



Fifty New Year's Stop Smoking Tips

by John R. Polito, founder of [WhyQuit](#) and author of "[Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home](#)"

Nicotine hijacks the brain's dopamine pathways, the mind's priorities teacher, its "pay attention" circuitry. It physically desensitizes the brain by growing millions of extra nicotinic-type acetylcholine receptors in at least 11 different brain regions, a process known as up-regulation.

Recovery is a temporary journey of re-adjustment where we allow the time needed to restore natural sensitivities, break all subconsciously conditioned links to smoking triggers, and allow the conscious thinking mind time to move beyond years of smoking rationalizations, minimizations and blame transference.



Although a nicotine induced dopamine/adrenaline high reflects alert intoxication, chemical dependency upon nicotine is every bit as real, deep and permanent as alcoholism, crystal meth or heroin addiction. Admitting [true chemical addiction](#) is an extremely liberating step. It allows the enslaved mind to at last stop playing games and begin coming to terms with the only rule that guarantees lasting freedom: no nicotine today, none.

Do you remember the calm and quiet mind that you called home before nicotine took control? Probably not. It's what true drug addiction is all about, about quickly burying the real us. Although a lie, it's entirely normal to feel that nicotine now defines who you are and that life without it won't be nearly as good. Try not to be afraid during your journey home as you're in for a treat. Although nearly impossible to believe right now, you're leaving

nothing behind. Even the love in our heart, we get to bring it with us. In addition to the below fifty stop smoking tips, visit www.whyquit.com for additional motivational resources, to download our free quitting books "[Never Take Another Puff](#) and Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home, to watch 64 free [video quitting lessons](#), for free professional counseling or for free online [peer support](#).

1. **[Law of Addiction](#)** - The Law of Addiction states, "administration of a drug to an addict will cause re-establishment of chemical dependence upon the addictive substance, at the old level of use or greater." Yes, just one powerful puff and up to 50% of brain dopamine pathway receptors will become occupied by nicotine. While roughly half walk away from relapse thinking they have gotten away with smoking just once, they soon sense their brain begging for more. It forces them to again face up to 72 hours of nicotine detox, the most challenging period. We're simply not that strong. Adherence to a simple restatement of the Law of Addiction guarantees success to all. No nicotine today ..."**Never Take Another Puff!**"
2. **Be Honest - [This is a True Chemical Dependency](#)** - Nicotine dependency is every bit as real and permanent as alcoholism. Admitting chemical dependency causes us to treat it as the true addiction it is, instead of some nasty little habit that can be modified, controlled or molded. There is no such thing as just one puff of nicotine. Recovery truly is an all or nothing proposition.
3. **[Enhancing Motivation](#)** - Are you having trouble getting started? Is your motivation in need of a boost? Visit WhyQuit.com and meet [Noni](#), [Bryan](#), [Brandon](#), [Kim](#) or [Sean](#), or watch more than 30 short determination fueling [movie clips](#). If you don't have Internet access visit your local library.
4. **[Education is Power](#)** - Visit [WhyQuit.com](#), read [Joel's Library](#) one time from cover to cover, download his PDF [free book](#), watch 50 free [video quitting lessons](#), or get [online support](#).
5. **[Measuring Victory](#)** - Forget about quitting "forever." Like attempting the seemingly impossible task of eating an entire elephant, it's the biggest psychological bite imaginable. Instead, work hard at adopting a do-able "[one day at a time](#)" quitting philosophy for measuring victory. If you insist on seeing success only in terms of quitting forever then on which day will you celebrate?
6. **[Recovery Phases](#)** - When quitting, the amount of nicotine remaining in your bloodstream will be cut by half every two hours. Within 72 hours all nicotine and 90% of the chemicals it breaks down into will have passed from your body. Physical withdrawal peaks by day three and is substantially complete within two to three weeks. Subconscious trigger reconditioning normally peaks during the first week and all but our remote, infrequent or seasonal triggers should be extinguished within a month. Conscious thoughts of wanting will gradually grow fewer, shorter in duration and generally less intense. Within a few months they'll become the exception not the rule, as you'll gradually start to develop an expectation of going your entire day without wanting to smoke nicotine.
7. **[Withdrawal Symptoms](#)** - Within reason it's fairly safe to blame most of what you'll feel during the first three days on quitting. But after that you need to listen to your body and if concerned give your doctor a call. Don't blame your symptoms on

where you're going but on where you've been. See each symptom as a true sign of healing it reflects.

