

Quitting the habit by Mike DeCinti

As I have mentioned before, I do almost all of my exercising in the morning sometimes as early as 5:00am. I prefer mornings, because I have found that if I wait until after work I am more prone to finding an excuse not to workout. Which is a simple lesson in trial and error. It takes some time, but when you find what works you'll be more likely to stick with it.

Now a lot of you have started your workout plans and you are still probably getting use to your schedule. That's fine. Take your time and really work it out. Plan your workouts and meals, even what you're going to wear. The less you have to think about when it's time to start, the more you can concentrate on reaching your goals.

Besides working out, obviously you need to be watching what you eat, drinking plenty of water, and for some of you, quit smoking. Like exercising you have to plan this as well. You need to get mentally ready as well as have the tools you need so you don't have to think about while your quitting. Here's some advice that may help, but remember, if you have any questions or concerns contact your primary healthcare provider.

- Try to quit with someone. Going it alone can be tough, but having the support of a spouse, best friend or co-worker can be beneficial. Ask people for their help. If they don't know you need it, they probably won't offer it. And let people know your quitting, so they'll understand why you may be a little grumpy.
- Remember that the urge to smoke only lasts a few minutes, and will then pass. The urges gradually become farther and farther apart as the days go by. When you get that urge reach for a piece of fruit or sugarless gum, or try taking deep breathes.
- Do your very best to stay away from alcohol, sugar and coffee the first week or longer, as these tend to stimulate the desire for a cigarette. Avoid fatty foods, as you may gain weight even if you eat the same amount as before quitting. So discipline about diet and moderate exercise is extra important now.
- Change your normal routine – park at the back of the parking lot, take the stairs, walk the dog or even jog around the block. The more active you become the less you'll want to smoke.
- Ask friends and family members not to smoke in your presence. Don't be afraid to ask. This is more important than you may realize, and they will understand.
- Need even more help? Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-877-44U-QUIT to talk to a trained counselor who can provide you with one on one counseling over the phone. Or visit informative websites like www.anti-smoking.org for helpful tips.

Now a lot of you may be tempted to buy some kind of stop-smoking product that's on the market, and although some of these products have helped, many of them are just filled with empty promises. I personally do not recommend any product, but that doesn't mean there are not useful ones out there. What I suggest you do is to take your time, and do

your research. You can find a lot of important information on the web, but you have to be careful.

For instance, this weekend I saw an ad to help people quit smoking. It mentioned nothing about a product but gave a website (mytimetoquit.com) where you can find very basic information about how hard it is to quit. What they don't tell you is the website is designed by the drug company Pfizer and they are trying to push the drug Chantix.

Again, I have nothing against this product or others, except to say that there are a lot of them out there and you need to make sure you know what you're getting before you start. The worst thing you could want would be to waste a lot of money on a product that not only doesn't work, but comes with unwanted side effects and leaves you still smoking and more discouraged.

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