



Staying Motivated to Quit

You've set your quit date. You're ready to take the first step! What's next? How do you stay motivated not to smoke? There are lots of things that you can do to help you succeed.

Even before your quit date, you can:

- Make a firm commitment. Ask the people in your life to support you
- Remove any items in your home, car, and work area that are related to smoking, such as cigarettes, ash trays, lighters, and matches
- Make a list of all the reasons that you would like to quit. Hang the list in a place where you will see it every day

Your list can include things like:

- Better overall health
 - Improving the aging process
 - Saving money and time
 - Enjoying the tastes of food again¹
 - Your clothes, hair, breath, and skin will no longer smell like smoke
 - Fewer stains on your teeth and fingers
 - Avoiding the inconvenience of having to smoke outside or away from others
 - Not contributing to the secondhand smoke inhaled by others
 - Being in control of your life and decisions
- Choose a statement such as "I am a nonsmoker and proud of it." It can even be a word or 2, like: "Done" or "In control." Pick something that has meaning for you. Write it down and hang it up. Put it on your bathroom mirror, refrigerator, the dashboard of your car, your workstation, your calendar, in your wallet, or tape it to your cell phone. Put it everywhere, so you will see it all the time

The goal is to surround yourself with positive reminders. You can get support and encouragement from others, too. But, this is your lifestyle change. You have to find the strength to follow it through, no matter what else is going on around you.

Celebrate your success along the way

Once you start on your path to better health, you can create a rewards program for yourself. Set aside the money that you once spent on cigarettes. Use it toward improving your health even more. Make a list of rewards. Your first one could be for a subscription to a magazine that can help you learn more about things like healthy cooking, running, yoga, or other healthy things. You can use your extra money for new walking shoes, a massage or other spa treatment, or a gym membership.



A new you

Now that you've committed to not smoking, your life will change. Your body will change, too. It may change more quickly than you may think. After quitting for¹:

- 20 minutes, your blood pressure may decrease
- 8 hours, your oxygen level may increase
- 24 hours, your chance of a heart attack may decrease
- 2 weeks to 3 months, blood flow may improve and your lungs may work better
- 1 to 9 months, coughing, congestion, tiredness, and shortness of breath may decrease
- 1 year, excess risk of heart disease may be cut in half

If you have not done so already, set your quit date. Welcome the changes to your new life and your path to improved health!

Reference:

1. American Lung Association. Quit smoking. Benefits.
<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=33568>. Accessed March 19, 2008.