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Smoking: Why You Do It and Why You Should Quit

Why Smoke? Seven Reasons You Stick with the Habit

There are many reasons why you shouldn't smoke, but what are the reasons why people do smoke? There are a multitude of reasons, starting with why people start in the first place, to why they can't seem to stop.

To Look Mature

As kids and teenagers, we see adults around us who smoke. We see this, especially from parents, relatives, or adults we respect and admire, we want to smoke, too. It makes us feel as if we are older.

Of course, smoking does make you look more mature, but not in the way you are hoping. The truth is, smoking destroys the elasticity of our skin and makes us wrinkle and age on the outside more quickly than you are supposed to. In addition, it makes the inside of you, in essence, age as well. This is because it causes extra unnecessary stress to your organs. This stress causes your body to get worn out at a quicker pace, almost as if you are speeding up the aging process.

To "Fit In"

From the time we are children, we continuously seek to be accepted. No one wants to be friendless or alone. The pressure to "fit in" becomes increasingly strong as we enter into our teen years and, often, remains into adulthood. Unfortunately, many people start smoking in order to become part of a peer group. For some, all it takes is having that first cigarette to become addicted. Once addiction has set in, it is extremely difficult to overcome.

To Experiment

Some people are drawn to smoking because they simply want to know what all the excitement is about. They feel as though they might be missing out on something if they don't try a cigarette. And, they are right – they are missing out on the increased chance of developing high blood pressure, emphysema, and all types of cancer, particularly mouth and lung. They are also missing out on poor sense of taste and smell. In addition, they are missing out on spending thousands of dollars every year to support their addiction. More than likely, there are more important things to be worried about missing out on, like seeing your child get married or seeing your 75th birthday.

To Break the Rules

Others start to smoke because it is "daring," "risky," or "against the rules." They think smoking

makes them look “cool,” or like they are rebels. If you want to act out against society, wear crazy clothes or get a wild haircut. Neither of these causes long-term damage to your health or costs extra money. Even better, invest the money in a sport or a hobby!

The desire to “be bad” is the overwhelming reason why teenagers start smoking. In most households, it is – thankfully – forbidden for kids and teenagers to smoke. The unfortunate side effect is that this very reason is what draws some teenagers to the act in the first place. At the core of this reason, however, is still the desire to be accepted and to be paid attention to. Parents who pay attention to their children and who are actively involved in their lives substantially decrease the likelihood of the child ever starting to smoke.

Addiction to Nicotine

Once a person does start smoking, it is difficult to quit for several reasons. One reason is the nicotine. Nicotine is a drug. By definition, this means nicotine is addictive. Addiction, no matter the type, is extremely difficult to overcome. Those who try to quit smoking usually experience withdrawal symptoms, which can range from having trouble sleeping, to developing the shakes, to feeling nauseous, to becoming moody.

Addiction to the “Habit”

Many people who smoke are simply addicted to the habit, or routine, created from smoking. It is a known fact that the brain begins to associate two acts with one another if they are repeatedly performed together. This was shown in the experiment with Pavlov’s dogs in which the dogs began to drool every time they heard a can opener because they associated it with getting fed. Of course, smokers aren’t dogs, but the same theory holds true.

If you have a cigarette every time you have a cup of coffee, your brain begins associating the two together. Over time, it becomes difficult to have a cup of coffee without craving a cigarette, too. The same is true for smoking when driving, smoking after a meal, smoking first thing in the morning, smoking when you have a beer, or any other activity during which you often smoke while doing.

Dealing with Stress and Emotions

Those who start smoking also develop a dependency upon cigarettes to help them deal with stress or other emotions. As the daily stresses of life, such as personal problems, problems at work, or problems at school, begin to mount, those addicted to cigarettes turn to the drug to help soothe their nerves and to help them get through the day. For some of these people, smoking makes them feel as if they are getting an energy boost to help them get through these situations or to get through the day.

Unfortunately, cigarettes actually have the opposite effect. While they may provide a temporary boost of energy or temporarily make you feel calmer, this is followed by a crash during which you feel less energized or more excitable. Obviously, this leads to a harsh addictive cycle that is difficult to break.

Identify Smoking Triggers and Nip Them in the Butt

One of the most difficult aspects of quitting smoking is overcoming triggers, which are certain events or situations that make you feel the desire to smoke. Identifying these triggers, and figuring out how to overcome them, is one of the primary keys to smoking cessation success.