8. **Possible Hidden Conditions** - Each puff of smoke contained more than 500 different gases and 3,500 different particles. One or more of these 4,000 chemicals may have been masking an underlying hidden health problem such as a thyroid condition (iodine), breathing problems including asthma (bronchodilators), or even chronic organic depression (nicotine). Your cigarette's chemicals may also have been interacting with medications you were taking and an adjustment may be necessary. Stay alert and if at all concerned contact your physician or pharmacist.
9. **Emotional Phases** - Chemical dependency upon smoking nicotine is one of the most intense, repetitive and dependable relationships you've likely ever known. It has infected almost every aspect of your life. Be prepared to experience a normal sense of emotional loss when quitting. Expect to travel through and navigate six different emotional phases: (1) denial, (2) anger, (3) bargaining, (4) depression, (5) acceptance, and (6) complacency.
10. **Quitting Cold Turkey** - According to evidence tables in the June 2000 USDHHS Guideline, a smoker's natural six-month odds of quitting "on-their-own" are roughly 10%. Education, new behavioral skills (such as adopting a one day at a time quitting philosophy), and ongoing support can easily more than triple those odds. Obedience to the "Law of Addiction" ("Never Take Another Puff") will raise your odds to 100%. Contrary to the marketing hype of those selling a growing array of quitting products, more successful long-term ex-smokers quit smoking cold turkey each year than by all other quitting methods combined (nearly 90%).
11. **NRT** - Replacement nicotine delivered by the patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler comes from the exact same tobacco plant as nicotine in cigarettes. Clinical efficacy and real-world effectiveness are two different standards. What those selling NRT fail to reveal is that in nearly all real-world quitting method surveys conducted to date that those using NRT failed to perform better than those quitting without it. A 2003 study combined and averaged the 7 OTC nicotine patch and gum studies. It found that only 7% were still not smoking at 6 months. It gets worse. A 1993 study (Tonnesen) found that 0% of second-time patch users succeeded in quitting for 6 months and a 1995 study (Gourlay) reported a 1.6% six-month quitting rate.
12. **Zyban** - Zyban (bupropion) is a dopamine uptake inhibitor in pill form. In nearly all real-world use surveys to date it has failed to perform better than those quitting without it, at rates similar to those for NRT.
13. **Chantix** - 2006 Chantix studies produced a 1 in 5 one-year quit smoking rate but were inflated by a record 25 one-on-one counseling/support session. Amazingly, there has still been no study of Chantix unaccompanied by record levels of counseling and support. Real-world use rates are expected to be substantially lower.
14. **Hypnosis** - A 1998 Cochrane Review of 9 hypnosis studies concluded that "we have not shown that hypnotherapy has a greater effect on six month quit rates than other interventions or no treatment."
15. **Acupuncture** - A 2002 Cochrane Review of 22 studies concluded, "there is no clear evidence that acupuncture, acupressure, laser therapy or electro-stimulation are effective for smoking cessation."
16. **Don't Get Intimidated** - It's easy to let quitting method study findings intimidate us. Instead, use them to gauge just how serious the challenge before you actually is.

Quitting is entirely do-able, as evidenced by the fact that here in the U.S. we have more ex-smokers than current smokers. Considering that no smoker ever took a puff that didn't destroy more of their body's ability to receive and transport life-giving oxygen, and deliver more cancer causing chemicals, it's well worth the effort.

