

# **Quit Plan: A Guide to Help You Quit Smoking and Stay Quit**

**smokefree60+**

## Introduction

This guide contains information and resources to help you quit smoking for good. You may have tried before, or this may be your first time, but following the methods outlined here can help you quit and stay quit. One of the keys to a successful quit is preparation. A great way to prepare to quit smoking is to create a quit plan. While this guide suggests a wide range of tools to help you quit, it is not necessary to use them in order, or complete each section if it does not apply you.

This guide is a product of the Smokefree 60+ website and goes hand-in-hand with the information provided on the site. For more information on topics related to quitting smoking, please visit [60plus.smokefree.gov](http://60plus.smokefree.gov).

## Commit to Quit

Making the decision to quit smoking is the first step to being smokefree. Cigarettes might have been part of your life for a long time, but you *can* live without them. You will be healthier, happier, and more energetic without nicotine holding you back.

### *Pick a Quit Date*

One of the first steps in quitting is to pick a quit date. Pick a date you are comfortable with, but remember, there is no perfect time. Life is filled with ups and downs, so maybe today is the day, or maybe a day not too far away. Write down today's date and your quit date to ensure you will be ready when the time comes.

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to quit on (month/day/year): \_\_\_\_\_

After you pick your quit date, make sure to mark it on your calendar and tell your friends and family. Keep reading to learn about other tips for planning for your quit day and for a better future.

## Make a List of Reasons to Quit

Take a minute to think about your own reasons for quitting smoking. The most important reasons for quitting are your own. When you quit smoking, reminding yourself of these reasons can help you resist the urge to smoke.

Which of these reasons are important to you?

*I want to quit...*

*For my family and loved ones:*

- I no longer want to expose my family and friends to secondhand smoke.
- I want to set a good example for my children/grandchildren.
- I want my family, friends, and coworkers to be proud of me.

*For my health:*

- My doctor said to quit.
- My body will start healing right away.
- My health will improve.
- I will avoid an illness that would cut down on my freedom.
- I want to reduce my risk of cancer.
- I want to reduce my risk of heart attack and stroke.
- I want to reduce my risk of lung diseases (emphysema and chronic bronchitis).
- I want to reduce my risk of developing cataracts (clouds in the eye that affect vision).
- I will cough less and breathe easier.

*For myself:*

- I will have more available money to spend when I stop buying tobacco products.
- I want to feel more in control of my life.
- I will be proud of myself.
- I would like to look more attractive and prevent myself from premature

wrinkles.

- I want whiter teeth and healthier gums.
- I want to have more energy and be able to better focus.
- I want to feel more physically fit.

**List other reasons why you want to quit:**

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Choose Who You Will Get Support From

People who get support from family and friends have an easier time stopping smoking and staying smokefree. Identify the people in your life who can help support you:

- My spouse or partner: \_\_\_\_\_
- My children or grandchildren: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other close family members: \_\_\_\_\_
- Friends: \_\_\_\_\_
- Coworkers: \_\_\_\_\_
- Friends who are former smokers: \_\_\_\_\_
- Neighbors: \_\_\_\_\_
- My online community: \_\_\_\_\_
- People in my religious or community groups: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Let these people know you will be grateful for their support. Tell them you may not be your usual self for a few days or weeks after you quit. You may be more irritable than normal, and their patience is important. Be specific about how they can support you, for example:

- Fix a favorite meal or invite you out for lunch or dinner.
- Help you to find ways to keep busy.
- Praise or celebrate your progress.
- Ask how you are doing and let you know they care.

## Identify Your Trigger Situations

Over the years, you have built up your own patterns around smoking. Do you know your daily smoking patterns? When and why do you smoke? There may be particular activities you do in combination with smoking, like drinking. These are your “trigger situations.”

Write down your main triggers below. Be specific about the time and place—such as “lighting up while watching the news after dinner” instead of “smoking in front of the TV.” Make sure it is something that happens at least once a day.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To help you practice quitting before your actual quit day, try not to smoke during your trigger situations. It will be hard at first. Try changing the situation or going 10 or 15 minutes without lighting up.

