
Fight Your Cravings!

A Few Simple Tips that can help you stay Smoke-Free

Congratulations.

You've made the decision to quit smoking – a huge step forward for your health!

In the hours, days and weeks ahead, you may need more than just willpower to help you combat the urges you may feel to smoke. And that's normal! Quitting smoking means breaking a physical addiction AND a psychological habit.

- Physically speaking, your body is used to getting a regular fix of nicotine; when you take that away, it's normal that your body will experience cravings and withdrawal symptoms ("Hey! Where's my nicotine?").
- Psychologically, smokers find it difficult to separate smoking from other daily rituals: for example, having a cigarette with your morning coffee, or going for a smoke break with colleagues. After years of doing this, it's hard to think of one thing without the other.

When you think of quitting smoking, you can think of it as breaking two chains: one is the physical craving and the other is the habits and routines that lead you to smoking.

Below are a few tips to help you get beyond those moments when you feel the need to have a cigarette:

Know Your Triggers

When, what, and who do you associate with smoking? Are there people that you normally like to share a smoke break with? Do you like to smoke after a meal? Is there a social activity that involves smoking? Do you smoke more when you are consuming alcoholic drinks? Do you smoke as a response to stress? Consider telling friends or family not to offer you cigarettes; avoiding a favourite place where you like to smoke; or changing up your routine.

Understanding the places, people and events that lead you to smoking can help you quit. By avoiding the things that trigger you to light up, you can break your habit.

Managing Cravings

Here are a few ideas on how to keep the cravings at bay:

Keep Your Mouth Busy

The sensation of having a cigarette in your mouth can be replaced with something healthy

Try carrot sticks, gum, mints, or healthy snacks

Drink water to keep yourself occupied during a craving

Drink through a straw to satisfy the mouth

Find something to hold onto...

- Many smokers who are quitting find it comforting to find a replacement for the tactile sensation of holding a cigarette.
 - Try: squeezing a stress ball when you are having a craving.
 - A hobby that uses your hands can also help you.
 - Some find that an NRT like the NICORETTE® Inhaler is a good tactile replacement for a cigarette.

Keep Physically Busy

- Go for a walk when you feel a craving coming on – it will help clear your head and your lungs.

Use your network of friends and family for support

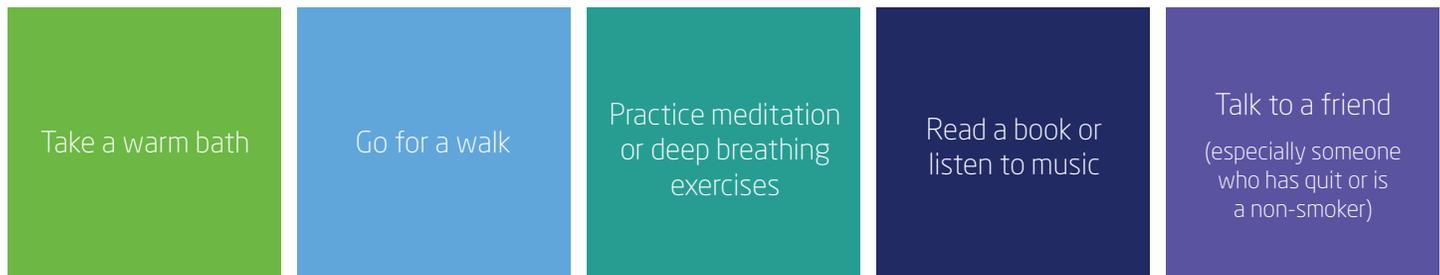
- Feeling a craving coming on? Distract yourself by calling a friend or loved one to talk.

Think about why you want to quit

- Keep a list of what you like and dislike about smoking. Remind yourself why you want to be an ex-smoker and how this will look 5 years from now.
- Envision what your future would be like if you quit versus if you continue smoking: would you be healthy? Would your children be smokers too?
- Once you understand your motivations for quitting, identify what you think are obstacles to your being able to quit and how you'll try to overcome those obstacles.
- Think about who you can turn to when you need support when things get tough.
- Journal your thoughts, feelings, successes, failures.

Relaxation Techniques

- Cravings can be stressful; to reduce the stress, try these relaxation strategies:



Use a Medicine that helps you quit

- Medication can help you overcome your withdrawal symptoms and cravings. In fact, research has shown that using medication doubles your chances of quitting successfully.
 - Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) includes patches, gum, lozenges, sprays and inhalers. NRT is very good at helping you combat cravings.
 - Prescription medications such as varenicline (Champix®) or bupropion (Zyban®), are also available.

Don't Give Up!

It may be tempting to "have just one" and think this is harmless. Research shows however, that up to 9 out of 10 smokers who decide to have a cigarette return to regular smoking.