

How To: Quit Smoking



Do you feel as if smoking is “just a habit” or is there a chance that it has become more than that for you? Answer the following questions as honestly as you can:

- Do you smoke your first cigarettes within a few minutes of waking up?
- Do you find it difficult to refrain from smoking in places where it is forbidden?
- Do you smoke even if you are so ill that you are in bed most of the day?

Did you answer “yes” to any of these questions? These may be signs of nicotine dependence. Approximately 24% of people will be diagnosed with nicotine dependence at one point in their life. Quitting smoking is not easy, but it’s also not impossible. Here are a few starting points:

- *Muster the motivation:* Friends, family, and medical providers could list a lot of reasons why you should quit. You must also be invested; what would you stand to gain by quitting?
- *Secure support:* Quitting smoking is much easier to do when you have a support system. Seek both personal and professional support from your doctor, family, and friends. Deer Oaks EAP can also offer resources and referrals for smoking cessation.
- *Track your moods:* Smoking can be very closely linked with moods, both positive and negative. Try to keep track of how you feel right before you light up. Connecting patterns between mood and smoking can be a helpful tool.
- *Don’t give up:* Smoking cessation can make you feel like you’re taking two steps forward and one step back. Taking a step back is not a sign that you should give up. It means that you’re in the same boat as everyone else who has quit before you.
- *Understand the biology:* Not only can you become emotionally dependent on smoking, but physically as well. If this is the case for you, talking with your doctor will be a crucial step towards successful cessation.

Source: Heatherton TF, Kozlowski LT, Frecker RC, Fagerstrom KO. The Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence: A revision of the Fagerstrom Tolerance Questionnaire. British Journal of Addictions 1991;86:1119-27



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