

How to
get ready to
quit smoking for
the last time!



My
Heart
&
Mind

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Welcome to the third stage of getting ready to quit smoking.

You've already moved through the [first two stages of change](#) and it's now time to consider the best options and strategies to help you become a non-smoker.

This 3rd stage is about preparing to change. It's like the foundations of a house. It will hold you up if things get tough. It gives you a solid plan to refer to. It will motivate you to keep moving forward. It is a reminder of your choices and the benefits of quitting smoking.

At this stage it is likely that part of you wants to quit smoking, but part of you doesn't. Maybe you're worried about withdrawal, or afraid that you'll fail. Put those thoughts aside for now. Focus on why you want to quit, and it will give you the drive to succeed. **You CAN quit smoking with a little help and some organisation.**

A great way to get ready to quit smoking is to create a quit plan. The following ideas will help you create your own personalised toolkit.

Read through them and tick the ones that feel that they will be helpful.

By doing this you will be able to identify any challenges you'll face as you quit and how you can overcome them. You can combine any number of them. They will keep you focused, confident, and inspired.

These activities will increase your chances of quitting smoking forever.

Learn from the past

You might have tried to quit smoking before and not managed it. Don't let that put you off. Look back at the things your experience has taught you, the lessons learned. Think about what you can put in place to avoid what tripped you up before. You're really going to do it this time.

Make your plan to quit smoking

Choose when you will quit smoking. Make a promise, set a date, mark it on the calendar and stick to it. Remember that there will never be the right time. Just decide, come hell or high water, that this is the date you will stop.

How are you going to do this?

Research all your [options](#). There are many [methods](#) to help you quit smoking. Make a list and work out the pros and cons of each. It may be that you decide on a combination or just one way. Whatever it is, it will be the right thing for you right now. Decide and just do it!

Decide to stick to the 'not a drag' rule

It will really help. Whenever you find yourself struggling say to yourself, "I will not have even a single drag" and stick with this until the cravings pass. You may hear yourself saying "but one puff won't hurt" or "it will prove that I don't like it anymore" or "one puff doesn't mean I am smoking again" or something similar. Do not pay attention to this counter with "not a drag" all the other thoughts are lies.

Think ahead

Give some thought to the future. There will be occasions and times where it might be more difficult - a party for instance, get ready with a plan. Work out what your

actions will be some of the tips that follow will help. Make sure you have an escape route in advance if people smoking near you. Don't stand with other smokers not matter how strong you are in the early days.

Consider your diet

Is your after a meal cigarette your favourite? A US study revealed that some foods, including meat, make cigarettes more satisfying. Others foods including cheese, fruit and vegetables, make smoking taste terrible. Plan to swap your usual steak or burger for a veggie meal instead, it's not for ever just for a short while.

Change up your routines

You may want to consider changing your routine after mealtimes. How about getting up and doing the dishes straight away, it will be a distraction. What else can you change? How about your morning routines and other habits that are linked to smoking?

Vice versa

As you are leading up to your quit date, start with little things to begin to break your habit. If you have a regular smoking place, then smoke somewhere else. If you smoke at the back door, start only smoking at the front door. Turn your usual smoking places into non-smoking areas. Make it fag free and do something else there, like read the paper or a magazine.

Clean your car and wash your clothes

If you smoked in your car, get it cleaned inside and out. Get rid of all reminders of smoking or vaping. Check the door pockets and the glove box. Wash your clothes that you've smoked in and get rid of the smell of smoke from any soft furnishings too.

Change your beverage

If you connect smoking or vaping with certain drinks you may need to make a short-term change. Research has found that fizzy pop, alcohol, cola, tea and coffee all make having a smoke taste better and more enjoyable. Plan to drink more water and if you are a tea drinker, swap to fruit tea instead. Drink something different to your usual it will help break the habit connection.

Alcohol and you

When you are socialising and alcohol is available, it can be difficult. Some people find that simply changing their drink makes a difference. For example, try switching from wine or beer to a vodka and orange for a change. This simple switch can affect your desire to reach for a cigarette. What are you going to change your drink to?

Fill the 5 minute crave

A craving can last five minutes. Make a list of five-minute strategies for the situations where you think you are likely to crave.

For example, if you are at a party or at the pub you could leave the party for a minute, have a dance, or go to the toilet. At other times it might be to chew gum or have a glass of water.

I found having a bag of sour Tangfastic helped, even though I don't like sweets. Stop what you are doing and do something/go somewhere different. Find something else to do.

Become aware

Practice being more conscious of smoking. Start to use your other hand to hold your cigarette when smoking. Yes, it will feel strange and awkward, a bit like trying to write with your other hand. It will make you more conscious of your smoking.

Check your habits?

Do you have strong links to having a cigarette while you are drinking tea, coffee or wine. If so, change it up so that you only smoke before or after the drink – not with it. This will begin loosening the link and help break the habit. What changes do you need to make in your life to break the connection to the old smoking habit?

