

Know Your Triggers Worksheet

If you are a regular smoker, smoking has become linked with nearly everything you do. Before you quit, know your triggers.

Here are some common triggers and solutions to help you fight the urge when it occurs.

Trigger

Stress. For years you have used tobacco as a way of dealing with stressful situations. This can include happy celebrations too.

A Solution



Begin thinking about ways to cope with stress—and ways to reward yourself—without tobacco use. Fun activities, talking with a trusted friend, saving up money for special rewards, exercise. These are some of the ways to cope that others have discovered. Having trouble thinking of ideas on your own? Speak with your health care provider or call The Maine Tobacco HelpLine.

Trigger

Consuming alcohol. Many people have found that drinking even small amounts of alcohol can trigger a return to smoking.

A Solution



Unless alcohol is also a problem for you, most people don't need to give it up for good but many find that they need to stay away from drinking for the first couple of weeks.

Trigger

Too much caffeine. When people quit smoking, caffeine can begin to affect the person more strongly than when still smoking. This can add to feelings of anxiety, restlessness and difficulty sleeping.

A Solution



Cut back on the amount of coffee, tea or soft drinks containing caffeine that you consume. With coffee, try mixing in some decaf with every cup you drink.

Trigger

Smelling tobacco smoke. For some people, the smell of tobacco—or even just being around others when they are smoking—can be too tempting.

A Solution



Try to avoid smoking situations for the first few weeks. It may be hard to avoid entirely, but the more you can, the easier it becomes. When it can't be avoided, think in advance about who else might be present that doesn't smoke. Try hanging out with him or her.

Trigger

Not enough medication or coming off of it too soon. It happens that people using nicotine gum, lozenge, inhaler or nasal spray, may not use enough. Also, with almost all tobacco treatment medication, people often come off it too soon.

A Solution



Don't wait for a craving to hit. It may be too late. With the gum, lozenge, inhaler and nasal spray, try taking it as directed periodically throughout the day. This will keep a steady supply of medicine in your body to help with any cravings. For all tobacco treatment medicines, take the medication for at least 8 weeks.

Trigger

After you quit, you believe that you can have "just one." This usually leads to another one after that, and then another.

A Solution



Remind yourself that cravings to smoke are like an itch: the more you scratch, the worse the itch. You don't have to worry about quitting for a lifetime, just take it one step at a time.