Health Promotion Agency

stopping smoking made easier

- **CHECKLIST**
  Do you really want to stop?
- **WILL POWER**
  You have more than you think
- **NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY**
  Which one is for you?
- **HELP AND ADVICE**
  Who to contact for support

Investing for Health

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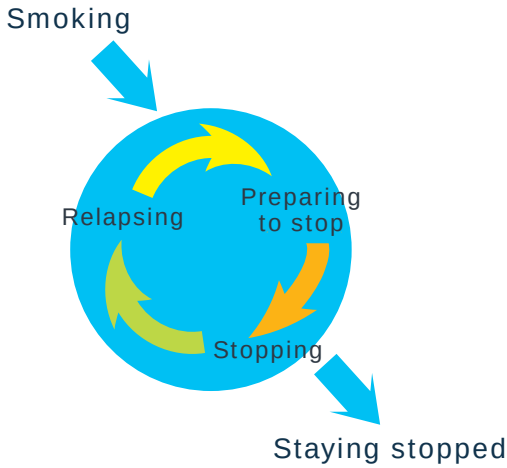
Stopping smoking isn't easy but it can help to think of doing it in stages. This booklet takes you through the stages of stopping smoking. It will help you make up your mind, prepare to stop, stop smoking and stay stopped. And it answers the most common questions smokers ask about stopping.

If you follow the stages carefully and use the ideas and advice in the booklet, you will stop smoking. If you don't stay stopped, don't worry - most smokers make several attempts before they stop for good. Go back to stage one and start again.



Preparing to stop smoking

Stage 1

Do you really want to stop?

One of the keys to success is wanting to stop. The following checklist identifies some of the reasons why smokers want to stop. Tick your reasons for stopping and try to add some more of your own. This is your checklist. Keep it handy over the next few weeks.

- ❑ I want to feel better.
- ❑ I don't want my children to become smokers.
- ❑ I don't want to feel out of breath.
- ❑ I could do with the money for other things.
- ❑ It smells, makes the house dirty, and clings to clothes.
- ❑ I want my breath to smell fresh.
- ❑ I don't want premature wrinkles.
- ❑ It's not fair to the people I work, live, and go out with.
- ❑ I'm afraid of developing a serious illness (heart disease, lung cancer, stroke etc).
- ❑ It's anti-social.
- ❑ I don't like being addicted.
- ❑ I want to live to see my children grow up.
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____

Get ready

To be really ready to stop you need to think carefully about why you're still smoking. Look at the list opposite. Do any of the following apply to you?

Smoking helps me cope with stress

Nicotine is a stimulant and it only seems to make you feel calm because you are addicted to it. When your nicotine level falls you feel edgy because of withdrawal effects. Smoking boosts your nicotine level and this relieves the withdrawal, making you feel less stressed. What feels like stress is actually caused by craving.

I'm worried about withdrawal symptoms

When you stop smoking you are withdrawing from nicotine and from a powerful habit. It takes time to clear the drug from the body and break the habit. You may get irritated and find it difficult to concentrate but these symptoms don't last more than a few weeks. Nicotine replacement therapy can help you through this stage. See page 7 for more information.

I don't want to put on weight

Some people may put on weight but weight gain can be avoided by healthy eating and keeping active.

It's too late - the damage is probably done

The risk from smoking builds up, so the sooner you stop the better. Within weeks you will be breathing more easily and the risk of serious disease starts going down immediately.

This isn't the right time

There are times when it may be harder to stop - for example when you're under particular stress. But it's easy to use this as an excuse not to stop and it might help to keep focusing on the reasons why you want to give up.

I haven't got the will power

Will power is not fixed. It's like muscle power - you can build it up. Will power just means wanting something badly enough.

If you are ready to stop smoking read on.

If you're not ready, have a break and try again at a later date. Keep this booklet and use it when you feel ready.