Drinking

One common smoking trigger is drinking, whether it is coffee, alcohol, or a soft drink. To help break your self of associating drinking with smoking, try to change something about the situation. Perhaps you always drink your coffee from a certain mug. Try drinking with a different one. Or, maybe you enjoy having a beer sitting outside on the porch. Try having your drink somewhere else in order to change your surroundings. Anything you can do to change the situation will help reduce the trigger effect of drinking and smoking.

You might even consider cutting back or quit drinking alcohol altogether while you are trying to quit smoking. This is because your willpower is weakened when you drink, making it more likely you will slip up and have a cigarette.

Finishing a Meal

Many smokers get into the habit of having a cigarette after they get done eating. This eventually becomes another smoking trigger. As a result, every time you finish a meal, you feel the desire to have a cigarette. Try forming a new after eating hobby, such as going for a walk, or even a chore, such as doing the dishes. Anything to keep your mind and body occupied at that time will be a great help. Ideally, you should find another pleasurable activity to do immediately after eating so it will form a new, less destructive habit.

In the Car

Riding or driving in a car has become a popular trigger for smokers, particularly since smoking has been banned in so many other places. This has caused smokers to seek refuge, and a place to smoke, in their cars. To help with this trigger, remove all ashtrays from your vehicle. Or, fill it with something else, such as potpourri. You might even write several reasons for quitting smoking on pieces of paper and fill your ashtray with them. Try playing your favorite music and singing along instead of smoking while driving in the car.

Talking on the Phone

Several smokers get into the habit of having a cigarette while on the phone. This then leads to the mind associating the two tasks together. When talking on the phone, try going to a different room than usual. If this isn't a possibility, such as in the workplace, keep small objects nearby to squeeze or play with in order to keep your hands occupied.

Being Around Others Who Smoke

Being around other people who are smoking can make it especially difficult to stay away from cigarettes. This is partly due to the nicotine addiction, but it is largely due to the trigger effect

of the camaraderie of smoking with other smokers. Try keeping away from designated smoking areas at work or from popular smoking gathering areas. In fact, just taking breaks at work can often trigger a desire for a cigarette. Try to spend time with people who don't smoke at this time.

Parties and other social events with people who smoke can also make it difficult to quit smoking. Of course, it is ludicrous to expect yourself to avoid these events. But, you should avoid going outside with your friends when they have a cigarette. If smoking is permitted inside, or if it is an outdoor party, try to keep some distance from people when they are smoking.

Other Reasons

Other common smoking triggers include: stress, sex, boredom, end of the workday, crisis, a sense of accomplishment, playing cards, reading, waiting, watching television, and getting out of bed. If any of these are triggers for you, do whatever you can to change the scenario in some way to lessen the trigger effect.

For example, instead of rewarding yourself with a cigarette, try rewarding yourself with a bubble bath or something else that is pleasurable to you. When going through a stressful situation or a crisis, reach out to friends and family to provide emotional support rather than reaching out for a pack of cigarettes. When watching television, keep your hands busy with something else or chew on something to satisfy your oral fixation.

Silence the Stress of Smoking Cessation – Ten Tips to Help You Cope

You have finally decided to quit smoking, and you feel great! Of course, it is only day one, and at this point it is still easy to feel on top of the world. You know about all the folks who tried and failed to quit, and you have heard the horror stories of grumpy behavior, excessive weight gain, and the knock down, drag out fights with spouses, significant others, and children that accompanied this valiant effort. Looking at your cigarettes, as you crush them into the trash can, it is hard to imagine that a little piece of rolled up paper and some dried plants in the middle could wreak so much havoc in anyone's life, but all the stories you have heard are based on truth!

Cigarette smoke contains the highly addictive substance nicotine. This drug's ability to addict its users has been compared to the habit-forming agents of heroine and cocaine. Studies have proven that nicotine directly affects the dopamine production in the user's body, and the latter is responsible for allowing a body to feel pleasure, comfort ability, and overall physical content. The vicious cycle that many long-term smokers have discovered is the fact that the drug in the long term depresses the brain's ability to generate adequate amounts of this substance, and so the smoker will seek to compensate for this shift by introducing greater amounts of nicotine into her or his system.

While it may briefly kick start the brain to release more dopamine, it simultaneously causes so much bodily destruction that the effect of the former is negligible in light of the pain and illness

generated by the latter. Additionally, the addiction is not simply physical but its severity is also linked to the habits that surround the activity of smoking. The activity is soon associated with certain activities, such as eating, driving, or reading, and a smoker who is trying to kick the habit finds temptations sore whenever she or he engages in any or all of these activities.

