

Booklet 3

Ready to quit smoking



Aboriginal Respect Symbol. Designed by
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Cancer Council
Tackling Tobacco

This booklet is written for people who have decided that they want to quit smoking.

Steps to breaking the habit.

Congratulations on taking the first step towards quitting smoking!

Planning can help you understand why you smoke and come up with some strategies to make quitting easier. Follow the steps in this booklet to help with your quitting plan.

Step 1 Understand your smoking

Nicotine is the addictive drug in tobacco. After you have been smoking for a while, your body gets used to the nicotine and relies on it to feel normal.

Complete the quick quiz below to understand your level of nicotine dependence.

People with high to very high nicotine dependence may benefit from using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to help with withdrawal. See “Products to help you quit smoking” (pages 5–6).

Questions	Answers	Score (please circle)
1. How soon after waking up do you smoke your first cigarette?*	Within five minutes	3
	6 – 30 minutes	2
	31 – 60 minutes	1
	60+ minutes	0
<i>* Or how soon after waking up do you want your first cigarette (even if you don't have one)?</i>		
2. How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?	31 or more	3
	21 – 30	2
	11 – 20	1
	10 or less	0

How dependent on nicotine are you? Check your score.

- 0-2 = Very low dependence
- 3 = Low dependence
- 4 = Moderate dependence
- 5 = High dependence
- 6 = Very high dependence

Step 2 Know when you smoke

Before you quit smoking, you need to know when you usually smoke. These will be the danger times.

When do you smoke?

- When I wake up in the morning
- When I have a coffee or cup of tea
- When I am on the phone
- When I am with my friends
- After a meal
- When I have an alcoholic drink
- When I am worried, stressed or upset
- When I am annoyed or angry
-

You will need to work out other ways of getting through these times when you quit smoking. If possible, it can be useful to avoid these danger times in the first couple of weeks. Cut down on coffee, tea and sugary drinks that are high in caffeine, and try to stay away from alcohol for a couple of weeks. Try to avoid friends who smoke, and put off going to parties until you feel more confident.

Things I am going to do instead of smoking.

Now that you have identified your danger times, list in the table below some things you are going to do instead of smoking. Some examples have already been given.

Instead of having a smoke when...	I am going to...
I am annoyed or angry	Go for a walk
I am stressed	Listen to some music

Step 3

Plan how to quit smoking

If you have tried to quit smoking before (and most people who smoke have) you will know what is likely to work for you.

Smoking can interfere with some medications; for example, those taken for physical health problems such as diabetes, or for mental health problems such as depression or schizophrenia.

If you take any prescription medications, it's important you talk to your doctor about quitting smoking first, as some medications may need monitoring.

1. Quitting all at once

Deciding on a quit date and not smoking any more from that day is the best way to quit. If you smoke as soon as you wake up in the morning and smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day, you might want to use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or quit smoking medications to help with withdrawal.

2. Cutting down

Cutting down gradually without a structured support program in place and without the use of NRT or quit smoking medications is not recommended. Unfortunately, what happens when you don't get your cigarette at the usual time is that you end up smoking in a more harmful way, such as:

- Smoking right down to the butt
- Puffing more frequently
- Inhaling more deeply, which makes the cigarette burn hotter and does even more damage to your lungs.

For this reason, cutting down is not a good idea unless you are substituting each cigarette that you miss with a nicotine replacement therapy product such as gum or inhalator.

**Use counselling
services such as
Quitline**



+

**Quit
medications**



=

**To give yourself
the best chance of
quitting for good!**



Support to help you quit smoking

1. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

NRT provides your body with nicotine while you are quitting. This helps ease withdrawal symptoms, while you work on breaking the 'habit' of smoking. It's a good idea to talk to your health worker, doctor or pharmacist about NRT before using it, as it is not suitable for everyone.



Nicotine patches

Nicotine comes out of the patch and goes into your blood, and this can help reduce cravings to smoke. You just stick the patch onto your skin and change it every day. Ask a health worker, doctor or pharmacist, or call the **Quitline** on **13 7848 (13 QUIT)**, to go through the correct way to use patches.



Nicotine gum

Chew the gum slowly when you feel like having a cigarette. You only need to chew the gum long enough to release the flavour (about one minute), then park (or rest) the gum in between your gum and cheek. When the taste fades, chew a few times until the taste gets strong, then park the gum again. Nicotine is released, and then absorbed through the lining of your mouth. Do not chew gum when eating or drinking.



Nicotine lozenge

The lozenge works the same way as the gum, except that you suck it. Move the lozenge around your mouth every now and then. Do not eat or drink while sucking the lozenge.



Mouth spray

After priming the mouth spray, point the nozzle towards the inside of your cheek, or under your tongue, holding it as close as possible. Press the top of the dispenser down to release the spray into the side of your cheek. Avoid swallowing for a few seconds after spraying.



