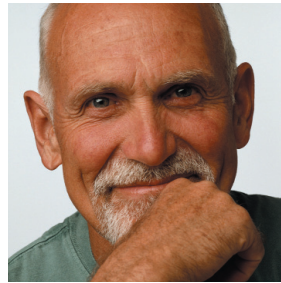




FOREVER
FREE™

A Guide
To Remaining
Smoke Free



Life Without
Cigarettes

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This is the eighth and last booklet in the Forever Quit series. This booklet covers life without cigarettes and how to keep it that way!! It also reviews some of the key points from the past booklets.

Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do for your health. You should be very proud of yourself, whether you have now quit for 3 months or 15 years!

There are a number of things that you should keep in mind as you continue your goal to live a smoke-free life. Although your odds for remaining smoke-free add up as each day passes, relapse can still occur if you are not careful.

We hope that this information will help to prevent relapse and keep you living a healthy smoke-free life. But first of all, we want to congratulate you!! By now we hope you see how good life without cigarettes can be for you and for those around you.

Urges

If you have not smoked for a while, you are in what is called the “maintenance stage” of quitting. By this time you may find that you rarely think about smoking. The thought of ever smoking again may even make you sick. On the other hand, you may still have some cravings or thoughts of smoking.

If you do have an urge to smoke, there are some things to keep in mind. As we discussed in Booklet 2, *Smoking Urges*, research has shown that people who use coping skills are much less likely to go back to smoking than people who do not use coping skills.

Review:

There are two types of coping skills you can use when you have an urge to smoke: **behavioral** and **mental**.

Behavioral coping skills are things that you can **do** to reduce the urge to smoke. These include leaving the situation, taking a deep breath, or reading a book.

Mental coping skills are things that you can **tell** yourself to reduce the urge to smoke. These include, “I feel better,” or “smoking is not an option.”

Thinking ahead about situations that may cause urges is an important part of preparing for them. If you have not smoked in a while, you have probably broken the links between smoking and most of your daily activities. They should no longer trigger urges to smoke.

But, you might want to be careful during events that used to involve smoking, even if they have occurred less often since quitting. If you have urges or thoughts of smoking, tell yourself that the **event** is causing the urge. Each time you have that event without smoking, you greatly reduce the chance of having an urge in the future.

Some events linked with smoking might be:

- Vacations.
- Weddings.
- Holidays or family parties.

Stressful events are also risk factors for relapse after a period of quitting. Very stressful events might include:

- Death of a loved one.
- Losing your job.
- Being apart from a loved one.
- Money problems.

Even though smoking may have seemed minor compared to the stress or sadness you are feeling at the time, you will be glad later on if you do not smoke. Do not turn one tragedy into two tragedies!

Bob quit smoking a year ago. Finding out that many more smokers die before the age of 65 than non-smokers, and starting to have chest pains really woke him up. He decided that he wanted to enjoy his retirement and see his grandchildren grow up. Quitting smoking would increase his chances of doing both. It was difficult for Bob at first. He had been smoking for 35 years, starting when he was 14 years old! He had liked smoking (or so he thought), and he had many urges to smoke during the first few months after he quit. He even found that he used cigarettes when he was stressed, angry, or when he wanted a break from work. Bob had thoughts of going back to smoking during the sad and stressful time after his mother died. But he never forgot his reasons for quitting. He was not going to leave those beautiful grandchildren behind too soon! But this was only part of the battle. Bob knew that he had to reduce the stress in his life, so he enrolled in a stress class at work. Bob had never been aware of how stress, even when he was smoking, was decreasing the quality of his life. Now his life and health are better in two ways! His grandchildren are getting bigger each day and Bob has really learned how great life can be without cigarettes.

**We know you do not plan to fail...
so please do not fail to plan!**

Benefits of Quitting

It is common for people who have quit smoking for a while to forget how much worse they felt while smoking. It is also common to forget how much better they feel now.

Ex-smokers also often forget their reasons for quitting. Some time may have passed since you felt short of breath while climbing the stairs, or since you had a morning cough. You may not remember how it felt to stand outside at work to have a smoke. You may even have started to take for granted the extra cash in your pocket each week, or how much better your car smells.

