

# 13 Best Quit-Smoking Tips Ever



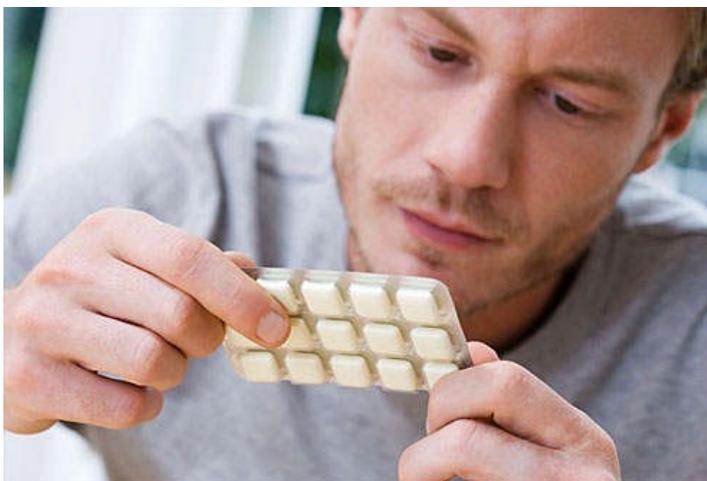
## No. 1: Know Why You Want to Quit

So you want to quit smoking, but do you know why? "Because it's bad for you" isn't good enough. To get motivated, you need a powerful, personal reason to quit. Maybe you want to protect your family from secondhand smoke. Maybe the thought of lung cancer frightens you. Or maybe you'd like to look and feel younger. Choose a reason that is strong enough to outweigh the urge to light up.



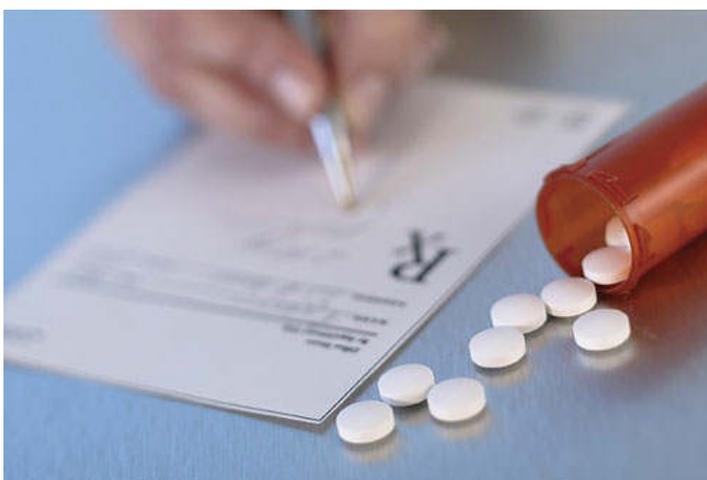
## No. 2: Don't Go Cold Turkey

It may be tempting to toss your cigarettes and declare you've quit, plain and simple. But going cold turkey isn't easy to do. About 95% of people who try to stop smoking without therapy or medication end up relapsing. The reason is that nicotine is addictive. The brain becomes used to having nicotine and craves it. In its absence, the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal occur.



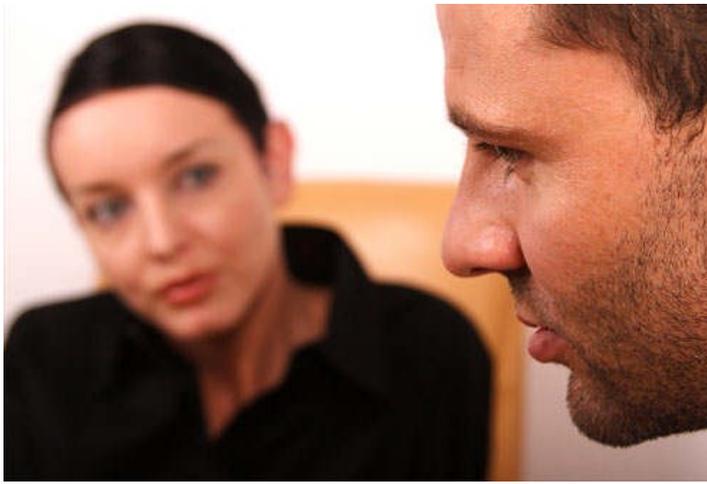
## No. 3: Try Nicotine-Replacement Therapy

