

# If you decide to quit smoking...



## Skills for quitting

This is number five of eight sections of the QuitAssist® Resource Guide.



## The more you know about how to quit, the better your chances for success<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to quitting smoking, there's no one way that works for everyone. A good way to start is to get as much information as you can, and decide on a plan that's right for you.

### Welcome to QuitAssist®

QuitAssist® is an information resource sponsored by Philip Morris USA. It's designed to help you connect with a wealth of expert quitting information available—usually for free—from government agencies, universities, and respected nonprofit organizations. This QuitAssist® guide points the way to programs, telephone quitlines, websites, guides, and more that can help you find your own path to success.

You can also visit QuitAssist® Online at [www.philipmorrisusa.com](http://www.philipmorrisusa.com)

From there, you can link directly to dozens of resources to help you move ahead and leave cigarettes behind.



"I carried a little notebook, and wrote down what was going through my mind. To write and reread it gave me perspective on the situation I was stressed about: 'Wow, day one I thought I was going to die. And now, it's day nine and I don't feel so bad.'"

—Nissa, smoke-free for 18 months

The quotes from ex-smokers throughout this guide are intended to offer insight as to why particular individuals chose to quit smoking and their experiences in doing so. Your own quitting experience may vary. The photographs and names are illustrative only and are not those of the quoted ex-smokers.

## > Skills for quitting

You may not think of quitting smoking as a skill, but in some ways, it's like riding a bike. You figure out how to move forward, keep your balance, and get where you want to go. And if you should fall, you can get up and keep on going.

### Learn and practice new routines and behaviors

- Plan ways to distract yourself when the urge to smoke strikes: Take a 2-minute walk, call a friend. Use nicotine gum or lozenges (*see the next section for more*).
- Have other things nearby that you can hold in your hands (*or put in your mouth*), like a pen, carrot sticks, or fat-free popcorn.
- Look for fun activities that don't include smoking to reward yourself and reduce stress: a hot bath, a walk with a friend.

For more help with changing your routines, go to [www.myclearhorizons.com](http://www.myclearhorizons.com) (under "Getting Ready;" click on "Try Habit Breaking")

### Be prepared to manage withdrawal symptoms

- The first few days after quitting, your throat may feel dry and your cough may get worse. This is actually a good sign; your body is clearing mucous from your airways. You may even feel dizzy from the extra oxygen!

### Skills for quitting *(continued)*

- Keep a glass of ice water or juice handy, and stock up on sugarless hard candy or gum to handle cravings for something in your mouth.
- In the first week or two, you may have trouble sleeping or be bothered by constipation or gas. Cut out caffeine in the afternoon and evening, and eat more raw fruits and vegetables or high-fiber cereal.
- Irritability and tiredness can last for two to four weeks. Don't push yourself too hard at this stage. Take naps if you can. You'll feel better soon as the nicotine clears from your system and your body adjusts.<sup>8</sup>
- Cravings for cigarettes are usually the worst during the first two or three days. You can wait out the urge by distracting yourself with something else. You might picture the urge as a big wave; if you can surf along with it and keep your balance, it will ebb away in a few minutes.
- Consider taking a class or reading a book about relaxation techniques or meditation. Or just take a ten-minute break: Close your eyes. Check for tense spots from head to toe, and relax those muscles. Now, breathe in and out naturally, and mentally repeat some calming words such as "relax, relax."

For more tips on managing withdrawal symptoms, go to [http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/Clearing\\_the\\_Air/symptoms.html](http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/Clearing_the_Air/symptoms.html)

"One of the nice things I noticed after I quit, even though I felt agitated, was that I could devote myself to a project for hours without having to say, 'Well, two more minutes and I can go out for a cigarette.' I like that freedom."

*—Kyle, smoke-free for 30 months*



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Success is the sum of  
small efforts, repeated  
day in and day out.

—Robert Collier



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