

# If you decide to quit smoking...



## Staying smoke-free

This is number seven 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 tried to quit cold turkey, but I would explode for no reason over the stupidest little thing, like 'Where's the milk?' I guess the nicotine in the gum relaxed me. I would use it only when I felt the tension—I'd say 10 times a day at first. Every 3 or 4 days I went down, until I didn't need it anymore."

*—Joanne, smoke-free for 4 years*



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.

## › Staying smoke-free

For most people, quitting is not the biggest challenge; it's staying quit. The final key to successful quitting is being prepared to handle difficult situations and to recover if you slip.

- › According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, you are at greatest risk for relapse in the first three months after quitting. Plan ways you can cope when you are around other smokers or in difficult situations where you're tempted to take a puff.
- › If you used to smoke to handle stress or calm your nerves, it's important to find other ways to do that—because stressful things will always happen sooner or later. Try to integrate stress reduction into your daily life. Some people find it helpful to meditate, to do yoga or tai chi, or to go for a run.
- › If you do slip and have a smoke, don't beat yourself up, and don't give up. Instead, think of what you can learn from this. Review what led you to smoke. Were you alone, or with others? How were you feeling before and after that cigarette? Did something happen that triggered the slip, such as a stressful time at work or a family fight?



"I would just eat light things, or something healthy, so I didn't gain any weight. Sometimes I'd bring little veggies to work, like celery and carrot sticks, or crackers. Chewing sugarless gum really helped me too, and drinking water."

*-Kim, smoke-free for 12 months*

Was the trigger a time or place you used to smoke: drinking in a bar, driving in the car, talking on the phone? Plan how you'll avoid or cope with that the next time. Ask for help from friends or experts.

- Limit or monitor your use of coffee and alcohol; these trigger the urge to smoke for many people.
- Eat healthy foods and get some exercise to manage your weight and moods. Just walking for ten minutes three times a day can do it.<sup>14</sup> While some people do gain weight when they quit smoking, research shows that large weight changes are unusual. Using medication also helps limit weight gain.<sup>13</sup>
- Remind yourself of the benefits of not smoking. Think about smoother skin and healthy lungs. Picture yourself not smoking at important events—your friend's wedding, your family reunion.

You'll find many more ideas to help you cope with cravings and tough times at [www.smokefree.gov/landing.aspx?rid=3](http://www.smokefree.gov/landing.aspx?rid=3)

For more help staying smoke-free, check out [BecomeanEX.org](http://BecomeanEX.org) (click on "Do the EX Plan," then click "Staying an EX.")

#### Helpful tip...

How much do you depend on nicotine? The "Stop Smoking Quiz" can help you understand your smoking habits, and how to use that knowledge to create a personal quit plan. Go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) and search for "Stop Smoking Quiz."

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

—Robert Collier



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