

# Coping With High Risk Situations

## INFORMATION ON HIGH RISK SITUATIONS

High-risk situations are those situations where you are at greatest risk of relapse and are often characterized by stress or negative emotions, other people smoking, drinking alcohol, and the settings where you routinely smoked or drank in the past.



Review your past quit attempts and your current smoking patterns:

- ✚ In which situations have you been most tempted to smoke or drink? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✚ In which situations have you lapsed in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✚ Who was with you the last time you had an urge? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✚ What was your mood like when you last had the urge to smoke or drink? \_\_\_\_\_

## NEGATIVE FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

More than half of all relapses occur when people are stressed, angry, sad, frustrated, anxious, worried, or irritable. Negative emotions can lead to relapse if you aren't prepared to cope with those feelings without smoking. For example:



- ✚ If you are feeling upset about an argument you had with someone.
- ✚ You are having a hard time making ends meet financially.
- ✚ Your kids are getting in your nerves.
- ✚ If you are frustrated by traffic.
- ✚ You are at home alone with nothing to do.
- ✚ If you are feeling down because you got a call from a friend with bad news.
- ✚ You feel exhausted because you have been working very hard.
- ✚ \_\_\_\_\_

**Action Plan:**

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## OTHER PEOPLE WHO SMOKE/DRINK OR CIGARETTES/ALCOHOL ARE AVAILABLE

Other people smoking or drinking or the availability of cigarettes/alcohol are particularly dangerous. Avoid these situations if possible. Even one puff increases the likelihood that you will start to smoke again. Examples include:

- ✚ You are in a friend's car and the friend offers you a cigarette.
- ✚ You are at a party and people are smoking or drinking.
- ✚ Some friends are visiting and several of them go outside to smoke.
- ✚ You go outside for a break from work and your co-workers are taking a smoking break.
- ✚ You are looking for something in a kitchen drawer and find an old pack of cigarettes.



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### Action Plan:

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## DRINKING ALCOHOL



It is easy to relapse when you drink. In fact, almost one third of all smoking relapses occur when people are drinking. Beer, wine, and wine coolers have exactly the same smoking risk as hard liquor. Even if you don't get drunk or buzzed, alcohol can increase your urge to smoke and you become more likely to give in to those urges. You might want to avoid situations where alcohol is present or even stop drinking completely until you've been smoke-free for a few months. At the very least, you should drink in moderation and limit your

drinking to those situations where cigarettes are not available. Examples of situations include:

- ✚ You are by yourself and having a drink to relax, when you start to feel an urge to smoke.
- ✚ You have just finished dinner and are having a beer, when you think about how nice it would be to smoke or have another beer.
- ✚ You are at a party and enjoying a cocktail. There are smokers around you.



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### Action Plan:

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## SOCIAL SITUATIONS

Social situations can be challenging for several reasons. You are likely to be around other people who are smoking and you will be engaging in some behavior that you have learned to associate with smoking, such as drinking alcohol, eating, or relaxing with friends. Don't let your guard down just because you are feeling good! Plan ahead and use your ACE Strategies for handling social situations. Examples of these types of situations include:

- ✚ You are relaxing with friends and people around you are smoking/drinking.
- ✚ You just received good news and feel like celebrating.
- ✚ You run into an old friend, and the friend invites you to join in a smoke or drink.



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### Action Plan:

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## ROUTINE SMOKING SITUATIONS

Urges are common during routine situations where you typically smoked such as driving, talking on the phone, watching TV, reading, with coffee in the morning, or after a meal. This is true for alcohol urges too. One way to reduce urges is to change your routine after you quit. Sit in a different chair while watching TV or relaxing, or drink your morning coffee in a different room of the house. Examples of routine smoking or drinking situations include:



- ✚ You are enjoying your first cup of coffee in the morning.
- ✚ During or after a meal.
- ✚ While waiting for your bus or driving to work.
- ✚ Watching TV and sitting in the same chair where you used to smoke.
- ✚ When you are having a hard time sleeping.
- ✚ While talking on the phone.
- ✚ When you take a break at work.



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### Action Plan:

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