

A close-up photograph of a calendar page. The date '20' is printed in black. Below it, the words 'Quit Smoking' are written in large, bold, red cursive marker. The calendar grid lines are visible.

## Mindful Smoking

You have a craving. It's a big one. You try to let it pass, but it's just not happening this time. That's okay, it happens and it doesn't make you a bad person. Go ahead and grab a cigarette but smoke it mindfully. Smoking mindfully means smoking with awareness. When we're mindful, we're actively conscious of the present moment along with our current thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

Many times, we smoke when we're driving, reading emails, or talking on the phone. We're not paying attention to the cigarette at all, it's just something we do without really knowing why. By smoking mindfully, you will solely be concentrating on the act of smoking a cigarette and bringing awareness to how it makes you feel. Try this exercise before you quit to understand how smoking affects you with no judgement. If you've already quit, it's even more important to smoke your cigarette mindfully when you slip.

**TIP: Try to get just 1 cigarette from someone else instead of buying a pack.**

1. Take the cigarette in your hand. What are you feeling? What brought on your desire to smoke?
2. Feel the cigarette between your fingers then hold it to your nose and smell it. What does it smell like?
3. Light the cigarette, focusing on the flame and the sound as it lights up.
4. Sense the smoke entering your mouth, throat, and lungs as you inhale. What do you taste?
5. Exhale and watch the smoke blow out of your mouth. How do you feel after the first puff?
6. Notice the time you take between puffs. Notice where your mind wanders.
7. If you get distracted, come right back to focusing on smoking.
8. Feel the sensation of flicking your cigarette and watch the ash travel through the air.
9. Smoke your cigarette to the end and look at your fingers.
10. Put your cigarette out. What are you thinking? How do you feel after smoking?

You may notice that you enjoyed your cigarette, or you may think the cigarette didn't taste so great after all. Most people notice that when they smoke mindfully, their opinions about cigarettes start to change and stopping becomes much easier.

**Remember, don't be too hard on yourself, smoke with awareness, then stop again.**