

Quit Smoking: Why and How

Quitting smoking may be one of the hardest lifestyle changes to make. But it's the most important step you can take to improve and preserve your quality of life.

Why quit smoking?

The benefits of quitting are numerous, significant, and undeniable.

When you quit, you'll have less

- Coughing
- Airway inflammation
- Risk of heart disease, [lung disease](#), and cancer
- Lung damage and loss of lung function
- Risk of other health effects
- Destruction of alpha-1 antitrypsin
- Mess, smell, and burnt holes in clothing and furniture

When you quit, you'll have

- More energy
- More money to spend on other things
- Better digestion and liver function
- A healthier home environment — for you, your family, and guests

How to make a plan to quit smoking

There are many resources available to help you quit smoking.

- The [American Lung Association](#) and the [American Cancer Society](#) offer smoking cessation programs.
- Your doctor can refer you to smoking cessation programs in your area and talk to you about your treatment options.
- You can find many resources on the Internet.

Step 1: Find your “why.”

What's your motivation for quitting? For some, it's getting an Alpha-1 diagnosis.

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Step 2: Get support. Your doctor can help you create your plan. Then, you can share it with your family and friends, and enlist their help and support.

Step 3: Set a quit date. Studies show that you'll be more successful if you quit all at once instead of gradually.

Step 4: Create a smoke-free home. Remove all cigarettes, lighters, matches, and ashtrays in the home, in your car, and at your work. Don't let people smoke in your home or vehicle.

Step 5: Use medicine. You can buy nicotine gum or patches at your local pharmacy. Or ask your doctor about medicines to cut your cravings.

Step 6: Replace smoking with other activities. Change old patterns by finding new and healthy activities, like walking, biking, or gardening.

Step 7: Eat right and exercise. Some people gain a little weight when they stop smoking. This is usually temporary. You avoid weight gain with regular exercise and proper nutrition.

Step 8: Reward yourself. Use the money you would have spent on cigarettes to treat yourself!

Follow these steps and you'll be on your way to a smoke-free life!

The facts about nicotine addiction and withdrawal

Smoking cigarettes creates an addiction to nicotine. You may have withdrawal symptoms when you quit. These symptoms can include

- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Aggressiveness
- Depression
- Increased hunger

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- Cravings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor physical and mental performance

The good news is these symptoms won't last forever. If they're really bad, you can use nicotine gum, patches, and nasal sprays to reduce them.

Alternative smoking cessation methods

Combining more than one form of treatment may boost your chances of success. Acupuncture, hypnosis, and counseling work for some people, along with support groups and smoking cessation programs.

Some patients have found success using e-cigarettes to decrease craving. However, this method of nicotine replacement can become a steppingstone for young users to become cigarette smokers in the future.

Keep trying until you succeed!

Most smokers quit a few times before they finally “kick the habit” for good. To succeed, you'll need support from your doctor and your friends and family members.

Remember: If you have a lapse and start smoking again, don't give up. Set a new quit date and try again. There's no one perfect way to quit. Try different strategies until you find one that works for you.

Your lapse can give you useful information. See if you can figure out what made you start smoking again. Understanding these triggers can help you avoid them in the future. You may also want to get extra support to increase your chances of success.

For many, quitting won't be easy. If it were, there would be far fewer smokers in the world! But **many Alpha-1 doctors report that 90% of their patients are able to quit.** Learning the cold, hard facts about

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smoking and lung disease motivates them to keep trying until they succeed!

For more in-depth information on this topic, please visit the [Big Fat Reference Guide](#). If you are enrolled in AlphaNet's Subscriber Portal, you can access the BFRG [here](#).