



Deal with stress as a non-smoker

If you used cigarettes to help you deal with stress or negative moods, normal stressful situations that come up after you quit may give you the urge to smoke. Fortunately, non-smokers and former smokers have found many ways to deal with their stress or negative moods (boredom, anger, sadness, anxiety) without lighting a cigarette. You can, too!



Why does this happen?

- ▶ Tension, strain, worries, responsibilities, and hassles that you may have everyday can add to stress and can cause bad moods.
- ▶ Happy occasions like moving to a new home or getting married can also cause stress.
- ▶ When nicotine enters your brain, it appears to activate many powerful chemical reactions in the brain.
- ▶ These chemicals regulate mood, alertness, learning, memory, pleasure, anxiety and pain.
- ▶ When you smoke, the nicotine changes these chemicals. You may feel increased pleasure, less anxiety and more relaxed.

How common is this?

- ▶ Over years of smoking, your brain is trained to think that smoking is relaxing, because without nicotine you begin to feel nervous and anxious. Practice handling stress without smoking.
- ▶ Stress levels may be highest during the first two weeks after quitting and then taper off.
- ▶ During the first few weeks of quitting, even small stresses can lead to powerful urges to smoke.
- ▶ As time goes by the urges get weaker.

What can you do about it?

- ▶ Know what stressor or mood gives you the urge to smoke. Try to think of other ways you can cope with them (read, take a walk, talk with a friend).
- ▶ Know the cause of stress in your life (i.e. job, children, money).
- ▶ Know your stress signals (headaches, nervousness, or trouble sleeping).
- ▶ Create peaceful times in your everyday schedule. Set aside some time where you can get away from other people and your usual environment.
- ▶ Practice and picture yourself putting your relaxation plans to work. Put your plan into action. Change your plan as needed.
- ▶ Learn relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga or deep breathing.



During the first few weeks as a non-smoker

- ▶ Plan for the following typically stressful situations
 - A bad day at work.
 - A problem with your kids.
 - An argument with your spouse or partner.
 - A traffic ticket.
 - A minor fender-bender.



After several weeks as a non-smoker

- ▶ Plan what you will do if faced with stressful situations:
 - Ask for support from a friend or loved one.
 - Try not to use the situation as an excuse to smoke.

Take strong actions when faced with the strong desire to smoke

- Leave the situation
- Call a friend
- Take deep breaths
- Go for a walk
- Exercise
- Chew gum
- Use the 5 Ds (right)

When you feel the urge to smoke
REMEMBER THE 5 Ds

1. Delay
2. Drink Water
3. Do Something Else
4. Deep Breathe
5. Discuss With A Friend

Make a mental "note to self"

- ▶ Remind yourself of the reasons you quit smoking.
- ▶ Remember, you don't need tobacco to get through it.
- ▶ Smoking will not solve the problem.
- ▶ Remember how far you have come. Tell yourself not to let your efforts go to waste.

Take a one-minute vacation

- ▶ The one-minute vacation. You can do almost anywhere, here's how:
 1. Close your eyes.
 2. Take a deep, slow breath through your nose. As you inhale, picture yourself in a favorite spot.
 3. Exhale slowly through your mouth, holding that scene in your mind.
 4. Enjoy the pleasure of that scene.
 5. Open your eyes and feel refreshed.

