

Managing Triggers

THE FACTS!

Nicotine addiction

Nicotine addiction will cause withdrawal symptoms for a few weeks after you stop smoking (see fact sheet 'Nicotine Withdrawal'). But once these withdrawal symptoms pass, it's still important to be aware of certain situations and old habits which could trigger your desire to smoke again.

Identifying your triggers to smoke

Identifying your triggers helps to figure out what's making you want to smoke in the first place. Once you've figured this out, you can **change your routines and habits** to avoid these triggers. This strategy, combined with using Nicotine Replacement Therapy for at least 8-12 weeks after quitting, can help you **break the habit for good**.

Emotional triggers

Do you tend to smoke when you're upset, stressed, angry, or bored? We recommend trying alternative ways to manage these feelings, including:

- > Deep breathing
- > Keeping a journal
- > Exercising
- > Mindfulness meditation
- > Art or craft
- > Expressive writing
- > Call a friend
- > Clean your house or car

People triggers

Do your friends smoke? It's difficult to be around people who smoke, when you're trying to give up. Here are some tips to avoid being around smokers:

- > Try to organise to meet your friends at smoke-free places.
- > If you unexpectedly run into a smoker friend when you're out, have an excuse ready to keep the meeting short (e.g. "I'm just off to an appointment").
- > When your friends walk outside to smoke, turn in the other direction and walk around the building or block until they have finished.
- > In the early days of quitting, you may need to avoid spending time with your smoker friends altogether, just for a while.

Place triggers

Try to avoid certain places where you used to smoke, even if it means taking a different route to and from work at first.





Activity triggers

As we know you may smoke more based on your daily activities. Here's some tips to help you manage those daily triggers.

If you usually have a cigarette with your coffee:

- > A couple weeks before you actually quit, start having your cigarette by itself, then wait at least 15 minutes before you have your coffee.
- > Once you actually quit, try only having your coffee in places where you cannot smoke.
- > Change the type of coffee you normally have or try to drink tea.

If you used to smoke while you use to drive:

- > A couple of weeks before your quit date, try only having a cigarette before and after you drive. Put your cigarettes in the boot so that if you want to smoke you have to stop – chances are you won't bother.
- > Once you have quit, clean your car to remove all traces of cigarette smoking - packets, rubbish etc.
- > While driving, distract yourself from the urge to smoke by listening to music or a podcast.
- > Car pool with non-smokers.

If you're used to smoking while talking on the phone:

- > Keep conversations short.
- > Stand while talking on the phone.
- > Have a notepad or colouring book by the phone.
- > Hold the phone in your other hand

Watching TV or using devices:

- > Make the room smoke-free.
- > Sit in a different chair.
- > Put a drink or food on the other

- > Record your tv shows and fast forward through the ads so you don't duck out for a smoke.
- > Do something else with your hands while watching tv, for example craft

To avoid that first cigarette in the morning:

- > Switch up the type of drink you have each morning, for example, tea or orange juice instead of coffee.
- > Clean your teeth first thing – it will make your cigarette taste odd.
- > Shower as soon as you get up.
- > Use the My Quit Buddy app before you get out of bed.

After meals:

- > Brush your teeth straight after each meal.
- > Plan an activity straight after each meal, for example, washing up, shower, or go for a walk.

Drinking alcohol:

- > Try to minimise your alcohol intake, as alcohol reduces your willpower.
- > Drink only in non-smoking venues.
- > Ask your friends to support you in not smoking, by smoking away from you.
- > Try not to drink alcohol at home.
- > Use Nicotine Replacement Therapy when you plan to have a drink.

Rewards

- > If you smoke to reward yourself (e.g. after finishing the housework or a day at work), try using something else as your reward.
- > Use the money you save by not smoking to buy something else that you want.

Source: St Vincent's Smoking Cessation team



Talk to your GP or Pharmacist for further advice or call Quitline on the number above.