While it is good and comforting to know that you will very likely encounter this distress, it does little to silence the stress of smoking cessation, and almost nothing to help you cope with it. To this end, here are ten tips that will make the road to quitting permanently not an easy one to traverse, but most certainly more livable, healthy, and perhaps even a bit more comfortable:

No matter what the purists are saying, nicotine replacement therapy, such as the use of the gum or patch, is a good alternative for those who face extreme irritability, anxiety, and even disturbed sleep patterns. Some decry the uses of replacements as weakness, but let's face it, you are trying to quit smoking, this alone makes you strong and determined in your own right!

Be aware of the habit that most tempts you to smoke, and change it. Let's say you like to have a cigarette with your evening cupcake in the easy chair. Change the habit by having a different snack (preferably a healthy one, such as some sunflower seeds or pistachios) in a different location, such as the sofa. This activity is not associated with smoking and will thus help you to avoid some temptations.

Take up a new hobby, such as the Yoga class you always wanted to go to, the drawing class that held your interest or maybe the evening lecture at the local library. Get out of the house and enjoy new things!

It is 3 o'clock in the morning and you need help – drop a dime! Did you know that there are actually help-lines that are staffed by trained individuals to help quitters deal with the biggest temptations and cravings? Call 1-800-ACS-2345 to get the number for your local counseling service.

Enlist support from friends and family. Let them know that you are quitting and that they should absolutely positively not give in when you ask them for a cigarette.

Consider hypnosis if all else fails.

Acupuncture is another great alternative for those who have a hard time dealing with the cravings.

Delay giving in to the urge. Let's say your temptation is acute and you are all but on your way to the corner store to buy more cigarettes. Tell yourself to wait for fifteen minutes. While it may appear that you are giving in to your craving, it still leaves you in control and takes off the edge just a bit. Usually this little trick will allow you to occupy yourself for fifteen minutes, and by the time this period has elapsed, the urge has probably lessened considerably.

Educate yourself on the process of smoking cessation. An educated quitter is a prepared quitter. Additionally, knowing about the process cuts your stress about what's next.

Forgive yourself and get back on the wagon if you fall off. If you give in to temptation don't think it was all for nothing but acknowledge your momentary weakness, find out what made you give in right then and there and avoid this situation in the future.

Mind Over Matter – Avoiding Temptation to Smoke Again

You have finally quit your smoking habit! Congratulations on a Herculean accomplishment! You have weathered the physical withdrawals, the psychological temptations, and all the anxiety, mood swings, as well as the minefield of rationalizations why just one cigarette could not possibly hurt you. Of course, you know that you are not yet out of the woods, after all, as they saying goes, today is the first day of the rest of your life, and you are hoping to make it a smoke-free life. How can you go about avoiding temptation to smoke again?

While there is no easy answer to this question, there are a lot of suggestions that will make temptations more avoidable or at least manageable if avoidance is impossible.

Avoid people who seek to entice you to smoke. For some reason, once in a while you will encounter a friend or family member who will treat your smoking cessation as a big joke, and who will either make a point of lighting up in your presence or in the alternative will wave a pack of cigarettes under your nose, all but lighting one up for you. She or he will rationalize that just one for old times' sake will hardly hurt and that you have proven you could quit any time. Avoid this person as much as you can. Obviously, you should not skip Thanksgiving dinner to avoid her or him, but it would be good to have a buffer between you and that person.

In case of a friend who does this to you, perhaps you will need to reevaluate your friendship with this person. Of course, the longer you have been smoke-free, the easier it gets to handle this temptation, and at some point you can just laugh in the person's face and get on with the social situation you are in. Until you get there, however, it is best to avoid the person.

Avoid situations and locations that tempt you to smoke. The favorite watering hole down the block may have a wonderful ambience, but if the smoke inside is so thick that you can cut it with a knife, it may not be conducive to your effort to remain smoke-free. Find a new haunt that may actually be nicer than your old one! You will also be able to make new friends, and pretty soon you will no longer associate going down to watch the game on Monday night with smoking. Once you get to that point, even a visit to the old watering hole will present only a small temptation that you will be able to resist much easier.

While locations may be easy to avoid, situations may not. If you work for a company where smoking on the premises or on the job is permitted, you will need to employ all of your willpower to overcome the temptations when you are faced with smoking coworkers. If this situation cannot be avoided, be sure to come prepared with hard candy, sunflower seeds, peanuts or pistachios in the shell, or some sugarless gum.

