

## Top Tips to Stop Smoking

1. **Look into the future.** Write down the most important reason why YOU want to stop smoking on a little card, keep it in your wallet and look at it several times a day. Be precise and positive: Don't say 'I don't want to get ill' but 'I want to stay healthy to see my children grow up'. If you can picture your goal in your mind's eye, even better.
2. **Set a date and stick to it.** For some people that may be during the week, for others at the weekend. Choose a day that will be relatively stress-free but busy enough to keep you from getting bored.
3. **Get ready.** Read an information book about quitting. Ask friends who have given up for tips and advice.
4. **Mark the day.** You may like to have a bath the night before, put on clean clothes, spring-clean your house, valet your car, buy a piggy-bank for the money you are going to save, buy yourself some flowers, book a massage ...
5. **Be confident.** It is YOUR decision to quit. If friends and family are supportive or even join in, that's great - if not, stick to your plan regardless. Every night, before you go to sleep, encourage yourself by saying; 'Well done', 'I enjoy being a non-smoker', 'It's easy to stay stopped' or some other words to the same effect.
6. **Take it one day at a time.** Concentrate on getting through each day without a cigarette. Know what you are going to say if someone offers you a cigarette. For a while, avoid the places and people that are closely associated with your old smoking habit. If you used to smoke habitually for example after a meal, create a new healthy habit such as having a rest or going for a walk.
7. **Ease the withdrawal symptoms.** Nicotine is addictive, and you may experience withdrawal symptoms like irritability, lack of concentration and sleeping problems. These symptoms are temporary. Your body will get rid of all the nicotine within 2 days! Withdrawal symptoms can be eased if you get plenty of fresh air and drink plenty of water. If you feel more hungry than usual, eat fresh fruit and vegetables. Your body will soon adapt.
8. **Learn to relax!** Try this simple breathing exercise:  
  
Sit or lie down comfortably. Close your eyes. Allow yourself to settle down. Breathe slowly in and out through the nose a couple of times, concentrating on the sensation of air moving in and out of the body.  
  
Start to breathe more deeply, still through the nose, consciously letting the air fill the abdomen, then the lower and upper chest in sequence. Breathe out the same way, expelling the air from the abdomen, lower and upper chest in turn.  
  
Repeat this 3 or 4 times, and then return to normal breathing. Stop immediately if you feel dizzy.
9. **Reward yourself!** Chose a reward that is meaningful to you. You could save the money that you would have spent on cigarettes for a treat such as a new outfit, going out for a meal or taking a holiday.
10. **Once stopped – stay stopped!** There is no such thing as 'just one cigarette'.