

My Quit Day: A Day Without Nicotine



Non-smokers, ex-smokers, and people who have never used tobacco in any form don't understand the anxiety you have about quitting. They just can't. They haven't developed the years of mental habit (300 puffs of nicotine a day for 25 years, for example) and the serious physical addiction to nicotine. So, your quit day is just an ordinary day to them. To you it will be a challenge and a triumph. You are preparing to do battle with your addiction, and every hour you refuse to surrender is a mental and physical victory. So, take it one minute at a time, one hour at a time, and one day at a time. It is also important not to set yourself up for failure, as in, "If I don't quit today, I give up."

Getting Ready

You've made all your preparations, but let's review them.

1. You've picked your method—maybe it includes nicotine replacement gum as needed, calling your sister if the craving gets really bad, and having secured a quit coach through the South Dakota Quitline (1-866-737-8487).
2. There are no cigarettes in the house, the car, or the garage, not even old butts. Everything was cleared out and taken away last night. You've made a contract with yourself not to buy cigarettes today or "bum" one off anyone.
3. You have a basket of hard candies on the kitchen counter and a baggie of more to take to work. You've got a bag of sunflower seeds for the drive to work and back.
4. You have a basket of fidget objects (paperclips, pencils, straws, etc.) at home and a baggie of more to take to work.
5. You've packed your lunch and included four juice boxes because you've read that drinking juice helps "detox" the body.
6. You're wearing a watch with a second hand today so you can time the cravings.
7. You've planned some easy activities for the evening, including your favorite meal, a favorite movie, and an early bedtime.
8. Your lists are ready (and you have copies in your journal, on the refrigerator, and at work):
 - a. All the reasons why you've decided to quit smoking.
 - b. Your support people with phone numbers and email addresses.
 - c. The activities you've been practicing that you can do when a craving hits.

Examples:

- a. At work, taking a walk down the hall to look out the window, then walk slowly back.
 - a. Deep breathe with eyes closed for 30 breaths.
 - a. Drink a glass of ice water and chew the ice.
 - a. Chew one piece of nicotine gum.
- d. Positive self-talk messages for when a craving hits.
 - a. I choose not to smoke right now because I don't want to smoke right now.
 - a. When I get home tonight I will enjoy not smelling stale tobacco smoke in my hair and clothes.
 - a. Each craving lasts about three minutes, and it will come back whether or not I smoke, so I choose not to smoke.
- e. End of craving rewards.
 - a. Put 25 cents (the cost of one cigarette) in a change purse, then count up the money at the end of the day and put it in my Quit Smoking bank at home.
 - a. One cookie out of the box of fig bars I brought today.
 - a. Scribble a few sentences in the journal about how I feel after getting through the craving.

My Quit Day: A Day Without Nicotine, cont.

"First Day Without Tobacco" Tips

- Make a list of all the things you used to do in the morning that included a cigarette (or any other form of tobacco) and avoid those activities.
- If you are used to smoking a cigarette first thing, make sure you've planned your morning differently. Your old routine was planned around a cigarette. Your new routine should be planned around something else that you enjoy like a good hot homemade breakfast and an hour of reading a good book and/or taking a walk.
- Do some deep breathing exercises and drink several glasses of water.
- Call your primary support person. Let them know what you are doing and how you are feeling.
- Journal.
- If you have a Quit Coach, schedule some calls or blogging.
- Organize all your lists, your packed lunch, and tobacco replacement aids, and have them handy to take to work (if this is a work day).
- Schedule activities for this first day that never included using tobacco, like going to work or church or visiting your mother.
- Remind yourself that you are just going to take the day one event at a time. It is important to remember that if you don't make it through the day, your assault on your addiction was not wasted. You will have gathered valuable information and experience for your next attempt.

No Such Thing As Failure

Didn't make it today? Smoked a cigarette or two? Don't let this stop you. A slip-up is like an emergency: a stroke has serious medical consequences but the EMT kept the stroke from becoming a death. You might have had a lapse, but you kept it from being a relapse. Some people need four or more attempts. Set another Quit Day in two weeks and stick to it.

For more information on tobacco cessation tips, please visit:

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco>

www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLuk9O0E/b.22931/k.8550/Smoking_Cessation_Support.htm

<http://whyquit.com/whyquit/LinksAAddiction.html>