

for those situations that made you automatically reach for a cigarette. Be positive. Be firm. Believe in yourself. Turn to friends and family who can offer comfort, reassurance, and support.

### RESOURCES

The BC Lung Association offers various resources to those planning to quit:

- www.quitnow.ca is an online cessation program.
- “Freedom from Smoking” is a self-help booklet, while “I Quit—How to Stop Smoking” is a video depicting one man’s admirable struggle to kick the habit. Both are available for purchase.
- Individualized support and print materials.

As well, there’s *Quitnowbyphone*, the BC Smokers’ helpline available 24/7, toll FREE @ 1-877-455-2233.

### CHECK OUT THE OTHER BROCHURES IN OUR SERIES ON TOBACCO:

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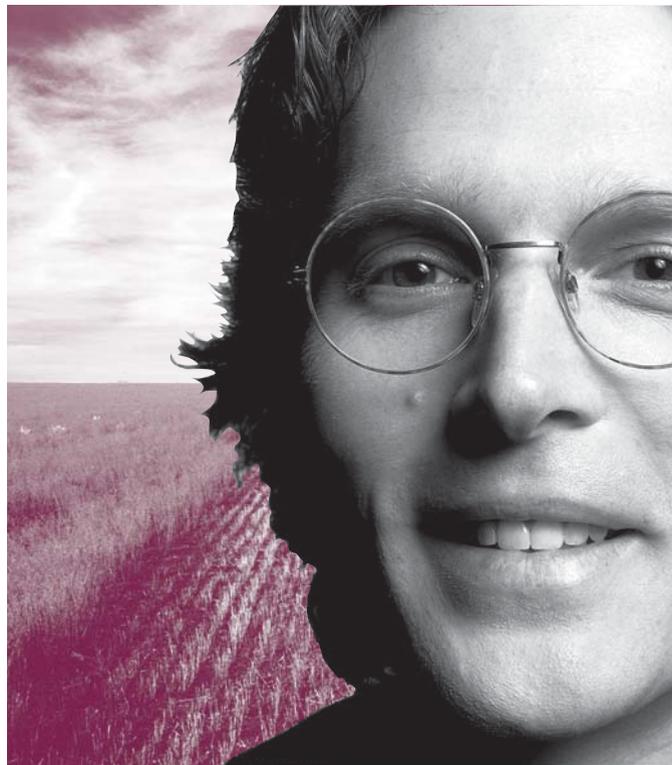
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# QUITTING SMOKING

## What you need to know.



[www.bc.lung.ca](http://www.bc.lung.ca)

## QUITTING SMOKING: TIPS & ADVICE

Quitting smoking is a process that—to succeed—requires careful planning, courage, discipline, and commitment on the part of the smoker. Here are some tips and advice for every step and stage of the quitting process.

### CHOOSING A QUIT DAY

As you decide on a day to quit, think of the times you tend to smoke the most. If you smoke more at work, try to quit on a weekend. If you smoke more at home, try to quit during the workweek. The important thing is to pick a date and to stick to it. Never say you’ll quit “someday” because—without commitment on your part—that day will never come.



### PREPARING FOR A QUIT DAY

Consider your situation very carefully: Can you quit cold turkey or do you need medication to help deal with cravings and possible withdrawal symptoms?

List your reasons for quitting—your health, family, the money you’ll save. While you’re at it, list also the rewards. Thinking of the good that quitting can do for your savings (if not for your health)—how it can help you make that trip to Mexico, for instance—can help strengthen your resolve.

Write down the things that can replace smoking. Start thinking of healthy alternatives—like exercise, starting a new hobby, or learning to play a musical instrument.

Speak with the people who can provide you with support. Telling them about your plan, including your quit date, may help make your plan more real to you.

Start making lifestyle changes that will enhance your plan. These changes may be relatively simple—like exercising regularly, eating a well-balanced diet, drinking more fluids, getting plenty of rest, seeing your dentist and having your teeth cleaned. They may also be more demanding and try your self-control—like practicing being smoke-free by going without cigarettes in the car or at work.

Keep track of your smoking. When and where did you light up a stick? Who and what prompted you? How important was that cigarette to you?

As you prepare for that big day, celebrate. You are choosing to be smoke-free.

### QUIT DAY

When your quit day finally comes, be firm that you won’t smoke.

Review your plan constantly. It’s easy and tempting to return to your old ways. But being aware of what you have to do when you get the urge to smoke—knowing how and with what you are going to fill the time you may otherwise be spending smoking—can keep you from lighting that first stick.

To help you get through those difficult moments, try these **4 D’s**:

- **Deep breathe.** Increased oxygen intake helps eliminate the craving in some people.
- **Do something else.** Distractions take your mind off your craving.
- **Delay.** Note: In time, your craving will go away whether or not you smoke.
- **Drink ice cold water.** The cold feeling may help keep your craving at bay.

