

How to choose a quit date

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Congratulations! You've decided to quit smoking. Setting a quit date is a key step in creating a successful quit plan. Now you just need to decide what that date is and figure out how to stick with it.

How to choose your quit date

1. **Choose a quit date within the next two weeks.** You don't want to wait too long — the sooner you quit, the better. But it's also important to give yourself time to get ready.
2. **Choose your quit date carefully.** Avoid days when the temptation to smoke is high. If you smoke at work, consider starting on the weekend so when you're back, you'll already be smoke-free for a couple of days. If you're more likely to smoke on weekends when you have a night out planned with friends, consider starting on a weekday.
3. **Consider choosing a quit date that has a special meaning for you.** Part of creating a successful quit plan is being clear on all the reasons

you want to quit. Some people want to be a good role model for a child. Some people want to honor the memory of a loved one. Choosing a birthday or anniversary of a loved one that relates to your quit plan may be a powerful motivator.

4. **Consider choosing a quit date that has broader meaning.** You may want to choose an annual event to give your quit date added meaning. Some people find inspiration in being part of the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November. Some people like quitting on Independence Day as a symbol of their newfound freedom.

How to make your quit date stick

1. **Make a big deal out of it.** Circle your quit date on your calendar. Write it out somewhere where you will see it every day. Let friends and family members know you are quitting, so they can offer support.
2. **Ask for help.** Talk to friends or relatives who have quit smoking and ask for their advice and support. Ask smokers to stop lighting up around you.
3. **Know and avoid your triggers.** Remove cigarettes and lighters from your home, car and office. Stock up on items such as sugar-free gum or straws, and snacks such as sugar-free candy or celery sticks that can serve as oral substitutes for cigarettes. Come up with a short list of activities you can do for a few minutes to keep you busy when a craving hit. Schedule smoke-free social activities such as going to the movies.

The more prepared you feel, the better your chances are of kicking the habit for good.

By Heidi Raschke, Contributing Writer

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Updated November 16, 2020