

TEN QUICK TIPS

- 1 Exercise 30 minutes on most days.** Walking, bowling, ironing and mowing the lawn all count. If you like, you can even break it up into 3 ten minute blocks.
- 2 Keep a journal.** Every time you light up, write it down. Get to know what moods and what situations cause you to want to smoke.
- 3 Seize any opportunity to quit.** You're so sick for two weeks you don't even feel like smoking, you get pregnant, you marry a non-smoker, you're looking for life insurance and you want the cheaper rate. Tie your quitting to any time-bound event.
- 4 Accept relapses.** It takes most people 4 or 5 attempts before they quit successfully. If you relapse, don't be hard on yourself. It's part of the process.
- 5 Ignore slipups.** If you slip-up and smoke one cigarette at a party, completely forgive yourself and move on as if it had never happened. When you consider the alternative; being so down on yourself that you give in and smoke a whole pack, it's the only sane thing to do!
- 6 Drink lots of water.** It's relaxing and good for flushing out toxins.
- 7 Practice meditation.** The easiest way to learn how to meditate is to buy a meditation or relaxation CD. Close your eyes and spend 10-20 minutes each day listening.
- 8 Practice deep breathing.** Count silently to five as you breathe in. Hold it for a count of five. And breathe out to a count of five. If you can't do a five-count, start smaller and build up. Use deep breathing every time you feel the urge to smoke.
- 9 Practice visualization.** Write down a list of all the benefits of quitting. Now close your eyes, and intensely imagine yourself enjoying those benefits one by one.
- 10 Practice mindfulness.** Relish the tastes and smells that return after you give up smoking: The scent of a pine forest, the subtle taste of aged cheddar, the fresh smell of a baby's scalp. Until you quit, you won't know what you're missing!

1 easy PAGE information guides

Stress & SMOKING Cessation

How to change your behavior for good



What you need to know...

Tobacco products kill nearly half a million people every year and smoking is the leading cause of death and disability in the US. Half of all tobacco users are dead by the age of 55 which means that one out of two smokers won't live long enough to see their children grow up or their grandchildren, ever. Over 43,000 children are orphaned in the US every year due to their parent's tobacco use.¹

Currently, a one pack a day smoker will spend over \$2,200 a year on cigarettes. However, the real cost is over \$41 per pack when you count increased medical costs, life insurance costs, car insurance costs, increased disability costs, lost wages due to illness, etc.²

Of course, smokers also pay with their health. Premature death is the ultimate price one will pay for this habit and it will usually be due to cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive lung disease and/or heart disease. But many will suffer from these diseases for years before dying and as a result, will experience years of ill health and loss of productivity and greatly impaired quality of life.

Nicotine is the most addictive chemical on earth. It is more addictive than drugs such as heroin or cocaine. Nicotine has been shown to have effects on brain dopamine systems

(i.e. the pleasure center in your brain) similar to heroin and cocaine.

Ironically, smokers think that nicotine helps relieve their feelings of anxiety and stress. And in a way it does. However, the stress-reducing properties of nicotine are a short-term illusion. When you light up, it does relax you, but what it's relaxing you from is your intense craving for more nicotine.

Here's how it works. Nicotine stimulates the brain to release dopamine, which is associated with pleasurable feelings, and you become addicted to these feelings. But like all drugs, the effectiveness of the drug weakens over time and your body needs ever increasing amounts of nicotine to feel normal. As the nicotine content in your blood drops below a certain level, you begin to crave another cigarette. This craving makes you feel stressed. The relief felt when this craving is finally satisfied is the feeling that you commonly mistake as relaxing.

This is just one example of the complex relationship between stress and smoking. And the more you know about smoking and stress, the more likely you will be able to quit smoking for good.



What you might ask...



What's the most important thing I can do to boost the odds of successfully quitting? According to Dr. James Prochaska, a world renowned expert on tobacco cessation, the number one reason why people relapse is emotional stress. Learning how to manage stress and developing new coping skills, is a vital part of learning how to quit.

