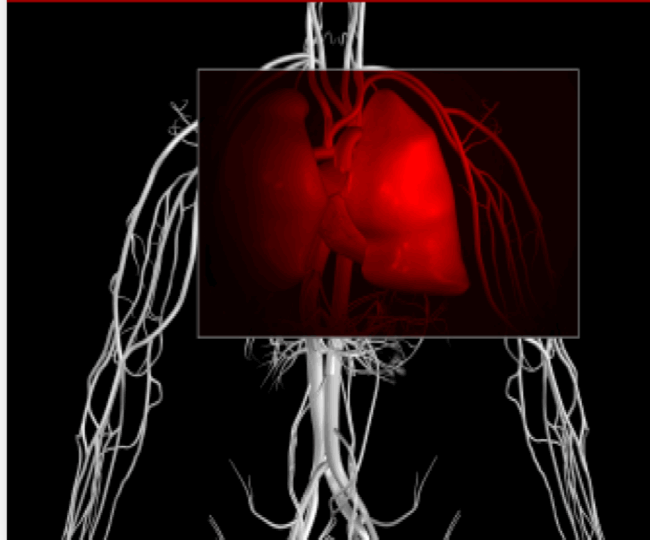


Invaluable Guide To Kicking Your Habit

The Top 10 Ways To Stop Smoking



An Overview of the Top 10 Quit Smoking Methods So You Can Choose the One That's Right For You

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Introduction

If you're one of the millions looking for effective methods to quit smoking, then you've certainly come to the right place. Nicotine addiction affects millions of people around the globe, and each year thousands look for new methods to quit smoking. With that in mind, we've brought you a list of the most popular different methods to quit smoking that you can use to once and for all break free from the hold that cigarettes have over you and your health.

Before we get started, how about a little extra incentive?

Here's the cold, harsh truth about what's inside your cigarettes. Everyone knows about the nicotine and the tar, but what about the other chemicals contained in each and every cigarette? Well, believe it or not, that last cigarette you enjoyed so much came with an extra dose of carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, ammonia, cyanide, arsenic and DDT.

If that doesn't scare the pants off you, nothing will.

So let's find a quit smoking program to get you off those coffin sticks.



Nicotine Patches

A nicotine patch is specifically designed to help reduce your craving for nicotine. The way it does this is by delivering a steady dose of nicotine throughout your day. The patch works by delivering a regulated dose of nicotine into your bloodstream through the skin. This steady introduction of nicotine helps to maintain your nicotine level throughout the day. While this level is generally lower than if you were still smoking, it's enough to eliminate withdrawal symptoms, especially the cravings.

The initial patch program goes on for about six weeks. This is the most difficult period and when the dosage will be highest. After this period, the patch prescribed will be of a lower dosage for two weeks and then a still lower dosage for the last two weeks. At this point, you should be smoke free.

Most nicotine patches are not available over the counter. They must be prescribed by a physician. Since the average cigarette contains only one milligram of nicotine, the prescription will be based upon the number of cigarettes you normally smoke in a day. As in all nicotine replacement treatment programs, it's vital to let your doctor know of any medical conditions you may have.

There is one brand that can be bought over the counter. It's a fifteen milligram dose and is worn only during the day. Before you go to bed at night, you remove the patch and toss it out. In the morning, you start the day with a fresh one.

There can be some side effects when using a nicotine patch to quit smoking. These can include a rash or skin irritation such as itching or burning around the patch itself. On occasion, a patch can cause nausea or dizziness. In addition, you'll want to refrain from smoking when using the patch. Otherwise, you risk the potential for a nicotine overdose.

You can wear a nicotine patch on your arms, back, or any other place that's hairless and clean and provides a good surface.



Nicotine Inhalers

A nicotine inhaler is a cigarette-like device consisting of a cartridge containing nicotine with menthol. When you inhale, the nicotine is absorbed through the lining of your mouth and upper esophagus. The nicotine dose is about 1/10th of a puff of a cigarette.

This quit smoking option is generally reserved for heavy smokers. In fact, for the very best results, you'll want to use the inhaler for twenty minutes or more. To relieve most withdrawal symptoms and for the best

chance at success, six to sixteen cartridges may be consumed throughout the day.

Nicotine inhalers, as well as nicotine sprays, work faster than gums. In addition, because they resemble a cigarette, they can be used in most situations. In other words, they're handy.

