



Heart-Healthy Tips: You Can Quit Smoking

Are you a smoker looking to enjoy the benefits of healthy lungs? Then follow these tips to help you quit smoking and improve your quality of life.

1. Don't smoke any number or any kind of cigarette. Smoking even a few cigarettes a day can hurt your health. If you try to smoke fewer cigarettes, but do not take the next step to stop completely, soon you'll be back to smoking the original amount again.

Smoking "low-tar, low-nicotine" cigarettes usually doesn't help, either. Because nicotine is so addictive, if you switch to lower-nicotine brands you are likely to just puff harder, longer, and more often on each cigarette. The only safe choice is to quit completely.

2. Write down why you want to quit. Do you want to:

- ▶ Feel in control of your life?
- ▶ Have better health?
- ▶ Set a good example for your children?
- ▶ Protect your family from breathing other people's smoke?

Really wanting to quit smoking is very important to how much success you will have in quitting. Smokers who live after a heart attack are the most likely to quit for good - they're very motivated. Find a reason for quitting before you have no choice.

3. Know that it will take effort to quit smoking. Nicotine is habit-forming. Half of the battle in quitting is knowing that you need to quit. This knowledge will help you be better prepared to deal with the symptoms of withdrawal that can occur, such as bad moods and the desire to smoke. There are many ways smokers quit, including using nicotine replacement products (gum and patches) or prescription smoking cessation medications, but there is no easy way. Nearly all smokers have some feelings of nicotine withdrawal when they try to quit. Give yourself a month to get over these feelings. Take quitting one day at a time, even one minute at a time - whatever you need to succeed.

4. Half of all adult smokers have quit – so you can. That's the good news. There are millions of people alive today who have learned to face life without a cigarette. For staying healthy, quitting smoking is the best step you can take.

5. Get help if you need it. Many groups offer written materials, programs, and advice to help smokers quit for good. Your doctor or dentist is also a good source of help and support. For more information on smoking cessation, visit the Put It Out campaign web site at www.healthy-firefighter.org/putitout.

Courtesy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Find more health and wellness tips and resources for first responders at www.healthy-firefighter.org.