re-learn life without cigarettes.
About EX®

EX® was created by the American Legacy Foundation® with the help of quit smoking experts at Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center. It has been brought to the public by the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation (NATC).

The National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation (NATC) is a public and private partnership. It began with the work of the American Legacy Foundation, which is a national public health foundation. Legacy was formed to build a world where young people do not start using tobacco and anyone can learn how to quit. The work these organizations do helps people learn how to break their addiction to tobacco. NATC, made up of the American Legacy Foundation, state governments, foundations and other national organizations, brings you the EX program.

Mayo Clinic is the first and largest medical group practice in the world. At Mayo doctors of all types work together to care for patients under the belief that “The needs of the patient come first.” More than 50,000 doctors, scientists and staff work at three Mayo campuses in Minnesota, Florida and Arizona. Mayo Clinic treats more than half a million people each year. Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center has treated over 38,000 smokers trying to quit. Go to ndc.mayo.edu/ for more information.

National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation™

Additional Resources

BecomeAnEX.org is a free website that people can use to create a personalized quit smoking plan to re-learn life without cigarettes. They can also connect with other people who are trying to quit.

1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) is a toll-free phone number that people can call to be connected with their state tobacco quit lines.
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What is EX?

EX is a group of people who learned how to quit smoking. We did it with a plan we call the EX plan.

What is the EX plan?

- It’s a plan that helps you re-learn your life without cigarettes.
- It’s a plan that tells you how to quit, not why you should.
- It’s a plan made with the latest medical research.
- It’s a plan for people who have tried to quit before.

We know what it’s like to try to quit and not succeed. We’ve been there. But we were able to quit for good with this plan. And we want to show you how because it works. You’re probably saying, “I tried to quit before, and it didn’t work.” This time can be different.

Here’s how it works.

The plan has 3 steps. We call them “re-learning” steps.

You’ll learn how to do what you already know how to do — but in a different way.

1. Re-learn habit. You learn what makes you want to smoke and how to deal with those things without cigarettes.
2. Re-learn addiction*
   You learn the true power of nicotine and how to fight it.
3. Re-learn support. You learn how to ask for whatever help you need from friends and family.

And here’s the best part. You don’t have to quit smoking today. We want you to practice quitting before you stop smoking. Start thinking now about your quit day. Pick a day one or two weeks away. You’ll know what date is right for you. And then when you’re ready, you’ll do it. You will become an EX.

We bet you’ve never tried to quit this way before. You may have tried to go cold turkey. We did too, and it didn’t work for us, either.

The EX plan makes quitting easier. Really.

You’ll learn about triggers. You’ll practice not smoking when you face a trigger. You’ll learn what to do when you are craving a smoke. And you’ll learn how to live without cigarettes.

We call this last part “Staying an EX.”

*Words in red are in the glossary.
Emilio! How come we don’t see you out here as much anymore?

Hi, José. Nice to see you again. Since you asked, I finally stopped smoking. I have tried so many times to quit before — but I think I’m finally going to make it this time.

You really stopped smoking? I’ve tried so many times, too, but it never lasted.

Yup, brother, I did! Did it with a program called **EX**. They say it’s a stop-smoking plan created by ex-smokers and based on the latest scientific research. But I never thought it would work.

How is it different than all the other things I hear about?

Well, it helps you re-learn how to live without cigarettes. You don’t have to stop smoking right away. In fact, the plan asks that you take some time to look at when and why you smoke first. You should try it. It really is different.
The EX plan. Well, it’s simple, really. They call it “re-learning.” You re-learn how to do things without cigarettes, like drinking coffee, driving or dealing with stress. You also learn about addiction, the medication that can help you quit and how having support helps, too. And the best part is, it’s free!

Still not smoking?  

Nope. I’m hoping I have quit for good.

So this plan of yours...how does it work?

So it really works, huh? I don’t know.... I’ve tried too many times, and I always go back to smoking.

Well, you know how many times I tried to quit. I wasn’t sure the EX plan would work either. But here I am — breathing in fresh air for a change. Go figure.

Another day José and Emilio are outside their workplace.

Still not smoking?

So what do you do?

First you figure out what makes you want to smoke — like having a bad day or drinking coffee — and you practice NOT smoking at those times. For instance, wait until after you drink your coffee to smoke.