Avoid rationalizations such as "one cigarette won't kill me." It may not kill you, but the slippery slope of rationalization will lead to further lapses in your resolve to remain smoke-free for life. In the same way that you would not suggest to an alcoholic to have just one drink for old times'

sake or for the road, you should not rationalize that just one cigarette for yourself is a good idea. It will make turning down the second and third cigarette just that much harder. Another more insidious rationalization is the idea that smoking while not buying cigarettes is different from being a smoker. Whether you buy or bum, if you stick the cigarettes in your mouth and light them, you are a smoker.

As you can see, it is hard to quit, and it is hard to remain smoke-free for life. Yet while it may be hard, it is entirely doable, and if you continue on the strength of your convictions, you will be able to make it through even the rough times. Should you, against the odds, give in to temptation, remember that a slip or lapse in judgment does not mean you have permanently fallen off the wagon. As a matter of fact, this is a good time to review the reasons why you quit smoking in the first place, revisit the benefits of smoking cessation, and reward yourself for success!

Ten Ways to Get Rid of Smoking Temptations in Your Life

A new year has begun and you are ready to make good on that promise of all promises: you will finally quit smoking. Or perhaps you are expecting a new addition to the family and there is no time like the present to get rid of that unhealthy habit. Whatever your motivation may be, quitting cigarettes or any other tobacco product will quite possibly be the most far-reaching decision you are making. It will improve your overall health, reduce your risk for many illnesses, improve your outward appearance, and even save you a lot of money!

No matter what your resolve, the biggest issue to deal with at this time is that of the smoking temptations in your life. Quitting nicotine is not an easy process, and even though many have done so, each one will be able to testify to the enormous difficulty and even adversity they had to overcome to make their resolve permanent. Here are ten ways to get rid of smoking temptations in your life:

When you decide to quit, get rid of all smoking related paraphernalia. Toss out your lighters, crumple up and throw away your cigarettes, and give away your ashtray collection. Do not keep anything inside the house that you use for smoking. Be certain to clean out all areas that may hold some stray cigarettes, such as the glove compartment of your car, your desk at work, or your purse and jacket.

When taking a break at work, it may have become an ingrained habit to go outside for a smoke with your coworkers. It is time to come up with a new and equally enjoyable routine that incorporates the interactions with coworkers while staying far away from the smoke and cigarettes. Perhaps make new acquaintances in the break room with your non-smoking coworkers. Or perhaps this will be a great time for a quick and refreshing walk around the block to stretch a little bit and to take some deep breaths. You may also want to consider taking up crossword puzzles, as they will occupy you and may take away the temptation to reach for a cigarette.

While watching TV, many experience extraordinary cravings due to the ingrained habit of kicking back, watching an enjoyable program, and smoking. While it would be easy to suggest

simply getting out and taking a walk, in and of itself this is not a realistic idea for every time you are sitting down in front of the tube. Instead, take up a new hobby, such as knitting, that will occupy your hands while you watch TV. Small quantities of unshelled sunflower seeds or pistachio nuts will also help to assuage the behavioral cravings.

Avoid locations that you associate with smoking, such as the local bar, the smoking section of your favorite restaurant, or the area in front of the pro-shop at your golf course. Find new hangouts.

If you feel vulnerable, avoid people who smoke. While you will come across the occasional smoker and will most likely be able to withstand the temptation, it is imperative to avoid the big events that draw many smokers.

Mimic responses to common questions and suggestions. You role-play with your children to help them deal with certain situations, and the same works for you. Practice saying "no thanks" in front of the mirror. Practice saying "no thank you, I quit." Don't be shy about communicating your resolve.

Involve your friends and families to help you quit. They will be able to help you cope with temptations, and may even be able to eliminate some of them.

Change your peer group. If all else fails, and your friends will not support you in your decision and perhaps even try to tempt you with cigarettes, it is time to make some new friends.

Consistently remind yourself of the reasons for quitting.

Reward yourself for your resolve by spending the money you have saved by not buying cigarettes on something special just for you.

While these ideas may not guarantee that you will never again face a temptation in your life to light up, they do help you to let go of many of the habits that form around the actual activity of smoking. Stay firm and good luck!

I Can Think Clearly Now - The Smoke is Gone

After one decides to quit smoking, there are several changes that will occur. One of the most obvious changes is that in your health. Beyond this, you will find that psychological and material changes that become a part of the switch after the smoking habit, disappears from your life. The benefits that occur after one decides to quit smoking occur on a physical and emotional level.

One of the ways in which things will begin to change with your body after you quit smoking is through the levels of chemicals that stop taking over your body. After only twenty minutes after your last cigarette, your blood pressure decreases, the pulse rate drops, and the body temperature of your hands and feet will increase. At first, this feeling will cause you to want to continue smoking, but if you allow the change to occur in your body, it will eventually relax you

as your body is able to normalize in its functioning.

