

# Quitting Tobacco Roadmap

Kicking the tobacco habit is a long, hard road. To find success, you need clear directions. And you don't have to travel alone. This roadmap is here to give you advice, support and encouragement along the ride. We can do it together!

So let's get started.





# GOALS!!!

- 1 Map it out.
- 2 Take a test drive.
- 3 Never look back.



## Welcome to your journey!

When it comes to smoking or tobacco use, quitting is one of the most challenging paths you'll ever take. And it's not always a one-way street. You may get very close, make a wrong turn and have to start again. That's all right. This roadmap is here to help you reach your goals once and for all.

Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times.

— Mark Twain

## Where do I begin?

As with any journey, it's important to know where you're headed and why. This helps you stay focused and motivated.

So, what's driving YOU to quit? Is it:

- Because you want to live longer and lower your risk for cancer, heart disease, lung problems and stroke?
- To make someone you care about happy?
- To have an active retirement keeping up with the grandkids and traveling?
- The worry that you may be pushing people away?
- To feel better – and literally breathe easier? Maybe start training for that first 5k?
- To protect your loved ones from the effects of secondhand smoke?
- The high price tag that comes with a pack-a-day habit, including:
  - More health care expenses
  - Missed work days or less productive days
  - Extra dental cleanings
  - New clothes, furniture and paint

These are all great reasons. Which ones rev you up to go the extra mile? Whatever they are, keep them in mind. Now, let's put the pedal to the metal.



**Secondhand smoke causes firsthand damage**, including more than 41,000 deaths each year from lung cancer and heart disease. It also leads to or worsens many different health problems, such as heart attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, asthma and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – and is especially harmful to young children.<sup>1</sup>

There's simply no risk-free level of exposure to the hundreds of toxic chemicals it releases, even over short periods of time.<sup>1</sup>

# Plan your journey

Be **SMART** as you map out your goals:<sup>2</sup>

<b>S</b> pecific.	Be specific in what you want to accomplish and the steps you'll take.
<b>M</b> easurable.	Determine how you'll track your progress: how much, how many and when will I know my goal is met.
<b>A</b> ction-oriented.	Select an action for your goal.
<b>R</b> easonable.	Set goals you can realistically achieve in a few weeks or months.
<b>T</b> imeline-based/ <b>T</b> imely.	Set time expectations. Have a start date and finish date to work toward.

To quit smoking, you must first want to quit,  
but then you must also do the quitting.

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



## What'll actually work for you?

**Think about the best route for your lifestyle, personality and health.** Quitting “cold turkey” isn't your only choice. There are medicines, over-the-counter (OTC) aids and therapies to help ease the pain and discomfort of withdrawal, as well as lessen cravings. Be sure to discuss your options with your doctor, who can help you weigh the pros and cons of:<sup>3</sup>

- Counseling and behavioral therapy.
- Prescription nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), including nasal sprays and inhalers.
- OTC NRT, including nicotine patches, gum and lozenges.
- Prescription non-nicotine medications, such as bupropion (Zyban) and varenicline (Chantix).
- Going off all tobacco products completely.

Using some of these medicines can *double* your chances of quitting for good.<sup>4</sup> **Please note:** If you're pregnant or want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor before using any medication.

## Ignore the billboards: tobacco is tobacco is tobacco

Remember, tobacco products are more than just cigarettes. And as much as e-cigarettes, vaping and “natural” options are marketed as safer alternatives, they’re not!



Light or low-tar cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipes, cigars, cigarillos, hookahs (waterpipes), and bidi, clove and herbal cigarettes all contain harmful chemicals and poisons.<sup>5</sup>

### Any way you smoke, chew or vape, tobacco products are dangerous<sup>6</sup>

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. — killing nearly 1 in 5 Americans yearly.
- It's behind 90% of lung cancer deaths and 80% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease deaths.
- Smoking causes more deaths each year than HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol use, car accidents and gun-related injuries combined.



According to a 2017 National Institutes of Health survey, about **28% of high school seniors** reported “vaping” at some point in the past year.