## COPING WITH WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

Nicotine is eliminated from the body three to four days after a person stops smoking. Depending on several factors, a quitter may or may not experience withdrawal effects. Here are some known nicotine withdrawal symptoms—and the ways to deal with them:

- **Dry mouth, sore throat, gums or tongue.** Sip ice cold water or fruit juice or chew sugarless gum to replace the moisture that tobacco used to produce in the mouth.
- **Coughing.** Have a sugar-free candy or take cough drops or hot tea. Any of these can help the lungs deal with the extra mucus it has produced due to tar build-up.
- **Hunger.** Drink plenty of water and eat low fat, low calorie food to overcome the common trap of mistaking a craving for a hunger pang.
- **Sleeping difficulties.** Avoid caffeinated beverages after 6 pm. To unwind, try deep breathing and relaxation methods.
- **Constipation.** Adjust your diet slightly by adding raw fruits and vegetables and whole grains to it. Drink six to eight glasses of water per day.
- **Fatigue.** Go to bed earlier than usual to help your body adjust to the lack of nicotine stimulation.
- **Tension and irritability.** Take walks, soak in a hot bath, or use relaxation methods.
- **Poor concentration.** Deep breathe and exercise to increase oxygen supply to your brain and to avoid that “zoned out” feeling. Avoid alcohol.
- **Craving.** Let the craving pass. Your urge will go away in time whether or not you smoke.

## STAYING FIRM IN YOUR COMMITMENT

Here are a few more tips to help you remain steadfast in your decision:

- Take advantage of the fact that, because most public spaces are smoke-free anyway, it's impossible for you to smoke.
- Avoid alcohol, coffee or any other beverage you associate with smoking.
- Let other objects—a key, stress ball, pencil, rubber band, paper clip—take the place of a cigarette in your hand.
- Substitute a toothpick, sugarless gum or stir stick for a cigarette in your mouth. In places where you used to put cigarettes (your pocket or office desk), put sugarless gum, mints, flowers, plants or books.
- Brush your teeth immediately after each meal to avoid smoking. Go for a short walk or a bicycle ride.
- Keep busy to take your mind off smoking. Doodle, write a letter, play computer games, or do the crossword to keep your hands occupied.
- Phone friends when the urge to smoke is strong. They can talk you through your craving.
- Remember that withdrawal means recovery. While withdrawal effects are worse for some than for others, they are only temporary.
- Celebrate your being smoke-free with a special dinner, a purchase, a vacation—something that was made possible because you quit.

## MAINTAINING A SMOKE-FREE LIFE

Cravings, stress, a lack of commitment, and peer pressure are among the most common reasons for relapses. Here's what you can do:

### Cravings

Look at where you are and where you're headed as far as your plan is concerned. Be positive that you—not cigarettes—are in control of your life. Let your cravings pass according to your master plan.

### Stress

Work-related stress usually results from the unexpected. Lessen your surprises by expecting the unexpected. When faced with a huge job, don't smoke to calm down. Rather, break the job into smaller, more manageable tasks. Also, be assertive; speak clearly about your ideas, needs, and difficulties with your co-workers.

Find some time for yourself. Maintain a healthy diet. Exercise regularly. Develop outside interests and activities. Phone a friend to vent or for support. Practice stress management exercises.



### Lack of commitment

Review and work your plan. However strong your urge to smoke, being aware of your feelings—and firm in your resolve—will help give you control of the situation.

Feeling cooped-up or bored? Have a good long stretch, then take a long walk. Tired? Run in place or up and down the stairs, do calisthenics, or take a cold shower. Restless? Run some errands or read a book to keep you busy. Angry or frustrated? Take a walk or deep breathe for a few minutes. Lonely? Call a friend, take a walk or go for a drive.

Any of the feelings described above can trigger the urge to smoke. Remind yourself that you are committed to being smoke-free.

### Being with people who smoke

No doubt, one of the most difficult situations for a new non-smoker is seeing others smoke. Smelling the smoke can easily cause intense cravings. While it's sometimes possible to avoid these situations, at times they're almost inevitable, so be prepared.

Before going to socials where you know there'll be smokers, picture yourself having a

great time without cigarettes. Tell yourself that you're in control and committed to your decision. If you associate drinking with smoking, drink non-alcoholic beverages or limit yourself to one drink instead during the party. Socialize with non-smokers.

## WHAT IF YOU SLIP

Something went wrong! You had a terrible day at work, and you smoked. Well, it's not the end of the world. Almost everyone who quits faces this moment of truth. Some return to smoking—you don't have to be one of them.

Mistakes are learning opportunities; try to learn from the experience. Think about what led you to that cigarette, and how you can deal with similar situations in the future. Feeling guilty is a waste of time. One small slip does not doom you to smoke again. You are not a failure.

## YOUR NEW HABIT: A SMOKE-FREE LIFE

Like any other habit, a smoke-free life doesn't just happen overnight. It takes time to develop and discipline to work. The first three weeks are the toughest to get through—it's when most relapses occur. Frequently (if possible, daily) review your plan for success. The third to the sixth month after quit day is another critical period. Be conscious, prepared and on guard

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