On the downside, you might experience side effects such as a burning sensation in the nasal tissues or throat, a stomach ache, or nausea. The inhalers are more expensive than gums (prices can range from \$40 to \$55 per package). Though convenient, in some cases inhalers are so close to the real smoking experience that they continue to promote the rituals and routines of smoking.

Nicotine inhalers are only available by prescription. They come packaged in a plastic storage case, 42 cartridges altogether. Each cartridge provides up to 300 to 400 puffs. Just as with a patch, the dose is gradually reduced over a period of time until your cravings are dramatically reduced or no longer exist. It's recommended that you do not continue to use inhalers beyond six months.

The use of nicotine inhalers require caution for a number of health conditions, including bronchospastic disease, coronary heart disease, cardiac arrhythmias, insulin-dependent diabetes, or accelerated hypertension.



Nicotine Gum

Nicotine gum is another nicotine replacement choice. It's similar in appearance and texture to a regular gum, and usually fruit, mint, or fresh mint flavored. The difference, of course, is the nicotine. Any time you experience a craving, pop in a "stick" of gum, and nicotine is released into your body, killing the craving.

This is generally one of the less expensive quit smoking products. Nicotine gums are available without a prescription. However, it's always a good idea to consult with your doctor before starting on a nicotine product. While a gum containing nicotine is generally harmless, it may not be suitable for certain medical conditions – diabetes, dental disease,

heart problems, high blood pressure, etc. It's also not recommended for women who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant as well as for breast-feeding mothers.

For best results, nicotine gum should be chewed slowly, waiting until a peppery feeling occurs and then stopping. The gum is then tucked into the cheek. When the tingle is no longer noticeable, repeat the process for at least thirty minutes to be certain all the nicotine has been released into the body.

During the first four weeks of the program, the average smoker uses between ten and twelve pieces daily. Daily use should not exceed two dozen pieces. As with the nicotine inhalers, a nicotine gum should not be used for an extended period of time, certainly not beyond six months. Nor should it be used if you're smoking, since the potential for nicotine poisoning arises.

There are two sizes of nicotine gum. One has two milligrams of nicotine while the other has four milligrams. The larger dose is potentially addictive, so unless your health care provider suggests using it, which would be for very heavy smokers only, it's best to use the lighter dose.

There are side effects, though they're uncommon. You may feel dizzy or weak while chewing nicotine gum. Some people experience headaches or stomach aches. You may experience damage to your teeth or dental work.



Hypnosis

Hypnosis has proven to be a highly successful approach for those wishing to stop smoking. In fact, depending on whether or not it's used in conjunction with another approach, hypnosis has a sixty-six to eighty percent success rate.

Why is hypnosis so successful?

Well, the primary reason is because smoking is not only a physical addiction, it's also a psychological addiction. When you're able to control your physical cravings at the same time that you're releasing your

psychological dependencies, you've got a powerful, often successful combination. Many of the common quit smoking aids, such as patches, gums, and inhalers are far more effective when combined with hypnosis.

If you plan on working with an accredited professional hypnotherapist, however, you should be aware that permanent change is unlikely to occur after a single session. In addition, the cost of hypnosis can be expensive (sometimes as much as two hundred dollars per session).

Fortunately, you can find a number of audio programs designed specifically to help you use self hypnosis to quit smoking. These programs are generally much cheaper (often between fifty and one hundred dollars) than traditional hypnosis therapy. And they can be equally as powerful.

Many people wonder if they'll experience withdrawal symptoms or gain weight when they use hypnosis to stop smoking. Fortunately, this is generally not the case. In fact, most people find that they experience only positive effects such as less stress, reduced anxiety, and an overall peacefulness.



Laser Therapy

Laser therapy is a fairly well known method used to help smokers break away from their habit. It first came on the scene in the 80's and is currently available in many European countries, the United States and Canada. Of course, it's come a long way since then and today is considered one of the advanced stop smoking methods.

The idea of using laser therapy to stop smoking can be a little misleading at first. The therapy is actually based on ancient Chinese acupuncture practices. The difference is that instead of needles, cold lasers are used. Stimulation of specific areas of the ears, neck and face increases endorphin production, thus improving mood and reducing cigarette cravings. The procedure is painless and most people find it very relaxing.

How does endorphin production help you quit smoking?

Endorphins are also known as the happiness hormones. The same hormones are produced in our bodies when we eat chocolate, drink hot cocoa or have a walk in the sun. Endorphins improve your general mood and in increased concentration they can reduce your cigarette cravings. Not only are your cravings reduced, but so are most of the cessation symptoms associated with an effort to stop smoking, such as nervousness, headaches, and anxiety.

