

The Coping Skills Worksheet

COPING WITH TRIGGERS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIVING A SMOKE-FREE LIFESTYLE

When you were a smoker, your mind associated certain situations with smoking. Even though you are quitting, when you are in these situations, you may still have a strong desire to have a cigarette. These are called triggers, or situational cravings, and they are an unavoidable part of quitting smoking. These cravings are temporary.

Understanding how to manage your own set of triggers and overcome them is the key to living a smoke-free life.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO HELP AVOID TRIGGERS



Change the way you think
when you are faced with situations
where you are tempted to smoke



Change the way you behave
or change your usual routines
so that you can avoid triggers

Although it's important to anticipate triggers, there are many things you can do to avoid being in a tempting situation where you'll want to smoke.

- **VISUALIZATION:** Visualize yourself dealing with the situation without a cigarette
- **PLAN AHEAD:** Devise a plan of action you can follow if you get into a tempting situation. Practice that plan often
- **DISTRACT YOURSELF:** Think of the reason why you quit, say the word "STOP," or remind yourself of the benefits of quitting
- **RETHINK YOUR BELIEFS:** Examine your belief that smoking somehow makes your life better or helps you deal with your problems
- **REMINDE YOURSELF THAT IT IS GOOD TO BE A NONSMOKER:** Remember often that you are happy being a nonsmoker and that life is much better without cigarettes
- **TRY TO AVOID SITUATIONS** where you may be tempted to smoke
- **KEEP YOURSELF BUSY:** Don't give yourself too much time to think about having a cigarette
- **START A NEW HOBBY** or begin an exercise routine
- **CHEW ON IT:** Give your mouth something to do in place of a cigarette. Chew on sugarless gum, hard candy, carrots, nuts, or sunflower seeds
- **USE NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY:** These products can help relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms

HOW TO MANAGE COMMON SITUATIONAL CRAVINGS

Because triggers can be unavoidable, it's important to understand how to handle them when they do occur. These are some of the most common triggers and strategies for managing them. They will be your tools to help manage your cravings the next time you encounter a situation that makes you think about smoking.

STRESS



- Practice deep breathing and positive affirmations such as "I can handle this"
- Remove yourself from the situation if you can
- Call a supportive friend or family member
- Begin an exercise program, take a stress management class, or learn to meditate. In the moment, try taking a walk

IN THE CAR

- Choose a different route for routine trips
- Listen to a different radio station or try audio books to keep your mind occupied
- Try using public transportation or join a carpool
- Change the environment in the car. For example, clean the interior, get new seat covers, etc.



COFFEE



- Drink a flavored coffee or a different brand, or try tea instead of coffee
- Change where you take your coffee break at work
- If you usually have your morning coffee at home, try having it at a café or at work

BEING AROUND OTHER SMOKERS

- For the first few weeks, avoid places where you know people are smoking
- Leave the scene from time to time if you have to be in a smoky environment
- Politely explain that you are trying to quit and ask them not to smoke around you. Discuss the idea of quitting together
- If you live with a smoker, negotiate where they will smoke and ask them to keep their cigarettes where you can't find them. Reward them with a small gift for helping you quit



ALCOHOL



- Alcohol may lower your resistance and make it harder to fight the urge to smoke, so keep that in mind for the first few weeks after you quit
- Change what you usually drink
- Limit yourself to one or two drinks
- Try not to go to a bar for at least the first few weeks of quitting

NEEDING SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR HANDS

- Some people need to have something to do with their hands or mouth when trying to quit smoking. Keep sugar-free gum, sugar-free candy, straws, or toothpicks handy
- Try eating carrots or celery sticks
- To help limit weight gain, be sure to use low-calorie alternatives and drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day

