

Quit Smoking Your Way: A Comparison of Methods

Quitting smoking can be very difficult, but today, smokers have many choices. A wide variety of smoking cessation tools are available - more than ever before. With a little knowledge and planning, the quitting process can become a bit easier.

METHOD

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

COLD TURKEY

The most common and inexpensive way to quit smoking. Cost: \$0.

With adequate planning (pick a day and make a plan) cold turkey has helped many to quit.

Withdrawal symptoms can be quite annoying. Essential support can be lacking. More often than not, quitting is done on a whim without enough planning.

GRADUAL REDUCTION

A gradual reduction in nicotine dosage by cutting down the number of cigarettes smoked or switching to a lower nicotine cigarette as a quit day approaches -also known as nicotine fading. Cost: \$0.

Withdrawal symptoms tend to be less severe.

Some find it difficult to control the number of cigarettes smoked while reducing or fading. Without a written plan, it can be difficult to stay on course.

NICOTINE PATCH

An adhesive patch that delivers nicotine through the skin. Available in different strengths and generic form. Cost: \$80-\$110/month.

Easy to use. Only needs to be applied once a day. Can buy over the counter. Few side effects.

Slow onset of delivery. Some develop skin rashes. Sleep can be disrupted.

NICOTINE GUM

A gum-like product that is not chewed like regular gum, but parked so the nicotine can be absorbed through the lining of the mouth. Depending on how many cigarettes you smoke, determines the dosage when you start this product. Comes in variety of flavors. Cost: \$35-65/100 pieces.

Convenient. Flexible dosing. Faster delivery than the patch.

Can be difficult to use for those with dental Problems. Frequent use is necessary to maintain adequate nicotine levels.

NICOTINE NASAL SPRAY

Prescription spray that delivers nicotine through the lining of the nose when you squirt it directly into each nostril. Cost: \$5-15/day.

Flexible dosing. Can be used in response to stress or urges to smoke. Fastest delivery of nicotine among currently available products. Reduces cravings within minutes.

Nose and eye irritation is common, but usually disappears within one week. Frequent use during the day required to obtain adequate nicotine levels.

NICOTINE INHALER

A prescription cartridge that delivers nicotine when you puff on it. Although it is used like a cigarette, the nicotine is absorbed through the mouth rather than going into the lungs. Cost: \$125-150/month.

Flexible dosing. Hand-to-mouth action mimics smoking. Few side effects. Faster delivery of nicotine than patches.

May cause throat or mouth irritation. Nicotine levels are difficult to maintain.

NON-NICOTINE MEDICATION

(Zyban) Prescription medication that acts on the brain chemistry to relieve nicotine cravings. Cost: \$84 \$100/month.

Easy to use. Pill form. Few side effects. Can be used with the patch.

Should not be used by people with eating disorders, seizure disorders, pregnant or breast feeding women, or those taking certain other medications such as Wellbutrin, or other medicines containing bupropion hydrochloride.

(Chantix) Prescription medication that contains no nicotine, but targets the same receptors in the brain that nicotine does and blocks them. Cigarettes become much less pleasurable. Recommended to take at least 1 week before your quit date and continue treatment for 12 weeks. Cost: \$115/month, may be covered by prescription drug plans.

Reduces withdrawal symptoms.

Nausea, headache, vomiting, gas, insomnia, abnormal dreams, affects the way food tastes. Pregnant women should not use this drug.

GROUP PROGRAMS

Sessions that meet regularly and focus on helping you change your smoking behaviors. Cost: \$20-\$200/ 1-8 week program. Local hospitals may have programs available.settings do not appeal to all people.

Supportive, encouraging. Skill building opportunities. Chance of success more than doubles with group program.

Meeting schedule may not be convenient. Group settings do no appeal to all people.

Alternative Medicine

ACUPUNCTURE is an ancient Chinese therapy that involves stimulating specific anatomic points on the body. This process regulates energy flow in the body, and thus restores health. Typically an ear clip is used for cessation.

HYPNOSIS is a state of attentive and focused concentration that is induced by the use of "therapeutic suggestion." The hypnotic trance state resembles other forms of deep relaxation. Hypnosis works best with other methods including behavior modification techniques. Physicians or other medical professionals can make referrals.



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