How To Stop Smoking

However you do it, living smoke-free is worth the pain and effort. No matter the method you choose to help yourself quit, the same bottom line will always apply: you just have to do it.

A doctor once asked me how many times I had tried to quit. When I told him the embarrassingly high number that I thought proved me to be incapable of ever quitting, his response made me believe that one day I would be successful. He said, “Good job! You’ll never quit if you don’t try. Don’t quit trying to quit! You’ll get it right! The people who don’t quit are the ones who don’t try.”

I did finally get it right. I learned a few lessons along the way.

Addiction is Multi-Faceted

There is so much focus on nicotine addiction, the buzz would have you believe that nicotine, or the lack thereof, is the only reason it is so hard to quit. This belief supports sales of nicotine patches, nicotine gum, and e-cigarettes. But nicotine wasn’t my main addiction; it was gone in a matter of days. There is so much more associated with the habit of smoking that smokers find appealing and habit forming. For me this included:

- The Deep Inhale and Exhale
- The Paraphernalia
- The Camaraderie
- The Break

The Deep Inhale and Exhale

The act of sucking in and blowing out smoke is as addictive as

nicotine. Add to this the whole oral fixation and hand to mouth thing and you have a behavior that is hard to replace when you quit. But there is a way to offset some of this loss. And no, I am not talking about e-cigs or vaping.

What To Do: Deep breathing as taught for yoga and meditation really helps replace the loss of the inhale and the exhale of cigarette smoke. If you need the hand to mouth connection as well, buy some short, fat, plastic straws and use them to replicate the action.

The Paraphernalia

Many of us buy things we like that are associated with our smoking habit such as special lighters, ashtrays, and cigarette cases. Sometimes we develop rituals around these items as well.

What To Do: In the weeks before your target date to quit arrives, get rid of every single one of these items.

The Camaraderie

When smokers are forced to ban together in a designated area, an easy acquaintance develops. Small talk flows freely when you have a habit in common. For those of us who are shy, this makes daily interaction in the workplace as well as interaction with total strangers out in the general public much easier.

What To Do: If you miss the companionship and camaraderie of being a smoker, you need to make the effort to talk to others without the excuse. If you find it too difficult, volunteer your time somewhere that has a mission you admire. Shared values breed camaraderie.

The Break

The break is as hard to lose as the action of smoking itself. Unless we smoke inside while we are working or involved in an activity, we have trained ourselves to take a break from whatever we are doing to have a smoke. When frustration rises, you take a break. When you can’t think of what to do next, you take a break. When you get tired or drained, you take a break. When you get angry, you take a break. When you are brain dead, you take a break.

Just the act of getting away from the task, or the desk, helps your mood and helps you redirect. But in all honesty, here is where the nicotine kicks in, in another way. The nicotine boost helps clear your head and helps you feel refreshed. It is, after all, a stimulant. It may help you figure out how to solve whatever problem was giving you grief, and it gives you a jolt of energy.

What To Do: Give yourself permission to take that break. Walk outside. Do deep breathing. If you like, replace the behavior of smoking with something else. Blow bubbles. Play an instrument. Sing a song. If you are at work, take a brisk walk. Just don’t walk by the smoking area. And don’t substitute candy. Putting yourself on a sugar roller coaster will not help your mood or your abstinence.

The Steps That Prepare You for Quitting

Denial is part of the addiction. We sublimate the negative. We ignore the smell, the mess, and the cost of the addiction. And most of all, we pretend we are not engaged in a suicidal act. Yes, it is a slow suicide – a steady march toward heart disease, emphysema, and cancer.

Set the Date

Pick a date in the near future. If you can, pick a date that begins a 3-day weekend. Give yourself a few weeks to prepare.

Reality Check

Take the time to pull your head out of the sand and face the facts. What are the risks of smoking? What do your lungs look like? What are the odds that smoking will kill you or cripple your health? What does that crippling disease look like?

Pretend you are entering a debate on “Why to never smoke” or “Stop now if you’ve started” side. Do the research. Do it like your life depends on it. After all, it does.

Pros and Cons

Complete a written pros and cons list. Dig deep and be honest.

Calculate the Cost

How much money is this habit costing you? What else could you do with that money?

Maybe It’s Not Such a Good Idea To Announce You’re Quitting

You need to decide what works for you, but that also means it’s time to be realistic and stop doing the same thing expecting different results. Many people like to announce self-improvement goals to friends and families, but some studies have shown that doing this does not correlate into greater success.