But doesn't tobacco lower my stress? It is a myth that tobacco reduces your stress. When you step outside for your tobacco break, you feel better because you've removed yourself from the source of your stress. But you could also go for a short walk or talk to someone who could make you laugh and you would get the same benefit



without the health consequences. And, as we mentioned in the "What you should know" section, any sense of stress relief derived from smoking is an illusion.

You're simply managing your nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

Are there any other ways that smoking affects my stress levels? Yes! When you are stressed, your body releases serotonin to combat the stress, but nicotine blocks serotonin. When the serotonin is blocked, you maintain high levels of adrenalin in your body and your cravings for nicotine return even sooner.

Why do people gain weight when they quit? Just thinking about this is stressful. What can I do? It's true that smoking *increases* your metabolism by about 200 calories per day. This means that when you quit smoking, you need to cut back on calories or you will gradually *gain* weight. Eliminating just one 16 ounce soda (or juice) per day will more than compensate



for this phenomenon. Or, you can always increase your level of exercise which will increase the calories you burn and lower your stress, too.

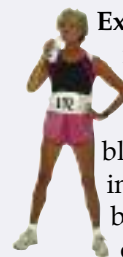
When I'm stressed, I just want to put something in my mouth to distract me. And eating is so comforting. What can I do to avoid this? Drink bottled water. Putting that bottle to your lips is surprisingly gratifying and drinking a lot of water helps flush out

the toxic chemicals that tobacco leaves in your body. Also, seek comfort in other relaxing activities such as walking, taking a hot shower, listening to music, watching a taped episode of your favorite sitcom, or meditating.

How addictive is nicotine? Smoking is so addictive that even after undergoing surgery for tobacco-induced diseases some users are still reluctant to stop. Around 40% of those who have had their larynx, or voice box removed and about 50% of lung cancer patients resume smoking after undergoing surgery for these life-threatening illnesses.



What you can do...



Exercise. The surgeon general recommends 30 minutes of light exercise per day on most days. You can even break it up into three ten minute blocks if you prefer. Light exercise includes walking, a leisurely bike ride, bowling, ping pong or even doing chores around the house like ironing, vacuuming and mowing the lawn. If you're not a regular exerciser these examples (of light exercise) are all good places to begin. But as a smoker, consider an activity goal that ties into your desire to quit, like running in a mini-marathon. If that activity would currently leave you breathless, your goal will be in direct conflict with your old habit. And that's exactly the kind of goal you want!

Seize any opportunity to quit. You move in with a non-smoker. You marry a non-smoker. You get pregnant. You get a new car and you want to keep it smoke-free.



You have surgery or an illness that takes away the urge to smoke for a prolonged period (such as a tonsillectomy or bronchitis). You take up a sport like tennis, basketball or running. These are all opportunities to quit smoking. People who quit for good, usually seize one of these opportunities and ride it all the way to cessation-success.

Keep a journal. Jot down a short explanatory note about every cigarette you smoke for one week. In the second week, force yourself to write the note *before* you smoke. (This step

makes it even more of a hassle to smoke and forces you to think about whether you really need that cigarette.) Be sure to observe what triggers your need to light up. Whether it's going to a bar, or hanging out with a particular friend who smokes, there's probably at least one trigger that you can permanently eliminate. If quitting cold-turkey seems stressful, vow to smoke one less cigarette per day - each week. So if you averaged twenty per day for the first week, smoke 19 per day for the second week. Keep eliminating one more cigarette per day, per week (and as many triggers as you possibly can) until you can give up the habit completely.



Pick a low stress time of the year to quit. Before the holidays is probably *not* the best time of the year to quit. From a stress perspective, December is a challenging



month. Also, if you are going through a particularly tough time in your life, getting divorced, or if you've just been fired, or if there's a major illness in the family, that's not the best time to quit either. Having said that, you will always have some stress in your life, so don't put off quitting forever. But if there's a time of year when you can leave work at a reasonable hour, indulge in lots of exercise and outdoor activities (and you're not stressed by some of the factors mentioned above) this would be an ideal time (from a stress-management perspective) for you to quit.