

# LIFE AFTER CIGARETTES

## *Avoiding Smoker's Relapse*

It has been said that, if you keep away from cigarettes for three months, the worst is over. If you are smoke-free for six months, the battle is virtually won. There is always the possibility of a relapse, no matter how long you have gone without smoking, but turning your back on the cravings becomes easier with the passage of time.

### **Keeping Away From Temptation**

The best place to start is your own home. Throw out all your ashtrays or at least keep them out of sight. You might want to clean out your closets and clean your clothes to rid them of all tobacco odors. Air out all your rooms so they smell clean and fresh. Keep any reminders of your cigarette days out of sight.

When you are out, stay away from coffee or alcohol until you are absolutely sure you can drink them without smoking. For a while at least, do not patronize bars or other smoke-filled areas. Explain to your smoker friends what you are doing and ask them not to offer you any cigarettes. You might also ask them to refrain from smoking in your presence.

### **Hone Your Techniques**

Never let your behavior modification techniques get rusty. They'll be valuable for the rest of your life and you must always be able to call

them into play when the urge strikes. Deep breathing can replace cigarettes as your best friend in times of stress.

Follow a regular exercise program. It doesn't

matter whether you go to an exercise class or whether you exercise alone as long as you do it consistently. This will keep your mind off cigarettes and enhance your feelings of well being.

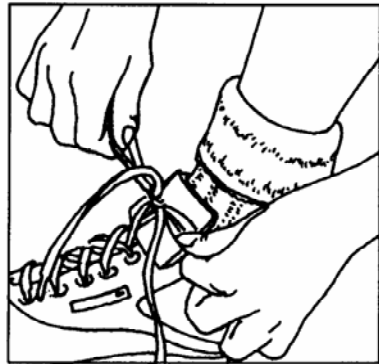
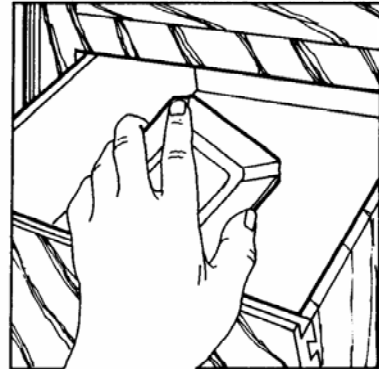
Continue to drink a lot of water and always eat a well-balanced diet.

### **Appreciate Your New Health**

You are going to start feeling better almost immediately. Your smoker's cough will begin to disappear. Your lungs will be cleaner. Your heart and blood pressure will improve. You'll have more stamina and lung power and you'll be able to exert yourself for longer periods of time. Keep thinking about how much healthier you feel without cigarettes. In order to stifle the urge to smoke, compare how wonderful you feel now with how you felt before.

### **Shift Your Perspective**

You are a non-smoker now, so never think of yourself in terms of cigarettes. You no longer "have" to smoke when you finish a meal. You no longer "have" to smoke when you talk on the phone. Think of yourself as being freer than you ever have been since before you started smoking. Never even consider a return to smoking as an option in your life.



**Remove ashtrays or other reminders of your smoking days and keep up your exercise program.**

### **If You Slip**

It's no big deal if you slip. You aren't a failure. You've only made a mistake. It does not mean you are going to become a full-fledged smoker again, as long as you immediately go back to your cigarette-free life. Turn your slip into a learning experience by analyzing what caused you to smoke and deciding how to handle the situation in the future.

**HelpPeople**<sup>SM</sup>  
Employee Assistance Program

470-7447 or 800-777-6110  
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