

How to Help a Smoker Quit



Want to Help Your Friend or Family Member Quit Smoking?

If so, this booklet
is for you.

You deserve
a lot of credit for
wanting to help.

You'll need to know what the quitting process is like.
This booklet tells you.
It also tells you what kinds of help work best.
It's based on advice from former smokers—and from the
friends and family members who helped them quit.

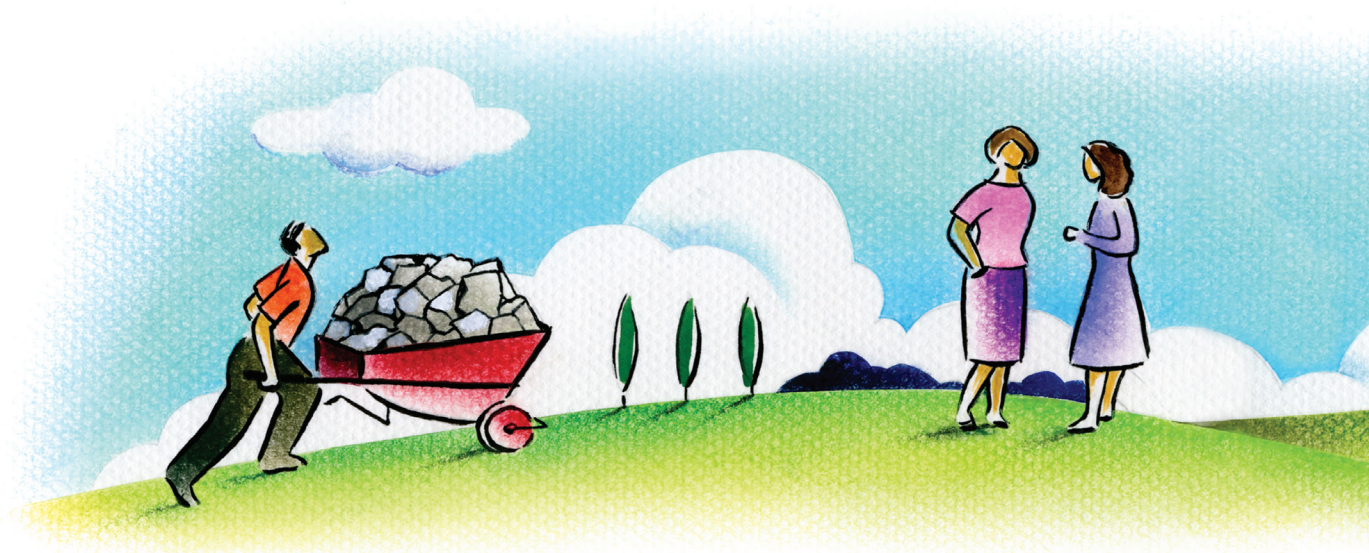
How to Help a Smoker Quit comes from the California
Smokers' Helpline at the University of California, San Diego,
School of Medicine.

Since 1992 the Helpline has served almost 400,000 people
who wanted to know more about quitting.

Quitting smoking is hard.

The smoker must make the decision and do the work.

But this booklet shows you how to help.



Step 1 LEARN
Why it's hard
to quit smoking
How people are able
to quit smoking

Step 2 ASK
What your friend
or family member thinks
about quitting
What kind of help
he or she needs

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Step 3 DO SOMETHING
That helps your friend
or family member quit
Like getting quitting
aids for him or her

Step 4 REMEMBER
That you have an
important role
To keep trying
to help

Why It's Hard to Quit Smoking

Most smokers feel two ways about quitting.

They want to quit, and at the same time they wish they could keep smoking.



Simply stated, quitting smoking is hard. Here's why:

Smokers have mixed feelings about quitting.

They know smoking is bad for them. But it also gives them something they like. Whatever they get out of cigarettes keeps them hooked.

Smoking is a habit.

Smokers are used to having cigarettes at the same times each day, for the same reasons. Smoking becomes automatic.

Quitting can disrupt the daily routine. Some people go back to smoking to feel normal again.

Smoking fills a need.

Many smokers use cigarettes to help them get through the pressures of daily life. They may come to believe that smoking is the only way to cope.

Many smokers see cigarettes as a long-time “friend.” They may have strong feelings of loss when they try to quit.

Smokers may be dependent on nicotine.

Their bodies may crave nicotine after quitting. Withdrawal symptoms are normal. They go away on their own, usually in a week or two.

dizziness	trouble thinking	hunger	restlessness
depression	coughing	tiredness	trouble sleeping
	headaches	irritability	

Some people start smoking again to get rid of withdrawal symptoms.

Keep in mind that thousands of people quit smoking each year, despite the mixed feelings, the habit, the need and the nicotine.

How People Quit Smoking

It is rare for a smoker to wake up one day and put down cigarettes for good.

More often, smokers take smaller steps on their way to becoming nonsmokers.

Quitting happens over time.

Most smokers try many times before quitting entirely. With every try, they learn more about how to quit for good.

The more times a person tries to quit, the closer he or she is to succeeding for life.

Motivation and planning are important.

Smokers can quit even without strong willpower.

The real keys to success are **motivation** (finding a strong reason to quit) and **planning**.

Slips and relapses are normal.

People often **slip** (smoke, but get back on track with quitting) or **relapse** (start smoking regularly again).

Smoking again is not a sign of weakness. It may just mean that the smoker needs to do more planning.

It takes a while to think like a nonsmoker.

When people first quit, they still think like smokers.

Every day, they have to decide whether or not to smoke.

Nonsmokers decide once and for all: no smoking, no matter what. When people change their thinking, they have a better chance of quitting for life.