When you stop smoking, nicotine withdrawal may make you feel frustrated, depressed, restless, or irritable. The craving for "just one drag" may be overwhelming. Nicotine-replacement therapy can help reduce these feelings. Studies suggest nicotine gum, lozenges, and patches can help double your chances of quitting successfully when used with an intensive behavioral program. But using these products while smoking is generally not recommended.



## No. 4: Ask About Prescription Pills

To ease nicotine withdrawal without using products that contain nicotine, ask your doctor about prescription medications. There are pills that help reduce cravings by affecting chemicals in the brain. They may also make smoking less satisfying if you do pick up a cigarette. Other drugs can help reduce troubling withdrawal symptoms, such as depression or inability to concentrate.



### **No. 5: Don't Go It Alone**

Tell your friends, family, and co-workers that you're trying to quit. Their encouragement could make the difference. You may also want to join a support group or talk to a counselor. Behavioral therapy is a type of counseling that helps you identify and stick to quit-smoking strategies. Combine behavioral therapy with nicotine replacement products and/or medication to boost your odds of success.



### **No. 6: Manage Stress**

One reason people smoke is that the nicotine helps them relax. Once you quit, you'll need another way to cope with stress. Try getting regular massages, listening to relaxing music, or learning yoga or tai chi. If possible, avoid stressful situations during the first few weeks after you stop smoking.



### **No. 7: Avoid Alcohol, Other Triggers**

Certain activities may boost your urge to smoke. Alcohol is one of the most common triggers, so try to drink less when you first quit. If coffee is a trigger, switch to tea for a few weeks. And if you usually smoke after meals, find something else to do instead, like brushing your teeth or chewing gum.



### **No. 8: Clean House**

Once you've smoked your last cigarette, toss all of your ashtrays and lighters. Wash any clothes that smell like smoke and clean your carpets, draperies, and upholstery. Use air fresheners to help rid your home of that familiar scent. You don't want to see or smell anything that reminds you of smoking.



### **No. 9: Try and Try Again**

It's very common to have a relapse. Many smokers try several times before giving up cigarettes for good. Examine the emotions and circumstances that lead to your relapse. Use it as an opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to quitting. Once you've made the decision to try again, set a "quit date" within the next month.



### **No. 10: Get Moving**

Physical activity can help reduce nicotine cravings and ease some withdrawal symptoms. When you want to reach for a cigarette, put on your inline skates or jogging shoes instead. Even mild exercise is helpful, such as walking the dog or pulling weeds in the garden. The extra calories you burn will also ward off weight gain as you quit smoking.



### **No. 11: Eat Fruits and Veggies**

Don't try to diet while giving up cigarettes -- too much deprivation is bound to backfire. Instead, focus on eating more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. A Duke University study suggests these foods make cigarettes taste terrible. This gives you a leg up in fighting your cravings while providing disease-fighting nutrients.



### **No. 12: Choose Your Reward**

In addition to the tremendous health benefits, one of the perks of giving up cigarettes is all the money you will save. Reward yourself by spending part of it on something fun.



### **No. 13: Do It for Your Health**

There's more than the monetary reward to consider. Smoking cessation has immediate health benefits. It lowers your blood pressure and reduces your pulse after only 20 minutes. Within a day, the carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal. Within two weeks to three months, your risk of a heart attack decreases and your lungs begin to function better. Long-term benefits include a reduced risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and other cancers.

*Source: <http://www.webmd.com/smoking-cessation/ss/slideshow-13-best-quit-smoking-tips-ever>*

Reviewed by [Melinda Ratini, DO, MS](#) on February 12, 2014  
Copyright ©2009, WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved