

Ways to Outsmart the Smoking Urge

Things you might do

- 1. Delay:** When the urge strikes, tell yourself that you will wait 10-15 minutes. By not satisfying the urge immediately, you begin to interfere with the routine of smoking and increase the probability that you will experience a reduction in the intensity of the urge.
- 2. Behavior Substitution:** This strategy is often used with the “delay” technique. It is the replacement of one behavior, smoking, with another behavior. For example, when you have the urge to smoke, you might decide to have a piece of gum, take a walk, draw or doodle, knit, play a game, brush your teeth, or any number of other things that would work for you.
- 3. Rewarding yourself:** This is an important strategy. Reward yourself when you have been successful at not smoking for a certain period of time, for example, go to a movie, buy yourself something, go out for a favorite meal.
- 4. Escape:** When you are in a situation where you are tempted to smoke, leave, rather than smoke.
- 5. Seek Support From Others:** Talk to someone who will be understanding of your situation and will give you encouragement.
- 6. Rearrange Your Environment:** Put your ashtrays away, do not have cigarettes around, put reasons for quitting in key places, stock up on gum, nuts, fruit and vegetables to snack on, visit dentist and have your teeth cleaned, clean your house and car thoroughly.
- 7. Rearrange Your Activities:** Cut back on drinks associated with smoking, at least temporarily; put yourself into “no smoking” situations and places, try out new activities and places.

Things you might think

1. Think about the positive benefits of not smoking.
2. Think about the negative effects of smoking.
3. Give yourself encouragement, for example, “C’mon, you can do it.”
4. Distract yourself by thinking about other things.
5. Imagine something relaxing.
6. Imagine yourself as a nonsmoker.
7. Recognize that quitting may be very difficult but not impossible.
8. Think to yourself “Stop!” “Don’t do it!” when you have the urge to smoke. Picture a “STOP” sign in your mind.
9. Imagine your friends’ or family’s reaction if you were to smoke.