The next thing that happens after you quit smoking is that the carbon monoxide level in your blood and the oxygen level in your blood will return to normal. This begins after about forty-eight hours from your last cigarette. Part of the addiction of smoking is that these two types of chemicals stay on a high through smoking cigarettes. Your body creates a need for these levels to stay higher. By stopping your addiction to cigarettes, it will allow your body to be more relaxed by allowing the extra chemicals to be removed from your blood stream.

One of the effects that smoking has on your body is that it allows nerve endings to break off because of the chemicals that are in the cigarettes. By quitting, the nerve endings will begin to re-grow. At first, it may seem that you have nicotine withdrawal symptoms, but it is allowing the nerves to build back in your system. As a result, your senses will improve in their sensitivity. You will find that your taste and smell will become stronger.

Over a longer period of time, you may begin to notice that not only does the state of your body begin to normalize, but the health risk factors will begin to decrease. Strokes, lung cancer, ulcer diseases, coronary heart disease, and a more substantial life are all diseases and health problems that will disappear after the chemicals from the smoke disappear from your body. By quitting smoking, it will allow a healing and clearing process to begin, which will clear out your system from the diseases that you were more susceptible to when you were smoking.

Along with the health benefits that take place in your body, there are also several psychological benefits that occur from you quitting the habit of smoking. At first, several experience withdrawal symptoms, causing a craving for nicotine. However, if you can move past this, then there are benefits that will occur for you mentally.

Feelings of freedom are one of the psychological benefits to stop smoking. A lowering of anxiety will also begin to occur. Many say that changes in their environment will occur, as well as a boost in self-esteem. Because of the addicting nature of cigarettes, it often causes one to feel powerless, lowering the self-esteem. When one quits smoking, there is a boost in power and control over their lives.

One of the things that are part of smoking is the environment, financial sacrifices, and time. By stopping smoking, all of these aspects will turn into beneficial changes and move into part of the feeling of freedom that happens by taking away the addiction. Changes in the environment such as smell will cause a change in your health as well as confidence.

Being able to save money also allows a new psychological freedom. You will also not be subject to time, as you will not need to stop what you are doing for a cigarette break. This will help with your production time, and will allow you to think more clearly.

The changes in health and mental states are benefits to you for allowing yourself to quit smoking. While the beginning may cause some anxiety for the addiction, getting past this and allowing you to step into a new found freedom with many benefits that will surround you.

Why Women Have a Harder Time Kicking the Smoking Habit

Many of those who smoke have the desire to quit smoking and break the habit that they have formed. However, it has been found that women have a harder time kicking the smoking habit than men do. While it has been found that smoking causes more health problems in women than in men, it has also been seen that smoking is harder to break with women. This happens because of the different effects that the nicotine have on the brain. This also happens because of the associations that women make with smoking, which often times differ from the reasons why men smoke.

One of the reasons why women have a harder time to stop smoking is because of the nicotine addiction that occurs with cigarette smoking. Cigarettes contain this chemical in order to get one addicted to smoking. The nicotine moves into one's brain and triggers a nerve that is responsible for calming pain.

When a woman decides to stop smoking this nerve is no longer triggered. In women, this causes a feeling of depression and negative moods making it harder for women to quit smoking. This nerve is more sensitive in women than it is in men. It has been found that the withdrawal symptoms are harder to maintain when a woman is trying to quit smoking because of these sudden changes in moods that have been triggered and suppressed from the change in the brain's nerves.

One of the effects that smoking has on the brain is being an emotional stimulus. This is more associated with women having the need to smoke than men. Because of the nicotine that is moving into the nerves of your brain, it causes you to believe that there is a lower stress level when smoking. Things such as stress levels seem to go up. Women may also begin feeling things more strongly when they quit smoking, such as anxiety and depression. The mood changes that occur from smoking are known to affect women more than they do men.

One of the nerves in the brain that triggers from the nicotine is related to finding a pleasure in the smell and taste of cigarette smoke. This nerve has been found to be more sensitive in women than in men. Because of this, the physical habit of smoking and sensations associated with smoking are harder to break. The desire for the physical addiction from smoking in women causes higher rates of withdrawal symptoms and anxiety. Because of this, it has been found that the nicotine replacement remedies, such as gum and patches are not as effective in women as they are in men.

Smoking is often associated with environmental surroundings, such as the place where one usually smokes. This also includes the social aspect of smoking, such as meeting with friends who all have the same addiction. Because women associate smoking with the physical at a higher level, they have to take themselves out of certain social circles and environments in order to help them move through the withdrawal symptoms.

