

## How to Quit Smoking

First, remember: you are not alone! Quitting smoking is hard, but you can do it. Forty-six million Americans have done it already. Each year another 4 million break the habit.

### The Truth About Quitting

Which of the following statements are true?

**I will gain too much weight if I quit.**

*False.*

Though some people do gain weight when they stop smoking, the average weight gain is only about 5 lbs. Only 3.5% of those who quit gain more than 20 lbs. The health benefits of not smoking are far more important than the problem of a minor weight gain.

**Low tar/nicotine cigarettes are less of a hazard.**

*False.*

If you think that low tar/nicotine cigarettes are a better choice, think again. When people switch to lower tar and nicotine brands, they often smoke more cigarettes or more of each cigarette. Even if you do not, the health benefits from switching are almost nothing compared with the benefits of quitting.

**Menthol cigarettes are less of a hazard.**

*False.*

Menthol cigarettes are not a good choice. They are really more harmful than ordinary cigarettes. Because of the smoother taste, people often inhale more deeply or hold the smoke inside longer. Both are worse for the lungs.

*Quitting smoking  
is hard, but it can  
be done.*

## **I am hooked on nicotine, so I cannot quit.**

### ***False.***

It is normal for people to take several tries before they succeed at quitting. If your nicotine dependence is strong, consider nicotine-replacement methods, (gum, patches, inhalers, nasal spray, lozenges) or the other medicines approved for cessation (Zyban™, Chantix™). These medicines can at least double the chance of quitting. Talk with your doctor about these options.

## **Ways to quit**

The way that works best for many people is to stop smoking (no cigarettes at all) on a certain day. Choose your quit date with care. It should be soon, but not right away. Choosing a date that is one or 2 weeks off will give you time to prepare mentally.

### ***One or 2 weeks before you quit***

- Write down how many cigarettes you smoke a day and when (after meals, with coffee, on the phone, watching TV, etc.).
- Stop buying cigarettes by the carton. Buy one pack at a time.
- Start smoking a brand you don't like.
- Change how you smoke in two ways: switch hands and smoke either faster or slower.
- Pick two non-smoking areas for yourself at home and at work. Beginning now, do not let yourself smoke while you're in those areas.
- Do not smoke for thirty minutes after meals.
- Try to go 10 hours or even a full day without smoking.
- Clean up the telltale signs of smoking; for example, have your clothes cleaned and throw away all ashtrays.
- Start to exercise: for example, walk, jog, or swim for about 30 minutes, three or four times a week.
- Skip tea, coffee, and alcoholic beverages if you smoke while you drink.
- Have your teeth cleaned professionally.
- On the day you set to quit – quit completely.

### ***Making it stick***

- After you quit, every day just before getting out of bed, promise yourself you will get through the day without smoking.
- Take a 10- to 20-minute break to relax once or twice a day. Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes, and breathe deeply.

- If you need to snack between meals, try low-calorie foods, such as unbuttered popcorn or fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Exercise! Working out relieves the urge to smoke.
- After dinner, grab a mint, crack nuts, or have a refreshing glass of ice water or club soda instead of a cigarette.
- Keep your hands and mind busy. Take up a new hobby – one that uses both hands – or start a volunteer job.

*Smokers need not wait until they are sure they want to quit before making a quit attempt. It may be the hardest thing a smoker ever does, but it will also be the most worthwhile thing he or she ever does. Smoking cessation represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives.*

Our smoking cessation specialist can help you identify the right therapy and coach you on behavior change techniques that can successfully break nicotine addiction. Call the Tobacco Treatment Specialist at **312-926-2069** or the Center for Integrative Medicine and Wellness at **312-926-WELL (9355)** to determine the right program for you.

## Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to [hlc@nmh.org](mailto:hlc@nmh.org).

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at [www.nmh.org](http://www.nmh.org).

*Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.*

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