

Quitting Smoking for Introverts



HOW TO QUIT SMOKING

Patrick Meninga **Introverted Recovery**

I'm going to show you how to quit using nicotine. Note that this is much more desirable than just switching from cigarettes to vaping or to nicotine gum or the patch--I am going to walk you through getting off of Nicotine entirely. Total freedom. No more cravings. Done for good.

Is Right Now the Best Time for Me to Quit Smoking?

Yes, for sure it is. No question. Here is why:

A) It never gets easier to make the decision to quit. Tomorrow never comes.

It is easy to fall into the trap of believing that one day in the future it will be somehow easier to quit smoking than it is today.

We put it off, knowing how easy it is to keep smoking today, imagining that some day we will do the right thing and clean our act up.

But tomorrow never comes. You always wake up to "today," and you always want that next cigarette.

Now is the best time to quit.

B) "Now just isn't the right time, I'm too stressed!"

If you try to "cut down" on your nicotine consumption, or if you try to quit entirely, you may notice that all of this drama pops up just when you are attempting to quit.

Bad timing, right?

Wrong.

There is no extra drama when you try to quit smoking, it is just normal life. But you cannot see this simple truth when you are going through nicotine withdrawal. Every time that you try to quit it is going to seem as if drama and crisis situations

are coming at you from out of nowhere, in a string of bad luck.

But it's just life. There will always be some drama in your life. Nicotine withdrawal amplifies that drama.

Now is the best time to quit.

C) Your future self will thank you profusely for quitting right now

I quit nicotine completely on 10/26/05 and so I have accumulated many, many years of being nicotine free since then.

Not only have I saved tens of thousands of dollars from quitting, but I am an avid jogger now who has logged thousands of miles running, and I have also saved several years of my life back health-wise.

If I could go back in time, the only message I would give myself would be to quit even sooner.

As it is, I would still thank my past self profusely for having made the decision to quit when I did. It was the single best thing that I could have done at the time.

You will want your future self to look back at this moment and thank your past self. Now is the best time to quit.

The 3 Reasons to Put Forth Your Best Effort - Your time, your money, and your life.

1) TIME.

Every smoker generally dies younger, and everyone pretty much grasps that.

But what you might not be grasping is just how much time the average smoker devotes to the mindless and unproductive act of actually puffing away.

Let's put it like this: While there are 43,680 minutes in a month, the average smoker spends 51,100 minutes actually smoking every single year.

So a typical pack-a-day smoker actually engages in the act of smoking for an entire month out of each year.

Just think of the lost time that can be reclaimed. Smokers have to constantly rush around in order to get that next fix in. How much less stress would you experience with an extra month of time added to your life every year?

2) MONEY.

The average smoker is spending upwards of \$2,000 annually on just the cost of the cigarettes.

That money, if invested at a modest 5 percent interest rate, is enough to hit 6 figures in just 20 years or so. Not a bad trade when you realize the alternative is all that wasted money and a lung cancer diagnosis.

Since the cost of smoking is so high, you can afford to spend a LOT of money on quitting. When it comes time to develop our quitting strategy, we don't want any excuses associated with costs, as this is silly. We are talking about a very expensive addiction that drains 6 figures every 20 years or so. Now that you've made the decision to quit, cost should be no object.

3) LIFE.

A typical smoker might say something like:

"But I am already old and have smoked for years, why quit now?"

A very large and thorough 50 year study involving over ten thousand smokers revealed that it's never too late to quit. The study demonstrated that people who smoke until they die typically lived about 15 to 20 years less than their non-smoking counterparts.

Quitting by age 50 cuts that time in half! And quitting by age 40 knocks it down about 75 percent. Quitting before age 30 showed the same mortality rates as nonsmokers.

Those are very encouraging statistics! Even if you are a senior citizen, quitting smoking will add several years to your life.

