



Getting ready to quit smoking

Quitting smoking is different for different people. Some people find it easy while others find it more challenging. The best way of quitting is the way that works for you. It can take time to discover what works best for you. If one method doesn't work, then maybe something else will. For many people a combination of methods works best.

Whatever the method, the more prepared and motivated you are, the more likely you are to succeed in quitting smoking. Developing a quit plan can help. A quit plan sets out your goals for quitting, when you want to do it and what things you might do to help you quit.

Some other suggestions for preparing to quit:

Set a quit date

For many smokers, setting a quit date helps to get things moving. A quit date is the date you choose to stop smoking completely. Choose a day when you have no social events that may make it difficult to avoid smoking and no stressful events, such as a job interview or exam. The day before your quit day, find and throw out all cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays in your house, car and workplace.

Cutting down to quit

For those who find setting a quit date too difficult, try instead a 'cut down to quit' approach. This means cutting down on the number of cigarettes smoked each day with the aim of continuing to cut back until you are ready to quit completely.

When cutting down the number of cigarettes you smoke make sure you don't inhale more than usual. It can be best to cut down to quit while using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or a quit smoking medication.

Think about your 'triggers'

- When and where do you like to smoke?
- What situations make it difficult for you to avoid smoking and staying quit?
- Do you like to smoke when drinking coffee or alcohol or after meals?
- Do you like to smoke socially with family or friends at home or when eating out or at clubs and pubs?
- Do you smoke when anxious, bored, stressed or worried?

Organise a support team

Decide who you will ask to give you support. Do you have friends, family and work mates who might encourage and support you? Ask them not to smoke around you and not to give you cigarettes even if you ask for them.

Talk to your doctor and call the **Quitline on 13 7848** for support and encouragement before and during your quit attempt.

Plan to change habits and routines

- Avoid situations where you used to smoke.
- Begin new activities to replace smoking.
- Change routines associated with smoking.
- Plan which habits and routines you are going to change.
- Set goals and rewards for using the money you save from not smoking.
- Keep cigarettes where you have to make an effort to get them (for example, in the boot of the car, on top of the wardrobe or a room you don't go to very often).

Create smoke free zones

A ban on smoking in your home and car increases your chances of quitting successfully. Ask your partner, household members and friends not to smoke in the house or car or near children.

Reduce caffeine intake

When cutting down or quitting smoking caffeine can have a stronger effect. Higher caffeine levels can make you feel more restless, increase anxiety or make sleeping difficult. The effects of higher caffeine levels can be confused with tobacco withdrawal symptoms.

Plan to halve the amount of caffeine (coffee, tea, energy drinks and cola) that you drink.

Limit alcohol intake

This is especially important during the first few weeks of cutting down or quitting. Drinking alcohol can make quitting harder and can make you forget your reasons for wanting to quit. Having a drink with friends may trigger your cravings. Instead of meeting for drinks, suggest something else, for example, going to the movies, going for a walk or doing some exercise.

If you choose to drink alcohol then try having every second drink as a non-alcohol drink. If you are cutting down to quit, drink inside without a smoke and smoke outside without a drink.

Plan some rewards

Smokers who spend \$100 per week on cigarettes will save more than \$5,000 for each year they don't smoke. Think of how you can use the money you save. Plan short term rewards, such as movie tickets, new clothes or a new phone and long term rewards such as a holiday or even towards a deposit for a car or house. Celebrate your success.

Deal with cravings

Cravings are a normal part of quitting and usually last only a few minutes. Over time your cravings will usually become weaker and shorter, and happen less often.

It might be helpful to keep a diary to write down how you feel, including how often and intense your cravings are - this may help you to see that things are improving over time.

Consider using NRT

NRT products include patches, gum, lozenges, mouth spray and inhalator. Using NRT can help you deal with cravings and withdrawal symptoms and can increase your chances of cutting down and quitting successfully.

NRT is cheaper than buying cigarettes and NRT products are available from pharmacies and supermarkets. Patches are available on script from your doctor and are subsidised, making them more affordable.

It's important to know how to use NRT correctly to get the best results:

- Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or smoking cessation advisor.
- Contact **Quitline on 13 7848 (13 QUIT)**.

See your doctor

Talk with your doctor about quitting and medications that can help you quit. If you are taking some prescribed medications your doctor may need to adjust the dosage as you cut down and quit due to chemicals in cigarettes changing the way some medications work.

Your doctor can also help you if you are worried about mood changes when cutting down or quitting.

Remember

- **Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your health.**
- **Most smokers make a number of quit attempts before quitting for good.**
- **Every quit attempt is a 'learning experience'**
- **Quitting can be difficult. Keep in mind your reasons for quitting and reward yourself for the progress you are making.**
- **Stay positive and be kind to yourself!**

To help you get ready to quit smoking contact the **Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT)** or speak with your health professional.

Visit the websites: www.icanquit.com.au and www.quitnow.gov.au