Interesting...tell me more about it.

You practice BEFORE you quit smoking. So by the time you quit, you’ve already done some of the hardest work. You’ve practiced fighting the urges to smoke caused by your “smoking triggers.”
All the reasons I can think of for quitting

The first step to becoming an EX is listing all your reasons for quitting. This list is really important. It will remind you why you’re quitting.

Here are a few of ours:

- I need to be there for my family.
- Cigarettes cost too much.
- I can’t smoke in a lot of places.

Write down all your reasons to quit:

- _____________________________________________
- _____________________________________________
- _____________________________________________
- _____________________________________________
- _____________________________________________

When you finish your list, put it aside for one or two days. Then read it again. Add more reasons if you have any.

Then write your 5 biggest reasons for quitting. Number 1 is your BIGGEST reason.

My 5 Biggest Reasons to Quit:

1. _____________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________
5. _____________________________________________

Keep this list with you. Read it often.
When you think about smoking, pull it out and read it again.

You can do it.
Because this time you’ll have a plan. Having a plan will help.
Raquel is writing a list with Alicia, her daughter, at the dinner table.

**In the** EX** plan, I need to write down all of the reasons I want to try to stop smoking.**

Mami, what are you writing?

**That should not be hard. You must have lots of reasons.**

First of all, I really do believe it is not good for me — and my doctor agrees — plus I know I should not be smoking around my grandkids.

I know, I know. It is not good for me and our family. I’ve tried before, but I still haven’t been able to quit. I would like to feel I could really overcome this addiction.

You are right about not smoking around them — especially my two little ones who have asthma.
Raquel is writing a list with Alicia, her daughter, at the dinner table.

We love you, Mami. We want you to quit, too. So what else — what other reasons do you have?

Yeah, it’s embarrassing having to scurry around when you’re out of cigarettes. I have even found myself looking in my ashtrays, trying to find some of the longer butts to smoke.

Personally, I would like to feel better. I don’t like it that I am often short of breath — plus I get sick a lot.

Yeah, that is true, and you get that bad cough at night. Do you have other reasons?

Yeah, that is true, and you get that bad cough at night. Do you have other reasons?

Last, of course, it is expensive. Even though I buy them all the time, I know I am just throwing my money away. If I quit, I will be able to save.

Sounds good, Mami. I will help you as much as I can. And with that money, we can go shopping!
Step 1: Re-learn habit.

A habit is something you do over and over again until it’s routine. You don’t even think about it. You just do it. We often do two habits together, like drink coffee and smoke. Doing them together becomes automatic.

As smokers, we just light up. It’s a habit. Think about the cigarette you just smoked. What were you doing when you lit up? Did it make you want to smoke? If it did, it’s what we call a trigger.

Here are some triggers we at EX had:
- When we drank coffee, we smoked.
- On the way to work, we smoked.
- After eating, we smoked.
- When we were mad at somebody, we smoked.
- When we felt nervous, we smoked.

These triggers had a lot of power over us. It was hard to do them without lighting up.

It’s important to know your triggers. They cause you to crave cigarettes. And when you quit, your triggers can cause you to smoke again.
Now let’s learn what your triggers are.

Once you know your triggers, you’ll learn to deal with them without smoking.

Here are some common triggers for smokers. Start thinking about which of these are triggers for you, too.

- Coffee or tea
- Finishing dinner
- Driving
- Friends who smoke
- Stress
- Drinking alcohol
- Having fun
- A fight
- Hanging out
- Feeling bored
- A good day
- A bad day
- Paying bills
- After sex
- Feeling sad
- Talking on the phone

One of the main reasons most people start smoking again after they quit is **stress**.
The Cigarette Tracker

This chart makes it easy for you to learn what your smoking triggers are. It’s called the Cigarette Tracker.

How to use the Cigarette Tracker:

1. Go to the back of this book.
2. Cut out one of the Cigarette Tracker charts.
4. Each time you smoke, write the following:

- The date and time of day you smoked
- How badly you needed to smoke
  (Was your craving very strong, strong, medium or light?)
- How you were feeling when you smoked (happy, sad, nervous, etc.)
- What you were doing before you decided to smoke

Be sure to track your cigarettes both at work and on your days off. Some people smoke more at home than at work. Try to keep track for 5 days in a row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Leaving work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why use the Cigarette Tracker?