Your Quit Smoking Plan Should Include Incentives to Generate Motivation

The negative consequences of nicotine addiction are too far off and too obscure to be successful deterrents. Nobody really believes that THEY will be the one to get lung cancer. Anti smoking campaigns attempt to shock people with dirty lung pictures, but it doesn't really work. The addiction is too powerful.

Therefore, instead of using a disincentive strategy that fails, we are going to use an incentive strategy to succeed.

That's right, you are going to create your own incentives.

This is going to take some brainstorming on your part.

What would you do if you had a million dollars? What would you buy? Where would you go for vacation? What would you eat? Steak, lobster, shrimp? The idea is to find some ways to reward yourself during your first week of quitting.

Get extravagant. Remember how much money you are saving by quitting smoking: upwards of \$2,000 annually.

You can afford to splurge on yourself.

For some people, this might mean traveling, or a vacation of some sort.

Others might be content to treat themselves to a luxury spa visit--every single day for the first week of quitting.

Don't say you can't afford this stuff. Nobody buys that excuse. You are spending thousands each year on cigarettes. You can afford any of these extravagances through careful planning.

Do not brush this off. Strong incentives are absolutely critical to get you through the first week or two of quitting.

Keep in mind the power of distraction and consider things like family vacations, camping adventures, and so on. Get creative. Go BIG. You are celebrating a whole new life of freedom from nicotine.

I personally decided that I was going to eat steak every night for dinner, and I basically did exactly that! I also planned a family vacation to Disney, which

served as a pretty massive distraction during my second week of nicotine freedom.

Note that I had to plan some of this in advance--especially the family vacation. I also recommend saving up money in advance of your quit date so that you are able to reward yourself with incentives.

Another idea for incentive is to take time off from work during the first week or two of your quit. Some people would argue "but I cannot take that much time off work." And I would respond to this: "What would happen if you got lung cancer and died suddenly? Or if you ended up in the hospital for several weeks. How would your work life fare then?"

So yes, you can afford to take a week or two off for your quit. Believing otherwise is just a form of denial to keep you smoking. No excuses. Create incentives and save up for them if necessary. Plan ahead to engineer a successful quit.

The First Week of Being Nicotine Free

Before you can practice living as a non-smoker you first have to get completely off of Nicotine.

My suggestion to you is that you NOT mess around with NRT products, which are "nicotine replacement therapy" products such as the patch or the gum.

Those just delay the inevitable withdrawal that will kick in fully once you try to get off of the patch or the gum. In my experience they do not make quitting Nicotine any easier in the long run.

There is a lot of evidence and studies that NRT products such as the patch and the gum are not really all that effective at helping people to become non smokers. In the short run, they are great at helping people to quit cigarettes, but in the long run, cold turkey quitters tend to become actual non smokers, and are more likely to stay that way.

As such, I suggest that you use the following technique for getting past the difficult withdrawal symptoms that are typical of the first week of quitting nicotine.

Remember, we don't just want to quit smoking cigarettes or vaping--we want to get off of Nicotine completely. That is the real goal here.

Getting through withdrawal

My suggestion to you is that you plan a quit date and then organize the rest of your quitting strategy around that date.

Let's say that you smoke your last cigarette tonight right before going to sleep for the evening. That's it, your farewell smoke, and nothing after that. It's over.

Tomorrow you wake up and you go through your day as a non smoker. Sip lots of cranberry juice throughout the whole day. Why?

Two reasons: One, it helps to replace the sugar that your smoking habit used to help regulate (yes, cigarette smoking seriously affects blood sugar levels), and two, it helps to flush out the Nicotine from your cells faster.

This is going to make the withdrawal faster and also more intense. The symptoms will be worse, but over sooner.

However, this is not a problem because your strategy is going to be to sleep through the worst of the withdrawal.

