



EAP Educates: Quit Smoking

Getting into the habit of not smoking

Quitting smoking is the best health choice you can make. Few things have more benefits.

- Quitting will greatly improve your health and improve your family's health by not exposing them to second hand smoke.
- You will feel better and look better.
- You will save a lot of money.
- You can enjoy the freedom of not depending on tobacco when you're at work, under stress or in social settings.

- **Sticking to the decision**

The first few days once deciding to quit will test your will. Each day that you don't light up will get you closer to your goal of becoming a non-smoker. Here are some things you can do to make it a little easier.

- Avoid places like bars and cafés that you know will tempt you to light up.
- Avoid your old smoking buddies for a while. Let them know why you are limiting contact.
- Tell the people in your life that you have quit smoking and ask for their support, patience and understanding.
- Talk to a friend who has quit.

- **Avoid your triggers**

Certain events, places or even people may give you an urge to light up. Avoid these triggers when you can. You can try some or all of the following.

- Meet with friends at non-smoking clubs, restaurants or cafés.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Have a plan ready to deal with times that trigger you to smoke, like when in a car or talking on the phone.
- If you find yourself around smokers, have a list in your wallet to remind yourself why you are quitting.
- Change your routine. If you used to have coffee and a cigarette before showering. Take a quick morning walk then shower instead.

- **Find real stress relievers**

When you are a non-smoker, you have to deal with stress head-on. You can try the following instead of lighting up.

- Blow off steam by exercising. It's a great way to clear your mind and get in shape.
- Practise deep breathing exercises. Visualise yourself walking in the mountains or sitting near a stream.
- As you feel stress building, take mini breaks over the course of the day.
- Get yourself a set of hand grips or a squeeze ball. Use them when you start to feel stressed.

- **Keep a healthy weight.**

Many smokers are tempted to eat more when they quit smoking. You can follow the steps below to help prevent excessive weight gain.

- Go for a walk around the block when you get the urge to smoke. You'll burn some calories and get some fresh air.
- Keep some sugarless gum available at all times. Chewing gum will help satisfy the oral craving that many former smokers experience.
- Stockpile crunchy healthy snacks like celery sticks, carrots and pretzels both at home and at work.



- Cut back on fried foods, red meat and whole fat dairy products.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.

- **Reward yourself.**

By quitting smoking, you are improving your health and the health of your family. For that you deserve a reward.

- Each day, place the cash you once spent on cigarettes in a jar.
- Make a list of the things you'll treat yourself to with the money that you have saved.
- Reward yourself for your hard work. A pack a day adds up to a substantial amount of cash.

- **A little extra help**

Many people who decide to quit smoking need extra support. Nicotine is highly addictive. Cravings can be very strong for many people, and this can get in the way of you quitting. If you are one of these people, perhaps consider the following:

- Products like nicotine patches or gum can help to control the cravings for nicotine. Speak to your doctor about using them, and if you do, follow the instructions carefully. If used incorrectly, they can have side effects and cause medical problems.
- Find a support group. People there can put you in contact with others who know what it is like to quit. They may be able to offer you helpful advice based on their experiences,
- Make use of the internet. You may find groups there and will hear how other smokers have coped with the challenges quitting poses.
- You will need to stay strong in order to resist the urge to light up when you really want to. Write down your goals and the reasons for quitting on cards and keep those cards with you. Those reasons will help you through the tough moments.

- **If you slip.... ?**

Many smokers relapse in the early stages of trying to quit. It is a setback, but not the end of the world. Forgive yourself and don't light up next time. Think about what triggered the desire to light up, and then plan what you can do to avoid lighting up next time you are faced with that trigger. Quitting smoking requires practise. You can quit though, so hang in there.

Resources:

- Smoke Enders:
 - Johannesburg / Pretoria: 011 487 0231
 - Cape Town: 021 788 9120
 - Durban: 031 262-3109 / 083 234 5082
- Facebook support group: Qwitters – inspiration and support to quit smoking
- Nicorette's Kick Butt Program: 0860 410 032 / www.nicorette.co.za/kickbutt You need to register on the site and you are then supplied with a starter pack, telephonic and email support over a 3 month period.
- National Council Against Smoking: www.againstsmoking.co.za
- Cancer Association Can/sa: 0800 22 66 22 toll free

CONTACT THE EAP FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE.

(Resources – The Health Society of South Africa HSSA)