When do you reach for a smoke? (take a moment to tick all that apply)

When I first wake up		When I'm bored		When I'm alone	
With my morning cuppa		When I'm at work		When I have a lunch break	
When I'm on the phone		When I'm feeling nervous		When I'm feeling stressed	
After breakfast		After a meal		To help me relax	
When I'm in the car		When I need to concentrate		When socialising with friends	
Before going in to work		In conversation with others		Before I go to bed	
During my elevenses		When I want to feel confident		When I finish a job/task	
Other		Other		Other	

Watch yourself

When you smoke become aware of the cigarette in your hand. Notice it burning, the red tip, the smoke and chemicals burning off it. Watch as you put the cigarette/vape to your lips, notice the feeling of it against your lips. As you inhale notice the feeling of it going inside you. The taste in your mouth and the smell of the chemicals as they enter your body. Look at the smoke/vapor as you exhale leaving your body and emptying your lungs. Be present as you smoke.

Needed vs enjoyed

When you reach for your next smoke consider it first. Use a scale of 1-10 (1 = not a lot and 10= ever so much). Choose a number that expresses how much you wanted that cigarette before you have it. Make a note. Then after you smoked it choose a number that demonstrates how much you enjoyed it. You might be interested to see how the two don't match up. Was it a habit, addiction, to fill time, to help you concentrate or to calm you down? Continue over a period of a week and get the bigger picture.

Self-belief

Believe in yourself, you **do** have the ability to make this change to become a non-smoker. Take some time to make a list and remind yourself of all the other things you have achieved in your life. Particularly think about the things that have been difficult.

List the exams you've passed, the new jobs or a promotion, learning to drive, an award or a challenge you've overcome. There will be lots of things if you think about it, start the list and add to it as time goes on. You can do this.

What's in it for you

Prepare a list or do some drawings to help you focus on what becoming a non-smoker will do for your health and your family. Think of all the things that when you have kicked the habit and stopped smoking will be different.

Here's a start for you: You will be fitter, healthier and better off financially. You will have more energy and be free from the inconvenience of smoking or vaping.

Create a vision board

A little bit woo woo! But heck give it go. Cut out picture of all the things that you can do once you have quit smoking. Perhaps you'll be able to afford a holiday of a lifetime. Maybe you can walk upstairs without getting out of breath. You'll smell fresh and clean; your hands and fingers will not be stained with nicotine. The new clothes you can afford, the places you can go that you avoided because you can't smoke. All that extra time you gain, what will you do with that?

Ask for help

You'll be surprised at how many people have quit themselves and are happy to support you. Remember everyone wants you to succeed – they are always there to help and support you. Especially if they used to be smokers themselves.

Come over to Facebook and join my community of quitters called Smoking Hearts! www.facebook.com/groups/smokinghearts You'll get a warm welcome and plenty of support.

Enlist some stop smoking support

Search the Appstore or Microsoft store for the latest and most recommended Smoking Apps for your phone. You can use them to keep a tally of the time since you quit and your success? Use Google to search for Quit smoking forums and websites. Visit the NHS smokefree website. Get in touch with a local hypnotherapist. Contact your doctor's surgery.

Get ready to be accountable

Once your date booked and set tell people you are stopping smoking. This gives you a focus and helps others to prepare to support you too.

Get moving

Plan some short exercise sessions, even a five-minute walk, skipping or stretching. You can use them to distract you from cravings and keep you healthy. It will help your brain produce feel good chemicals that will help reduce cravings.

Meet up with your non-smoking friends

As you quit date gets closer prepare to fill some time by getting some dates in your diary to spend some time with your friends that don't smoke. Plan some activities that will fill your time so that you have less time to dwell.

Watch other smokers and vapers

Start people watching, pay attention to all the smokers around you. When you look at them, don't envy them. Examine their behaviour and think about what they're doing as a bit strange. Lighting a small white tube, filled with poisons they then they breathe in the chemical laden smoke. In the cold & rain. Trapped by the habit.

Talk to your smoking friends

You may need to make some changes in the early days. It is better to explain and plan ahead of quitting. Talk to the people that you usually smoke with and explain to them that for a while you will not be joining them at smoke time. Avoid going outside with them for at least 2 weeks although a month would be better.

□ Your reasons to quit

Write a list of all the reasons that you want to quit so you can refer to it later. Start with your health, your mind, your finances, your family and friends, your goals, your lifestyle, all the things that by not smoking would be easier. This will then be ready for you to read when you need support and encouragement. It will remind you of why you made the decision to give up.

□ Calculate how much money you spend

You literally watch it go up in smoke. Do the math! Write these figures down so you can use it to inspire you to continue if you feel like it's getting tough.

- ⊗ How much do you smoke?
- ⊗ How much does it cost per day, per week, per month, per year?
- ⊗ Now work out how many years you have been smoking.
- ⊗ Then calculate your lifetime spend up to now.
- ⊗ Plus how many years you intend to continue smoking in the future.

