

ready to quit smoking?

The very first step in quitting any addiction, especially smoking, is to examine one's personal commitment level to quitting. Sure, most smokers will tell you they "want" to quit but this is very different than having a firm, deep conviction to stop smoking for good. It's not just saying I want to quit, it's saying with deep conviction that "I will quit smoking" and that quitting is the most important thing in your life for the next few weeks. It must be believed and expressed to others with such conviction that anyone hearing your words would surely believe your commitment to the fullest. The power of your mind and your level of conviction is perhaps the most important tool you have for successfully quitting your addiction. Given the highest level or degree of commitment you will be successful! 100% preparation always works. Below are some exercises that many have found helpful in examining motivation, commitment, and preparing yourself to QUIT SMOKING FOR GOOD!



Step 1. Determine your readiness to quit

Few smokers (or tobacco chewers) who are contemplating quitting really want to quit, but most do want the rewards of a tobacco-free lifestyle. Just as dieters who seek to lose weight or improve their health don't suddenly want to give up their favorite high-fat foods, most tobacco users don't decide suddenly that smoking is no longer enjoyable. The payoff for quitting must outweigh the sacrifice and effort it takes to transition into a new lifestyle.

To Do:

Create a list of all your reasons for wanting to quit smoking. These should be your personal reasons in strong, visual terms that evoke compelling images of your goals and they should be very specific (Just saying "Health" is not specific enough). Write them down and carry these with you to keep your motivation high and to serve as the voice of reason during times of irrational urges. You should also add to the list daily and soon you will clearly see, how many reasons -deep personal reasons- you have for quitting.

Create a balance sheet listing the costs of quitting vs. the benefits of quitting, and the costs vs. the benefits of continuing to use tobacco.

<u>CONTINUING TO USE</u>		<u>QUITTING SMOKING</u>	
Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs

Step 2. Set your quit date

If possible, choose a time when you can set aside two days or more, away from your usual pressures and triggers, to focus on the tasks at hand. In the transition period from smoker to non-smoker, the job description includes: 1) getting through physical withdrawal as comfortably as possible; and 2) developing a repertoire of healthy responses to situations in daily life that prompt you to use tobacco.

Step 3. Prepare for quitting

Make your tobacco use conscious rather than automatic behavior. The more aware you are of the needs tobacco meets for you in your life, the more power you have to choose different responses to those needs. Consider logging each cigarette for a day or two, identifying daily routines, feelings, people, places and other conditions that prompt you to use tobacco. Identify new, healthy behaviors to replace smoking in each trigger situation you identify. The more obstacles for which you plan ahead, and prepare and rehearse alternate responses, the greater your chances of success.

Start an exercise program. Exercise provides an excellent coping cushion for the stress in our lives, can offset depression, moderate withdrawal symptoms and give a positive focus to the new non-smoker. It is always a good idea to check with your physician before beginning an exercise program.

Solicit support from people close to you. Let them know that you will have a need to protect your environment in the weeks and months ahead, and also how they can best support you in the process. Consider attending Nicotine Anonymous meetings or other support groups. In California, county-by-county resources for tobacco cessation are available through the California Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-766-2888.

Commit to the process. Become willing to invest the time and energy it takes to develop new lifestyle habits that re-route the old, ingrained patterns of tobacco use to healthy alternatives. You will learn to enjoy your new life and a non-smoker.

Step 4. Smoke your last cigarette and say good-bye

Dispose of all tobacco products and paraphernalia in your home, car and workplace.

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