You’ll learn which cigarettes you need the most. These are your “very strong” ones. They’re the hardest ones to give up.

When those of us at EX smoked, we had 5 or 6 “very strong” cigarettes a day. The rest we smoked just because they were there. We didn’t even think about it. They just helped pass the time.

The cigarette tracker makes it easy for you to learn which cigarette you crave the most.

What is your #1 trigger? _____________________________

Here’s how to rate your need:

VS — Very Strong means
“I had to have a cigarette right away!”

S — Strong means
“I really needed a cigarette!”

M — Medium means
“It felt good. But I wasn’t craving it.”

L — Light means
“I smoked it just because it was there.”
Maria and Roberto are visiting their friend Angel, who is an ex-smoker.

To quit smoking, I started by writing down all the things that make me want to light up a cigarette. These are called my triggers.

Like a drink? I like to go with my friends after work for a drink some days. I can’t imagine having a drink without a cigarette.

True. Many ex-smokers had the urge to smoke when they were drinking. What else?

I almost always smoke when I am on the phone. Not at the office though. We can’t smoke there. So I have to go outside to smoke. I hate doing that!

Good. You need to know your triggers. They cause you to smoke. And when you quit, they can make you go back to smoking.

I have to have a cigarette with my first cup of coffee every morning. I never skip that cigarette.
Maria and Roberto are visiting their friend Angel, who is an ex-smoker.

So what other triggers do you have?

To be honest with you, I can use just about anything as a trigger, an excuse to light up. Especially stress.

How about you, Roberto?

I smoke while I am driving back and forth to work. I light up a cigarette when I get on the freeway. A smoke and the radio make the drive go faster.

It helps to know what your main triggers are. Those are the triggers that will really make you want to start smoking again once you quit. Once you know what they are, you can learn how to separate them from smoking.
Start separating your triggers from smoking *before* you quit.

This exercise helps you *separate* the trigger from your need to smoke. This will make quitting easier.

Really. Trust us — this works.

**Trigger Exercise #1**

If one of your triggers is your first cup of coffee in the morning, do the following:

1. Stop. Do not light up.
2. Instead drink your coffee first.
3. Eat breakfast.
4. Then smoke.

You’re just putting a little time between your coffee trigger and your first cigarette of the day.

The next morning, do the same thing. But this time **wait 10 minutes** after you finish your breakfast. *Then* smoke.

The next day, see if you can wait **15 minutes**. Do this every morning for a few days. Soon you will not always think about smoking when you drink coffee.

**Trigger Exercise #2**

If you smoke when you are driving, do this:

1. Put your cigarettes in the trunk of the car or in the bottom of your bag.
2. Drive.
3. When you get to your destination, *then* smoke.
The next morning, do the same thing. But this time, after you get to work or wherever you are going, wait 5 minutes before lighting up.

The next day, try to wait 10 minutes before lighting up. Once you’ve tried this for a week or so, you won’t always think “I need a cigarette” when you drive.

**Trigger Exercise #3**

If you smoke when you are upset, do this:

1. Stop. Do not light up.
2. Take a few deep breaths.
3. Call a friend or a relative.
4. Wait 10 minutes.
5. Then have your smoke.
6. The next time you are upset about something, wait 15 minutes before you light up.

Try this with all of your triggers. Put a little time between your trigger and a cigarette. Keep adding more time. Before you know it, you’ve separated your triggers from your cigarettes.

**You can do it.**

The idea is to separate your triggers before you stop smoking. That way when you do quit, it’ll be easier to handle your triggers.
Luis is telling his wife, Alicia, about his practice quitting.

What are you doing down here before me?

You know how I am trying to quit smoking? Well, this is an EX plan “trigger exercise” that I have been working on.

Oh, yeah. What do you do?

Well, I always have a smoke with my first cup of coffee.

Yeah, I always see you lighting up in the morning. Right about...this time. So why aren't you smoking?

Well, now I drink my coffee and eat breakfast first. THEN I will have that morning cigarette.
Luis is telling his wife, Alicia, about his practice quitting.

Why does all this waiting help when you quit? By the way, do you want breakfast?