Stopping

Stage 2

Getting through the first few days

Smoking is strongly linked to certain times and situations - the first smoke of the day, out socialising with friends who smoke, drinking tea or coffee. To break the link between the situation and smoking, change your habits. For example:

- If you have a cigarette first thing in the morning get up and have a shower instead.
- If you like a cigarette with a cup of tea or coffee change your drink to milk, water or some other soft drink (without added sugar).
- If you like to smoke when you're chatting on the phone move the ashtray.
- If you enjoy a cigarette after a meal, try cleaning your teeth or chewing sugar-free gum after eating.
- Socialising with smokers is often difficult when you're trying to give up, so it may be better to try and avoid such situations for the first few weeks.

Be prepared

- Identify situations that will be difficult and plan how you'll cope. Don't wait for them to happen.
- If you miss having a cigarette in your mouth try sugar-free chewing gum, or something healthy and non-fattening.

- If you're used to having a cigarette in your hands, find something else to fiddle with, anything but a cigarette.
- Be careful when drinking alcohol - a few drinks can make you forget you've given up smoking.
- Try eating fruit when you feel like having a cigarette. This will freshen your mouth and hopefully lower your craving.
- Nicotine replacement therapy can double your chances of stopping. See page 7 for more information about nicotine replacement therapy and other aids to stopping.

Take one day at a time

It's a cliché but it works. Make your goal to get through today without smoking. It's easier to do this each morning rather than worry about how you'll manage without cigarettes for the rest of your life.

Treat yourself

Think what else you could do with the money you spend on cigarettes - take the family to the cinema, have a night out, buy CDs or something new to wear. Use the table below to work out how much you would save if you stopped smoking.

Cigarettes per day	1 day	1 week	1 month	1 year	5 years
5	£1.31	£9.17	£39.30	£478.15	£2,390.75
10	£2.61	£18.27	£78.30	£952.65	£4,763.25
20	£5.23	£36.61	£156.90	£1,908.95	£9,544.75
30	£7.84	£54.88	£235.20	£2,861.60	£14,308.00
40	£10.46	£73.22	£313.80	£3,817.90	£19,089.50

Based on £5.23 for a pack of 20 cigarettes.

Staying stopped

Stage 3

The following advice aims to help you stay stopped.

Do:

- Stay positive. There will be times when you feel tired and tempted to give in - if you feel tempted remember how far you've come and why you stopped. If you stay determined, the temptation will pass.
- Keep busy. Boredom can make smoking seem more important to you than it really is.
- Learn to relax and deal with stress. Try to make sure you get some peace and quiet for yourself every day - even just five minutes of deep breathing will help.
- Take some exercise. Even a short walk will give you energy and take your mind off cigarettes.
- Give yourself a reward. Spend some of the money you've saved to give yourself a treat for getting this far.
- Be careful when drinking alcohol - it can affect your will power.
- Take care. After the first few weeks, especially if you found it easy to stop, people may stop encouraging you and even forget you're stopping. Keep determined and don't be complacent or allow yourself to be tempted.

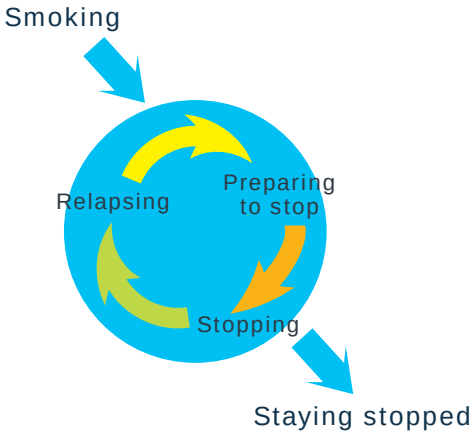
Don't:

- Don't play games. A favourite is 'one cigarette won't hurt', or 'I'll just have one to prove I've kicked it'. Recognise these games for what they are - just excuses to have a cigarette - don't give in.

- Don't let friends who smoke tempt you to join them.

What if I've had a cigarette?

It's not the end of the world. Many smokers are caught in the 'revolving door' of smoking and stopping smoking before eventually breaking free. Have a break, and when you're ready, try again.



How long does it take to become an ex-smoker?

When you first stop smoking you still think of yourself as a smoker. Under stress your automatic reaction is still to reach for a cigarette. But in time your mind 'catches up' and this reaction stops. Usually it takes about three months. It is quite rare for the craving to last much longer than this.

