

Quitting Smoking

The addictive properties of nicotine make quitting extremely difficult as physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms set in. The following is a six-step plan that was developed to help people quit smoking. The total program should be completed in four weeks or less. The first four steps should take no longer than two weeks, and two additional weeks can be used to complete the rest of the program.

1. Decide positively that you want to quit by preparing a list of the reasons why you smoke and why you want to quit.

2. Initiate a personal diet and exercise program.

Exercise and decreased body weight cause a greater awareness of healthy living and increase motivation for giving up the addiction.

3. Decide an approach you would like to use to stop smoking. It's been found that many ex-smokers immediately gave up smoking but gradually decreasing the number of cigarettes smoked daily has also been successful for people. If you are trying to quit cold turkey and it fails to work the first time, try not to get discouraged because many smokers need several attempts and eventually they are able to overcome the habit with less difficulty.

4. Set a target date for quitting. In setting a target date, one can choose a special date such as an upcoming birthday, anniversary, vacation, graduation, family reunion, etc. as an extra incentive.
5. Obtain low-calorie foods such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, popcorn (butter and salt-free), sugarless gum, and plenty of water. Stock up on these foods and use them as replacements for cigarettes when you get a craving.
6. On the day you quit smoking, you should not keep any cigarettes handy and you should try to stay away from friends and events that may trigger your desire to smoke. Drink large amounts of water and fruit juices and eat low-calorie foods, replacing the old behavior with the new behavior. If you desire a cigarette, try to occupy yourself by things such as talking to someone, washing your hands, brushing your teeth, eating a healthy snack, chewing on a straw, doing dishes, playing sports, going for a walk or bike ride, going swimming, or engaging in other activities that you find enjoyable.

- If you have been successful and stopped smoking there are still a lot of events that can trigger and urge one to smoke. If confronted with such an

event people tend to rationalize and tell themselves “One won’t hurt”. This can increase the chance for relapse. If put in that situation, try to find something that you can substitute smoking for. Try to remind yourself of all your progress and how it would be a waste to throw it all away. As time goes on, it will only get easier.