No, don’t worry — I just had sweet bread. The waiting helps because I am re-learning how to drink coffee without cigarettes. I am actually practicing having a cup of coffee — one of my smoking triggers — WITHOUT having a cigarette.

That’s great, honey! So you still do all the same things you normally do?

You bet. But for now, I am putting some time between those things and the cigarettes. I wait at least 15 minutes before my first cigarette.

And how does that help you?

It’s breaking the connection between my triggers and the cigarettes. I am re-learning that I CAN do things like have coffee without a cigarette.
Nicotine is a chemical in tobacco. Nicotine is a drug. As smokers, our bodies crave nicotine. We need it. We become addicted to it.

It’s important to know that nicotine does not cause cancer. It’s all of the other dangerous chemicals in tobacco smoke that cause cancer and other diseases. These chemicals can make us sick and even kill us.

How nicotine works:

1. You inhale the smoke.
2. The nicotine in the smoke goes right to your brain. It only takes about 10 seconds.
3. Your brain gets the nicotine and likes it.
4. When you finish smoking, the amount of nicotine in your blood starts to go down.
5. Soon your brain and your body crave more nicotine. (This is withdrawal.)
6. You smoke again because you need to. Your body doesn’t want you to stop.

Smoking makes you feel better, right? Well, not really. It just keeps you from feeling bad. It keeps you from feeling withdrawal pains.
So here’s what happens when you quit.

When you quit smoking, your body goes through withdrawal. You **need** more nicotine. Your body craves it.

At EX we found that **medicine** really helped our bodies deal with withdrawal. It can help you, too.

**When you quit, you might feel these things:**

- Sad
- Anxious
- Angry
- Frustrated
- Grouchy
- Restless
- Trouble sleeping
- Not able to focus
- Headaches
- Tired
- Hungry
**Medicine can help you deal with these feelings.**

It can also improve your chances for success.

Yes, people can quit without medicine. But with medicine, you increase your chances of quitting.

**How do these medicines work?**

Some medicine works by giving your body a little nicotine.

Just enough to make you feel better.

Just enough to take the edge off.

There are also medicines with no nicotine.

They can also increase your chances.

Medicine reduces withdrawal. It helps you feel more in control while you try to quit.

Talk to your doctor before you take any medicine.

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**Why take medicine?**

The #1 reason is that it can double your chances of stopping smoking.

Medicine is like a good tool.
A good tool makes a job easier.

Medicine makes quitting easier.

When you crave a cigarette, medicine will control that craving for nicotine.

After a while, your body won’t crave nicotine at all.
And then you can stop taking the medicine.

You may say, “**Medicine didn’t help when I used it before.**”

Here at EX, some of us once felt the same way. We used medicine.

It didn’t seem to work. Now we know better.

The reason it didn’t work before was because we didn’t use the medicine as part of a plan.

Now you have the EX plan to guide you.

And medicine is one part of the plan.
Here are some medicines:

- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine lozenges
- Nicotine patch
- Nicotine inhaler
- Nicotine nasal (nose) spray
- Non-nicotine medicine

How do these medicines help?

- Gum or lozenges keep your mouth busy. They give you small, quick doses of nicotine when you need it.
- The patch gives you nicotine more slowly. It’s pretty easy to use. You put it on and forget about it.
- The nasal spray gets the nicotine into your system fast.
- There are also medicines that have no nicotine. They can help you quit, too.

Ask your doctor which medicine is best for you.

It may be okay to use more than one medicine at a time. But always use your medicine like your doctor tells you to or like it says on the package, or it might not work.

Try one kind. If it doesn’t help, try another. When you decide on a medicine, get some to keep at home. That way you’ll be ready when it’s time to quit.
José visits Emilio over the weekend. Emilio has nicotine lozenges.

It’s a nicotine lozenge. It really helps. It gives my body some nicotine while I am trying to break the other habits that go with the smoking addiction. It is just one of the things I am doing to quit.

What is that? Is that nicotine medicine?

Yeah, well. I tried medicine before, but it didn’t help at all.

Where did you get those lozenges?

From the doctor at the health center. He gave me specific instructions about how to use them and for how long so that they really work. You need a prescription for some of these stop-smoking medicines. So talk to your doctor.