As time goes by, you may begin to have thoughts of smoking and to think about how nice it would be to have just one cigarette. You might even try to tell yourself that you could have just one since it has been so long since you've quit. Do not be over confident. This is like “playing with fire” and can be very risky.

If you start having thoughts of smoking, it may be because you have forgotten your reasons for quitting. Now may be a good time to think about the negatives of smoking. Now is the time to think about the benefits of quitting. Also recall your own reasons for quitting.

Think of all of the benefits you have had from not smoking. We will even start you off with a few:

1. You have done a great thing by quitting. You have joined many others in living a healthier life! Smoking in the United States is at an all time low!
2. You have reduced your chances of getting a smoking-related illness. One year after quitting, your extra risk of heart disease has been cut in half, and the cilia (tiny hairs in your lungs that are damaged by tar build-up from smoking) have grown back and are normal and healthy. Five years after quitting, your risk of dying from lung cancer has been cut in half. You are adding years to your life—and healthier years at that.
3. You have saved money. Take a look at the following chart and circle how much you would have spent on cigarettes at \$3.00 a pack (or how much you can keep saving by not smoking).

TOTAL AMOUNT SAVED ON THE COST OF CIGARETTES (Based on \$3.00/pack)						
		Years Quit				
		1	2	3	5	10
Amount Formerly Smoked	1 Pack Per day	\$1,095	\$2,190	\$3,285	\$5,475	\$10,950
	2 Packs Per Day	\$2,190	\$4,380	\$6,570	\$10,950	\$21,900

And this is only part of the money saved. The greatest costs of smoking are to your health and the large costs of health care. Smokers become ill much more than non-smokers, and they need more health care than non-smokers. Smokers miss 40% more work time than non-smokers. Also, life and health insurance are higher if you smoke. This can add up!! Why don't you reward yourself for a job well done? Use some of the money you have saved!



Take a minute to write down some other benefits of quitting!

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

**And now remind yourself of your reasons
for quitting:**

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

As you can see, you had some good reasons for quitting!

Ivette quit smoking 3 years ago. Her reasons for quitting were the high cost of smoking and health concerns. She had two miscarriages while smoking. When she quit, most of her friends were still smoking, and smoking was allowed at work and at most places she went. Since that time, most of Ivette's friends have quit, and smoking is not allowed at most public places. Now she is even more glad that she quit smoking. With more information being reported about the harmful effects of smoking, Ivette is even more sure about being a non-smoker. She never thought of herself as an addict, but she sees now that she was. Smoking was more than just a bad habit. Ivette feels good about giving up this negative addiction. She has even developed a few "positive or good addictions." She has a new interest in dancing. She has more energy from not smoking. She recently found out she is pregnant—another reason she is glad she quit. She and her husband are very happy.



But What about My Weight?

Weight gain after quitting smoking is a concern for many people. Remember, smoking is far more dangerous and looks worse than any weight that might be gained. Gaining weight may have discouraged you about quitting smoking.

**But remember...smoking is a
VERY DANGEROUS way to lose weight!**

If you have gained weight since quitting smoking and would like to lose it, the best way to do so is to change your diet and increase your exercise. Speak to your doctor about healthy ways of losing weight. Many people have lost the weight they gained after quitting without going back to smoking! Sometimes the extra weight comes off on its own as your body adjusts. Other people find that making even small changes to eating and exercise goes a long way towards weight loss.

You already know about coping skills that reduce urges to smoke. Try to use behavioral and mental coping skills to reduce extra eating as well.

Refer back to Booklet 3, *Smoking and Weight*, for information about healthy eating and exercise. And do not forget to talk to your doctor before making any big changes in your diet or exercise.

Many people who gain weight after smoking gain only small amounts. Chances are that this is what they would have weighed if they never smoked. (Smoking keeps weight down by increasing your metabolism in an **unhealthy** way.) However, about 10% of ex-smokers gain as much as 20 to 30 pounds after quitting. It may be that quitting smoking is not the direct cause of your weight gain. There may be other things going on that are causing you to eat more. Sometimes the reasons that people smoke are also the reasons that they over-eat. For example, depression and stress are both related with smoking and overeating.