How many stop smoking laser therapy sessions will you need?

The required number of sessions depends on your specific circumstances. Your therapist will consider the level of your smoking addiction and how well you respond to your first session. If you've only recently started to smoke one session might be enough. For severe smokers, two or three follow up sessions may be required. Generally, a complete course of treatment will take between one or two weeks.

Is the laser therapy expensive?

The cost depends on the type of the clinic you've chosen and the number of sessions you'll require. However, the price is minor when compared to the cost of your cigarettes over the course of a year. In addition, some health insurance policies cover various stop smoking laser therapy, so it may turn out to be free for you.

Finally, many specialists suggest that the use of laser therapy is most successful when combined with behavior therapy. This is similar to using hypnosis, where the combination of therapies addresses your physical needs as well as your psychological needs. The good news is that many laser therapy clinics also provide their clients with behavior therapy programs.



Stop Smoking Medication: Zyban

There are not many choices if you're looking for a medication to help you to quit smoking. In fact, the best place to start is with a visit to your doctor, who can explain your options and recommend what he believes will work best for you.

Having said that, currently the most popular medication for helping smokers kick their habit is Zyban (Bupropion hydrochloride). Zyban does not contain nicotine, so you can continue to smoke when you first begin to take it and as you wean yourself off cigarettes altogether. While it doesn't contain nicotine, Zyban does give your body the impression that it does, so you won't experience the intensity of the usual symptoms associated with quitting smoking.

According to clinical trials, "treatment with Zyban reduced withdrawal symptoms compared to placebo. Reductions on the following withdrawal symptoms were most pronounced: irritability, frustration, or anger; anxiety; difficulty concentrating; restlessness; and depressed mood or negative effect. Depending on the study and the measure used, treatment with Zyban showed evidence of reduction in craving for cigarettes or urge to smoke compared to placebo."

Zyban is recommended for those who cannot use nicotine medications and for those who've tried other products unsuccessfully. It's also highly recommended for those concerned with weight gain, as it prevents this. You will, of course, require a prescription from your doctor to use Zyban. In fact, for those with a severe smoking addiction, your doctor may prescribe a combination of Zyban and a nicotine patch or a gum for best results.

Zyban's success rates have ranged as high as 58%, though most studies resulted in a success rate between 15%-25%.

The most common side effects experienced with Zyban include dry mouth and difficulty sleeping. There are also other risks associated with its use, so it's important to talk with your healthcare professional to see whether Zyban is right for you.



Live Naturally

Many people prefer to try to kick their nicotine habit naturally, hoping to become non-smokers without using any artificial means. For this group there are a number of potential alternatives. For instance, one possible natural approach is the use of various breathing techniques. Here's how it works ...

When you begin to experience a nicotine craving, take in a deep breath. Draw in as much air as you can, then slowly release it. Relax as much as possible as you are breathing out. Close your eyes and let your chin rest on your chest. As the air leaves your body, imagine your stress leaving with it. This relaxation method is very effective. Whenever you crave a cigarette, run through your breathing process three times and see how much better you feel.

There are other natural things you can do to help get through the early difficult days of quitting. Go swimming, jog, or take long walks. Get a massage, go for a steam bath, sit in a hot tub or go dancing with friends. Change your daily routines so that those times you would normally reach for a cigarette are replaced with other activities.

During the first week make sure you drink plenty of water and other liquids, though coffee and alcohol are discouraged during this early phase. Drinking liquids helps to flush the nicotine out of your system.

Another natural approach is the use of herbs. The herb most widely used in stop smoking herbal blends is Lobelia. The Lobelia plant contains Lobeline – a nicotine like substance. Lobeline replaces nicotine without creating a new addiction. The result is that you can throw all of your cigarettes packs in the garbage bin without being a victim of the nasty cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Cutting out foods that are not organic, that contain high levels of sugar, or that are heavily processed and packaged is also a natural option. By changing to a more natural lifestyle, you will be treating your overall health, rather than just the addiction to nicotine.



Join A Support Group

One way to insure that you succeed in giving up cigarettes is to involve yourself with a support group. When you feel like giving up, or you forget why you quit smoking in the first place, they can bolster your strength and help keep you on course. In addition, they can make sure you're responsible for the promises you've made regarding your decision to quit.

Here are some tips for making the most of your support group:

Your support group should consist of those who care about you and are willing to aid you in your efforts to kick your smoking habit. They can be your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, boss, church members, pastor, or a professional support system such as your healthcare provider, therapist, nurse or a community group for those who have quit smoking.