I thought the same thing, but that was before I started the EX plan. If you don’t have a plan, then the medicine may not be enough. Medicine alone can’t help you change your habits — like always smoking when you have a beer — it just helps your body withdraw from nicotine.
Step 3: Re-learn support.

If you’ve tried to quit smoking, you know how hard it is.
You say, “This time will be different.”
But then you relapse and start smoking again.

You feel guilty.
You told your family and friends you were quitting.
Now what do you tell them?
It’s embarrassing, isn’t it?
Soon you get tired of telling people.

So the next time you try to quit, you tell no one.
You keep it a secret.
That way if you start smoking again, no one knows.

Guess what?
At EX we did the same thing.
Re-learn support

There’s no shame in relapse.

The EX plan is a smart plan. And part of a smart plan is asking for help. That’s what we mean when we say re-learn support.
You may say, “Why should I ask for help?”
We say, “Because quitting is hard to do all by yourself.”

Your chances of success are better if you get help from the people in your life.
If your smoking friends or family know you’re trying to quit, maybe they won’t smoke around you. They may even try to quit, too.
You may need some space from those who smoke.
• Be sure to tell them why.
• Tell them what you are trying to do.
• Tell them how hard it is.
• Tell them how much you want to stop smoking.
Support is another tool, like medicine.

How to ask for help.

Family and friends can be a lot of help. But...they can also be triggers.

You don’t have to tell everyone that you are quitting.

Tell just a few key people, the ones you know will support you.
Re-learn support

Decide who to ask for support.

Answer these questions.

Who can support me at home?
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Who can support me at work?
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Which friends will help the most when I’m quitting?
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Which friends will be less helpful when I’m quitting?
___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________

Help can come in different ways:

- If you have a craving, talk to someone instead of lighting up.
- Maybe you want people to leave you alone for a while.
- Maybe you want them not to ask you about smoking.
- It is OK to ask people not to smoke around you. Tell them it’s only for a while.

Most people in your life will be happy to hear you’re quitting.
Chances are they’ll be happy to help you.
As you work this plan, you’ll meet people who are also quitting.
They can be some of the best support you’ll get.

Some people may not be much help.

They might smoke right in front of you.
They may make fun of your plans.
But they’re still friends. They’re still family.
They’re still part of your life, even if cigarettes are not.
At **EX** most of our friends and family helped us. Some didn’t.
Some of your friends may not be much help.

**Here’s what you can say to them.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A friend says:</th>
<th>Tell them:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Come on — you know you can’t quit.”</td>
<td>“You know what? I may not be able to quit. But I am going to try. You could help me, you know. Please don’t offer me any cigarettes. And please don’t smoke around me. Let’s see if I can pull this off.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We’re going to a bar tonight. Aren’t you coming?”</td>
<td>“Give me some time to get going on this quit smoking thing. I need to get past the first few weeks. Then I’ll be there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why are you doing this?”</td>
<td>“This is my doctor’s idea. She says I really have to quit.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**And when you need more help, try these ideas:**

- **Join a free online group at BecomeAnEX.org.**
  This can really help if you live with a smoker.

- **Get a quit coach.** It’s free. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
  Services are available in both English and Spanish. Or call a local stop-smoking program.

- **Talk to others who are trying to quit.**
  They can help you stay strong at home and work.

- **Quit with a friend.** Going through all this with a friend can help.
  If you feel like giving up, they might help you keep going.
  But remember, you are quitting for you, not your friend.

- **Enter a live-in treatment program** like the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center.
  It’s an 8-day program that has helped a lot of people quit smoking.
José and Emilio are on their lunch hour, on their way to a deli.

Still not smoking?

Yep, still not smoking. I have tried to quit so many times. But this time is different.

How is it different?

One of the things I’m doing is asking friends and family for a little support, just during these first few weeks. Most people are very willing to help.

Look, I may tease you but I am really with you — so are the other guys. In fact, we are all a little jealous that we haven’t had any luck quitting. I’ll ask the guys not to smoke around you when we’re hanging out together. Hey, want to eat at that place down the block? It’s nonsmoking.

Thanks, my brother. I can use all the help I can get.
Becoming an EX

Let’s go over what you’ve done so far.