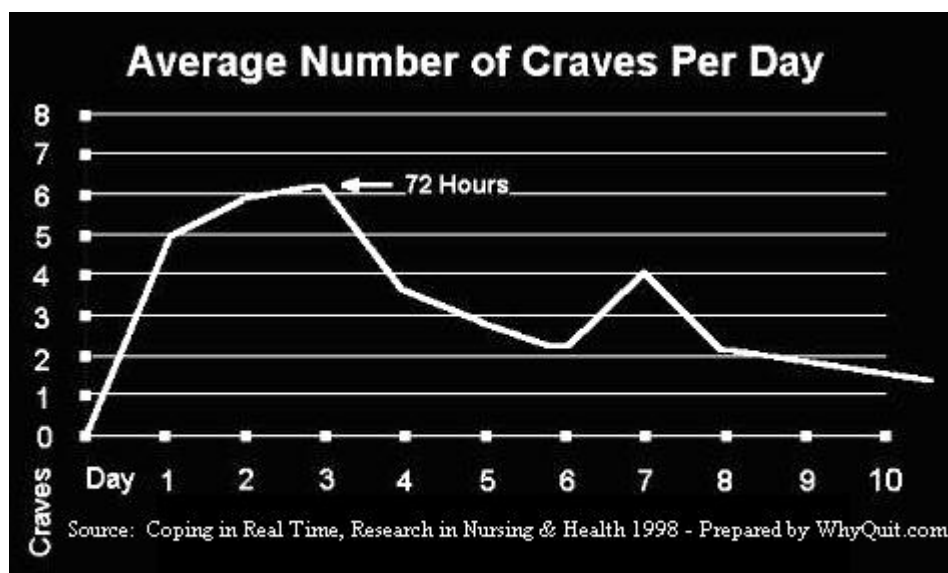
Although quitting isn't easy it is simple. There is just one rule ... no nicotine today ...
Never Take Another Puff!

17. **Recording Motivations** - Once in the heat of battle, it's normal for the mind to quickly forget the reasons that motivated us to commence recovery. Writing a loving reminder letter, carry with us and reaching for it during moments of challenge can serve as a powerful front line defense. As with achievement in almost all human endeavors, the wind beneath our recovery wings will not be strength or willpower but willingness (or "won't" power) grounded in dreams and desires. Keeping those dreams vibrant and on center-stage ensures that no circumstance will deprive us of glory.
18. **Do Not Skip Meals** - Each puff of nicotine was our spoon, via activation of the body's fight or flight response, releasing stored fats into our bloodstream. It allowed us to skip meals without experiencing wild blood-sugar swing symptoms such as an inability to concentrate or hunger related anxieties. Properly fueling the body and avoiding needless symptoms isn't a matter of eating more calories but spreading them out more evenly.
19. **Three Days of Natural Juices** - Acidic fruit juices will not only aid in more quickly eliminating the alkaloid nicotine from the body but in helping stabilize blood sugars. Unless diabetic, we recommend 3 days of drinking natural juices. But be careful beyond that as juice can be rather fattening. Cranberry is excellent and a bottle will cost less than a pack of cigarettes.
20. **Weight Gain** - You'd need to gain at least 75 extra pounds in order to equal the health risks associated with smoking a pack-a-day. We recommend vegetables and fruits instead of candies, chips and pastries to help avoid sugar spikes and weight gain. We recommend some form of moderate daily exercise if at all concerned about weight gain. Keep in mind that you can expect a substantial increase in overall lung function within just 90 days. It will aid in engaging in extended periods of physical activity, building cardiovascular endurance and shedding any unwanted pounds.
21. **Stress Related Anxieties** - Recognize that contrary to popular thinking, smoking nicotine did not relieve stress but only nicotine's absence. Nicotine is an alkaloid. Stress is an acid-producing event capable of quickly neutralizing the body's nicotine reserves. As smokers, we added early withdrawal to every stressful event. Ex-smokers soon discover an amazing sense of calm during crisis. In handling stress during this temporary period of readjustment called "quitting," practice slow deep breathing while focusing your mind on your favorite object, place or person to the exclusion of other thoughts.
22. **Quitting for Others** - You cannot quit for others. It must be your gift to you. Quitting for a an unborn child, child, spouse, parent, friend or employer creates a natural sense of self-deprivation that will ultimately result in relapse. If quitting for another, how will an addict's junkie-mind respond the first time that person disappoints us?
23. **Attitude** - Although our attitude during recovery may experience substantial swings, so long as no nicotine finds its way into our bloodstream it is impossible to

fail. Still, strive to keep those day #1 core motivations vibrant and alive to help offset needless fears. Fear of both success and failure is normal. Those fears we be gradually consumed by realizing that everything we did as an actively feeding nicotine addict can be done as well as or better as us. Yes you can!

