to change them, so keep as accurate a count as possible.

## **Resist the urge to smoke**

*Wait five minutes.*

Wait as long as you can before smoking when you feel the urge, but aim for 5 minutes. Wait longer before smoking as time passes.

Try not to "compensate" by inhaling longer or more deeply if eventually do smoke.

## **Remove smoking reminders**

Make your home, your clothes, your car, and other spaces you spend time in those of a non-smoker.

- In addition to cigarettes, throw away ashtrays, lighters, and matches.
- Store dishes that double as “ashtrays.” Store your car’s ashtray or use it to hold change or gum/mints.
- Clean your home, car, and clothes so old cigarette smells won’t remind you of smoking.

## **Break Old Habits; Build New Ones**

### **Old Habits:**

All the people, places, and situations that make it easy for you to smoke will still be present.

*Plan for Triggers:* People, places, and situations that your mind associates with smoking might trigger you to smoke. How will you respond to each?

When meeting smokers: people you smoke with or who might allow you to slip.

- What will you say if offered a cigarette?
- What will you do if someone starts smoking around you?
- What will you say if invited to places where you might slip (bars or clubs).

In places where you usually smoke: Make lists of places where you usually smoke. Tips:

- If you smoke in the car, listen to different music. Change your route to work.
- Take breaks as usual, but plan “non-smoke” breaks. Example: Lunch with a supportive friend.

In situations that may tempt you: will you avoid them or prepare for them?

*Prepare to turn down smoking.*

Have responses ready like:

“Thanks, but I don’t want to smoke.”

“I’m trying to quit smoking.”

“Smoking doesn’t really help me.”

“My throat hurts.”

“Thanks, but I don’t smoke anymore.”

*Don’t smoke in your favorite places:*

Avoid building new routines. Don’t smoke in the same place for more than 4 or 5 days.

*Don’t smoke at home.*

If you feel an urge at home, go outside to smoke. Put ashtrays outside or store them.

*Avoid places with smokers:*

Bars, parties, dance clubs.

### **New Habits:**

Smoking is physically addictive, because of the nicotine, but also because of all the little habits that go with it.

*Keep your mouth and hands busy.*

Try forming new habits with toothpicks, breath mints, or carrots for your mouth and a pencil, a coin, or a game on your device for your hands.

*Go to places where smoking isn’t allowed:*

- The theatre/cinema
- Restaurants
- Health Clubs
- Museums
- Libraries
- Buses
- Homes of friends and family who don’t smoke
- Places of worship

*Keep busy and entertained.*

Learn about the connection between smoking and Rewards in Your Brain. You have the power to reward your brain with Healthier Activities than smoking.

**Rewards in Your Brain:**

If something rewards our brains, we're more likely to do it again.

*Unhealthy Rewards of Nicotine:* Smoking is addictive because it sends nicotine to your brain, which rewards it by producing pleasurable sensations and reducing unpleasant sensations from cravings or withdrawal.

The unhealthy rewards of smoking are artificial. They don't last long and increase cravings.

*Avoiding Harmful Activities:* like drinking coffee or having unproductive arguments, which can increase the chances of smoking or worsen your mood.

*Replacing unhealthy rewards:* Pleasant activities reward your brain by releasing natural chemicals. Increasing healthy rewards help replace those of smoking and improve your mood naturally. You can increase healthy rewards with Healthier Activities than smoking.

**Healthier Activities:** Create a personal list of healthy, rewarding activities.

Include:

*Brief Activities* that are easy to do throughout the day, like puffs from cigarettes are.

*Varied Activities:* Don't let yourself get bored. Many people slip when they feel bored or depressed. Do fun, interesting things to help you forget cigarettes. Get others to do these activities with you.

*Examples:*

- Active activities: dance; go for a walk; do some gardening; play with the children; go to the beach;
- Passive activities: watch a movie
- Peaceful activities: meditate; pray

- Educational or expressive activities: read magazines or books; take photos<sup>9</sup>
- Helpful activities: give someone a gift
- Self-care activities: listen to music; take a long bath
- YOU CHOOSE! Do an activity of your choice.

**Change the activity if you feel the urge to smoke.**

Pleasant activities improve your mood, which reduces the chances of smoking.

Learn more about the connection between Mood and Smoking.

**Mood and Smoking**

Many smokers self-medicate, meaning that they rely on cigarettes to improve their mood or calm their nerves. While quitting, craving cigarettes can put people in a bad mood. In turn, doing things that put you in a bad mood can make quitting harder because it's so easy to have "just one" cigarette and feel better. Remember, this is temporary and isn't worth the effort you've already put into quitting.

*Be more aware of your Mood and Smoking: Ask:*

When do I smoke most? When my mood is bad or good? After smoking, do I feel: Better? How much better and for how long? Worse? In what ways? Do I always notice it? Do other things make me feel better than smoking?

## **Get Help from Others**

*Tell your friends and relatives.* Encourage them read the section Help Someone Quit.

