

WELLNESS WORKS



January 2019

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Happy New Year! If you're like 40% of Americans, you've made (or are thinking of making) a New Year's Resolution. If you've ever tried before, you know that some resolutions are harder to keep than others. A lot of the challenge has to do with building healthy habits, but once a habit is established, the resolution is easier to keep. This month, we're looking at smoking cessation, one of the biggest-impact health changes you can make, as well as tips for keeping any kind of resolution.

Make a resolution to quit smoking

It's hard to quit smoking. But quitting can be a bit easier if you have a plan. When you think you're ready to quit, here are a few simple steps you can take to put your plan into action.

Commit to your quit

Set your quit date. The first step to becoming smoke free is to choose when you want to quit.

Give yourself time to prepare. Preparation can help you build the confidence and skills you need to stay smoke free. Check out resources both online and from your doctor to provide the best chance of success.

Don't put it off for too long. Picking a date too far away gives you time to change your mind or become less motivated. Choose a date that is no more than a week or two away.

Try quitting on a Monday. Many people who quit on Mondays feel more confident about quitting—it can be the fresh start you need to begin your smoke free journey. (This is also a good reason to quit in January—it's a fresh start). You can also use Mondays to recommit to your quit every week, set goals for the week, contact your support system, or reset your quit date if you slipped.

Do a practice quit. Practice quitting for 1, 3, or 5 days before you resolve to kick the habit permanently.

Know why you're quitting

Before you actually quit, it's important to know why you're doing it. Do you want to be healthier? Save money? Keep your family safe? If you're not sure, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I dislike about smoking?
- What do I miss out on when I smoke?
- How is smoking affecting my health?
- What will happen to me and my family if I keep smoking?
- How will my life get better when I quit?

Learn how to handle your triggers and cravings

Triggers are specific persons, places, or activities that make you feel like smoking. Knowing your smoking triggers can help you learn to deal with them.



Building Healthy Habits

Making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle. No matter what habit you're trying to form (or break), certain strategies can always help you achieve your goal.

- **Plan.** Identify unhealthy patterns and triggers. Set realistic goals. Write down steps to help you achieve them.
- **Change your surroundings.** Remove temptations. Work for changes in your community, like safe places to walk.
- **Ask for support.** Find friends, family, co-workers, or groups for support or ask people to join you.
- **Fill your time with healthy activities.** Try exercise, a favorite hobby, or spending time with family and friends.
- **Track your progress.** Record how things are going to help you stay focused and catch slip-ups.
- **Imagine the future.** Think about future benefits to stay on track.
- **Reward yourself.** Give yourself a healthy reward when you've achieved a small goal or milestone, like a massage or personal time.
- **Be patient.** Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.

Adapted from [NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)

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Cravings are short, but intense, urges to smoke. They usually only last a few minutes. Plan ahead and come up with a list of short activities you can do when you get a craving. Here are a few ideas:

Keep your mouth busy. Chew a stick of gum instead of picking up a cigarette. Keep hard candy with you. Drink more water.

Do something else. When a nicotine craving hits, stop what you're doing immediately and switch to something different. Simply changing your routine might help you shake off a craving.

Go for a walk or jog. Or go up and down the stairs a few times. Physical activity, even in short bursts, can help boost your energy and beat a craving.

Take slow, deep breaths. Breathe through your craving. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Repeat this 10 times or until you're feeling more relaxed.

Find ways to handle nicotine withdrawal

During the first few weeks after you quit, you may feel uncomfortable and crave a cigarette. These unpleasant symptoms of quitting smoking are known as withdrawal. Withdrawal is common among smokers who quit, whether they are doing it cold turkey or with the help of medications, counseling, or other tools.

During withdrawals, your body is getting used to not having nicotine from cigarettes. For most people, the worst symptoms of withdrawal last a few days to a few weeks. During this time, you may:

- Feel a little depressed;
- Be unable to sleep;
- Become cranky, frustrated, or mad;
- Feel anxious, nervous, or restless; and
- Have trouble thinking clearly.

You may be tempted to smoke to relieve these feelings. Just remember that they are temporary, no matter how powerful they feel at the time.

Try nicotine replacement therapy

One of the best ways to deal with nicotine withdrawal is to try nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). It's not for everyone, but NRT can reduce withdrawal symptoms. And NRT can double your chances of quitting smoking for good. NRT comes in several different forms, including gum, patch, nasal spray, inhaler, and lozenge. Many are available without a prescription.

A lot of research has been done on NRT. It has been shown to be safe and effective for almost all smokers who want to quit. But teens, pregnant women, and people with severe medical conditions should talk to their doctor before using NRT.

If you plan to use NRT, remember to have it available on your quit day. Read the instructions on the NRT package and follow them carefully.

Tell your family and friends you plan to quit

Quitting smoking is easier when the people in your life support you. Let them know you are planning to quit and explain how they can help. Here are a few tips:

- Tell your family and friends your reasons for quitting.
- Ask them to check in with you to see how things are going, especially on your quit date.
- Ask them to help you think of smoke free activities you can do together (like going to the movies or a nice restaurant).
- Ask a friend or family member who smokes to quit with you, or at least not smoke around you.
- Ask your friends and family not to give you a cigarette—no matter what you say or do.
- Alert your friends and family that you may be in a bad mood while quitting. Ask them to be patient and help you through it.

Get some help. Check out smokefree.gov for quit plans, apps, and resources to help you quit smoking.

Adapted from smokefree.gov



Recipe of the Month:

Winter Citrus Salad with Honey Dressing

Dreary winter months mean that seasonal vegetables dwindle in number. Luckily, citrus is abundant this time of year, and this recipe is a refreshing change from your run-of-the-mill green leaf salads.

Ingredients

- 2 blood oranges or tangerines
- 1 pink grapefruit
- 1 navel orange
- Salt
- 1/2 small red onion or 1 shallot, chopped
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- Lime or lemon juice to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly chopped tarragon, or a pinch dried

Instructions

Peel citrus, removing as much pith as possible, and slice into wheels. Remove any pits, layer fruit on a serving dish, sprinkle with salt, and garnish with chopped onion.

Whisk together olive oil, vinegar, honey, lime juice and tarragon until well combined; taste, adjust seasoning as needed and drizzle over salad.

Nutrition per serving (serves 4):

Calories: 181; Fat: 11g; Saturated Fat: 1.5g; Sodium: 122mg; Carbohydrates: 22g; Fiber: 5g; Protein: 1g; Sugars: 16g

Courtesy of Cooking Channel