□ Portable hobby

Start to consider what activities you can use as a distraction. Cravings only last a short amount of time if you find something else to think about.

Are there any games you can play on your phone or tablet? Maybe you knit, sew or crochet. You could take a project with you? How about listening to a podcast or audio book or reading a book on a kindle or your phone? You could learn another language. Carry a colouring book and some pens. Take up origami or perhaps start writing songs or some poetry.

What can you use as distraction, what can you do to fill the gaps where you would have smoked. Carry them with you at all times. Keep them on view too. By getting involved in these activities it will occupy your mind and body and if you do have a craving it will pass very quickly.

□ Turning back time

Once you've set your quit date add it to your diary, calendar or notebook. Then include the following benefits so you can see how well you are doing. You'll be aware of the benefits of stopping even when you can't see or feel them.

- ⊗ After 20 minutes - Pulse rate returns to normal.
- ⊗ After 8 hours - Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in blood reduce by more than half and oxygen levels return to normal.
- ⊗ After 48 hours - Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from the body. Lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris. There is no nicotine in the body. Ability to taste and smell is improved.
- ⊗ After 72 hours - Breathing becomes easier. Bronchial tubes begin to relax and energy levels increase.
- ⊗ After 2-12 weeks - Your circulation improves.
- ⊗ After 3 weeks - Higher HDL levels are good as it's the good cholesterol. HDL (high-density lipoprotein) levels can increase by as much as 30% within just three weeks of stopping smoking.

- ⊗ After 3-9 months - Coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve as lung function increases by up to 10%.
- ⊗ After 1 year - Risk of heart disease is about half compared with a person who is still smoking.

□ Create a streak

Get yourself a wall calendar or a method of marking off days in your diary. Your intention will be to put a big tick on each day that you don't smoke. You'll see the running streak and it will motivate you not to have a missed day. A visual reminder of how well you are doing.

□ Get essential

A 2013 study published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that when nicotine users inhaled the scent of [black pepper oil](#), their cravings were reduced. They reported a slight burning sensation in the throat, which is similar to the sensation they had when smoking.

Put a drop of the oil on a cotton wool ball (keep it in a small glass jar) and then inhale it when a craving becomes noticeable.

□ Sleep

If you aren't using nicotine replacement your sleep can be affected. Some people experience insomnia for a couple of nights after they quit smoking. [Get a plan together](#) of how you will manage this should you be affected.

There is some evidence to suggest that the herbal remedies can be effective for insomnia. The most commonly used ones to treat insomnia are valerian, passionflower, hops, lavender, lemon balm and Jamaican dogwood. (Always check with your pharmacist if you are taking medication as even herbal remedies can be contraindicated)

□ Relaxation

Get some lavender scented candles or incense. Lavender has been useful for treating anxiety, insomnia and restlessness. It is physically and emotionally calming, relaxing and balancing. For an immediate calming effect rub a drop or two of [lavender oil](#) in to your cupped hands. Inhale deeply drawing the scent into your amygdala (emotional warehouse) to calm your mind and body.

□ Guided relaxation

You'll often hear me talking about meditation, breathwork and relaxation. Using relaxation techniques when you quit smoking can help you manage how you react to stressful situations.

Even when you have a craving which is caused by a lack of nicotine, that your brain senses, it then sends a flood of cortisol to tell you to do something to make it better. Usually, reach for a smoke.

We often forget how to relax as automatically as we grow up as we don't afford ourselves the time and space.

By practising relaxation you can retrain the brain to be calmer throughout the day, any stressors can then be handled better and differently. It can give you the space to say no to a craving.

Why not give it a go, take 10 to 20 minutes for yourself to relax every day, it can make a real difference! The benefits of relaxation are physical, mental, and emotionally related to cardiac health, it also helps reduce the stress risk factor. Here is my [FREE 20-minute download of guided relaxation](#)

Reward, reward, reward

Decide in advance that, once you have stopped smoking, you will give yourself a reward. You will absolutely deserve it. What is going to be your mile stone date, the one where you think I HAVE QUIT? How will you celebrate? Make sure you have that one thing to look forward too.

It's the little things too

It's not just about that big mile-stone make sure you also map out in your diary some other successes. How will you reward yourself? For instance, how about celebrating your one-day target, your one-week achievement, your two-week goal and your one-month triumph?

Time on your hands

It can be amazing how much time you gain when you've stopped smoking. Start to plan how you are going to adjust your life to fill the void that being a non-smoker will leave? Eg getting up later so you don't have time to walk leisurely to work or have time to have a cigarette in the morning.

The next step

The great news is that it doesn't matter how long you have smoked or how many cigarettes you have smoked it's not too late. If you quit now, your body will begin to heal and it be there for you even after many years of smoking.

Complete this sentence.

MY QUIT DATE IS



You are now ready for the next step to become a non-smoker. Join my Quit Smoking Online Programme for Hearties

If you have a heart condition and smoke this online quit smoking programme is for you.

[Click to find out what it's like when you quit with me.](#)

You Can Do This!