



If You Quit Using Tobacco

Cold Turkey

WHAT TO EXPECT

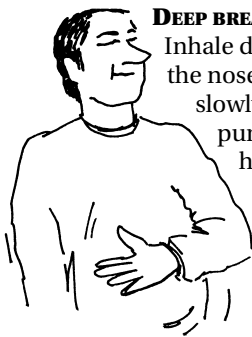
Now that you've decided to stop using tobacco, there are several roads you can follow to a tobacco-free life. One is to quit cold turkey, relying solely on your desire to quit, self-control and discipline to achieve your goal. It won't be easy and you may have withdrawal symptoms, but there are techniques to help you over the low spots.

Withdrawal Woes

Because you have become chemically dependent on nicotine, you may have to cope with withdrawal symptoms. The longer you have used tobacco, the more difficult it will be, because the drug has gained firm and demanding control over your body. You will probably feel irritable, anxious and nervous. You may find it hard to concentrate. You may feel restless or drowsy or you may have headaches or stomach upsets. But most of all, you are going to have a strong craving for nicotine. Here is the good news. All of these symptoms will begin to fade as you distance yourself from tobacco. They usually peak on the third day after quitting, then gradually disappear, although the craving may pop up again at any time.

What to Do

Medical and psychological researchers have developed a few simple methods that may help you through the withdrawal woes:

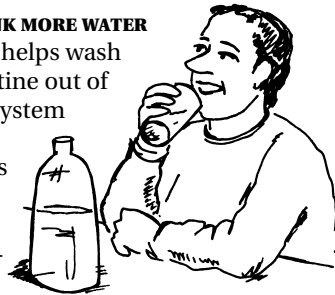


DEEP BREATHING

Inhale deeply through the nose, then exhale slowly through pursed lips. This helps you relax and generally relieves tension and irritability.

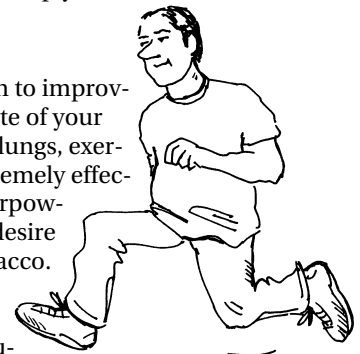
DRINK MORE WATER

This helps wash nicotine out of the system and helps curb the craving for nicotine.



EXERCISE

In addition to improving the state of your heart and lungs, exercise is extremely effective in overpowering the desire to use tobacco. Aerobic exercises are particularly recommended, including walking, running and swimming.



Changing Your Habits

In addition to the three simple procedures listed above, you should begin to work on changing parts of your daily routine that trigger tobacco use. If a cup of coffee automatically means lighting up, switch to a glass of fruit juice. If you always smoke after a meal, get up as soon as you are finished and do something else. Make yourself conscious of the times you react automatically—when the phone rings, when you get into the car, when you turn on the TV—and work hard to change those patterns. Keep busy, pick up an old hobby, chew on a toothpick or carrot. It's important to remember that the urge to smoke will pass, so keep diverting your mind and body away from cigarettes.

Rewards

You should be proud of yourself when you quit cold turkey or any other way. It's a difficult path, lined with many temptations, so don't hesitate to reward yourself when you have passed a particularly difficult period. Go out for a special dinner. Buy yourself a little gift. Or get tickets to a concert or play. Since you're in the process of kicking a dangerous, deadly habit, you deserve a special "thank you" to yourself.