24. **Patience** - Years of smoking nicotine conditioned us to be extremely impatient, at least when it comes to our addiction. A deprived nicotine addict could inhale a puff of nicotine and have it arrive and satisfy dopamine pathway "wanting" within 8 to 10 seconds. Realize the importance of patience to successful recovery. Baby steps, just one hour, challenge and day at a time and then celebrate your continuing freedom, healing and risk reversal.
25. **Keeping Cigarettes** - It's a mistake to keep any nicotine delivery device handy or available. Keeping a stash of cigarettes, a cigar or old nicotine gum or lozenges makes as much sense as someone on suicide watch carrying a loaded gun. Toying with a 50% chance of depriving our self of 5,000 sunrises isn't a game. In that no crave episode will last longer than a few minutes it's good to put time and distance between challenge and nicotine.
26. **Caffeine/Nicotine Interaction** - Nicotine somehow doubles the rate by which the body depletes caffeine. Studies have found that our blood-caffeine level rises to 203% of normal baseline if no intake reduction is made when quitting. Although not a problem for most light to moderate caffeine users, consider a caffeine reduction of about half if troubled by anxieties or difficulty sleeping.
27. **Subconscious Smoking Triggers** - You have conditioned your subconscious mind to expect nicotine when encountering certain locations, times, events, people or emotions. Be prepared for each to trigger a brief crave episode. Encountering a trigger cannot trigger relapse unless you take a puff. Take heart, most triggers are reconditioned and extinguished by a single encounter during which the subconscious mind fails to receive the expected result - nicotine.
28. **Crave Episodes Less than Three Minutes** - In contrast to conscious thought fixation (the "nice juicy steak" type thinking that can last as long as we have the ability to maintain our focus), no subconsciously triggered crave episode will last longer than three minutes.
29. **Time Distortion Symptom** - Research shows that nicotine cessation causes serious time distortion. Although no crave episode will last longer than three minutes, to a quitter in panic the minutes may feel like hours. Keep a clock handy to maintain honest perspective.

30. **Crave Episode Frequency** - Research suggests that the "average" number of crave episodes (each less than three minutes) experienced by the "average" quitter on their most challenging day of recovery is six episodes on day three. That's a total of 18 minutes of challenge on the most challenging day. But what if you're not average? What if you established and must encounter twice as many nicotine-feeding cues as the average quitter? That's 36 minutes of significant challenge. Can you handle 36 minutes of serious anxiety in order to reclaim your mind, health and as much life expectancy as possible? Absolutely! We all can. Be prepared for a small spike in crave episodes on day seven as you celebrate your first full week of freedom from nicotine. Yes, for most of us smoking was part of celebrations too. Also, stay alert for subtle differences between crave triggers. For example, the Sunday newspaper is much thicker and may have required three cigarettes to read instead of just one.



Although no subconscious crave episode will last longer than 3 minutes, serious time distortion is very real when quitting so keep a clock handy.

31. **Understanding the Big Crave** - The average quitter will be experiencing just 1.4 crave episodes per day by day ten. After that you'll soon begin to experience entire days without encountering a single un-reconditioned subconscious crave trigger. If a later crave episode ever feels far more intense it's likely that it has been some time since your last significant challenge and you've dropped your guard and defenses a bit. It can feel as though you've been sucker punched. If one does occur, see the distance between challenges as the wonderful sign of healing the incident reflects.
32. **Crave Coping Techniques** - The shower is always a safe bet. Another is to practice slow deep breathing when experiencing a crave episode. Try briefly clearing your mind of all needless chatter by focusing on your favorite person, place or thing. Another popular three minute crave coping exercise is to say your ABCs while associating each letter with your favorite food, person or place. For example, the letter "A" is for grandma's hot apple pie. "B" is for warm buttered biscuits. I think you'll find that you'll never make it to the challenging letter Q.
33. **Embracing A Crave** - Another coping technique is to mentally reach out and

embrace your crave. A crave cannot cut you, burn you, kill you, or make you bleed. Try being brave just once. In your mind, wrap your arms around the crave's anxiety energy and sense as it slowly fizzles and dies while within your embrace. Yes, another trigger bites the dust and you've reclaimed yet another aspect of life!