When someone decides to stop smoking, there are several bodily functions that begin to change. This includes things in association to blood flow, tissue and nerve re-growth, and a loss of toxins and chemicals from cigarettes. At the same time, it may cause weight gain because of the changes that the body begins to go through. For several years, smoking has been advertised as allowing women to help maintain their weight. When women associate

quitting their smoking habit with weight gain, it becomes harder to be convinced that they should quit smoking.

If a woman decides to quit smoking, it creates a different effect when going through the withdrawal symptoms. The brain nerves that are affected from a woman smoking have shown to be different than how they effect a man's reaction. This causes more severe withdrawal problems as well as feelings of anxiety and depression, which are associated with smoking. Often times, these mood changes and physical changes cause more relapses from women than they do men. Despite this, there are also several health factors related to smoking. These affect women in more areas as well, making it important for a woman to kick the smoking habit.

Establish Smoke-Free Zones in Your Environment

When you are addicted to smoking, there are several associations that are used in relation to having a cigarette. One of the large associations is the environment that you created to support your smoking need. When you decide to quit smoking, establishing smoke-free zones will help you to stop your habit. Having the right environment to quit smoking is a way to give yourself the support that you need to stop smoking.

One of the zones that you can create to help with a smoke-free environment is in your kitchen. When you decide to quit smoking, toxins and chemicals will begin to move outside of your body. You will need to balance this with the right kinds of foods that will help to move the toxins outside of your body and allow vitamins and nutrients to become part of your diet. Multi-vitamins and healthy snacks will help your body to get the fuels that it needs in order to begin changing your body.

Often times, smoking will cause your body to become sick, as the vitamins and other parts of your body are being normalized, which your body is not used to anymore. Make sure that part of your environment is allowing yourself time to get extra rest and let your body rejuvenate.

If you have certain places that you associated with smoking, then these can be changed to help with breaking your habit. One of the places where many smoke is in the car. You can keep water, candies and gum in your car in order to get through withdrawal periods. You can put these in the same places where you kept your cigarettes to help change your associations.

If you know that part of your smoking habit was in relation to the physical sensation, then you can keep straws, lollipops and cinnamon sticks at your disposal to chew on and relieve the physical craving. If you have other places in your home or outside of your home that you associate with smoking, you can place these other tools there to help you fight your cravings.

One of the things that will help you to remain smoke free is by continuing to educate yourself and make tools for yourself, such as a quit smoking journal. If you constantly remind yourself why you are quitting through gaining knowledge and allowing yourself time to gain insights, it will help to establish and maintain a smoke-free zone. Giving yourself time to read books about the effects of smoking, and doing things that will remind you why you decided to quit will help

in the process of you not smoking. Several will keep a list of why they decided to quit smoking and periodically look at it to remind them not to relapse.

Smoking is often related to calming down stressful or hard emotional situations. If you are angry, sad, or stressed, your first reaction may be to get a cigarette. Creating a smoke-free environment means placing substitutes around your home to replace the cigarette habit. Having good music on hand, creating spaces for meditation and relaxation, finding stress relievers, and creating peaceful places in your environment to replace your emotions will all help you to keep being smoke-free.

If you are having anxiety and withdrawal symptoms, sometimes the best solution is to take yourself out of the environment. An easy way to do this is to go for a walk outside of your home, allowing your energy to be used in a different way. Another way of taking yourself out of the environment is to simply stop what you are doing in your environment, and simply concentrate on breathing deeply or on something that is peaceful to you. This will help to calm the anxiety that you feel and bring you back to focusing on your life instead of the cigarette cravings.

Because cigarettes are a habit, the best way to fight them and create a smoke free environment is to find ways to substitute the habit. Changing your habits with eating, and creating spaces around you to fight against the urge to smoke will all help your environment to be a way to support yourself when you decide to quit smoking.

Be Held Accountable – Sign a No-Smoking Contract

Signing a no-smoking contract will allow you to further the mental change that you will be making when you decide to quit smoking. The first thing that it will allow is a way of showing your motivation to kicking the habit of smoking. The next thing that it will allow is for you to remind yourself of the commitment that you are making and sticking to by quitting smoking. By having a physical no-smoking contract available to you, you are allowing yourself to be accountable to stop your habit as well as giving yourself a physical form of remind yourself of the intentions you have to quit smoking.

