



COACH RESOURCES

WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT AWAY?

If you drink lots of water, breathe deeply, and keep moving, you will be able to go long periods of time without being aware of your changed situation. As you notice the time between urges increasing, you may become aware of some of the physical symptoms of recovery described below.

You may feel all, some, or none of these symptoms within the first week. Remember that your body is healing and that over time, the symptoms will abate. Don't worry about them unless they persist for a long time.

This list below includes symptoms smokers may or may not experience during the first several weeks of having quit.

► PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF WITHDRAWAL

■ Coughing

Your lungs and upper respiratory system are now getting rid of the built-up toxins that restricted your breathing while you were smoking. Your body is cleaning house, so don't panic if you cough or spit up blackish mucus. Your cough should last only a few days; cough drops or syrups may help relieve the symptoms.

■ Sleeplessness

Smokers lack energy, and their sleep tends to be restless because of coughing and difficult breathing. Now that you are no longer smoking, you are healthier and your body has more energy.

You should need fewer hours of sleep, and the sleep you get should be more restful. If you want to sleep longer, use more of your new energy during the day by exercising harder and going to bed later, when you tend to be more tired.

■ Mouth Sores

A small number of people who stop smoking are affected by chemical changes in their mouths and may suffer minor problems including blisters, sores, and inflammation. For years, your mouth has had to withstand the endless attacks of hot smoke, so it can handle the sores. They'll go away in a few days.

■ Occasional Dizziness

Because your body is taking in more oxygen through the lungs than you have been used to, you may feel dizzy. These dizzy spells will last only a few seconds. This symptom may recur for four or five days, until your body adjusts to increased oxygen intake.

■ Constipation

Internal movement may decrease for a brief period when a smoker lowers or stops cigarette use. This symptom rarely lasts longer than three to four days.

■ Tightness in the Chest

Some newly free smokers complain of chest pain after stopping. This happens because your body is getting more fresh air than usual. The extra air fills the lungs and makes them feel tighter. This symptom should last for only a day or two after stopping. See your doctor if it persists.

■ Lack of Concentration

Some former smokers notice lapses in concentration soon after they break free. This symptom may be the combined result of other withdrawal symptoms - irritability, sleeplessness, and the change in your routine. Give it time. Your focus will be clearer within a few days, and you will develop new ways of coping without reaching for a cigarette.

■ Irritability

It is the nicotine that causes your cigarette addiction. When the nicotine level declines, your body begins to sense the loss. This can cause tension and be symptomatic of the grief process. Deep breathing and exercise will help relieve irritability.

■ Feeling Sleepy

Some smokers report that they get a boost of energy from smoking. The body needs time to adjust to not having a cigarette every half hour or so. If you feel sleepy, don't hesitate to take a nap during the first few days you are free of smoking.

■ Bigger Appetite:

As you smoke, nicotine is absorbed into your bloodstream and within 3 minutes, chemical reactions cause your body to trigger the release of sugar. After quitting, you may feel dizzy, restless, nervous or even have strong headaches. This is because you are lacking the immediate release of sugar that cigarettes provide – and why you may have a bigger appetite. These sugar-related cravings should only last a few days until your body adjusts to this new smoke-less state of being. So, for the first 3 or 4 days after you quit, make sure you keep your sugar levels a bit higher than usual by drinking plenty of juice. It will help prevent the craving symptoms triggered by a lack of sugar and help your body re-adjust back to normal.

► PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS NOT COVERED

Remember, not all symptoms that surface after you stop are due to smoking withdrawal. It has already been suggested that you see your dentist soon after stopping smoking. In some cases, periodontal disease may become more evident. Individuals often report having a severe head cold soon after smoking cessation.



KEEP A CRAVING JOURNAL

For a couple of weeks, make entries into a log book to monitor your daily progress. Think about different moments in your life when you enjoy having a cigarette. These are your triggers to smoking. Are there certain people or environments that trigger your cravings? How do you feel when you smoke? Jot down some other things you can do to feel that way. After you quit, if you're having a bad day, you can look back at the comments you wrote in week one to get perspective on how far you've come.