When asked what they thought was in the mist they inhaled, **52%** said “just flavoring”; **33%** said “nicotine”; and **11%** said “marijuana” or “hash oil.”<sup>7</sup>

These stats show that many young adults are vaping — and that most of them don’t even realize what they’re putting into their bodies.

# Prepare for success

**Now that you have a destination and plenty of emotional fuel to get there, ask yourself why you began using tobacco in the first place.**

You probably never meant to have a habit. So what got you started? Understanding your choices makes it easier not to repeat them.

## Identify your triggers

When did you take your first puff and why? Did you start as a social smoker to hang out with friends or co-workers? Did smoking help you curb other bad habits, like overeating or biting your nails? Or have you been band-aiding deeper emotional issues, like anxiety, boredom or stress?<sup>8</sup>

Not quite sure how you got here? One helpful tool is a [craving journal](#), where you can write down when you smoke and begin making connections.

## Look out for the most common ones

It could be a feeling, a place, a situation or even a person. Maybe it's the smell of morning coffee or a way to deal with a deadline? A lot of people light up or use tobacco when:<sup>8</sup>

- Smelling cigarettes or being around other smokers.
- Eating out, drinking or after a meal.



- Taking a break or looking at a screen (TV, personal device and computer).
- Driving or being a passenger in a vehicle.
- Feeling bored, lonely or depressed.
- Feeling angry, irritable or impatient.



## Defuse those triggers

Once you understand why and when you smoke, you can start putting the brakes on temptation.

*Examples:*

- Does smoking often follow a few beers or glasses of wine with friends? Then, don't drink when you go out or ask friends to go to a coffee bar instead.
- Does stress on the job lead to smoke breaks? Ask a co-worker to join you for a walk around the block or climb stairs as a healthy release.

Find ways to change your behavior and environment, so you're less likely to get off track.<sup>9</sup>



### Make a clean getaway

Your private spaces may be filled with memories of smoking. Try to extinguish those triggers by:<sup>10</sup>

- Freshening up your surroundings. Clean your drapes and clothes. Shampoo your car. Buy flowers or scented candles.
- Throwing away all your cigarettes, lighters, vaporizers, chews, ash trays and matches. Remember the ashtray and lighter in your car!
- Having your teeth cleaned to remove smoking stains. See how great they look?
- Leaning on friends and loved ones. They were there from the start. Let them remind you why it wasn't meant to be.

**And don't save a pack "just in case" or to prove your will power.** It's just another excuse to fail.

### Get outside support<sup>9</sup>

- Call or text someone. You don't have to do this alone. Reach out to people you trust — especially if they're going through a similar journey.
- Find a local quitline. Call [1-800-QUIT-NOW](tel:1-800-QUIT-NOW) to connect directly to your state's quitline.
- Use the National Cancer Institute's quitline. Call [1-877-44U-QUIT](tel:1-877-44U-QUIT) to talk with an expert for free.
- Try SmokefreeTXT. Sign up to get motivational messages sent right to your phone, 24/7.
- Use a quitting app. The [QuitGuide app](#), for example, allows you to track cravings and slips by time of day and location, along with many other handy features.



## Worried about withdrawal?

### Nicotine makes quitting tough

When cigarette smoke enters your lungs, nicotine is quickly absorbed in the blood and delivered to the brain: You feel a high within 10 seconds of inhaling. This “euphoria” doesn’t last as long as it does with other types of drugs, leaving you wanting to feel it again right away. And so the pattern of addiction begins.<sup>11</sup>

**How strong is your nicotine addiction?** [Take this test to find out.](#)

### What does withdrawal feel like?

Depending on how much you’re smoking, your lifestyle and other factors, the intensity of withdrawal symptoms may vary. Chances are, you’ll feel strange at first and not quite yourself. *Your body is getting used to life without nicotine.*<sup>11</sup>

The most common withdrawal symptoms include:<sup>11</sup>

- Depression
- Trouble sleeping
- Crankiness, frustration or anger
- Anxiety, nervousness or restlessness
- Cloudy thinking
- Hunger or weight gain
- Flu-like symptoms



If withdrawal is keeping you from quitting, talk to a doctor, counselor or therapist for advice.