34. **Confronting Our Triggers** - Recovery is a process of reclaiming every aspect of life. At the end of each challenge we are awarded another piece of a puzzle that once complete will mirror the reality that everything we once did as smokers can be done as well or better as an ex-smoker. Meet, greet and extinguish your triggers. Don't hide from them. We need not give up anything except nicotine.
35. **Alcohol Use** - Be extremely careful with early alcohol use during the first couple of weeks as research suggests that alcohol plays a role in up to 50% of relapses. Use of an inhibition diminishing substance while surrounded by smokers during early withdrawal is a recipe for relapse. We need to get our quitting feet under us first. Consider breaking trigger encounters down into more manageable tasks. Consider drinking at home first without smokers around, being with smokers but refraining from drinking, spacing drinks further apart, or drinking water or juice between drinks. Have an escape plan and a backup, and be fully prepared to use both. Be careful as nicotine is a stimulant. Without it, you may feel more intoxicated a bit sooner than normal.
36. **Support Expectations** - Don't expect family or friends who have never been chemically dependent themselves to have any appreciation of your challenges or the time required to achieve substantial comfort. It simply isn't fair to them or you. Find an ex-smoker and ask them if they'd mind being your mentor for the next 90 days. Online you'll find a number of wonderful quitting [support groups](#).
37. **No Legitimate Excuse for Relapse** - Recognize that smoking nicotine cannot solve any crisis. Fully accept the fact that there is absolutely no legitimate excuse for relapse, including an auto accident, financial crisis, the end of a relationship, job loss, a terrorist attack, a hurricane, the birth of a baby, or the eventual inevitable death of those we love most. Picture yourself not smoking through each and every step needed to overcome the most difficult challenge your mind can possibly imagine.
38. **Conscious Thought Fixation** - Unlike a less than three-minute subconscious crave episode, we can consciously fixate on any thought of wanting to smoke for as long as we're able to maintain our concentration. Instead of trying to run or hide from thoughts of "wanting" try placing each thought under honest light. Flavor? How many taste buds are inside human lungs? Just one puff? For us nicotine addicts, one is too many and a thousand never enough. It is dishonest to debate with our self about wanting to smoke "a" cigarette. Instead, we need to be honest and ask how we'd feel about going back to all of them, to our old level of nicotine consumption or greater.
39. **Reward Yourself** - Consider putting aside the money that you would have spent buying cigarettes and treat yourself to something you really want after a week or a month. Save for a year and go on a vacation. Even if unable to save, reward yourself by quickly climbing from that deep smoker's rut and spending time in places where you couldn't smoke, such as movies, libraries and no smoking sections of restaurants, by engaging in activities lasting longer than an hour, and, if your health permits, by ever so slightly pushing your normal limits of physical endurance in

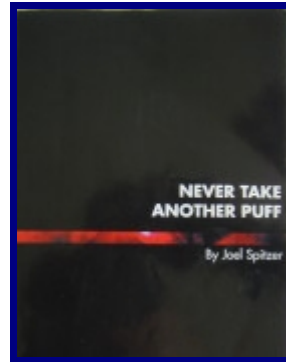
order to sample the amazing healing happening within.