A new life

When you haven't smoked for a few months and are feeling ready, you could look at other parts of your lifestyle (maybe your eating or exercise habits). Stopping smoking could be the beginning of a new more confident, healthier you!

Nicotine replacement therapy

Nicotine replacement therapy - or NRT - really does work. You can try nicotine chewing gum, patches, inhalator, nasal spray, tablets or lozenges.

All these products have been scientifically tested and the results show that they double your chances of stopping.

They can be bought over the counter from your pharmacist and are also available on prescription. Some of these products may also be available in other outlets. Ask your pharmacist or GP for advice about the best NRT for you.

How does NRT work?

NRT works by getting nicotine into your system without the tar, carbon monoxide and other poisonous chemicals you get from tobacco smoke. It is these chemicals in tobacco that are most harmful, not the nicotine. But it's the nicotine that is addictive. So while you're becoming a non-smoker, you can still get nicotine from NRT without the risk of cancer or heart disease. Once you're comfortable not smoking, you can cut out the NRT, gradually if necessary.

Is NRT safe?

NRT is much safer and less addictive than cigarettes. It's not a magic cure, but it will reduce the withdrawal symptoms and the cravings to smoke while you're stopping.

It's important to remember that NRT isn't meant to feel the same as smoking - it's meant to help you stop.

Nicotine patches

These are available in different doses. The instructions will provide information on which strength is most suitable to begin with. They are extremely convenient but you can't quickly alter the dose - say, to get more nicotine quickly when the craving is particularly strong.

Nicotine gum

You can chew this gum whenever you feel a craving. Try the 2mg gum first, then if you still experience severe craving and withdrawal, try the stronger gum. The taste can be strange at first but for most people this only lasts a week or so. You should read the instuctions on how to chew the gum correctly to obtain the most benefit.

Nicotine inhalator

This is a plastic holder with nicotine cartridges that you put on the end. You draw on it like a cigarette and nicotine passes into your mouth.

Nicotine nasal spray

This is nicotine solution, which you spray up your nose. You can absorb nicotine through the nose quicker than with the gum or the patch, but it takes more getting used to, and can irritate the nose.

Nicotine tablets

Placing small tablets under your tongue allows nicotine to be absorbed through the lining of the mouth. These tablets should not be chewed or swallowed.

Nicotine lozenges

As with tablets, the nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth.

If you want to talk to someone face-to-face about NRT, ask at your local GP practice, community pharmacist, or stop smoking service.

If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or midwife about NRT. A short course of NRT is safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke.

Non-nicotine treatments

Zyban™ (Bupropion)

This is a non-nicotine treatment used with motivational support to help smokers quit. It is only available on prescription from a GP. Zyban™ works in the brain to help break the addiction to nicotine - it reduces the cravings for cigarettes and the withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting. It differs from nicotine replacement therapy in that it does not substitute one source of nicotine with another.

Champix™ (Varenicline)

This is a new, non-nicotine treatment, also only available on prescription from a GP. Champix™ works on the brain by reducing the strength of the smoker's urge to smoke and relieving withdrawal stmptoms. Like Zyban™ it does not substitute one source of nicotine with another. Scientific tests show that it increases the chance of a successful quit attempt.

Where to get help and advice

The Smokers' Helpline on **0800 85 85 85** is a freephone service, which provides advice and support to smokers about stopping smoking.

If you want to talk to someone face-to-face, ask at your GP practice or local pharmacy where you can get general advice on nicotine replacement therapy and non-nicotine treatments.

Your GP, pharmacist and the helpline staff will also be able to tell you about special services for helping smokers stop which are available in your area. These services are free and are run by specially trained staff who can advise you on the best way to stop smoking.

The Ulster Cancer Foundation also provides information and advice on stopping smoking. Telephone: 0800 783 33 39 (Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm).

For help and advice on stopping smoking call the Smokers' Helpline

0800 85 85 85

Produced by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland. Text adapted from *Smoking: giving up for life* with permission from the Department of Health.

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