

TEN STEPS TO QUIT (Tobacco, that is)

Nicotine is one of the most addictive and toxic substances on earth. One drop of pure nicotine could kill a number of people. One in three people who ever try smoking or chewing tobacco will become addicted. Nicotine, like any other addictive substance, is hard to give up. Whether using a nicotine patch, weaning or stopping cold turkey, in order to succeed you need to prepare mentally, physically, and emotionally. The following suggestions are designed to help you succeed.

First, to stay successfully off nicotine you must want to stop smoking or chewing for your own well-being. Decide why you want to quit. Is it to lessen the risk of cancer, heart disease, emphysema, stroke, and accidents? To have increased energy or a greater sense of well-being? Have you considered the economic benefits? More money to spend or save, less sickness, medical expenses, and damage to possessions? How about your job opportunities? And what about the social benefits? Improved appearance of skin, teeth and fingers, fresher-smelling person and possessions, more self-confidence and influence with others? How about the psychological benefits? You'll feel good about yourself for taking control: after all, not everyone escapes such a powerful addiction. And, you'll be more in touch with things when you can reach beyond a cigarette or dip and come to grips with pressure situations, tense conversation, or anxieties. No more enslavement!

Getting Ready to Quit

Start your program by asking, "What feelings or situations trigger my desire to smoke or chew?" You may even want to keep a record: When do you tend to use nicotine the most? What happens just before you chew or smoke? Every time you recognize another one of your triggers, you're another step closer to mastering this addiction. Start with physical triggers. What withdrawal symptoms do you experience when your body's level of nicotine is too low? In the morning, when your nicotine level is lowest, you may feel shaky, irritable, or headachy. After a movie or long meeting, you may feel foggy or ill at ease.

Examine your psychological triggers. Psychological triggers are the situations which make you reach for a dip or cigarette. Do traffic jams get you hunting for your pack? Do you chew when you are frustrated? Impatient? Nervous? Angry? Do you always light up when you're on the phone or studying? What about time between classes? By discovering and identifying as many physical and psychological triggers as you can, you will be able to know what you have to overcome. Being prepared to deal with your triggers will allow you to stay ahead of them one step at a time.

Know Your Barriers

Your program for success continues when you ask yourself, "What barriers have I been putting up to keep me from quitting? What obstacles have been protecting my addiction?" Here are some common barriers.

"I MIGHT FAIL." But what if you're not successful this time? Well, you've learned a number of things that will help you to be much more likely to succeed the next time you are ready to quit. Most people who successfully quit tobacco have tried many times before they finally make it work.

"I MIGHT LOSE CONTROL." Maybe you went to pieces last time you tried to quit. That's because you've depended on nicotine to help you cope. But this time you'll be prepared to control your nicotine triggers and substitute other stress reduction strategies.

"I'LL GAIN WEIGHT." You may gain some weight temporarily, perhaps 10-15 pounds. But don't be discouraged; you'll probably shed them within a year. By preparing for healthy eating you may not gain any weight at all.

"BUT I NEED NICOTINE." You've been relying on nicotine to calm you down and pick you up. So why not learn healthy ways to cope? It may take practice to learn better, healthier coping skills. You will.

"IF I'M NOT SOMEONE WHO SMOKES OR CHEWS, WHO AM I?" OK, you've been using nicotine for a long time: lighting up a cigarette or chewing has become second nature. Changing is hard. But remember how much you want the benefits of being nicotine-free.

"BUT I'VE GOTTA DIE FROM SOMETHING." Sure, you've gotta go sometime. But why die a slow, painful death from lung disease, cancer, or heart disease? Being nicotine-free greatly reduces these risks. You will experience health enhancing benefits almost immediately.

Now's the Time to Start

Set a quit date. Set a time that's definite. Unless you are under unusual stress, plan to make the break sometime soon, preferably within the next week. Although there is no wrong time to stop smoking, there is no better time than now! The difference between a goal and a dream is action. Decide you want to be free from nicotine. Choose to be tobacco free. Select a specific date and time in the near future when you will smoke your last cigarette or chew. Stick to your decision. Write it down:

I will break free on S M T W T F S, ___/___/___, at _____ a.m./p.m.

Sign your name. _____

PREPARE PHYSICALLY. Like an athlete in training, your success in breaking free from nicotine depends on proper preparation. Begin to: Get eight hours of sleep a night. Drink eight glasses of water a day. Eat a balanced breakfast. Walk briskly at every opportunity. (Many who get into regular aerobic exercise lose their desire to smoke.) Make an appointment to have your teeth cleaned immediately following your break-free date. Visit your health care provider to make sure you are otherwise in good health.

PREPARE MENTALLY. Just like you study for an exam, you need to mentally rehearse how you will act when you become nicotine-free. Visualize yourself enjoying all the benefits of living tobacco free. Verbalize this joy by repeating frequently, "I love being free from nicotine." Believe that you are becoming free from tobacco and you will be free. Ask a non-smoking friend for moral support. You may decide it is helpful for you to seek individual or group counseling for further support.

Observe Nonsmokers and Imitate

People use tobacco for a variety of reasons—for stimulation, occupation of hands, reduction of craving and tension, and the reassuring comfort of a familiar habit. Observe nonsmokers to learn how they react to situations that would prompt you to smoke or chew. Note how they handle stress, occupy their hands, or stall for time. Imitate their better methods for meeting these needs.