- You decided to quit.
- You wrote down your reasons for quitting.
- You figured out what your triggers are.
- You practiced separating cigarettes from your triggers.
- You got your quit smoking medicine.
- You asked your close friends and family for support.

Now there are 3 more things you need to do before you actually quit smoking.

1. Pick your quit day.
2. Write it everywhere.
3. Get ready to become an ex-smoker.

This is like training for a game.
You get your body and mind ready for the big day.
Your big day is your quit day.

Are you ready?
Now pick your quit day.

Pick a day that’s 1 or 2 weeks from now.
It’s a good idea to avoid holidays, like Christmas.
Don’t pick a day you know will be stressful.
Pick one you think will be relaxing.

We know it’s hard to say,
“OK, this is the day I’m going to quit.”
But don’t let that stop you.
Pick the best day that you can and stick with it.

Did you choose a day? Great.
Now write it everywhere.

- Circle it on all your calendars.
- Write the date on a piece of paper.
  Tape it to your bathroom mirror.
- Put the date all over the place if you want to.
  It’s a good reminder.

Now get ready to become an ex-smoker.

Just before your quit day, throw away all the things that remind you of smoking.
- Toss your ashtrays, lighters and matches.
- Wash the smoke smell out of your clothes.
- Clean the inside of your car to get rid of the smoke smell.
- Get rid of any spare packs of cigarettes.
- Have sugarless gum and healthy snacks on hand.
Now let’s talk about stress.

Stress is a big deal for most of us. A cigarette really seems to help, right?

- It gets you outside.
- It gets you away from the problem.
- It calms you down.

But now it’s time to re-learn stress without cigarettes.

Here are 4 things that helped us:

1. **Learn to deal with stress in new ways.**

   Stress is hard for all of us. If you know what stresses you out, you can get ready for it.

   **Make a list of things that stress you out.**

   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

   Think of ways to deal with stress *instead* of smoking. Breathe deeply. Go outside. Walk around the block to clear your mind. Do something active. Listen to music.

   **Things I can do instead of smoke:**

   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
2. Be good to yourself.

When you feel healthy, it’s easier to let go of stress.

Try these things:

- Cut down on caffeine. You may feel the effects of caffeine more after you quit smoking.
- Visit with a good friend.
- Sleep. Take a short nap if you can.
- Get as much exercise as you can. Even a walk can help.
- Do something that keeps your hands busy.
- Do something that calms you.
3. Learn to eat healthy.

When you quit smoking, you might eat more. Snacking keeps your hands busy. And that’s good. But you may gain weight when you don’t want to.

If the thought of weight gain is causing you stress, here are some ideas that can help.

- Drink lots of water. It can help your stomach feel full.
- Eat all the fruits and veggies you want.
- Eat baby carrots or an apple when you crave crunchy food.
- Eat low-fat popcorn or crackers.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy foods.
- Eat whole-grain breads and cereals.

Other things you can do:

- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Try not to drink alcohol, at least for a few weeks. Alcohol is one of the biggest reasons we start smoking again.
- Treat yourself to a low-calorie dessert every once in a while.
4. Learn to ask for what you need.

Having people smoke around you can cause added stress when you are quitting.

It’s OK to ask people not to smoke around you. You have a right not to smoke. Just as they have a right to smoke. But you can ask them to please smoke outside or not in front of you. If you ask nicely, most people will understand.

Explain that it’s just for now. After a while, not smoking will be easier for you. You’ll feel stronger. It’ll be easier to say “no” to smoking when someone else is smoking.

But for now, ask them to respect your needs and help you by not smoking around you.
Staying an EX

When those of us at EX quit smoking, we found there were 3 big triggers that could cause us to slip or relapse.

1. Dealing with stress
2. Drinking alcohol
3. Being around smokers

Be extra careful when drinking alcohol. Even a little bit can make you slip. You let down your guard. You think you can smoke just one. But that one is often the first of many cigarettes. And you’ll be back to smoking.

So we have another tool. At EX we say, “If you don’t want to slip, stay away from slippery places.”

Avoid bars or parties for a few weeks until you can handle being around alcohol and not smoking.
Signs you’re about to slip and light up

If you hear yourself saying or thinking these things, it’s a sign you’re about to slip:

“Come on. I’ve quit for 3 weeks. I have proved I can do it. I can have just one cigarette. I’ll be fine, really.”