Nicotine inhalator

The inhalator has cartridges containing nicotine that is inhaled. Take a puff, hold the breath in your mouth for a few seconds and breathe out normally. Don't inhale into your lungs like you would with a cigarette.



2. Prescription quit smoking medications

Tablets that are only available with a prescription from a doctor, because they are not suitable for everyone. Talk to your doctor for more information regarding these medications.



3. Talk to a quit smoking counsellor

Talk to a quit smoking counsellor at **Quitline** on **13 7848 (13 QUIT)** for advice and support tailored to you



4. Free online resources

Use free online resources like iCanQuit.com.au and find your community in the online forum



5. Mobile Apps

Use a mobile phone app like My QuitBuddy to track your progress

REMEMBER

1. All nicotine replacement products contain less nicotine than cigarettes and they have none of the 7,000 chemical compounds that are in tobacco smoke. Quit smoking medications do not contain any nicotine at all. It is important to use these products for at least 12 weeks, or for the recommended period, until you have beaten the habit of smoking.
2. NRT patches are available at a very cheap price through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme if you get a prescription from a doctor.



Step 4 **Set a quit date**

Unless there is a very good reason, make your quit date within two weeks from now. Choose an easy day to stop, one when you won't be under too much stress.

My Quitting Plan

Write out your own quitting plan and keep it handy.

My main reasons to quit are:	
Three things I am going to do instead of smoking:	
Things I can do with the money I normally spend on smoking:	
My support person will be:	
The quit smoking support that I will use (if applicable):	
My quit date is:	

Step 5 Understand withdrawal symptoms

Most people will experience some withdrawal symptoms when they quit smoking. They are a sign that the nicotine is leaving your body; your body is starting to recover from smoking and you are becoming healthier. If you have a lived experience of mental illness, speak to your doctor if you have any concerns, as withdrawal symptoms can sometimes be confused with symptoms of your illness.

Remember, the withdrawal symptoms will gradually pass, and most will disappear within the first two weeks – so hang in there!

Here are some ideas for dealing with common withdrawal symptoms.

Withdrawal	Tips
Feeling restless, tense or angry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathe deeply• Do some relaxation exercises• Go for a walk, do something physical• Listen to music or have a bath
Having difficulty sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relax• Listen to music• Have a hot, milky drink• Exercise during the day
Feeling sad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relax• Go for a walk, do something physical• Do something nice for yourself
Constipation or diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink 8-10 cups of water each day• Eat more fruit, vegetables and cereal
Having trouble concentrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make lists• Break tasks into small chunks and do them one by one, with breaks in between
Increase in appetite and weight gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snack on healthy foods• Limit sugary and high-fat treats• Do some exercise
Coughing or tightness in your throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink water• Suck on a throat lozenge• Give it time, it will ease

Good things about quitting smoking

Quitting smoking will make you feel good, knowing that you are controlling the cigarettes rather than them controlling you. But quitting will test your willpower, so it's a good idea to keep reminding yourself of your reasons for quitting.

“I felt healthier almost straight away”

As soon as you quit smoking your risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease goes down. Soon after quitting you will feel healthier and have more energy, with easier breathing. Remember, you may cough a bit more at first because you are clearing out your lungs.

“I feel in control”

You won't have to worry about running out of cigarettes any more. You can go places where smoking is banned.

“I'm setting a good example for my kids”

By not smoking you are reducing the chance that your kids will smoke. Children also want the best for their parents. It can be a big relief for them when you quit smoking.

“I paid off my car”

The money you save by not smoking soon adds up. Spending this on presents or paying bills feels good.

“My home smells better now”

Many people who quit smoking like the fact that their breath and clothes don't smell any more.

Look after yourself while you are quitting

Get plenty of sleep, eat well and do some exercise. Take one day at a time and give yourself rewards and encouragement. Some people plan at least one enjoyable thing for each day. This gives them something to look forward to.

The way you think affects the way you feel and act. If you slip up, you might think, “I’ve blown it, I may as well start smoking again”. But if you do have a cigarette, it is more helpful to remind yourself that it was just a slip-up, and go back to your normal plan.

Sometimes it helps to practise positive self-talk, such as, “I’m a person who doesn’t smoke”, and, “I can quit”. Believing that you can quit can improve your chances of success.

It helps to know that slip-ups are part of the quitting journey.



For more information, see your health worker, nurse, doctor or support worker about quitting. Quitline can help you by providing free information and support.

You can call them on **13 7848 (13 QUIT)** for the cost of a local call with higher costs from mobile phones.

Remember

- Quitting smoking is easy for some people and harder for others. Knowing what's going to happen after you have that last cigarette can help.
- Be aware of the 'triggers' when you normally smoke, and plan something you can do instead when you quit.
- Make a plan to quit smoking, and speak to your doctor if you are on medication.
- Set a quit date.

Acknowledgements

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**We're here for all Australians affected by cancer.
Call 13 11 20 for information and support.**

