GoalTodo

# Quit smoking or vaping: a week to prepare, then one day at a time

## Quit smoking or vaping

8 weeks · Mon, Nov 30 → Sun, Jan 24

# Week by week

Tick a box each time you do a session.

Nov 30–Dec 6
Week 1

## Pick a quit date and tell one person

Prepare

- [ ] Pick your quit day: Monday of next week. Write it down where you'll see it
- [ ] Tell one person your quit day and ask them to check in with you in the first week
- [ ] Talk to a doctor or pharmacist about what might work best for you, such as nicotine replacement or medicines
- [ ] Note each time you smoke: the time, where you are, what you're doing
  every cigarette
  ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
- [ ] Write down your reasons for quitting and keep them on your phone
- [ ] Get rid of all your cigarettes, lighters, ashtrays and any vapes (unless you've agreed with your doctor, pharmacist or stop-smoking service to use a vape to stay off cigarettes), at home, in the car and in your bags

**Done when:** Your quit day is set, one person knows it, and there's nothing left to smoke in your home

**Sticking point:** A date further away can feel safer. It isn't: picking a date too far away gives you time to change your mind.

Dec 7–13
Week 2

## Your first smoke-free day, and the hardest days

Quit week

- [ ] Quit day: not one cigarette, not even one puff
- [ ] When a craving comes, wait at least 10 minutes, breathe slowly and read your reasons
  every craving
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- [ ] Check in with your support person
  a message or a call
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- [ ] Keep the week light: skip parties, drinking and the places where you used to smoke
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**Done when:** You get through quit day without a cigarette, and reach Sunday still smoke-free

**Sticking point:** Withdrawal is usually worst on the second and third day. Keep Tuesday and Wednesday easy, and have gum or something to hold in your hands.

Dec 14–20
Week 3

## Swap the habit for something else

First month

- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on every craving
  every craving
- [ ] Replace each old smoking moment with something else: a short walk, a glass of water, gum, slow deep breaths
  each trigger in your notes
- [ ] Check in with your support person

**Done when:** You've gone a second full week without a cigarette

**Sticking point:** Feeling low, jumpy or irritable is part of withdrawal. If it feels like too much, ask your doctor for help now, not later.

Dec 21–27
Week 4

## Rebuild the routines around it

First month

- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on every craving
  every craving
- [ ] Ask friends who still smoke not to offer you cigarettes, and not to smoke around you
- [ ] Change one routine that went with smoking: a different coffee spot, a new route, a new break habit
- [ ] Check in with your support person

**Done when:** You've gone three weeks without a cigarette, and the people around you know you've quit

**Sticking point:** Alcohol is the classic trap. Drinking lowers your chance of success, so keep it out of these weeks if you can.

Dec 28–Jan 3
Week 5

## Cravings start to ease

First month

- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on every craving
  every craving
- [ ] Look back at your notes: which triggers are still hard? Plan one new answer for each
- [ ] Check in with your support person

**Done when:** You've gone four weeks without a cigarette

**Sticking point:** Feeling better can make you think one won't hurt. There is no such thing as just one cigarette, or even just one puff.

Jan 4–10
Week 6

### A smoke-free month

A month

- [ ] Mark your smoke-free month on Tuesday, your 30th smoke-free day
- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on any craving
  any craving
- [ ] Tell your support person you've made a month, and thank them

**Done when:** You reach day 30 without a cigarette

Jan 11–17
Week 7

### Ready for the surprise cravings

Keep going

- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on any craving
  any craving
- [ ] Write a short plan for one high-risk moment: a party, a bad day, a trip

**Done when:** You have a written plan for your riskiest situation, and you're still smoke-free

**Sticking point:** A strong craving after weeks of calm is normal, and can come months or even years later. It doesn't mean the plan has stopped working.

Jan 18–24
Week 8

### Past six weeks: your mind starts to feel it

Keep going

- [ ] Wait at least 10 minutes on any craving
  any craving
- [ ] Read your reasons again, and add what's better since you quit
- [ ] If you're vaping to stay off cigarettes, keep going for now, and plan with your doctor or pharmacist when to quit vaping too

**Done when:** You've gone seven weeks without a cigarette

## Milestones

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|---|---|
| Mon, Nov 30 | Pick a quit date and tell one person |
| Mon, Dec 7 | Your first smoke-free day |
| Tue, Jan 5 | A smoke-free month |
| Mon, Jun 7 | Six months smoke-free |

## How the plan works

The plan has two parts: one week to get ready, then stopping completely on your quit day and staying stopped, one day at a time.

Week 1 is preparation. You pick a quit day (the plan puts it on the Monday of week 2), tell one person, talk to a doctor or pharmacist, note when and why you smoke or vape, and clear everything out the night before. If you need a little longer, repeat week 1, but keep your quit day within the next month: a date too far away gives you time to change your mind.