If they smoke, ask them not to smoke around you or offer you cigarettes, **even if you ask**. Otherwise, try to spend less time with them for the next month as you try to quit.

*Talk to people who have quit.* Ask them to help you resist the urge to smoke.

*Make your quit attempt public.* Announce your quit attempt and post regular updates on sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc.

*Talk to your doctor or nurse.*

They can provide support and suggestions on how to quit.

*Get help for nicotine addiction.*

If you're very addicted to nicotine, your doctor may: suggest nicotine replacement therapy like nicotine patches or gum; other medical treatments for nicotine addiction; refer you to other professionals. Keep in mind that you can't smoke if you're using any nicotine replacement.

*Contact a group that can help.*

In the US you can call: the American Lung Association (1-800-LUNG-USA), the American Cancer Society (1-800-ACS-2345), The American Heart Association (1-800-AHA-USA1), the local Department of Health, or the Cancer Information Service (1-800-422-6237).

## **Exercise Other Healthy Habits**

Sometimes people gain weight when they quit because their appetite increases and food tastes better.

You can control your weight if you:

*Avoid fatty foods and sweets*

Reduce or eliminate sugar, candy, desserts, fried foods, animal grease (lard) and fat. Remove the skin of chickens before cooking them.

*Eat healthier foods*

Vegetables, fruits, beans, lentils, potatoes, oats and whole bread *in moderation* help control weight.

*Do more exercise.*

Move more to burn more calories. Walk more. Drive less. Play a sport. Park farther away. Take the stairs, not the elevator.

*Drink plenty of fluids.* Eight, eight-ounce glasses of water (2 liters) is usually recommended. Excessive amounts of water, however, may negatively affect your health.

*Rest.*

Take a nap. Go to bed early.

*Avoid caffeine.* It can trigger urges to smoke.

*Avoid alcohol.* It can trigger urges to smoke.

**Make a Survival Pack:** Your survival pack should include:

**Gum/Mints**

**Carrot and celery sticks**

**Herbal teas, hot chocolate packets**

**Something to chew on like coffee stirrers**

**A note of encouragement from a loved one**

**Your list of reasons for quitting**

**A squeezable toy or “stress ball”, worry beads or a smooth stone**

**A picture or description of a reward for quitting**

## **Keep Motivated**

*Think positively.*

As soon as you notice the urge to smoke, breathe deeply and think: “What will happen if I don’t smoke at this moment? I’m not going to die.”

Or

“Nothing bad going to happen. This urge is uncomfortable, but it will pass.”

Or

“This urge is unpleasant. But I don’t NEED to smoke”.

*Follow your own advice.*

Imagine advising your child to quit smoking. Follow the advice you’d give him or her. *Notice negative effects.*

Notice the negative effects of smoking you’ve learned to ignore, like irritation in your throat, eyes and lungs. Smoking might not be as pleasurable as you thought.

*Collect cigarette butts in a jar.*

Place cigarettes and cigarette butts in a bottle. Add water and cover it.

To resist urges, examine the bottle and smell the odor of the cigarette poisons you inhale whenever you smoke.

*Review the negative health effects of smoking and **your reasons to quit.***



# What if I Start Smoking Again?

*Review your slip carefully.*

What happened and where were you when you first smoked again? Should you avoid this situation or prepare for it next time?

*Don't think you've failed.*

Many people slip before they quit for good. Remember, many difficult things take several tries. Think about difficult things you've gotten through in the past.

*Be careful with your thoughts.*

They can get in the way or help you quit. Complaining probably won't help.

Don't focus only on how hard it is to quit. Try thinking:

"It's difficult, but not impossible."

"I'm capable of quitting!"

If you start thinking you're going to die anyway, think:

"Probably not today and without cigarettes, I can live the years that I'm given happy and full of health."

*Practice new techniques to quit.*

Read this guide again. Try some suggestions you didn't before. The more techniques you try, the easier it will be to quit.

*Don't put off the next attempt.*

Quitting a few days is still a success! While you might have many other problems now, **there will never be a perfect time to quit.**

# How do I Help Someone Quit?

*Ask them how they feel.* Show interest in their well-being.

*Ask about their reasons to quit.*

It's important they have their own specific reasons for quitting. Help them out with some common reasons mentioned in this guide.

*Suggest not smoking at home.*

Smoking affects others<sup>2</sup>. Ask them to protect those in their lives by NOT smoking inside the house.

*Help them break the routine.*

Smokers need pleasurable activities to replace their smoking routine. Suggest that they try going to a show or taking the kids to the park. Do something special, like preparing a favorite meal for them.

*Don't scold them.*

Congratulate and support them in their effort.

*Help them avoid alcohol.*

Alcohol can lead to urges and remind some people to smoke. Help them avoid it the first few weeks after quitting.

*Support them even if they slip.*

Almost all ex-smokers try quitting more than once. With each try, they learn where and when the urge to smoke is difficult to control. They'll have more success next try.