



# QUITTING TIME

When was the last time you smelled the subtle floral scents within the air or really tasted your food? Do you miss having fresh breath and clothes that don't smell of smoke? Are you tired of getting short of breath when you do just a little bit of cardio exercise? Have you tried to quit smoking, but found yourself back at it? These natural stop-smoking aids can help.

/// Dr. Michele Burkland, NMD

It is estimated that 36.5 million adults in the United States currently smoke cigarettes, which means, most likely, you or someone you know has battled with smoking. These days everyone is familiar with the impact smoking has on the body, so why do some people still do it? Why can't they simply quit? Most likely, friends and family have encouraged them to stop at some point or another, but to no avail. Understanding the effects, which include premature aging, an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, nutrient deficiencies, and decreased life span, is sometimes not enough to overcome the addiction. They might have tried to quit numerous times, and maybe they even made it a week or two, but somehow they always end up going back.

To some, smoking a cigarette is more than just a bad habit; it's a ritual that is used to address many physical and emotional states. In order to finally end the addiction to smoking, and to prevent future relapses, you need a holistic approach—one that integrates both physical and emotional symptoms along with a real, concrete plan. By integrating the latest research, science-backed natural remedies, and other proven techniques, it is possible to quit smoking, and stay smoke-free.

## Treating the Physical Symptoms

Nicotine withdrawal can begin within 30 minutes of your last cigarette. The first days are the most intense, but remember that these cravings become less frequent and less intense with time. Here are some proven techniques for dealing with those cravings:

**Exercise:** A study published by the *Journal of Psychopharmacology* found that exercise had a positive effect on smoking. The trial included 15 different studies that evaluated variables, including the desire to smoke and the strength of the desire. Again and again researchers found that many different exercises, including yoga and high-intensity activities, had positive results on reducing cravings. So, next time you have a craving, try embracing the outdoors and go for a 15-minute walk instead.

**Deep Breathing:** Techniques that focus on breath work, such as taking a series of deep breaths, diaphragmatic breathing, and directed breathing, are an effective and easy way to reduce cravings. A study published in *The Journal of Addictive Behaviors* found that taking a

series of deep breaths every 30 minutes significantly reduced smoking withdrawal symptoms, including cravings and irritability. Have an urge? Try taking several deep breaths and notice that desire begin to slip away.

## Treating the Emotional Symptoms

Feelings such as irritability, anxiety, and even depression can occur as the body begins to withdraw from nicotine. Breaking the psychological addiction can be difficult because the limbic system, also known as the reward center of the brain, is stimulated with each cigarette. The urge to light up can feel uncomfortable as the brain and body begin to detoxify. The good news is that in as little as a month after your last cigarette, a large number of nicotine receptors in the brain will return to normal. Remember that each day will get better, and the cravings will decrease as your brain chemistry rebalances.

**Feeling Irritable?** Try taking GABA, a calming neurotransmitter that could help reduce cravings. A 2013 study performed by the University of California's Department of Psychiatry analyzed the role that GABA plays in nicotine addiction, and concluded that integrating this supplement could be useful in promoting smoking cessation.

**Can't Relax?** Try this 10-minute technique: A recent study revealed that individuals who were experiencing acute nicotine cravings and who participated in a 10-minute relaxation technique reported significantly lower cravings afterward. Participants also reported lower levels of irritability, tension, and restlessness compared to the control group. Next time you're feeling the urge, find a quiet place and slowly relax the muscles in your body, starting with your feet and working your way up all the way to the crown of your head.



## Addressing the Triggers

These are moments in your daily life that exacerbate the craving for cigarettes. For example, maybe every morning you used to have your first cigarette with a cup of coffee. Or perhaps you always lit up when drinking alcohol. Acknowledging these situations and creating new patterns can help. Write down the moments where your cravings are the most intense and think of new, healthier alternatives that can take their place. Here are some ideas to get you started.

### REPLACE

- ▶ Coffee with green tea
- ▶ Alcohol with kombucha
- ▶ Hanging out with smokers with joining an exercise class

A study published by *The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry* found that drinking green tea regularly might protect smokers from oxidative damage, and could also reduce their risk of cancer by decreasing the free radicals associated with smoking. Replacing your morning coffee with cup of green tea not only

reduces the urge for a cigarette, but also nourishes the body by replenishing much-needed antioxidants.

## Replenish

Did you know that smoking actually reduces the amounts of certain nutrients in your body? An article from *Progress in Food and Nutrition Science Journal* found that smoking could lower plasma levels of vitamin C and beta-carotene, as well as reduce the bioavailability of selenium. Some studies have also indicated that smokers have suboptimal levels of vitamin E, a potent antioxidant, and some of the B vitamins.

The bright side is that the body begins to rebalance itself in as little as 20 minutes after your last cigarette. In just eight hours after quitting, the carbon monoxide level in the blood returns to normal and the oxygen levels increase. Heal your body from the inside out with whole foods, nutrient-packed smoothies, and vitamins.

## Nourish

Nourish the body with foods high in vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, papayas, bell peppers, guava, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, tomatoes, and strawberries. You can restore lost antioxidants with beta carotene-rich foods such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and dark leafy greens, including kale and spinach. Increasing your intake of vitamin E will help rebuild your body's reserves. Try eating fruits, veggies and nuts. Avocados, almonds, olive oil, and kiwi are some great ones to try.

## Detox

A report published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that cigarettes contain more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds of harmful substances, and at least 70 that are linked to cancer. Chemicals such as ammonia, which is used for cleaning products; carbon monoxide, found in car exhaust;

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and even arsenic, found in products like rat poison, were all detected in cigarette smoke. The body does a great job at detoxifying itself and works around the clock to eliminate toxins, but sometimes it needs a little help.

Here are some easy ways to support the body's natural detoxification pathways

**Drink Water:** Flush out toxins by drinking about 6-8 (8 oz.) glasses of water per day. Try adding a slice of lemon for a vitamin C boost.

**NAC:** N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) is well-known as a potent antioxidant and detoxifier, but it's also used as a "mucolytic" for its ability to break up mucus, making it easier to cough up.

As the lungs begin to heal, you might find yourself coughing more than usual. This occurs as the cilia regenerate and more mucus is cleared, as this is part of the normal healing process. NAC can help support the lungs' natural ability to heal and detoxify.

**Castor Oil Packs:** This traditional remedy has been used to reduce inflammation, aid detoxification, and promote healing. Try this time-tested folk treatment: apply it topically over your liver and lungs to support their rejuvenation.

#### SUPPLEMENTS TO HELP YOU QUIT



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Perfect Food  
Alkalizer &  
Detoxifier



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Sinus Health



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