

Stop Smoking Recovery Timetable

[Watch a short video on how to quit smoking](#)

WARNING: This recovery benefits timetable reflects averages and norms. It is intended for cold turkey quitters only. E-cigarettes and quitting products such as NRT, Chantix, Champix or Zyban can generate their own symptoms and/or side effects, and can delay withdrawal or otherwise inhibit restoration of natural brain neuron function or sensitivities.

Do not rely upon this recovery timetable as it relates to any behavioral change or symptom if using any quit smoking product. Regardless of quitting method, contact your physician or pharmacist **IMMEDIATELY** if you or a family member become concerned about any symptom, or any change in thinking, mood or behavior.

The 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 have returned to normal.

8 hours

Remaining nicotine in your bloodstream has fallen to 6.25% of normal peak daily levels, a 93.75% reduction.

12 hours

Your blood oxygen level has increased to normal. Carbon monoxide levels have dropped to normal.

24 hours

Anxieties have peaked 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 will have

peaked.

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 [have peaked](#) 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 your lung's 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 minutes feel like hours when normal [cessation time distortion](#) combines with the [body's panic response](#), it is unlikely that any single episode will last longer than 3 minutes. Keep a clock handy and time the craving to maintain an honest perspective on time.

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 your 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.

2 weeks to 3 months

Your [heart attack risk](#) has started to drop. Your [lung function](#) has noticeably improved. If your health permits, sample your circulation and lung improvement by walking briskly, climbing stairs or running further or faster than normal.

21 days

The number of acetylcholine receptors, which were [up-regulated](#) in response to nicotine's presence in the frontal, parietal, temporal, occipital, basal ganglia, thalamus, brain stem, and cerebellum regions of the brain, have now substantially down-regulated, and receptor binding has returned to levels seen in the brains of non-smokers ([2007 study](#)).

3 weeks to 3 months

Your [circulation](#) has substantially improved. Walking has become easier. Your chronic cough, if any, has likely disappeared. If not, get seen by a doctor, and sooner if at all concerned, as a chronic cough can be a sign of lung cancer.

4 weeks

Plasma suPAR is a stable inflammatory biomarker predictive of development of diseases ranging from diabetes to cancer in smokers. A [2016 study](#) found that within 4 weeks of quitting smoking, with or without NRT, that suPAR levels in 48 former smokers had fallen from a baseline smoking median of 3.2 ng/ml to levels "no longer significantly different from the never smokers' values" (1.9 ng/ml)

8 weeks

Insulin resistance in smokers has normalized despite average weight gain of 2.7 kg ([2010 SGR, page 384](#)).

1 to 9 months

Any smoking related sinus congestion, fatigue or shortness of breath has 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 years	Your risk of a subarachnoid hemorrhage has declined to 59% of your risk while still smoking (2012 study). If a female ex-smoker, your risk of developing diabetes is now that of a non-smoker (2001 study).
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). Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus and pancreas have declined. Risk of developing diabetes for both men and women is now similar to that of a never-smoker (2001 study).
13 years	The average smoker who is able to live to age 75 has 5.8 fewer teeth than a non-smoker (1998 study). But by year 13 after quitting, 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. Your risk of pancreatic cancer has declined to that of a never-smoker (2011 study - but note 2nd pancreatic study making identical finding at 20 years).
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 has declined to that of a never-smoker (2011 study).

So long as we stop our self-destruction in 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.

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Learn More About Smart Turkey Quitting

- [WhyQuit.com](#) - WhyQuit is the Internet's oldest forum devoted to the art, science and psychology of cold turkey quitting, the stop smoking method used by the vast majority of all successful long-term ex-smokers. Left to right, WhyQuit is organized under three headings: (1) Motivation, (2) Education and (3) Support.
- [Nicotine Addiction 101](#) - WhyQuit's guide to understanding nicotine dependency.
- [Nicotine Cessation Topic Index](#) - An alphabetical subject matter index to more than a thousand nicotine cessation articles, videos and support group discussions.
- [Joel's Library](#) - Joel's Library is home to Joel Spitzer's "Daily Quitting Lesson Guide." The Guide walks new quitters through the first two weeks of smoking cessation, recommending daily videos to watch and articles to read. Joel's Library is also home to more than a hundred original short stop smoking articles, to Joel's free ebook Never Take Another Puff, and to his collection of more than 400 video stop smoking lessons.
- [Joel's Stop Smoking Video Index](#) - An alphabetical index to Joel's more than 400 videos. Each link opens a webpage where Joel shares the video articles and links.
- ["Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home"](#) - Polito, a former 30-year heavy smoker and WhyQuit's Freedom from Nicotine (FFN) is a free nicotine book that documents the science underlying nicotine successful cessation. Whether hooked on cigarettes, bidis, kreteks, a pipe, hookah or cigars, on dip, chew, snuff or snus, or on the nicotine gum, lozenge, spray, inhaler or patch, FFN provides a comprehensive yet easy to follow road-map to freedom from nicotine.



Written by John R. 1999 founder, dependency recovery dependency and e-cigarettes (e-cigs),

- [Turkeyville](#) - Imagine surrounding yourself with more than 10,000 cold turkey quitters. Turkeyville is a Facebook support group exclusively for cold turkey quitters. The group's primary focus is helping newbies navigate the first few days. Just that first brave step, yes you can!
- **Freedom** - Freedom was WhyQuit's original 1999 stop smoking support group. No longer accepting members, today Freedom's 453,000 archived member posts serve as a valuable source of recovery insight and understanding.



Knowledge is a Quitting Method

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