

# Quitting? Manage Withdrawal

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Quitting tobacco is a big step, but it's one of the best things you can do for your health. Unfortunately, withdrawal symptoms can really test your resolve in the early going. Cravings for nicotine can hit hardest in the first few weeks. So can the jitters. But you can bolster your willpower by making your own plan for coping with withdrawal. Here are a few strategies that can help:

## 1. Curb your cravings

When the urge for nicotine hits, strike back with a good workout. Walk, jog, bike, box, dance, lift weights, or do some stretching. Another trick is to busy yourself with something you love, such as a hobby. Or seek the support of good friends or a counselor. If you find the cravings are too hard to beat on your own, you might want to talk with your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products. They can help take the edge off cravings until your body adjusts.

## 2. Tame your triggers

Think of healthy ways to deal with the places, situations, and even people that trigger your cravings. It might be best to avoid or limit your time around these triggers for the time being. Share your quit plan with your friends so they don't feel you're simply avoiding them.

## 3. Soothe your nerves

Quitting may cause you to feel jittery. Fortunately, there are many ways besides lighting up to ease irritability. Try some deep breathing or an easy workout. Play some soothing music. Talk with a friend who supports your quit goals. Or immerse yourself in one of your favorite activities. Learning how to calm yourself may also help lessen cravings when they hit.

## 4. Keep your sleep sound

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods before bedtime. Have a sleep routine that helps you unwind. For example, you might listen to relaxing music, meditate, read, or take a warm bath. It's also helpful to have a cool, dark room and clean, comfortable bedding. Consider turning off your TV, cell phone, and computer an hour before your planned bedtime. The light from such devices can promote wakefulness.

Remember that withdrawal doesn't last forever. Most symptoms will likely ease up within a few weeks. Have a plan to help you get through this first stage. And if you experience a slip up along the way, get back on your plan as soon as you can.

