

Quit
SMOKING

Dealing with Cravings

When you first quit smoking, it may feel like your day is one long, continual urge for a cigarette. If you pay close attention though, you'll notice that most cravings to smoke last only three to five minutes. The good news: there are some tips to help overcome your craving to smoke.

The most effective way to curb your cravings is to interrupt your thought pattern on the spot. Do something different for a few minutes. Change your activity, either mentally or physically, and urges to smoke will lose power and be gone before you know it.

Try one of the tips below, or come up with some ideas of your own to suit the situation you are in.

Get Support

- Use your QuitGuide smoking cessation app. The app allows you to track cravings and slips by time of day and location and has many other features to help you become smoke free.
- Visit smokefree.gov to join their free text messaging program that gives 24/7 encouragement, advice, and tips for becoming smoke free and being healthier.
- Call or text a friend for support. You don't have to do this alone. Lean on people you can trust.
- Call a smoking quit line. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to connect directly to your state's quit line. Use the National Cancer Institute's quit line. Call 1-877-44U-QUIT to talk with an expert for free.

Think About Your Reasons for Quitting

- Remind yourself why you want to quit. This is a powerful motivator to keep you smoke free.

What are your reasons for quitting?

- Calculate your savings. Cigarettes are expensive! Add up the money you'll save (get help here: <https://smokefree.gov/how-much-will-you-save>) and decide what to do with it. This is a great way to stay motivated and kill time while you let a craving pass.

How much will you save? _____

Stay Busy

- Keep your mouth busy. Chew a stick of gum instead of picking up a cigarette. Keep hard candy with you. Drink more water.
- Eat a healthy snack. When blood sugar levels drop, cravings to smoke can seem stronger while at the same time, you feel less able to manage them. Eat something nutritious, like a piece of fruit, a cup of yogurt, or a tablespoon of peanut butter on a couple of crackers.
- Go for a walk or jog. Or go up and down the stairs a few times. Physical activity, even in short bursts, can help boost your energy and beat a craving.
- Take a mini mental vacation. Close your eyes. Create a place in your mind that you can visualize when you need to slow down and relax. As you settle in, start to follow your breathing, and slow it down gradually. Breathe deeply in and out for three to five minutes.
- Drink a glass of water. When the thought of smoking hits, chug down a glass of water. Not only will it bust the urge to smoke, it will help you physically. Many of us are mildly dehydrated without knowing it, so adding some water to your diet is a good idea. Good hydration will help your metabolism work more efficiently and you'll feel better overall. Water is one of nature's finest quit aids; use it to your advantage.
- Make a list of reasons to quit smoking. Reading the reasons why you hated smoking and wanted to stop is a quick and easy way to realign your priorities and stick with your quit.
- Have a portable hobby. Find something you enjoy doing that's easy to pick up and put down at a moment's notice. Keep it handy to fill a five-minute break here and there. You could work a crossword puzzle or read a few pages of a novel.

Try Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), can help control your physical cravings. It comes in short term (gum, lozenge) or longer acting options such as the patch. The best way to control physical cravings is to use a combination of both.

Don't Give Up

Do whatever it takes to beat the urge to smoke. Keep trying different things until you find what works for you. Just don't smoke. Not even one puff!