You stop completely on quit day. The plan doesn't cut down bit by bit. Withdrawal is strongest on the second or third day without nicotine, and fades over the next three to four weeks. That's why the first month carries most of the work: a 10-minute wait on every craving, swapping old habits for new ones, and regular check-ins with your support person.

After the first month the work gets lighter, but cravings can still surprise you, sometimes months or even years later. The last weeks prepare you for that.

Support makes the biggest difference. For people who use tobacco, counselling and medication can more than double the chance of quitting successfully. You don't have to do this on willpower alone.

The milestones count from the day you start week 1: your first smoke-free day is day 8, a smoke-free month is day 37, and six months smoke-free is day 190.

# Which level to pick

- I smoke (or smoke and vape): pick this if you smoke cigarettes or other tobacco, even if you vape as well. If you've switched to vaping to get off cigarettes, that's a real step: nicotine vaping is less harmful than smoking. Once you're sure you won't go back to smoking, aim to quit vaping too.
- I only vape: pick this if you don't smoke but vape nicotine. The weeks are the same, because nicotine withdrawal follows the same course.

The sources don't give different timelines for heavy or light use, so both levels follow the same eight weeks.

# Before you start

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare provider before you quit, so you have a plan for withdrawal symptoms and know which medicines or nicotine replacement might suit you.

See a doctor first if you are pregnant, breastfeeding or younger than 18. You shouldn't use quit-smoking medicines without talking to a doctor. Those medicines are approved for quitting cigarettes, so if you only vape, check with a doctor or pharmacist before using them. If you're under 18, don't take up vaping to quit.

Withdrawal can bring sadness, anxiety and irritability. If you're having a difficult time, or low mood is strong or doesn't lift, ask your healthcare provider for help.

If you don't smoke, don't start vaping. This plan is for stopping, not for switching.

# Tools and support

- One support person who knows your quit day and checks in with you. Tell family, friends and co-workers too if you can.
- A stop-smoking service or quitline in your country, for counselling. Counselling and medication give you the best odds.
- Medicines or nicotine replacement, chosen with a doctor or pharmacist.
- Something for your mouth and hands: sugar-free gum, a straw, a stress ball.
- A notes app for your triggers, your reasons and your plan for risky moments.
- Calming tools for cravings: slow deep breathing, a short meditation, a walk.

# Common mistakes

- Setting the quit day too far off. Pick a day within the next month. The plan suggests one week.
- Keeping a pack or a vape "just in case". Get rid of everything the night before.
- Thinking one won't hurt. There is no such thing as just one cigarette, or even just one puff.

▪ Drinking in the first weeks. Drinking lowers your chance of success.

▪ Going it alone. For tobacco users, counselling and medication can more than double the chance of quitting successfully.

▪ Treating a slip as the end. A slip is a one-time mistake that's quickly corrected. Look at what led to it, and carry on with the plan.

# Keeping it up to six months and beyond

After week 8 there are no more weekly tasks. Keep three things going:

▪ The 10-minute wait. Use it on any craving, however long it's been.

▪ Your plan for risky moments. Update it when your life changes: a new job, a move, a hard loss.

▪ A monthly check-in with your support person, until you're six months smoke-free.

It can take as little as six weeks to start feeling the mental health benefits of stopping smoking. Six months is a milestone, not the end: strong cravings can still come months or years later, and the 10-minute wait still works.

If you go back to smoking or vaping, you haven't failed. It takes most people several tries. Work out what helped and what got in the way, set a new quit day within the next month, and start again at week 1.

# If you fall behind

**Missed 1 week:** Missed a week's tasks, or slipped? A slip is a one-time mistake, not a reason to go back to smoking or vaping. Write down what led to it, tell your support person, and keep going with the week you're on.

**Missed 2 weeks:** Repeat the last week you finished in full, with daily check-ins with your support person. If you've slipped more than once, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about adding counselling or medication.

**Missed 3 weeks:** If you're smoking or vaping regularly again, that's a relapse, not the end. Set a new quit day within the next month, start again at week 1, and plan for the trigger that caught you.

**Missed 4 or more weeks:** Start again at week 1 with more support this time: a stop-smoking service, counselling or medication. Most people need several tries before they quit for good.

# Sources


**American Cancer Society**
`https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking/deciding-to-quit-smoking-and-making-a-plan.html`
“Choose a day within the next month.”

**American Cancer Society**
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“Picking a date too far away gives you time to change your mind.”

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`https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking/deciding-to-quit-smoking-and-making-a-plan.html`
“And tell your family, friends, and co-workers that you’re quitting.”

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| **This plan online** | https://goaltodo.com/quit-smoking |
| **Reach it with others on Welang** | https://welang.com/goals/quit-smoking |
| **Reach it on your own in HourLife** | https://www.hourlife.com |

This plan is a guide, not medical advice. See a doctor before starting if you have a health condition, are pregnant, or haven't exercised in a long time.