



## Stop Smoking Recovery Timetable

**WARNING:** While most of the listed health risk reversal entires are common to all quitting methods, the below **chart is intended for cold turkey quitters only**, not those using quitting products which may produce their own symptoms, delay withdrawal or otherwise inhibit restoration of natural brain neuron function or sensitivities.

The chart reflects averages and norms. Do not rely upon this chart as it relates to any behavioral change or symptom if you are using any quit smoking product. If using a product and you or a family member are at all concerned about any change in behavior, depression, aggression or any ongoing symptom contact your physician and pharmacist **IMMEDIATELY!** If you experience any suicidal thinking, thoughts of wanting to harm or kill others, loss of consciousness, seizure or other serious behavioral change or symptom seek IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION.

Our body's ability to mend is beauty to behold ...

### Within ...

- 20 minutes Your blood pressure, pulse rate, and the temperature of your hands and feet will all return to normal.
- 8 hours Remaining nicotine in your bloodstream will have fallen to 6.25% of normal peak daily levels, a 93.25% reduction.

- 12 hours Your blood oxygen level will have increased to normal and carbon monoxide levels will have dropped to normal.
- 24 hours Anxieties peak in intensity and within two weeks should return to near pre-cessation levels.
- 48 hours Damaged nerve endings have started to regrow and your sense of smell and taste are beginning to return to normal. Cessation anger and irritability peaks.
- 72 hours Your entire body will test 100% nicotine-free and over 90% of all nicotine metabolites (the chemicals it breaks down into) will now have passed from your body via your urine. Symptoms of chemical withdrawal have peaked in intensity, including restlessness. The number of cue induced crave episodes experienced during any quitting day will peak for the "average" ex-user. Lung bronchial tubes leading to air sacs (alveoli) are beginning to relax in recovering smokers. Breathing is becoming easier and the lungs functional abilities are starting to increase.
- 5 - 8 days The "average" ex-smoker will encounter an "average" of three cue induced crave episodes per day. Although we may not be "average" and although serious cessation time distortion can make minutes feel like hours, it is unlikely that any single episode will last longer than 3 minutes. Keep a clock handy and time them.
- 10 days 10 days - The "average ex-user is down to encountering less than two crave episodes per day, each less than 3 minutes.
- 10 days to 2 weeks Recovery has likely progressed to the point where your addiction is no longer doing the talking. Blood circulation in our gums and teeth are now similar to that of a non-user.
- 2 to 4 weeks Cessation related anger, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, impatience, insomnia, restlessness and depression have ended. If still experiencing any of these symptoms get seen and evaluated by your physician.
- 21 days Brain acetylcholine receptor counts up-regulated in response to nicotine's presence have now down-regulated and receptor binding has returned to levels seen in the brains of non-smokers.
- 2 weeks to 3 months Your heart attack risk has started to drop. Your lung function is beginning to improve.
- 3 weeks to 3 months Your circulation has substantially improved. Walking has become easier. Your chronic cough, if any, has likely disappeared.
- 1 to 9 Any smoking related sinus congestion, fatigue or shortness of breath have

- months            decreased. Cilia have regrown in your lungs thereby increasing their ability to handle mucus, keep your lungs clean, and reduce infections. Your body's overall energy has increased.
- 1 year            Your excess risk of coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke has dropped to less than half that of a smoker.
- 5 to 15 years      Your risk of stroke has declined to that of a non-smoker.
- 10 years            Your risk of being diagnosed with lung cancer is between 30% and 50% of that for a continuing smoker ([2005 study](#)). Risk of death from lung cancer has declined by almost half if you were an average smoker (one pack per day). Your risk of pancreatic cancer has declined to that of a never-smoker ([2011 study](#)), while risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus has also declined. Your risk of developing diabetes is now similar to that of a never-smoker ([2012 study](#)).
- 13 years            Your risk of smoking induced tooth loss has declined to that of a never-smoker ([2006 study](#)).
- 15 years            Your risk of coronary heart disease is now that of a person who has never smoked.
- 20 years            Female excess risk of death from all smoking related causes, including lung disease and cancer, has now reduced to that of a never-smoker ([2008 study](#)). Risk of pancreatic cancer reduced to that of a never-smoker ([2011 study](#)).

... so long as we stop while still time!

- Primary sources for this recovery benefits timetable are: (1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General](#), 2004; (2) Hughes, JR, [Effects of abstinence from tobacco: valid symptoms and time course](#), Nicotine and Tobacco Research, March 2007, Volume 9(3), Pages 315-327; (3) O'Connell KA, et al, [Coping in real time: using Ecological Momentary Assessment techniques to assess coping with the urge to smoke](#), Research in Nursing and Health, December 1998, Volume 21(6), Pages 487-497; and (4) Mamede M, et al, [Temporal change in human nicotinic acetylcholine receptor after smoking cessation: 5IA SPECT study](#), Journal of Nuclear Medicine, November 2007, Volume 48(11), Pages 1829-1835.