The worst withdrawal symptoms only last a few days to a couple of weeks. **Stay strong!**

Remind yourself: **N.O.P.E.**

Not  
One  
Puff  
Ever.

The word "NOPE" is spelled out using cigarettes. Each letter is formed by a cigarette: 'N' is two cigarettes, 'O' is a ring of cigarettes, 'P' is a cigarette with a filter, and 'E' is three cigarettes. The cigarettes are white with orange filters and some ash is visible.

Even one cigarette makes it hard to stay quit.<sup>12</sup>



## Cope with cravings

When it comes to quitting smoking, you'll likely hit roadblocks. So map out detours you can take to escape cravings, which only last 5 to 10 minutes.<sup>9</sup> It might be uncomfortable, but you can wait that out!

**Put yourself in the moment.** What can you do when you really want just one puff? How do you get past it?

Here are some tips:<sup>13</sup>



Feed your oral fixation. Try carrots, pickles, sunflower seeds, apples, celery, raisins or sugar-free gum.



Breathe through a straw. A lot of quitters say it's helped them!<sup>9</sup>



Make a distracting playlist. Cravings last the length of a few songs.<sup>9</sup>



Scrub the sensation. Wash your hands or the dishes when the urge to smoke creeps up. Or take a shower.



Learn to relax quickly with breathing exercises and guided imagery.

- Take 10 steady, deep breaths, and hold the last one.
- Breathe out slowly.
- Relax all your muscles.
- Picture a soothing, pleasant scene.
- Think only about that peaceful image and nothing else.

Light incense or a candle instead of a cigarette. This is using muscle memory, which is calming, without the triggering smells.



Change your scenery. Step outside, walk to another room or visit a friend.



Remind yourself why you're quitting. Go back to those reasons that motivated you to get to this point.



No matter what, **don't think**, "Just one won't hurt."  
It **will** hurt. It may undo everything.<sup>14</sup>



## Seek inspiration

**Remember the major benefits of quitting — a better quality of life and future!** Write out a list of positive outcomes you're trying to achieve and put it in a visible place. You can have it pop up on your phone as a daily reminder.

### Consider that:<sup>15</sup>

Your body begins to heal within 20 minutes after your last cigarette:



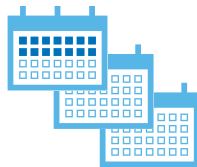
20 minutes

heart rate, blood pressure drop



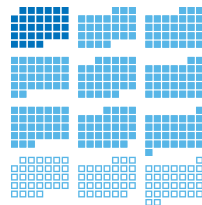
12 hours

carbon monoxide in blood stream drops to normal



2 weeks to 3 months

circulation, lung function improve; heart attack risk begins to drop



1 to 9 months

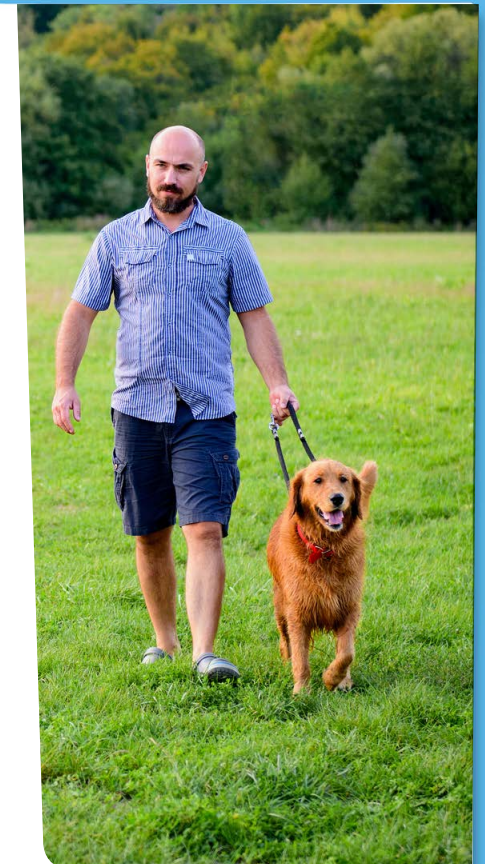
cough less, breathe easier

Within a few days, you may notice:

- Your senses of taste and smell are better.
- You can breathe easier.
- Your “smoker's hack” begins to go away. (You may keep coughing for a while, though.)

