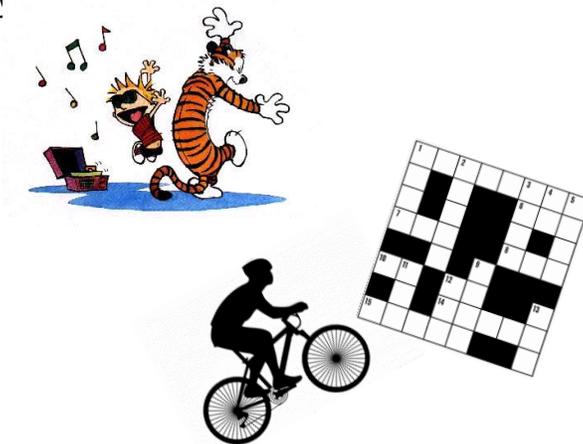


COPING STRATEGIES

DISTRACTION

Almost all smoking urges will pass within a few minutes and doing something to distract yourself from the urge is often all you need to do. A good strategy is to distract yourself by doing something you enjoy!

- ✚ go for a walk
- ✚ read a book
- ✚ listen to the radio or your favorite song
- ✚ dance
- ✚ play with your kids
- ✚ call a friend
- ✚ play a game
- ✚ take a shower or bath
- ✚ work a crossword puzzle
- ✚ exercise
- ✚ play cards
- ✚ garden or work on the yard



POSITIVE SELF-TALK/COGNITIVE COPING SKILLS

Things that you say to yourself influence the way you feel - stress, worry, anger, depression, and urges to smoke or drink can be created by our own thoughts. You can feel better and reduce urges by using positive self-talk. Review your reasons for quitting smoking or reducing alcohol to help prevent smoking or drinking. For example, tell yourself that:

- ✚ Cigarettes/Alcohol will not change situations or problems; they only provide a brief escape.
- ✚ I had to learn how to smoke/drink, and now I am learning how NOT to smoke/drink. This is a difficult task and takes time.
- ✚ I made a commitment to quit based on some very good reasons.
- ✚ Quitting smoking/Changing drinking is a process. I have made progress and I will succeed.
- ✚ I have a lot of reasons for quitting/changing. I am going to review those reasons anytime I really feel tempted to smoke/drink.
- ✚ All I have to do is take it one day or even one hour at a time. I don't need to worry about tomorrow, next week, or the rest of my life.
- ✚ Smoking is not an option because I'm a nonsmoker now!
- ✚ Cigarettes/Alcohol no longer control me. I am in control of my life now!
- ✚ I can handle this. I know what I want for myself.
- ✚ I don't need a cigarette/drink. There is nothing that it can do for me that I can't achieve in some other way.



SUPPORT SYSTEM

Research shows that people who use their social support system are more likely to quit smoking and stay quit. Let your family and friends know that you are serious about quitting smoking or changing drinking and tell them what kind of support will be helpful.

- ✦ Talk to your family and friends and ask them for support. Explain your plans for quitting/changing drinking. Be as clear as you can.
- ✦ Call a friend or family member when you feel angry, sad, anxious, or have an urge to smoke/drink.
- ✦ Ask your minister or members of your church for help in getting through difficult times. Most people will be flattered that you asked them for help.
- ✦ Tell your co-workers who smoke about your plans for quitting and ask them not to offer you any cigarettes/drinks.
- ✦ You also can talk to former smokers/drinkers about their feelings and experiences.



SPIRITUAL/INSPIRATIONAL

When faced with an urge or high-risk situation you can look to your spiritual beliefs for comfort and strength. You can also use prayer or other inspirational sources during high-risk situations to help you cope with the urges.

SUBSTITUTES

Many people miss having something in their hands or mouth after they quit smoking or drinking. Find substitutes for smoking or drinking.

- ✦ Drink a lot of water, orange juice or a low-calorie non-alcoholic beverage. Limit coffee and alcohol – they can increase your craving to smoke.
- ✦ Chew a stick of sugarless gum, a toothpick, a straw, or a cinnamon stick.
- ✦ Snack on low-calorie foods like carrots, celery sticks, or any fresh vegetable or fruit. Avoid sugar and fatty foods.
- ✦ Brush your teeth.
- ✦ Suck on a sugar-free hard candy or peppermint.
- ✦ Keep your hands busy with a pencil, paper clip, key holder, or coins.



REMIND AND REWARD



Remember why you chose to quit smoking and change drinking, and congratulate and reward yourself for your successes.

- ✦ Always keep the big picture in mind! Remind yourself of your reasons every day.
- ✦ Quitting smoking will lower your chance of having a heart attack, stroke, or cancer. You will live longer and better. Your loved ones, especially your children, will be healthier. You will save money.
- ✦ Reward yourself for not smoking/drinking. Use the money you save by not smoking/drinking to go to a movie, out to dinner, or to buy yourself something special.