

## S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Quitting Smoking

While we may all see plenty of benefits to quitting smoking, and even while we truly want to stop, the very thought of quitting smoking may stop us in our tracks. Plenty of folks have told us how hard it is and we may have some previous unsuccessful attempts of our own that remind us that quitting smoking might be the hardest thing we'll ever do. Let's take a deep breath and try to break it down into S.M.A.R.T. goals.

**S.M.A.R.T.** goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imely. While your personal quit plan needs to be tailored specifically for you, the guidelines below can really help you on the journey to being free from tobacco's death-grip.

**Specific:** It will help to first recognize that there are different sorts of smoking; habit or routine smoking, buddy or social smoking, craving smoking -when your body starts to freak out a little due to a lack of nicotine, and mood smoking – when we're angry, anxious, bored, or discouraged. Try to develop a fine-tuned goal for each type of smoking. Be as specific as you can. Here are some good goals, made more **S**pecific:

*I'll exercise more and smoke less.*

*At break time I'll ask my buddy to come for a brisk walk with me rather than go to the smoking area.*

*I'll learn some new coping skills.*

*When I feel tense I'll try deep breathing for 2 minutes.*

*I'll change my habits.*

*After I start the car I'll put a piece of cinnamon gum in my mouth.*

**Measurable:** How will we know if we're hitting our target if we don't measure, right? So "smoking less" may be a worthwhile goal, but we're more likely to achieve it if we make it more measurable. Let's start by being honest with ourselves about how many we smoke each day. Do a baseline count. Then set a target number per day. Reducing a pack per day habit by two cigarettes is a 10% reduction in the soot in your lungs and the nicotine in your brain! And what if you aim to reduce by 2 per day and only reduce one? Well, a 5% improvement is a big deal. Keep it **M**easurable. Keep moving. You'll get there.



**Achievable:** Is life without tobacco achievable? Of course it is! And it's even better than you think it will be! But let's keep our eyes on the small steps along the way, so we don't become overwhelmed by the ultimate goal. On any given day, quitting may **seem** unachievable, but focusing on a single small step in the right direction can keep us in the game. Getting some support makes a big difference too. Enlist the support of a Quit Buddy or Coach and you'll see the goals as more **Achievable**.

**Realistic:** Switch from 40 cigarettes per day to a 21mg nicotine patch overnight? While it may be **possible**, most experts agree that reducing your number of cigarettes per day to 20-25 increases the likelihood that the patch will help control your withdrawal symptoms. Having realistic expectations about what your quit medication can do (and what it can't do) will prevent avoidable struggles along your way. Those struggles could trip you up and convince you that quitting is too hard! Getting information and support from qualified professionals can only improve our chances by keeping our expectations **Realistic**.

**Timely:** Putting some reasonable time limits on quitting goals keeps us from putting it off too long. Even if we're not ready to quit today, we could aim to have a quit day 'inked in' before the end of the month. Interestingly, writing our quit date seems to help some folks perceive it as more possible. And while we have the pen and calendar out, let's set an appointment with our doctor – they'll be glad to help. Calendars and appointments keep us moving toward the goal. Clocks and watches can too. Let's try flexing our quit muscles by just delaying our next smoke by 15 minutes, or even an hour. It's time to get started, don't you think?

You deserve to be free and S.M.A.R.T. goals can help get you there. Take a deep breath and let's go! Scan the QR Code below and sign up for free daily text messages!



Don't forget  
that you're  
**awesome!**



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