

IDENTIFYING YOUR REASONS TO QUIT SMOKING

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You have decided to quit smoking. Great! Take some time now to identify your reasons for quitting.

Maybe it's financial. Cigarettes cost a lot of money. A pack a day habit can cost you thousands of dollars a year.

"I've been thinking about quitting smoking for a while now. It is a financial thing. I mean, seven – you know – seven dollars a pack. Let's say a pack or two a day. That adds up really quick."

Do the math. How much do you spend on tobacco each week?

What other things could you be spending that money on? You could save for a new car, pay down some bills, maybe take a nice vacation.

Smoking can be inconvenient. Most public places have become non-smoking areas forcing you outside, no matter the weather.

Smoking can affect your relationships with family and friends.

"My grandmother smoked for like 20 years or so. Before she passed away I told her that I was actively trying to quit, and she was very happy."

Their concern for you is real.

Maybe you want to quit for them to set an example, or to protect them from second hand smoke. You could just want to have more control of your life.

Maybe you are tired of your car, house and clothes smelling like smoke. Or, it could be the most important reason – your health.

"I was having problems breathing. And to walk up a hill, it would hurt."

"I do find myself, you know, being out of shape per se ... when I'm trying, you know, if I run more than 10 feet, I'm going to know it."

The damage smoking does to your blood vessels leads to heart disease, lung disease, stroke, amputation. It causes cancer and can cause many other health issues, including ulcers erectile dysfunction. And smoking damages your skin and hair.

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If you smoke, quitting is the healthiest thing you can do. And the health benefits start immediately.

Within 20 minutes, your blood pressure and pulse rate decrease. In the first 8 hours, oxygen levels in your blood return to normal. Within 48 hours, your chance of heart attack decreases, your nerve endings start to regrow, and your ability to smell and taste improves.

As times passes, your lungs and circulation work better. And your risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, and ulcers all decrease.

You may have tried to quit before and are now going to try again.

"I did try before. I quit once for about 3 months when I was in college. I used the nicotine patch and, you know, I was successful for a while. But I just picked it back up again."

So, take some time to work on your reasons to quit. Once you have decided on your reasons to quit, write them down.

Keep your list with you and refer to it often. This list will remind you of why you are working to quit smoking and can help you stay motivated to reach your goal.