Mix It Up

In the weeks leading up to your target date, consider

switching your brand. One way to go is organic. Organic cigarettes are easier to kick. The other extreme is to change the brand you smoke each and every day, buy brands you hate, or try vaporizing, but be careful not to simply switch one addiction for another (and it should be noted that vaporizing may not be the healthy alternative people thought it was).

Embrace Health

It’s damn hard to be a health enthusiast when you are a smoker. You feel like a hypocrite. When you quit smoking, that conflict is gone. And the more health conscious you are before and during the process, the better you will feel and the easier it will be to quit.

Eating right evens out your blood sugar. A dip in blood sugar can cause an almost unbearable desire to smoke.

Plan ahead and shop ahead. Fill your kitchen with fresh whole foods – organic produce. If possible, cook ahead for your first few days of abstinence and make several salads filled with lots of vegetables.

If you don’t already know what constitutes a truly healthy diet and a healthy lifestyle, now is the time to learn and to start living right. This choice to embrace health will be a major factor that helps you abstain from smoking.

Avoid Triggers

Once you quit, avoid places where you smoked. If there is a place you frequented where there is smoking (like my old karaoke bar) don’t go! Declare your home a smoke-free zone. If you have friends who smoke, let them know you are quitting and that you can’t be around them for a while. Do not put yourself in the position where you could simply ask someone to give you a cigarette. They will.

If you are watching a movie where the characters smoke, change

the channel. If you walk by smokers, look away. You don't know your triggers yet – those sights and smells that make you crave "just one." Don't push it. Avoid them.

Don't Argue With "The Voice"

We've all got a voice in our head. Sometimes it is the voice of reason. Sometimes it is our conscience. Sometimes, especially in our younger decades, it is the voice of our mother. But when we are trying to break an addictive habit, that voice is the voice of addiction. Or maybe it is the voice of the devil himself.

- **Voice:** You can have just one.
- **Reality:** It's true. Maybe today you can. But tomorrow one is not enough.
- **Voice:** You can't quit.
- **Reality:** Yes, you can.
- **Voice:** Not today. How about tomorrow?
- **Reality:** You've been saying this for years.
- **Voice:** It's too hard. Cold turkey doesn't work.
- **Reality:** The only way to stop smoking is to stop smoking.

When you start arguing with this voice, you often lose. The voice is persistent – relentless, actually. So just shut it down. Don't answer. Simply remind yourself that you can do this.

The Night Before the Chosen Day

This is it. You're ready. Your head is in the right place because you have reminded yourself about the reality of smoking – how it is impacting your life and your health. You have chosen health. You have chosen life and a life well lived.

You have already thrown away or given away all of your smoking

paraphernalia. Before you go to bed, throw out all of your cigarettes. But tossing them is not enough. Breaking them is not enough. Drown them. And do the same with your cigarette butts. If you don’t, you will dig through your trash. You don’t want to do that. It makes you feel… well… at the very least horribly addicted, which gives that voice energy when it says you can’t quit. Thoroughly wetting all cigarettes and cigarette butts makes smoking them impossible.

Get a good night’s sleep. Tomorrow will be the start of your new life.

How To Stay Quit

Okay, you’ve done it. You have woken up to the first day of the rest of your life. You have chosen to live smoke free. For the next 2-3 days, stay home! Do not put yourself closer to a place to buy or bum a cigarette. Besides, you are going to want to sleep a lot for the next few days.

You will be detoxing from nicotine and a host of other chemicals you have been inhaling. There are things you can do to help this process:

- Drink plenty of clean, pure water – distilled or spring water and cranberry lemonade.
- Eat right. You need a nutrient dense diet. The 80% raw diet is great.
- Vitamin C helps with cravings as it flushes out your system.
- Complex B vitamins help you relax and sleep. It’s “nature’s valium.”
- Sleep all you want. Relax. Read. Watch TV. Live in your PJs for a few days.

What To Expect After You Quit Smoking

As the days go by, you will think about smoking less and less. The day will come (fairly soon!) when you realize you had not thought about it all day. Don't dwell on this thought because "the voice" will kick in. Just acknowledge it and move on.

If you do find yourself next to a smoker, one of two things will happen. You will want to breathe in that smell as if second hand smoke is heaven or the smell of smoke, even the faintest whiff, will make you nauseous. Oh yes, your sense of smell will probably improve. You'll probably be able to smell a smoker from a distance.