Plan Rewards that Motivate You

Write down the rewards you'll give yourself when you accomplish each of the following goals:

| <u>GOAL</u> | <u>REWARD</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Breaking free | _____ |
| One week of freedom | _____ |
| One month of freedom | _____ |
| Three months of freedom | _____ |
| Six months of freedom | _____ |
| One year of freedom | _____ |

Try to avoid using food as a reward so you'll minimize weight gain.

Break Free with a Ceremony

When your break-free day and time arrives: destroy all your cigarettes, pipes, lighters, ashtrays, smoking jackets, holders, pouches, filters, and all other smoking, chewing, and dipping equipment. Tell your family and friends you've terminated your worst enemy. Celebrate (but without alcohol)! Alcohol is a diuretic, nicotine an anti-diuretic. Hence drinking triggers a strong, physical urge to smoke.

Eat and Drink for Victory

For a day or two after you break free, concentrate on fluids more than on solid foods. Drink a glass of water whenever you have an urge to smoke or chew. Drink fruit juice to lessen withdrawal symptoms. Avoid coffee, teas, cola and alcohol. Avoid high-fat meats and junk food. Eat a balanced breakfast every day. Emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables, unrefined cereals, and whole grains.

Get your Rest and Relaxation

People often use nicotine to reduce stress and tension, but rest and relaxation diffuse the stress bomb much faster than tobacco. Add relaxation exercises to your daily routine. Find a comfortable seat and loosen tight-fitting clothes. Tighten each set of muscles in your body for five counts, then relax for ten counts. Enjoy eight hours of sleep nightly. Relax one day each week. Take a vacation every year.

Plan a Survival Kit

You'll need substitutes for the pleasures of smoking or chewing. You can get oral satisfaction from low calorie snacks, gum or toothpicks. Drink water or fruit juice. Chew on a carrot or celery stick. Shell and eat sunflower seeds. Drink a glass of milk. Brush your teeth. You can keep your hands busy with finger puzzles, pencils, or coffee stirrers. Have your survival kit ready and carry with you for the times you'll need it. If none of these tactics work, try telling yourself you will live longer being tobacco free. Call a friend

for encouragement. Walk or do some light calisthenics. Meditate. Call on a higher power. Do your favorite stretching and relaxation exercises. Count backwards from 300. Relax in a warm bath. Take a shower and briskly rub dry.

Coping with Nicotine Withdrawal

IRRITABILITY. At first, you may experience periods of grouchiness. A few slow, deep breaths are often all it takes to get you over the moment. If possible, get away from other people at times like this so you won't alienate your co-workers, friends, or family. Tell people what you are trying to do so they are prepared to support you.

INSOMNIA. If you have trouble getting to sleep, here's a chance to catch up on your reading! Or you might want to end your day with a hot bath or some relaxation exercises. And believe it or not, warm milk works!

BOREDOM. The solution to "the blahhs" is to plan to keep yourself busy. Make a list of interesting activities. Now's your chance to try new things or catch up on those rainy-day projects.

INCREASED APPETITE. Nicotine is an appetite suppressant. Without nicotine, you'll need your survival kit. Be prepared for the munchies!

FUZZY-HEADEDNESS. For a few days you may feel fuzzy-headed because your body is releasing toxins as it adjust to lack of nicotine. Drink extra water to help flush the toxins. And take a brisk walk for exercise. You'll feel clear-headed soon.

FATIGUE. At first, you may be tired and listless during the day. After all, you don't have the regular stimulant of nicotine to keep you going. Ironically, the solution is to get more exercise and adequate sleep at night.

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT AND OTHER OPTIONS. Consider nicotine replacement in the form of the patch or gum to help you cope with the physical symptoms of withdrawal. These products are available in pharmacies over-the-counter. Other options include the nicotine inhaler and the medication Zyban® which are available by prescription only. Consult with your health care provider for a prescription or if you need further instructions or advice on their use.

If You Slip, Begin Again!

Many people make several false starts before they finally break free from tobacco. If you should find yourself puffing away on a cigarette or dipping into a pouch before you realize it, don't give up. Instead: STOP!!! Throw the cigarette or chew away. Realize you have not failed; this is only a detour. Repeat, "To fail is failure only if I fail to try again." Remember you deeply desire to be tobacco free. Recall the many exciting benefits of being free. Remind yourself that PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. Say out loud, "I choose to be nicotine-free."

ASK FOR HELP. Nicotine is addictive. Your brain, which is telling you to stop using nicotine, is also addicted. Rely on friends, a support group, a counselor, even a 12-step group like a smoke-free AA or NA group (after all, nicotine is a drug).

QUITTING FOR LIFE

You want to quit smoking or chewing and this time you have a plan that works. You CAN take charge and break free from your nicotine addiction. Now it's easier to be healthy; like the first domino in a row, quitting smoking or chewing gives you the momentum to succeed on your plan to wellness.

UHS Resources

Quit & Win Challenge, offered by the Office of Health Promotion and Education
Call 863-0461

Telephone Advice Nurse: call 863-4463

Medical Appointments: call 863-0774

Online Resources

- Quinet.com
- PSU website <http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/ohpe/tobaccocessation.cfm>

Other Resources

Pennsylvania 24 Hour Quitline Toll Free 1-877-724-1090 (available in 140 languages)

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

Medical Appointments

Appointments can be made in person or by phone. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments, call: 863-0774

For more information about health care issues, visit the UHS Web site at www.sa.psu.edu/uhs

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

Soc_Tobacco_052406

Approved by Patient Education Committee: 5/24/2006

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. This information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.