40. **Fully Commit To Going the Distance** - Don't be afraid to tell people around you that you have quit smoking. Fully commit to recovery while taking pride in each and every hour and day of healing and freedom from nicotine, and each challenge overcome. Shed needless fears of success.
41. **[Avoid All Crutches](#)** - A crutch is any form of reliance that is leaned upon so heavily in supporting your recovery, that if quickly removed would likely result in relapse. Try hard not to lean upon a quitting buddy who quits at the same time as you, as unless they too are an educated quitter, their odds of success are small. Instead, ask an ex-smoker or never-smoker for support, or visit a free online support forum such as WhyQuit.com's [Freedom from Nicotine](#).
42. **[The Smoking Dream](#)** - Be prepared for an extremely vivid smoking dream as tobacco odors released by horizontal healing lungs are swept up bronchial tubes by rapidly healing cilia and come in contact with a vastly enhanced sense of smell. See it as the wonderful sign of healing it reflects and nothing more. It has no profound meaning beyond healing.
43. **[See Marketing as Bait](#)** - Arresting your dependency means thousands of dollars in lost profits to the tobacco industry. They do not want to lose you. See store tobacco advertising and the hundreds of neatly aligned packs and cartons for what they truly reflect - bait. Within all the pretty colored boxes and among more than 600 flavor additives is hidden what many dependency experts now consider earth's most captivating chemical, nicotine.
44. **It's Never Too Late** - Regardless of how long you've smoked, how old you are, or how badly you've damaged your body, it's never too late to arrest your dependency, become its master, and commence the most intense period of healing that your mind and body have likely ever known.
45. **Study Smokers Closely** - That smoker smoking beside you is not smoking nicotine to tease you. They do so because they must, in order to replenish a constantly falling blood-serum nicotine level that declines by half every two hours. In fact, most nicotine is smoked while on autopilot. What cue triggered the public feeding you're now witnessing? Watch acid-producing events such as stress or alcohol quickly neutralize their body's reserves of the alkaloid nicotine. How long before the next feeding? Witness their endless mandatory cycle of replenishment.
46. **[Thinking vs. Wanting](#)** - Thinking about smoking and wanting to smoke are two different things. After years of smoking you should expect to notice and smell smokers but it doesn't necessarily mean that you want to smoke. As for thoughts of wanting, like a slowly opening rose bud, with each passing day they'll gradually grow shorter in duration, generally less intense and a bit further apart.
47. **[Non-Smoker or Ex-Smoker](#)** - What should you call yourself? Although it's normal to want to be a non-smoker, there is a major distinction between a never-smoker and an ex-smoker. Only the ex-smoker can grow complacent, use nicotine and relapse.
48. **Complacency** - Recovery transports us from active dependency and not being able to remember the calm and quiet mind we enjoyed prior to chemical enslavement, to a point where we can no longer remember the emotion and effort expended in quitting. It would be wise to take a few notes during your journey home.
49. **Relapse** - Remember that there are only two good reasons to take a puff once you quit. You decide you want to go back to your old level of consumption until

smoking cripples and kills you, or, you decide you really enjoy withdrawal and you want to make it last forever.

50. **Just One Guiding Principle** - As long as neither of the above two options appeal to you, staying free is as simple as, no nicotine just one hour, challenge and day at a time ... Never Take Another Puff, Dip or Chew!

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- [Daily Quitting Lesson Guide](#) - This guide suggests daily video and reading lessons for specific days during the first two weeks.
- ["Never Take Another Puff"](#) - a free 149 page stop smoking book in PDF format by Joel Spitzer of Chicago, the Internet's leading authority on cold turkey quitting and nicotine dependency recovery. Joel's free book is an insightful collection of almost 100 short quitting articles on almost every cessation topic imaginable.
- ["Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home"](#) - a 240 page nicotine dependency recovery book by John R. Polito, a former 30-year heavy smoker and the 1999 founder of WhyQuit. It's available as either as a free-pdf e-book or a printed paperback.
- [Joel's Library](#) - an HTML version of Joel Spitzer's 149 page free quitting book
- [Nicotine Addiction 101](#) - WhyQuit's guide to nicotine dependency.
- [Freedom from Nicotine](#) - the Internet's only 100% nicotine-free stop smoking forum. Here, visitors will find 320,000 archived member posts indexed on 22 subject matter message boards.
- [Nicotine Cessation Topic Index](#) - an alphabetical subject matter index to hundreds of nicotine cessation support group discussions at [Freedom from Tobacco](#).

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