On one day you will see a group of people standing outside smoking and you'll think about how stupid they look. The very act of doing what they are doing will look wrong and you will feel grateful that you are not one of them. The next time you see a group of smokers you may have the opposite reaction. They may look like the "cool guys" and you wish you were with them.

Unexpected things will trigger you or surprise you. Acknowledge them and move on.

The less time you spend thinking about, talking about, worrying about, or even congratulating yourself about the fact you have quit, the better. You will find weeks pass. Months pass. With each passage of time the pull lessens. Instead of focusing on the issue of whether or not you smoke, focus on ways to improve your health on an ongoing basis.

What To Do If a Crisis Occurs

A horrible fight with a spouse, the death of a friend or family member, losing a job…these are the worst triggers. When

something big happens, your instinct will be to reach for that crutch.

What will happen? You'll get a headache. You'll feel sick to your stomach. Your heart will race. You'll have trouble sleeping. And you'll be trying to bury your guilt and frustration with the fact that you are smoking. How is any of this going to help the situation when you and your family are in crisis?

This is a good time to practice deep breathing. Take extra B vitamins. Handling the stress in a healthy way will not only help you remain free from your addiction, you will actually handle the situation better for yourself and for your loved ones if you use healthy rather than unhealthy coping mechanisms.

What To Do If You Backslide

Stop again immediately! Do not let a little slip define you. Now is the time to review all that information you saved about the horrors of smoking and review your pros and cons list that you haven't looked at since the day you quit. Drown the cigarettes. Throw away the lighter. Just do it again – now. Don't wait a week, a month, or a year to start over. Just do it. If you wait too long, it might actually be a year or two before you convince yourself to have another go at it. So why waste the time?

Simple Stop Smoking Protocol

Lots of good ideas right? But maybe a bit overwhelming, so let's put most of what's above into a simple protocol, throw in some nutrition, and feel free to make the necessary adjustments that makes this the perfect program for you.

1. **Pick a Date**

Regardless of which path you take and how you do it, pick a date. Give yourself some time, but burn that date into your subconscious as the date you know that you will be smoke-free from that point on. Remember it. Believe it. Know it. No matter what else you do, no matter what else happens, you will never smoke beyond that point.

2. **Learn to Breathe Properly, and Practice Constantly**

When you breathe properly, your diaphragm, your stomach, and your ribcage expand, not the upper chest. Fully exhaling is important, too. Remember, you are breathing in oxygen rich air and releasing carbon dioxide and toxins.

Have you ever watched babies breathe? Their stomachs rise and their rib cages fully expand with each breath they take. Watch and learn.

3. **Switch it Up**

In the weeks before your target date, try a brand that doesn't add additives to increase addiction, roll your own, don't smoke in the car, break up your routine, etc. When you need to smoke, give it 10 minutes no matter what, and spend that time breathing properly.

4. **Do Squats**

Exercise. Squats help detoxify the body and keep the organs healthy. Work up to a sweat, and breath heavily and deeply.

5. **Address Other Issues**

If you're a long-term smoker, you're likely to be dealing with some health issues like hypothyroidism, hormonal imbalances, periodontal disease, and asthma. Be sure to address them, and address them naturally.

6. **Detoxify**

Detoxify now, and keep doing it until you quit smoking. The

focus should be on flushing out heavy metals toxins, carbon, other carcinogens, and all those other toxins that come along with smoking that increase your body's cravings. Drink lots of cranberry lemonade and eat lots of salads. It's also a perfect time to repair the gut and balance your flora, which will in turn heal your endocrine system and balance your hormones.

Also, take a good antioxidant, try Shillington's Huff and Puff Formula to help detoxify the lungs, and always have B vitamins on hand. Smokers are constantly depleting their B vitamins, which leads to emotional issues and addictive behaviors. See the links above and the related reading section below for more information on breathing, healing the gut, and hormones. See the first article for our salad and cranberry lemonade recipes.

Recommended Supplements:

- CoQ10 50mg with Vitamin C – Douglas Labs (antioxidants)
- Shillington's Herbal Snuff Formula (clear sinuses and revitalize sense of smell, but buyer beware, it's not for the faint of heart)
- Shillington's Blood Detox Formula (detoxify the blood of toxins, stay well while sinuses drain)
- Shillington's Total Nutrition Formula (chelate heavy metals, lots of nutrients)
- Shillington's Tooth Gum Formula

Related Reading:

- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Gluten, Candida, Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases*
- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*
- *Top 5 Foods that Detox Heavy Metals and Toxins – With Protocol*
- *How to Breathe*