

Coping with Stress Without Smoking

Stress is a normal part of life—in moderation it can help you reach your goals, but too much stress creates more problems. Managing stress is a key part of quitting smoking.

You may have learned to deal with stress by smoking, but there are ways to handle stress without smoking. Here are a few ideas you might find helpful. Some of these tips may take practice, but others you can do right away. Try one or more to learn what works for you.

Relax.

Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that increase your heart rate and raise your blood pressure. Practicing relaxation techniques, like the ones below, may improve your health and help you handle your stress in positive ways.

Breathe.

Take a few slow, deep breaths—in through your nose, out through your mouth. You will feel your body start to relax.

Locate your stress.

Take a minute to figure out how stress affects your body. Where do you feel tension in your body? Finding ways to reduce that tension will also help your mental stress. A warm bath, a massage, or stretching can help you release built-up tension.

Visualize.

Think of a place where you feel safe, comfortable, and relaxed. Picture it as clearly as you can, including imagining what you would feel, hear, and maybe even smell if you were in that relaxing place. Let yourself enjoy being there for a few minutes.

Exercise.

Being active sends out natural chemicals that help your mood and reduce your stress. Sometimes a short walk is all it takes to relieve stress. And walking is free!

Talk.

You don't have to deal with stress alone. Share your feelings with friends, family, and other important people in your life who can support you in staying smokefree.

Focus.

Life can sometimes be overwhelming. Try not to get caught up in worrying about what's next. Instead, try to focus on what is happening now, not what you might have to deal with in the future.

Care.

Make an extra effort to take care of yourself. This includes basic things like eating a balanced diet, drinking lots of water, and getting enough sleep.

Do good.

Doing something nice for others can make your day a little better too. Being caring toward others helps you reduce your own stress.

Decaffeinate.

Caffeine can help you stay awake, but it also can make you feel tense, jittery, and stressed. Cutting back or even doing away with caffeine can help reduce your feelings of stress. Switching to herbal tea or even hot water with lemon gives you a chance to enjoy a hot beverage without the caffeine.

Accept.

Life is full of twists and turns. You'll always have some stress in your life. It helps to understand that there will be good days and bad days.

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