Here is the timeline:

- 1) For example, let's say that tonight you smoke your final cigarette and go to sleep.
- 2) Tomorrow morning you wake up and go through your first full day as a non-smoker. As the day goes on you will crave nicotine more and more. Remember to sip cranberry juice all day long.
- 3) When tomorrow night comes you are going to pull an all-nighter. You stay up all night long, hopefully with some helpful distractions planned, and maybe support from friends.
- 4) The following day is going to be tough. You are operating on zero sleep from the all nighter, and the goal is to stay awake as long as you can throughout today. Again, through this entire timeline you are sipping on cranberry juice to facilitate the detox process.
- 5) Finally you crash and sleep for a good 10 hours plus.
- 6) When you wake up you will realize--just as I did once--that you are no longer physically dependent on nicotine. You made it.

A lot of people object to this process, arguing that it is too difficult, too grueling to

stay awake for so long, and that it is far easier to just slap on a nicotine patch.

To those people I would say "Great, go use the patch. Quit smoking however you can, do whatever works. I am telling you that the patch never worked for me in the long run, and I had to eventually quit cold turkey. This is the method that got me through withdrawal successfully. I planned it out so that I could sleep through the most difficult part of my withdrawal, and it worked perfectly for me.

Note that this may take some planning. You may need to use vacation or sick days at work, schedule time off, etc. You may also need to arrange distractions or social support for yourself to help you get through the all nighter and the following day.

Tips for early quitters

1) Clicker pen for your hand -This is helpful. Get a pen that has a clicker button on the end of it, and carry it during your quit. Click the thing like crazy. It helps.

2) Sugar free gum (NOT nicotine gum) - Give your mouth something to do. I recommend sugar free gum or mints. Highly recommend AGAINST using nicotine gum, as this only keeps you addicted to nicotine. Keep your mouth busy! It helps.

3) Sip juice - During your quit you are drinking cranberry juice for the detoxification benefit, but after the first few days you can switch to orange juice or something else. You may also consider cutting juice with some water or drinking Gatorade. My suggestion is that you sip juice all day long, every day, for the first week at least.

Why? Because your blood sugar is a mess during your quit, and this creates cravings, both for nicotine and also for sweets and junk food. The way to fix this is to keep sipping juice. This will help to regulate your blood sugar.

4) Eat extra slow and reduce sweets - You will likely want to gorge yourself on junk food. You will feel full for hours, then suddenly be starving and you will eat far too much, far too quickly.

Avoid this because after you gorge you will want to smoke like crazy. Force yourself to eat slower, and keep sipping on juice all day to help your sugar stay even. Again, don't chug the juice. Just sip it all day long.

5) Half caffeine - When you smoke regularly the nicotine that you take in sort of "cancels out" roughly half of the caffeine that you ingest.

So if you used to drink 2 cups of coffee each day while smoking, you should cut back to 1 cup per day as a non smoker. It will also help if you slow it down and spread that one cup out over a longer time frame.

I do not recommend quitting caffeine completely while trying to eliminate smoking. Reduce it to half the caffeine, and take it slower and more spaced out.

Exploring Solutions for Your Nicotine-Free Life

One thing that I did in preparation for my quit was that I started jogging regularly before I even attempted to quit smoking.

This seems backwards, right? Most people would think that you should stop smoking before you attempted to start exercising.

However, I knew from past quit attempts that this would never work. I had to do it backwards--I had to establish the habit of jogging while I was still a smoker, so that I had a chance at using this "tool" when I was becoming a non-smoker.

And it worked. I started by going on walks first, then I built up to jogging 1 mile, then 2, and eventually 3 miles. I was jogging as much as 3 miles at a time while I was still a regular smoker.

I noticed that after a jog I did not have the urge to smoke for at least an hour or two, which I found remarkable. So I knew there was something to this strategy.

Now obviously jogging is not for everyone, but I think that every smoker needs to find some sort of physical outlet that is similar to this idea. It could be Tai Chi, it could be yoga, it could be walking, it could be working out at a gym, and so on.

But my suggestion to you is that you prepare in advance. Don't fall into the trap of believing that you can "get into shape later" after you are a non smoker. Instead, get into shape right now, as a smoker, and use this as part of your quitting strategy.