If you find that you eat more when you are feeling down or feeling stressed, you may want to find ways of reducing the stress in your life, rather than smoking. One way you might do this is by increasing activities that give you pleasure. Now may be a good time to go back to the Pleasant Events List in Booklet 7, *Lifestyle Balance*. Choose things that you like to do. Make it a point of fitting them into your schedule.

You may also want to do relaxation exercises or deep breathing. Or you may choose to use all of the money you have saved from not smoking to take a vacation. For other tips on how to deal with stress in your life go back to Booklet 6, *Smoking, Stress, and Mood*.

If you were to start smoking again, you might lose some weight. But it would come at a great cost to your health and your overall looks and it will not reduce the stress in your life. Chances are that it would only add more stress to your life.

Exercise may seem like a chore at first, but if you start slowly, over time it may become the most fun part of your day. It can be much better than smoking ever was!

Lisa is a 35 year old secretary who quit smoking two years ago. Within her first year of quitting she gained twenty pounds. When she was upset at work, she would munch on junk food rather than smoke. Her weight gain was very discouraging, and Lisa thought about going back to smoking—not because she liked smoking anymore or was having urges—but because she thought it would make her lose the weight she had gained. A friend of Lisa's who also had been a smoker at one time asked Lisa to start skating with her. Lisa didn't want to at first. Although she was active in her 20's, Lisa had become pretty inactive lately. Lisa just did not think she was the exercising type. But after just a few weeks of skating with her friend Marie, she loved it! She was surprised at how much better she felt. And she also found many of the things that used to bother her at work which caused her to eat, did not bother her anymore. After three months of skating she had lost 10 of the 20 pounds she gained!



If You Do Smoke

“I have not smoked for 1 year and I do not intend to go back... But, can’t I have a cigarette once in a while??”

The answer to this question is **NO**.

A mistake that ex-smokers sometimes make is thinking that they have not smoked in so long that they are no longer “addicted”—that they can have a cigarette. This is like “playing with fire,” and it can set you up for relapse.

Research has shown that it is hard—if not impossible—for people who at one time were heavy smokers to smoke once in a while. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that you can smoke just one or two cigarettes. Odds are that you cannot. One cigarette may *seem* harmless at first, since you have been doing so well. But that one cigarette can quickly lead back to smoking one to two packs per day. You will lose all that you worked so hard for. Why risk it?

But remember...if you *do* slip and have one cigarette, there are things you can do. Look at the situation and what led up to smoking. Use it as a learning experience. Feeling guilty and beating yourself up will only lead to the “I Blew It” Reaction (that was discussed in Booklet 4, *What If You Have a Cigarette?*) which could set you up for more smoking.

If you are smoking again, here are some tips that may help:

- Go back and read *Forever Free* booklets 1 and 2, about the stages of quitting and how to cope with urges to smoke.
- Pick a new quit date in the near future. Stick to it. If you are not yet smoking as many cigarettes as before, the sooner you quit again, the easier it will be.
- If you are smoking more than a pack per day, talk to your doctor. Think about using the nicotine patch, gum or another product such as Zyban™.
- Make quitting smoking your number one goal.
- Remember, if you have quit before, you can quit again. Do not feel bad about it. You now know more than you did last time. Use that knowledge to quit again. Stay quit.

In Closing

We wish you success in your healthy life. We hope you have felt the great benefits of life without cigarettes. And congratulations once again!

Congratulations!





Have you received all 8 Forever Free booklets?

Booklet 1: An Overview

Booklet 2: Smoking Urges

Booklet 3: Smoking and Weight

Booklet 4: What if You Have a Cigarette?

Booklet 5: Your Health

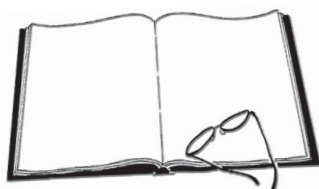
Booklet 6: Smoking, Stress, and Mood

Booklet 7: Lifestyle Balance

Booklet 8: Life Without Cigarettes

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Director: Thomas H. Brandon, Ph.D.
1(877) 954-2548

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