

Transitioning To A Tobacco-Free Lifestyle

Habits are difficult to break, but it is possible with the right tools and mindset, even in the case of habit-forming substances such as tobacco. Continue reading for steps and advice to help you ease into a tobacco-free lifestyle.

Moving Towards a Tobacco-Free Lifestyle

- **Remove, delay or avoid the tobacco reinforcement.** To delay the time between the impulse (wanting the cigarette) and the reward (smoking the cigarette), try and find a place to de-stress where smoking is not allowed. This can help break the tobacco reinforcement. Other ways include keeping your hands and mouth busy by chewing sugarless gum, sucking on a toothpick, and even frequently brushing your teeth. To help delay the urge to use tobacco, count to three hundred. Most urges come and go within three to five minutes.
- **Avoid temptations.** Avoid cues that trigger the urge to use tobacco. If you want to cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke, remove items around you that are linked to smoking, such as lighters and ashtrays. Also, avoid situations that lead to the habit; keep your distance from smoking areas and friends and family who use tobacco regularly. Instead, go for a walk, ring a friend or do something that keeps your mind elsewhere. Plan a busy week filled with fun, distracting activities, but be careful not to substitute one bad habit for another.
- **Create a new response.** Forming a new, better habit in response to the old stimulus is a productive method. Make a list of times and places that you usually smoke. Then think of ways to change your activities to accommodate your plan to quit smoking. For instance, if you typically smoke straight after a meal, plan to immediately clear the table, wash the dishes, and then dry and put them away.
- **Try the negative practice method.** This method involves doing something until it gets very uncomfortable or boring. If you smoke while driving, try smoking continuously before setting off for work. You will probably feel a bit sick, and as a result, you may not want to smoke in the car while driving. This method relies on the fact that when most of us overindulge in something, we get bored of it.
- **Try the feedback and visualisation method.** Examining a habit closely and keeping track of how often you indulge in it can increase your understanding of its extent and effects. Making a rational decision to change it is the natural next step. Do this by picturing yourself free of your tobacco habit; imagine yourself practising new habits. For example, see yourself as a non-tobacco user or as a non-smoker, and think of yourself as successful at breaking your habit.
- **Exercise** Exercise is a great way to break bad habits because it makes you feel better about yourself. You'll have more energy and a new perspective on life just by getting up and moving around more. Not only can you improve your physical fitness and help your body heal from the effects of tobacco use, but you can focus on a new routine. Try swimming, dancing, cycling, or brisk walking.

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