Be accountable to one person for the completion of your tasks and goals. This will help prevent you from cheating and sneaking a cigarette.

Don't allow anyone to be negative or to constantly nag. Let everyone know that you're making this decision to quit smoking and you need to have positive supporters who will encourage you to achieve your goal.

Be your best supporter by believing in you. Believe that you can be successful. Support your goal by deliberately stating what it is that you dislike about your smoking habit. Admit your dependency on nicotine and don't underestimate the negative impact it's had on your body.

An ideal way to support your goal is to keep a Smoke Free Journal so that you can record all the important steps you take from day 1 right through the milestones - week 1, month 1, your 3 month anniversary, 6 months, and 1 year of being smoke free. Recording your failures and triumphs will inspire you later down the road. It may even inspire someone else to succeed.

Support your goal not only by clearly defining when and how you will quit smoking, but make sure that you have the information that you need to cover all the bases regarding any obstacle you may encounter on your journey to being smoke free. Talk to others in your support group who have successfully quit. Listen to their helpful tips and ask about any quit smoking aids they've found helpful.

It's not easy to quit smoking by yourself. Having a support group not only keeps you accountable for doing what you set out to do, your support group can remind you why it's important to you during those times when the cravings may cause you momentarily forget. They can help keep you focused. Never forget that you are breaking an addiction and support is vital.



The Quit Smoking Action Plan

Yes, there is such a thing as a quit smoking action plan. In fact, this one has worked for countless people just like you. Here's how it works ...

Step One - Set A Quit Date

The first, and possibly most important, part of your quit smoking action plan is to set a quit date. This is important because it helps you to get your mind set on quitting before it actually happens. Your set quit date doesn't have to be tomorrow, or even next week; in fact, it's actually best if you set your quit date about three weeks in advance. This will give you the opportunity to follow step two in your quit smoking action plan.

Step Two - Start From Within

The second step in your quit smoking action plan is, now that you've got your quit date in mind, you need to get your body ready to handle the effects of quitting. Since smoking affects your overall health, it only stands to reason that you should treat your entire body when it comes time to quit. This is best accomplished by beginning a regimen of multi-vitamins and herbal supplements to help strengthen your immune system; and by changing your diet to reflect a more organic lifestyle. Be sure to include plenty of fruits and veggies in your quit smoking action plan, as they will help to flush the toxins from your system.

Step Three - Get Help

The third step in your quit smoking action plan needs to be to join a support group for people trying to quit smoking about a week before your scheduled quit date. This will allow you to bond with some new friends prior to your actual quit date; and will give you a better foundation for the day when you actually put down those cigarettes for good.

Step Four - "D" Day, No More Smoking!

When the scheduled quit date for your quit smoking action plan comes around, make sure that all tobacco products and paraphernalia have been removed from your home the night before. This will help to eliminate temptation, and help you to stick to your quit smoking action

plan. Start every day with a tall glass of orange or grapefruit juice, and be sure to include plenty of water in your daily routine so as to flush the toxins and leftover nicotine from your system even faster. Drinking orange juice as a part of your quit smoking action plan has also been shown to reduce nicotine cravings by more than 50%!



Cold Turkey

Many ex-smokers have successfully quit the habit cold turkey. Most, however, will tell you that they did so with little preparation. Often going cold turkey is unplanned and spontaneous. It just happens. Usually the smoker goes cold turkey in response to a major event such as the loss of a close friend or a loved one to lung cancer. The smoker simply stops, the event so vivid in their mind that every time the urge to smoke occurs the urge is zapped.

To succeed at going cold turkey, the smoker either needs to be able to stay focused on the event or to have a constant reminder. For instance, a pregnant mom might want to tape the ultrasound picture on her refrigerator as a reminder of the life growing inside of her. Or the father of an asthmatic son might be reminded that he needs to make his home smoke free every time he sees his asthmatic son wheezing and reaching for his inhaler.

Going cold turkey without a plan does not mean that you can't still develop a plan. In fact, it's always helpful if you develop some definite goals and enlist the help of family and friends to help you achieve them.

Whether you're going cold turkey or have designed a plan to quit, you're likely to run across feelings of irritability, being tired, and cravings. Here are some tips to help you survive:

Understand that being irritable, tired, or out of sorts is to be expected.

Make sure you drink lots of water throughout the day.

Do something physical, such as going for a swim or taking a walk, to keep your mind active and off your cravings.

Surround yourself with support - people who can help you to resist the temptation to smoke.