You've got more cash in your wallet. By year's end, this may or could add up to thousands.<sup>16</sup>

More people want to hang around you. And you don't have to feel guilty about harming others with secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>



## Stay on track

It's good to have immediate strategies to deal with cravings. It's even better to adopt healthy behaviors to snuff out those cravings long-term.<sup>17</sup>

- Never underestimate the power of physical activity – walking, running, swimming, weight lifting, etc. Your fitness plan should work with your lifestyle and schedule. Try activities that are convenient to do on a regular basis, fun and stress-relieving.
- Good nutrition can also help you stay strong and avoid unhealthy oral fixations. To fight emotional eating, plan your meals ahead, go for smaller portions of what you love, and skip sweets, alcohol and fatty sides. When snacking, turn to foods like spinach, oranges, pistachios, crunchy veggies and whole grains, which can actually enhance your mood.<sup>18</sup>
- Consider meditation, yoga and other ways to connect your mind and body.
- Pick up a new hobby, join a book club or finally start those big home renovation projects.
- Sign up for an online coaching program.
- Join a local support group and get recommendations from your doctor.
- Download quitting apps for tips, advice and encouraging messages (*for example*: QuitGuide, SmokeFree TXT, QuitNow!, Butt Out and Quitter's Circle).
- Acknowledge milestones and reward yourself for progress.

Every day is a new day. If you need to remap your goals, do it. Remember, this is a lifelong journey.



**Quitting smoking is rather a marathon than a sprint.  
It is not a one-time attempt, but a longer effort.**

– Aristotle

# Arrive!

**You're ready.** You've thought about all the what-ifs. You've faced your triggers, unpacked them and sent them away. You know there will be challenges — especially during the first three months — and anticipate withdrawal symptoms. You've even reviewed your craving journal for the hundredth time and asked a friend to back you up when the going gets rough. **What now?**

**It's time to plan your actual quit day.**

Let's **START** with these five key steps:<sup>19</sup>

**S**et a date within two weeks of today.

**T**ell family, friends and co-workers that you plan to quit.

**A**nticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

**R**emove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car and work.

**T**alk to your doctor about medicines or other tools that can help during the process.





## Life after quitting ...

**It's not always a smooth ride. And you might get lost along the way.**

That's okay. A setback is not failure. It's just an extra challenge. Quitting tobacco is more of a cross-country move than a road trip and many ex-smokers have to quit a few times before they're really tobacco-free. When people do slip up, it's usually within the first three months after quitting. Here's what you can do if it happens to you:<sup>20</sup>

- Understand that you've had a hiccup, made a mistake. You're human. This doesn't make you a smoker again.
- Don't be too hard on yourself. One wrong turn doesn't undo all your good work. It doesn't mean you can't quit forever.
- Don't be too easy on yourself either. If you slip up, don't say, "Well, I've blown it. I might as well smoke the rest of this pack."
- Get back on the nonsmoking track right away. Remember, your goal is no tobacco — not even one puff.

- Feel good about all the time you went without smoking. Look at how you can improve your coping skills.
- Find the trigger. Exactly what made you smoke? Be aware for next time. Decide now how you will respond in the future.
- Are you using a medicine to help you quit? Don't stop taking it after a few cigarettes. Stay with it until you're really ready.
- Know and use the tips in this roadmap. People with even one coping skill are more likely to remain tobacco-free.
- START to stop again!
- See your doctor or another health professional for advice.

As the saying goes: **If you're still trying, you haven't failed.**

## Beginning the journey to a healthier you

We're excited you're using this roadmap to live your best life. There's never a better time than now to make changes for your health. We hope the guide helps you achieve the benefits of being tobacco-free at a pace that makes sense for you. You should be proud of what you've accomplished. We're very proud of you!

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