



Tips for Remaining Smoke-Free after Quitting

1. Remember that nicotine withdrawal symptoms are temporary, while your body re-adjusts to the lack of nicotine in your system. Tobacco cessation medications can take the edge off withdrawal symptoms.
2. Expect to have “urges” or “cravings” to smoke, even after nicotine withdrawal has ended. It is normal to want a cigarette in situations where you have regularly smoked, such as when you are around other smokers, while driving, after dinner, and so on. Eventually, as you experience these situations without smoking, the urges will gradually cease.
3. When you have an urge to smoke, try to engage in an activity that distracts you from that urge, such as taking deep breaths, drinking water, going for a walk, calling a friend, and so on. Also, it may help to respond to the urge mentally, by telling yourself that “smoking is not an option,” or reminding yourself of your reasons for quitting, or that the urge will pass quickly if you don’t smoke.
4. Most relapses are caused by stress. Try to find other, more direct, ways to deal with stress rather than by smoking.
5. Shortly after quitting smoking, alcohol use is a risk for relapse. Try to limit your alcohol use during the first few weeks after quitting.
6. It is normal to gain some weight after quitting smoking because smoking increases your metabolism in unhealthy ways. Many people also substitute eating for smoking during the early days of quitting. Try to avoid excess eating, while also increasing your level of activity. But also remember that smoking is *far* more unhealthy than a few extra pounds.
7. Remind yourself how much your health has been improving since you quit smoking. Quitting not only adds years to your life, but it improves the *quality* of your remaining years.
8. Do whatever you can to avoid having that first cigarette after quitting. You can’t return to smoking if you never have that first one.
9. However, if you *do* have that first cigarette, take immediate action so that your “slip” or “lapse” doesn’t progress to a full relapse. Stop and recommit to quitting as soon as possible. Don’t beat yourself up, but use the experience to learn about what caused you to slip. Then be better prepared in the future.
10. Quitting smoking is a good opportunity to rebalance your life, and find other, healthier sources of pleasure.

Good Luck!