

Coping With Urges: ACE Strategies

One of the most important tasks in successful quitting is learning how to handle urges and high-risk situations without smoking or drinking too much. Research shows that people who use coping strategies are **12 times** more likely to be successful than people who do not use coping strategies! The ACE (Avoid, Cope, Escape) strategies are specifically designed to help you handle urges and difficult situations without smoking or drinking more than you want. Review your past attempts to quit smoking or change your drinking behavior and then identify some ACE strategies that will work for you.

AVOID **C**OPE **E**SCAPE

AVOID

You can prevent many smoking/drinking urges simply by avoiding triggers to smoke/drink and high-risk situations. Planning how to avoid dangerous situations is an extremely effective technique for reducing urges and the stress of quitting. After you have been successful for a month or two, avoiding certain situations may no longer be necessary. Suggestions for avoiding urges and high-risk situations include:



- ✚ Avoid places and situations where you used to smoke/drink (bars, break areas, kitchen table after a meal).
- ✚ Avoid or limit food and beverages that make you want to smoke/drink (coffee, alcohol).
- ✚ Avoid being bored and inactive. Start a new hobby or exercise program so you don't get bored and want to smoke/drink.
- ✚ Avoid people who are smoking/drinking or places where you have access to cigarettes/alcohol. This isn't forever, just until you feel more comfortable resisting temptations to smoke/drink.
- ✚ Avoid friends that smoke/drink, or ask them NOT to smoke/drink around you.
- ✚ Avoid neglecting yourself. Take good care of yourself. Get plenty of rest, eat a balanced diet, and get regular exercise.

COPE

- ✚ Research shows that using coping strategies leads to are strongly related to success at handling urges smoke/drink and high-risk situations. Strategies that have been proven to work are shown on the next page.



ESCAPE



- ✚ If you get into a situation that is too overwhelming or you continue to feel tempted to smoke or drink – ESCAPE! Don't let anything threaten your goals. For example, if someone starts smoking around you and you can't ask them to not smoke, excuse yourself and leave – even if only for a few minutes. As you get stronger, you will need to escape from fewer situations, but don't be afraid to ESCAPE if you have to. Your health is worth it!