Seeing Eye to Eye

If you're planning to help someone quit smoking, think about this key question.

What does it mean to help?

The answer is not simple.

What you think is helpful may not seem that way to the smoker.

One of the best things you can do is understand how the smoker sees things.

To find out, try asking:

1 **How ready are you to quit smoking?**

If a smoker is just thinking about quitting, but hasn't decided, don't push. Only the smoker can make that decision. Instead, say you're sure he or she can do it when ready. Then check back later.

2 **What concerns you most about quitting?**

Listen without judging what the smoker says. Show that you care and that you really want to know.

3 **What can I do to help?**

Let the smoker's experiences guide you. If you can, give exactly the kind of help he or she asks for. More important than doing any one special thing is showing understanding about the challenges of quitting.



Helping Tips

After you check with your friend or family member about what would be most helpful, try to follow these guidelines.



Try not to nag.

Complaints and pressure only lead to tension and arguments.
Instead, give support: “You can do it,” or “We can do it together.”

Learn more about how people quit.

Read a booklet on how to quit smoking.
Find out about “quitting aids”— things that can help smokers quit. These include nicotine patches, nicotine gum, and prescription pills like Zyban® or Wellbutrin®. (See pages 6-7.)

Make your home smoke-free.

Encourage a ban on smoking in your home. It helps reduce smoking and makes quitting easier.

A smoke-free home also protects everyone from secondhand smoke.

Help with planning.

Ask your friend or family member which cigarettes will be hardest to give up each day, and why. Help him or her think of things to do instead of smoking. Provide substitutes for cigarettes.

Try fruits and other healthy snacks or drinks.

Suggest calling a quitline.

Show your friend or family member the 1-800-NO-BUTTS number.
Trained staff will give free quitting help over the phone.

Encourage nonsmoking activities.

Suggest ideas like taking a walk together or going places (movies, malls, restaurants) where smoking is not allowed.

Avoid parties and bars with smoking and alcohol.

Be patient with mood swings.

A person quitting smoking may be grouchy, nervous, or forgetful at first. Keep in mind that these changes won't last.

Don't take mood swings personally.

Quitting Aids and Methods

One part of helping is learning about quitting aids and methods. This chart shows the most common ones.



Nicotine patch

HOW TO USE IT Stick to skin on upper body. Follow directions carefully.

WHERE TO GET IT Over the counter at drugstores and grocery stores, or by prescription.



Nicotine gum

HOW TO USE IT Chew briefly, then park it between cheek and gum. Follow directions carefully.

WHERE TO GET IT Over the counter at drugstores and grocery stores, or by prescription.



Nicotine inhaler or nasal spray

HOW TO USE IT **Inhaler:** inhale through mouth. **Nasal spray:** spray into nose. Follow directions carefully.

WHERE TO GET IT Pharmacy (prescription only).



Nicotine lozenges

HOW TO USE THEM Dissolve in mouth slowly, one at a time. Follow directions carefully.

WHERE TO GET THEM Over the counter at drugstores and grocery stores, or by prescription.

WARNING: **Manufacturers warn that people should not smoke while using these products.**

Smoking while using nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, spray, or lozenges can make the smoker sick from too much nicotine.



Prescription pills (Zyban®, Wellbutrin®)

HOW TO USE THEM Take pills prescribed by doctor.
Start 1-2 weeks before quitting smoking.

WHERE TO GET THEM Pharmacy (prescription only).



Professional help and 12-step programs

HOW TO USE IT Attend a class or group, or call a telephone quitline.

WHERE TO GET IT State Department of Health Services;
insurance company; local phone directory.



Hypnosis

HOW TO USE IT Reach a deep state of relaxation and
“openness to suggestion” (to change the way
a smoker thinks about cigarettes).

WHERE TO GET IT Certified hypnotherapist.



Acupuncture

HOW TO USE IT Practitioner briefly puts very thin needles
into the skin.

WHERE TO GET IT Licensed acupuncturist.



Herbal remedies

HOW TO USE THEM Drink herbal teas or take herbal mixtures.

WHERE TO GET THEM Herbalist.

When It Gets Tough

It can be hard
when your friend
or family member
keeps smoking.



Accept that there's a limit to what you can do.

You may need to give your friend or family member some space.

Say something like,

"I know that quitting smoking is your decision, not mine."

"I respect your right to decide when you're ready."

If you can't help nagging, share your concern at the same time.

You might say,

"I care about you."

"I want you to have a healthy future."

"I want the grandchildren to have you here for a long time."

Show understanding about slips and relapses.

Praise every effort your friend or family member makes.

Tell him or her,

"Even a short try is a success."

What You Won't Read Anywhere Else

The good news:
every smoker who tries
enough times *will* quit
for good.

It's a matter of not
giving up. That's why
your encouragement is
so important.

Even when smokers get the best help to quit smoking, six out of every seven tries end in relapse.

Not many people know this fact, and those who know don't say much about it. Nobody wants to dash the hopes of smokers—or of helpers.

But the truth is that most smokers have to try time and time again before they can quit for good.

You are giving a wonderful gift by helping. As you provide support through the challenges of quitting, keep these four points in mind:

Quitting is hard.

Even with the best help available, relapse happens a lot.

Relapse is normal.

Going back to smoking is part of a learning process.

It is not a sign of weakness or lack of ability.

Smokers should keep trying.

The average smoker will have to try many times before quitting for good. Be careful not to nag, but always look for a chance to say, "Keep trying. You can do it."

The more tries the better.

When a smoker keeps trying, it's just a question of time. He or she will succeed.



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California Smokers' Helpline

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