If you are already doing exercise, yoga, or some sort of fitness when you are a smoker, then it will be much easier to benefit from that practice during your quit.

Creating a Zero Tolerance Policy For Yourself Before You Quit - Make a Contract and Carry it Always

You need to make a written contract, with yourself, and for yourself, which outlines the reasons why you decided to quit smoking.

Why is this necessary?

Let me draw an analogy here. Stay with me for a moment.

Imagine that you normally enjoy camping up in the mountains, fishing, hiking, and being fully immersed in the great natural outdoors. Imagine further that you have lived out in the country your whole life and that you fish and hike and hunt on a daily basis, living completely off the land.

Now imagine that suddenly you wake up one day and you are in your own apartment, right in the heart of downtown New York City. Without fully understanding what is happening, you walk out onto the street, hail a cab, and rush off to your office day job in a cubicle.

It is as if someone switched your entire universe around without your knowledge. You think "Wait a second, why am I trapped here in the city? I am supposed to be out in the country, right? What is going on here?"

This is the same level of confusion that you are going to experience during nicotine withdrawal. I am not kidding here. The effect will be this profound to you. You must prepare yourself for it.

The exact nature of the confusion is going to be against your own self, and against your own decision to quit smoking in the first place.

Nicotine withdrawal is so powerful that it actually changes the brain in a profound way. In some ways this effect is even more powerful than psychedelic drugs.

You will question your own decision to quit smoking. You will have moments of intense nicotine craving in which you say to yourself "Could this really be true? Did I actually decide to quit smoking? Was I really in my right state of mind when I made the decision to quit?"

The level of confusion is going to be just like the poor country guy who suddenly wakes up in downtown New York City, living a completely foreign life.

Now if you are still smoking and using nicotine then you are currently in your "right mind" and you can say to yourself *"oh, it's no big deal. I will remember that I really DID want to quit smoking, and I have my reasons why, and I would not forget these things."*

WRONG.

You **will** forget. You are seriously underestimating what nicotine withdrawal does to the chemical structure of your brain.

This is what I am telling you: It doesn't matter how smart you are, and it doesn't matter how good your memory is. **YOU WILL QUESTION YOUR DECISION TO QUIT SMOKING DURING WITHDRAWAL.**

So - write out a contract for yourself. Brainstorm all of the reasons that you are quitting: health reasons, financial reasons, longevity reasons, so your clothes don't smell, so your breath doesn't stink, and on and on and on. Write it all down on a sheet of paper and keep it with you always.

It seems silly, right? It's NOT. Sit down and write out a list of reasons why you are quitting.

Do it!

The Zero Tolerance Policy

Create a "policy" for yourself. The policy should be roughly this:

"I will not ingest nicotine for any reason, no matter what happens, no matter what the excuse is, no matter what trauma or tragedy is happening in my life, nothing is so bad that smoking would not make it even worse. I will never touch nicotine again."

Put your zero tolerance policy for yourself on your contract page. Keep it with you always. Refer back to it in times of craving.

You might also put a list of actions to take during moments of craving. These will be things that you already know work well for you, things like taking a walk, exercise, yoga, meditation, calling a fellow quit buddy for support, etc. You would do well to come up with several options.

You can do this. Follow the ideas outlined here and make a commitment to yourself that you are finally going to quit this time "for real."

I quit smoking myself in October of 2005.

By doing so I have avoided smoking 217,063 cigarettes.

This has saved me \$65,118.90 just in the cost of cigarettes, and if invested at 5% would be worth \$176,644!!!!

This is real freedom.

You can do this. It's one week of hell followed by a lifetime of freedom.

If you don't make the leap now, you may never make it.

The universe is waiting for your success. The universe has been waiting, loving you all along, waiting for you to treat yourself kindly. Isn't it time to give yourself some love?

This is it. It's game time. Man up and do what you know is right.

Say goodbye to Nicotine forever.

Learn more at IntrovertedRecovery.com