



Stress Awareness

Everyone experiences stress! It is a natural physical or emotional response to difficult situations we may face. For tobacco users the first reaction to stress is usually turning to a nicotine product.¹

Cravings usually only last about five to ten minutes, so it's important to have a game plan on how to endure these short periods of cravings.¹

Try some of these tips:



Do some quick physical activity¹

Go for a short walk, do some push-ups or jumping jacks. Any sort of quick physical activity that will distract you but also help you with gains.



Take a water break¹

This gives you something to do and changes the taste in your mouth. Water or other plain drinks are the best options are they don't remind you of tobacco the way coffee, soda, or a beer might.



Minty freshness¹

Brushing your teeth could help curb your craving. If you're not able to brush on the whim, having mints or gum on hand are great alternatives to pop in when a nicotine craving hits.



Snack on something healthy¹

Keep a stash of healthy snacks such as nuts, crackers, carrots, celery, or fruits to munch on whenever a craving hits.



Chew a straw or toothpick¹

Having something in mouth can help you through a craving as it keeps you distracted.



Keep your hands busy¹

Keeping your hands busy is a good distraction from the feeling of holding a vape or cigarette. Using a stress ball or fidget toy are also great tools.

What are Tobacco Triggers?

Here are 4 common triggers that may make you want to use tobacco and how to tackle them²:

1. Emotional²

- Reach out to friends, a support group, or loved ones.
- Take deep breaths to de-stress

2. Pattern²

- Change your routine. Do something you normally wouldn't do such as texting a friend or eating a snack.

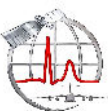
3. Social²

- Try to limit putting yourself in stressful situations.
- Suggest non-tobacco activities or environments where tobacco is not a norm.

4. Withdrawal²

- Refocus your energy. Try a new hobby or activity.
- Consider your quit options. Talk to your health care provider and see what options are best for you.

1. You Can Quit 2. (n.d.). Shook By Tobacco Cravings? Refocus Your Energy. Retrieved from <https://www.ycq2.org/stay-quit/beat-tobacco-cravings/how-to-refocus/>
 2. You Can Quit 2. (n.d.). Tackle Your Triggers. Retrieved from <https://www.ycq2.org/how-to-quit-tobacco/preparing-to-quit/tackle-your-triggers/>



A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

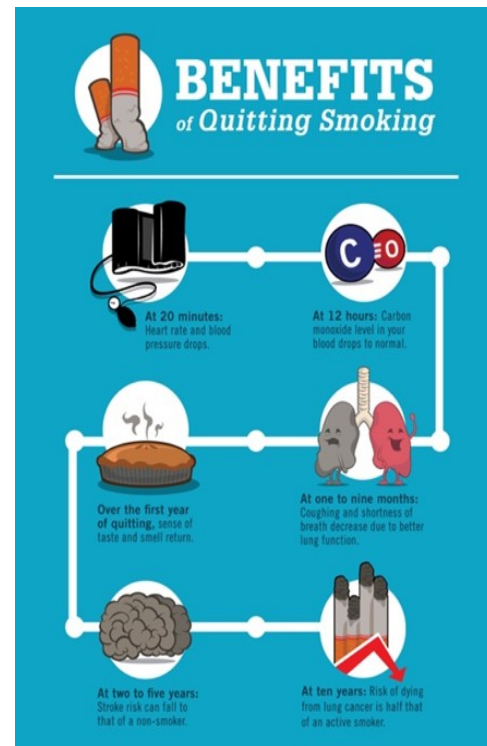
I want to stop smoking since I know it is a bad habit, but it is extremely difficult as I find smoking to be relaxing. After a long day at the office all I want to do is smoke a cigarette since it soothes me almost immediately. I even find myself taking more frequent smoking breaks throughout the day as I feel my stress creeping up. Smoking is so relaxing and soothing for me, how am I supposed to quit?

Respectfully,
Tryin2Qit

Dear Tryin2Qit,

While it may seem that smoking relaxes you, it in fact does the opposite. It seems like it is relaxing you, but all smoking does is relieve the tension you are experiencing caused by your nicotine craving.¹ This can lead to a vicious cycle of constantly needing to smoke to relieve the tension since your heart rate and blood pressure are increasing, causing you to feel more stressed.² Most people say their mood gets better and they feel less stressed within 6 months of quitting.² When you feel a craving it is important to find ways to distract yourself especially while stressed. There are tools such as My QuitBuddy that can help you keep track of your quit journey and serve as a goal setting aid.³ Check out <https://www.ycq2.org> to learn more about how to start your quit journey and what resources are available to you.

Sincerely,
Health Myth Busters



- 1 MHealthy. (2017). Myths About Tobacco Use. The Regents of the University of Michigan. Retrieved from https://hr.umich.edu/sites/default/files/smoking-myths_0.pdf
 2 The Myth about smoking and stress. (n.d). Think smoking helps stress? Retrieved from <https://besmokefree.com.au/hot-topics/the-myth-about-smoking-and-stress/>
 3 My QuitBuddy app. (2020). What is the My QuitBuddy App? Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Retrieved from <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/my-quitbuddy-app>

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you "Bust The Myths!" Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.afmra-hpo@mail.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line "Health Myth Buster." For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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Air Force Health Promotion HQ

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