## Reward Yourself After Reaching Important Milestones

Quitting smoking is hard, and it happens one minute, one hour, one day at a time. Recognize your progress and reward yourself throughout your quit journey. Rewarding yourself can lead to greater success. Consider celebrating milestones by treating yourself to rewards, big or small, such as having a nice dinner, a day at the movies, a favorite snack, or any other smokefree activity.

*I will reward myself after...*

- 24 hours** of living smokefree, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1 week**, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1 month**, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 months**, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 months**, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1 year of living smokefree**, by... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Choose Tools to Help You Quit

There are many tools available to help you quit smoking. Medications such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and other prescription medications can reduce withdrawal and cravings. Before beginning any medication, talk to your doctor. Medications can double your chances of quitting for good, but they can't do all the work for you. Remember to use other quit strategies such as planning for trigger situations or contacting your friends and family for support. Other popular tools include quitlines, online counselors, and websites.

**Medications** (Choose **only one** medication unless otherwise instructed by your doctor):

- Non-prescription NRT
  - Patch
  - Gum
  - Lozenge
- Prescription medication
  - Spray (NRT)
  - Inhaler (NRT)
  - Varenicline
  - Bupropion

### **Other Tools**

- Use in-person counseling at your local clinic or hospital
- Call a free quitline to talk to a counselor:
  - National Cancer Institute's quitline at (877) 44U-QUIT [(877) 448-7848]
  - Connect to your state quitline at (800) QUIT-NOW [(800) 784-8669]
- Revisit the Smokefree 60+ website <http://www.60plus.smokefree.gov>
- Chat with a free online counselor on <https://livehelp.cancer.gov>
- Use a mobile app such as: SmokefreeTXT, NCIQuitPal, or QuitStart

- Attend a support group
- Talk to your friends and family
- Talk to your doctor about other available tools

## Manage Your Urges and Cravings

For the first few weeks after you quit smoking, you may feel irritable and have strong urges to smoke. Prepare to handle these urges and cravings by using some of these popular methods or creating your own. Check the techniques you will use to manage your urges and cravings.

- Change your routines. For example, sit in a different chair.
- Distract yourself. Try reading a magazine or playing a game.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Drink 6–8 glasses of water every day.
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, or other beverages you associate with smoking.
- Have “smoking substitutes” nearby and use them to keep your mouth and hands busy.
- Exercise. Even a short walk will help.
- Find a diversion such as visiting a good friend, eating a meal out, seeing a movie, playing with a pet, buying flowers, or reading to a child.
- Share feelings with your support network.
- Meditate or pray.
- Go somewhere where smoking is not allowed—a library, museum, theatre, store, place of worship, or nonsmoking areas at work.
- Use another quit smoking tool: call a quitline, visit the [60plus.smokefree.gov](http://60plus.smokefree.gov) website, or review your quit plan.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Tomorrow Is Your Quit Date — Get Ready to Quit!

You have thought about it for some time, you have a plan, and you are ready. Take these final steps the day before your quit date, and check off the tasks you have completed.

- Throw away all cigarettes. Every one of them. Get them out of hiding places, too (sweater pockets, glove compartments).
- Get rid of cigarette cases, ashtrays, lighters, and matches.
- Replace ashtrays with cigarette substitutes like healthy snacks and gum, even in the car.
- Review your reasons for quitting. (Some people like to carry their lists with them. Have you found new reasons since you first made the list? Add those!)
- Make sure you have on hand any prescribed medicines and over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies you plan to use.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Resist negative thinking. Negative thinking can lower your confidence and get in the way. Stay positive about your ability to quit!

Now that you have a plan, you are another step closer to becoming one of the millions of former smokers in the country. You have what it takes. Believe that you are going to succeed! This will make quitting—and your life—easier. Remember, take it one day at a time and celebrate your successes. If you do start smoking again, your quit attempt is *not* worthless. You can use what you learned from it to try again and succeed. Set a new quit date as soon as possible.

Congratulations on taking the next steps toward a brighter and clearer future without cigarettes!