

Start the Journey to Quitting: Make a Plan

LUCHA Tabaco
Health Education Council

Taking the beginning steps to quit using tobacco can feel like a serious commitment. So much so that they may not know where to start looking for help. Despite the difficulty that many face simply just getting started, making a plan is one of many effective cessation methods that's been backed by research to truly help smokers eliminate tobacco from their lives.

1. Successfully quitting begins with **setting a date** to stop smoking. This can be anywhere from within a few days to a few weeks, but the sooner, the better. Picking a date and sticking with it also gives a smoker time to prepare for the process of quitting. Try to pick a free day to avoid quitting during stressful times or situations during the week. Circling the quit date on a calendar is another visual step that can motivate someone to stick to their commitment.
2. **Identify reasons to quit smoking.** Making a list of the reasons can motivate someone and help them visualize their goals. Whether it's a desire to regain lung capacity, concern from loved ones or advice from the doctor, understanding what's motivating can keep a smoker focused on their long-term quitting goals.
3. **Telling loved ones** about one's desire to quit can be highly motivating. Seek out a supportive family member to tell.
4. **Remove reminders of smoking** from your environment. Physically getting rid of cigarettes, ashtrays, lighters and other smoking-related items keeps their influence out of a smoker's head. It can be a difficult step for many smokers to throw away their cigarettes but also a crucial step to committing to quitting.
5. After some time without smoking, a once-regular smoker can experience withdrawal symptoms, physical and emotional changes, **identify triggers and supportive coping strategies** that can help when cravings strike.
6. **Set up a place for immediate help.** If a smoker is having complications like unpleasant feelings, withdrawal symptoms, or the temptation to not smoke, it is a good idea to have a plan to seek immediate help. A smoker can call a loved one, a doctor, or any of the tobacco cessation service phone lines or phone applications to get help.

Quitting smoking after long-term use can be extremely challenging, but a smoker doesn't have to do it alone. Being prepared and sticking to a plan can increase a smoker's chances of fully quitting tobacco.

If you or someone you know needs help quitting, call 800-300-8086 or 800-600-8191.