Your contract will first allow you to be able to be accountable for the day that you decide to quit smoking on. Once you decide the day that you decide to quit smoking, you should make your contract, starting out with the specified date. It is important to keep this as the main commitment to yourself so that you can carry out with your plan.

The contract can then hold several things in order to help keep you motivated and committed to the process. Most contracts that are written include all of the details of what you are signing. Because of this, your no-smoking contract should be detailed and comprehensive. The first thing to include in your contract can be the reasons for you quitting. This may be for health reasons or because of relationships that are suffering because of your smoking habit.

The next thing to include in your contract is a list of those things that make you want to smoke, also known as triggers. This may include spaces that make you crave a cigarette, or certain

emotions, such as stress, that lead you to smoke. By understanding these different trigger points and allowing yourself to commit to change them through the contract will help you carry out with your plan to quit smoking.

Another important part of your contract is outlining the different methods that you will be using to quit smoking. This includes changing your environment and diet, as well as the use of physicians, smoking support groups, knowledge and friends and family to help you break your bad habit. By knowing what positive aspects are changing from your desire to quit smoking, it will further motivate and commit you to leaving your smoking habit behind.

Many no-smoking contracts include rewards that you will receive by quitting your smoking habit. You can reward yourself in several ways, either by giving yourself smaller things at the end of each day, or by rewarding yourself with bigger things at the end of certain periods of time. You can also include the rewards that you will receive through your changing health and changes in relationships on your contract. By seeing what you will receive by carrying through the process of quitting your smoking habit, you will be able to commit easier to breaking your habit and staying with the contract.

The next step to take with your no-smoking contract is to have someone else sign it who will help you prepare and be accountable for you to stop smoking. Make sure that they know your plan and are willing to hold you responsible for quitting your habit. This will give you extra support in your efforts and plans to stop smoking. You may want to ask the person or people who sign the contract to help you in changing the trigger points as well as being included in the things such as the rewards. This can further motivate you to quit smoking.

Signing a no-smoking contract is one way of motivating you to stop smoking. It will allow you to outline the necessary steps and plans that you need to take to quit smoking. It will also give you a physical form to look at when you are going through the stages of withdrawal. By having a contract, you will be able to stay focused on your goal. This will allow you to have a consistent reminder and way to motivate yourself.

By having a no-smoking contract, you will also be able to keep a positive attitude while going through the hardest stages of giving up smoking. Sticking to your plan to quit smoking is the key to successfully quitting. This can be done easier by making yourself accountable for the different parts of your plan.

Spousal Support – How to Help Your Significant Other Quit Smoking

Everyone has heard how difficult it is to quit smoking. When smokers try to quit, their family and friends would often like to know how they can help. Although smokers won't quit until they have made the decision for themselves, once the decision has been made, a spouse can provide a great amount of support and encouragement.

Listen. Whether you are a smoker, ex-smoker, or nonsmoker yourself, the process of quitting is different for every individual. Once your spouse has announced his or her intention to quit, sit down and have a conversation. What are her expectations? What are his greatest fears? Work

through the best ways in which you can help your spouse quit successfully.

Learn. Particularly if you are a nonsmoker, learn about smoking and nicotine addiction. Read up on the physical and mental aspects of quitting smoking, especially those associated with the method your spouse has chosen. It may be helpful to join a support group for the friends and family of smokers who are quitting and learn more about others' experiences. The physical effects of nicotine withdrawal are strongest in the first month, but mental cravings will continue for several months. Learn methods to deal with these cravings, so you can help your spouse on a daily basis.

Be Patient. Feelings of anger, irritation, and depression are par for the course when a person is trying to quit smoking. As a supportive spouse, you need to be aware that some days will be more difficult than others, and keep in mind what your spouse is trying to achieve. If your spouse is taking out these feelings on you, wait until he is in a better mood and approach him for a conversation about how to better handle the situation. Make sure your spouse knows that you are completely supportive of her efforts to quit, but you would like to work with her to find better outlets for her frustration during the process.

Sympathize. If you are an ex-smoker yourself, you can empathize very closely with what your spouse is going through. If you are a nonsmoker or a smoker who has never tried to quit, you will not be as familiar with the process of withdrawal and recovery from nicotine addiction. When times get rough, take a few moments to put yourself in the place of your spouse, and sympathize with the challenge of quitting. If you are making plans for the two of you, keep your spouse's efforts in mind—don't make reservations at a smoky bar or restaurant that may be tempting. Or if you are a smoker, respect your spouse's wishes and keep cigarettes hidden and outside of the home.