“I can’t do my job without cigarettes. I can’t think straight. Smoking is part of my job.”

“Just this one time. When I get home, I’ll stop.”

“I am going to quit smoking, really. But these holiday parties make it too hard. I just picked a bad time to quit. I’ll quit again later.”

“My aunt smoked a pack a day and lived to 95.”
Here are other signs that you’re about to slip:

“Life is not as much fun as it was when I smoked.”

“What the heck. Everybody’s got to die of something.”

“OK, just this once.”

“I’ll smoke one of these ‘light’ cigarettes. They’re not as bad, right?”

“I can quit anytime I want — next week may be better.”

“There are too many other smokers around me.”

There are plenty of ways you can slip. If you feel like you’re going to smoke, leave the place where you are. Walk away. Just get out of there.

Be ready for a slip.

Here’s what you can do:
• If you hear yourself thinking these thoughts, get out.
• If you’re alone, call a friend.
• If you’re drinking alcohol, stop.
• If you’re at a party, leave.

Other things you can do:
• Eat a healthy snack.
• Go for a walk.
• Use your quit smoking medicine.
• Reread your list of reasons for quitting.
• Hang out in places you’re not allowed to smoke.
• Look at photos of your kids or anyone else you love. Remember, they want you to be healthy.
If you do slip, don’t give up.

Don’t beat yourself up, either. You can get back on track. We did and you can, too.

You can learn from your slip.

Take a minute to think about what happened. What were you doing when you slipped? Was it a trigger? Did you go to one of those slippery places, like a bar? Remember: Most ex-smokers tried 8 to 11 times before they quit for good. So hang in there and keep trying.

You’ll feel so much healthier because you did. You’ll be glad you became an EX.

Ideas to keep you from slipping:

• It’s easy to slip if you’re hungry, angry, lonely or tired.
• Practice how to say “no, thanks” when someone offers you a cigarette.
• If you get a craving, wait 10 minutes before you smoke. Usually, the craving will pass.
• Don’t bum a cigarette.
• Think about having to tell your loved ones you gave up.
“I am finally an EX. It’s been tough — I slipped up a couple of times. But I just tried again. In fact, I’ve learned that it takes most people a few tries to quit for good.”

The EX quit plan helped me re-learn how to live without cigarettes.

1. I re-learned how to deal with things that make me want to smoke. I tackled my triggers one by one and learned I could do all the things I normally do WITHOUT smoking.

2. I re-learned the whole idea of what addiction is. I thought I knew but I didn’t. And once I did know, I understood WHY medication can help you quit — and I learned HOW to use it properly.

3. And finally, I re-learned how to get support from the people in my life, even friends and family who still smoke.

“But what has really changed is that I feel better than I have for years. My family is also happy for me. They know I am healthier now. I feel proud of myself. I have fought the battles, but now I think I may have won the war.”
The Cigarette Tracker

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The three steps to re-learning

1. Re-learn habit.
   Put time between your triggers and your cigarettes.

2. Re-learn addiction.
   Use your quit smoking medicine.

3. Re-learn support.
   Ask for help.

My biggest reason for quitting:

My biggest trigger is:

When you feel you might slip...
1. Go for a walk.
2. Call a friend who supports your quitting.
3. Eat a healthy snack.
4. Read your list of reasons for quitting.
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**Addiction** *(a-dic-shun)* — when you depend on a drug, like nicotine. If you don’t have the drug, you go through withdrawal.

**Cold turkey** — when you quit something all at once, without having a plan.

**Craving** — an urge to smoke that is caused by a trigger. Cravings may last a few minutes but can happen often. After you quit and some time has passed, you may not have as many cravings.

**Nicotine** *(nik-uh-teen)* — the chemical in tobacco that causes addiction.

**Relapse** *(re-laps)* — when a person who has quit smoking starts smoking again.

**Trigger** — something that causes something else to happen. A cup of coffee can trigger the need to smoke.

**Withdrawal** *(with-drawl)* — bad feelings or a change in mood that can happen when a person stops using an addictive drug like nicotine. Withdrawal usually disappears 10 to 14 days after stopping smoking.