

## Tips I've picked up along the way

- ⊗ It usually takes a number of attempts to quit, so if you fail, don't worry, just keep trying.
- ⊗ It is never the right time to quit, so therefore it's always the right time if you plan to quit "sometime".
- ⊗ Too much nicotine chewing gum hurts your jaw. If you are using the gum, have a few chews until you get the taste and then tuck it inside your lip for a while. Think of it as a patch for the mouth.
- ⊗ When you stop smoking you will find yourself looking for any excuse to cave in. Especially look out for the "who cares if I live or die" trap.
- ⊗ One's too many and a hundred's not enough. Cracking always starts with "just one won't hurt".
- ⊗ Do not take hayfever tablets (pseudoephedrine), dexamphetamine, caffeine and nicotine all together because it turns you into a jittery mess (if you are keen on clubbing, you may wish to disregard this advice).
- ⊗ When you stop smoking expect to cough up some gunk—it's perfectly natural and healthy, if inelegant. It's very common to catch some kind of cold when you first quit.
- ⊗ For some it may help to quit smoking in a very public manner so you'll look stupid if you crack.
- ⊗ If you are the kind of person that always needs to do something with your mouth, nicotine patches are less effective than nicotine gums or lozenges. Also note that a recent study found that those who smoke for two weeks while using patches tend to be more successful than those who stop smoking as soon as they start with patches.
- ⊗ You can get pitifully depressed and lose your confidence when suffering nicotine withdrawals. Do not make any major decisions if you are feeling this way ... ever!
- ⊗ Patches fall off when you sweat so you need Leukoplast or some other kind of medical tape to keep them on, especially during summer or if playing sport.
- ⊗ Those using nicotine replacement therapy (gum, lozenges, patches) to quit have a far better success rate than those who go cold turkey. Guys, using NRT does **not** make you a pussy. It just means you would rather work smart than work hard.
- ⊗ For some reason, high strength NRT products often cost around the same as low dose. If money is short, you can get the high strength ones and halve them (or cut into thirds, if appropriate).

- ⊗ People with ADHD, schizophrenia and other dopamine-related disorders are more likely to become addicted to tobacco than others because Nicotine boosts dopamine.
- ⊗ Various foods (such as fish, dairy, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower) and supplements (NADH or L-Tyrosine) can boost your dopamine and/or acetylcholine to help you cope with withdrawals (see 16 Jan entry). If all else fails, you can always ask your doctor about anti-depressants.
- ⊗ Putting a clove in your mouth and keeping it under your lip is a good way to keep your mouth happy while you're not smoking. Try not to chew it too much or it will make your mouth go numb.
- ⊗ If you miss the sensation of smoking, a herb called coltsfoot is a less dangerous nicotine-free option, as long as it's leaf (the flower buds are bad for your liver). But be warned—it smells like marijuana leaves (and even looks a bit like it), so be ready for people to give you funny looks.
- ⊗ You can minimise your NRT intake by putting other things in your mouth such as cloves, sweets (get a variety—Tic Tacs, Fruit Gums, barley sugar, butterscotch, tooth-whitening chewing gum, etc), nuts, bios with the inner bit taken out, or coltsfoot cigarettes. Also, keep a small container of water with you to sip on.

### ***And last but definitely not least ...***

Ignore people who hate smokers and smoking. Their opinions don't matter because they usually know NOTHING about it.

Remember, even many reformed smokers have never experienced *strong* addiction and have this throwaway "all you have to do is decide to stop" opinion. If that was the case, how come qualified drug counsellors don't tell that to heroin addicts?

Studies (eg. Benowitz) show that nicotine rates higher than heroin in the level of dependence it creates in users, and there are more temptations because you don't usually see people walking down the street with needles in their arm (at least not in my local area).

What I am saying here is that your decisions should be YOUR decisions and when others throw in their unsolicited input, it can be distracting. Remember, many disastrous things are done by people who think they are doing the right thing (think Iraq).

This is YOUR decision.

This is YOUR life.

So if you choose to smoke or choose to quit, each option is just one way of living a life. Of course, if you prefer having others tell you what to do, then that's your decision too. Whatever works for you ...