Praise. From day one, praise your spouse loudly and often. The praise may be in the form of a few words of encouragement or a small surprise gift. Whatever form it takes, your praise shows your spouse that you appreciate the hardships she's enduring and will support her until she has successfully quit.

Be supportive. What, exactly, does this mean? Many of the actions described above fall within this mandate. Being supportive is an overall attitude toward your spouse's attempt to quit—do whatever you can to ensure success and help him along the way. If you started the quitting process by listening carefully to your spouse's plans and wishes, you will know just what to do to be supportive in your particular situation.

Don't judge. The majority of smokers who try to quit are unsuccessful on their first try. A year after quitting, only 5-10% of quitters will still be smoke-free. If your spouse has a short relapse or is unsuccessful the first time quitting, don't judge her or blame her. Nicotine addiction is extremely hard to break because of its physical and mental aspects. No matter how the effort to quit turns out, make sure you support your spouse and give him your unconditional love.

Keep in mind throughout the process of quitting that your spouse is making a healthier choice for you both. Even though there will be difficult times, the goal of a smoke-free house and lifestyle is well worth any temporary discomfort. Just be patient and supportive, and you will both be glad of the outcome.

When at First You Don't Succeed – Quit Smoking Again

So you've decided to quit smoking—again. As Mark Twain famously said, "Quitting smoking is easy. I've done it hundreds of times." As Twain's quote illustrates, people have been trying to quit smoking for decades, even before the terrifying health reports that started being widely broadcast in the 1960s. If you've quit smoking so many times that you've lost count, take heart. Thousands, if not millions, of smokers are in the same position.

Now more than ever before, smokers are armed with an arsenal of quit smoking aids, good advice, and support than ever before. Forget your past failures and resist the urge to get frustrated. Take this bit of friendly advice and go ahead and do it: quit smoking again!

Here are eight tips to get you going on your quest for better health and a smoke-free future.

1) Remember that failure to quit right away is perfectly normal. It is rare to find someone who was able to quit cold turkey one time, and never light up again. In fact, it usually takes people at least two or three attempts (and in several cases, many times more) before they are able to successfully quit smoking.

2) If you are a 'serial quitter,' you come to the battle better prepared than before. One of the greatest advantages to quitting smoking a second (or third, or fourth) time is that you have a better idea of what your strengths and weaknesses are. You are better prepared to quit if you learn to identify what kind of triggers impel you to reach for your cigarettes. Do you tend to light up at parties? Do you smoke when you're hungry? When you're sad? Bored? Stressed out? Figure out what your triggers are, and then strategize how you can avoid the feelings that make you want to smoke.

3) Prepare for your quitting date as if it were a major event (which it is!). Choose a "quit date"—the first day in which you will begin your life as a non-smoker. Place a calendar in a prominent location and mark the date. Prepare your home, office, car, and other areas of your environment for the big date. Clear these areas of smoking paraphernalia, or anything that may remind you of smoking.

4) Set up your own personal support network. Call friends and family to tell them that you are quitting. As friends or family members who smoke to please refrain from smoking around you. Write down the number to your local smoking cessation hotline and have it handy. When the cravings start to hit, reach out to members of your support network for help.

5) Consciously strive to change your behaviors. A popular and successful technique used to quit smoking is to change your daily habits and behaviors. Change your everyday routine. For instance, if you're accustomed having dinner at 6:00 pm each day, try to eat at 5:30 pm instead. If you watch TV every night for two hours, skip one of your shows and go for a walk instead. Whether you realize it or not, you're smoking breaks are probably spaced throughout your day at regular intervals. Changing your everyday routine can help you ease into a life without your regularly scheduled smoking breaks.

6) Reward yourself with a special treat each day. Congratulate yourself for each day you go without smoking. That is quite an achievement! Many people reward themselves with food.

While this is OK, it should be done sparingly to avoid gaining weight. If you want to avoid overspending, think of easy things you can do at home. For example, you can treat yourself with permission to take a long, relaxing bubble bath, or by watching one of your favorite movies.

7) Take it easy for the first two weeks. The first two weeks after your quit date will probably be the hardest. Your body is experiencing withdrawal from the nicotine, and you are likely to feel both sluggish and jittery. Give yourself permission to take it easy. Remind yourself that quitting smoking is a major lifestyle change. Take lots of naps, stay hydrated by drinking enough water each day, opt for raw foods, and try to steer clear from situations where you'll be exposed to other smokers.

8) Be prepared for a relapse. Avoid all-or-nothing thinking. Remind yourself that if you succumb to your cravings, you can always start again tomorrow. Of course, this is no excuse to light up, but you should strive to stay relaxed yet focused on your goal.

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