

## Tell a newbie how many seconds a day do you still want a cigarette

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Remember the first few days after you quit smoking? Remember worrying that the urges, wanting and craves would never end? Here's your chance to reach out and tell both smokers and new quitters what it's like now. Below are 33 pages of comments written by hundreds of former smokers who had successfully quit smoking for days, weeks, month, years and some even over a decade, sharing what it was like for them at these different points in time to be nicotine free.

If a cold turkey quitter, please [email us](#) and share with visiting newbies both how long you've been 100% nicotine-free (paste your [quit meter stats](#) if possible) and how many seconds each day you spend wanting a cigarette. We'll then add your response to the below "[Tell a newbie ...](#)" parade which [Joel started](#) back in 2001 in our original support group Freedom.



Zero!

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#102 | 31 Jan 2002 | ceb (green)

😬 Exactly, I have been off for 6 days and I find that as each day passes my cravings get fewer but when they do come it's like a sledge hammer to my chest but hey, this too shall pass.

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#103 | 05 Feb 2002 | Toast (GOLD)

The cycle of addiction is being rewritten psychologically in me daily. It took 20 years of active smoking addiction, and all the years before of witnessed addiction to write the thoughts and beliefs and attitudes. I can take my time and marvel at each psychological reminder that pops up to be addressed.

Today, I was driving down the street and saw a young couple - probably about 20 - walking down the street, pausing to light cigarettes. I lurched inside. That old familiar lurch of "Hey, yeah!" But these days, through diligent and loving determination, that lurch quickly was replaced with, "What a shame." What a shame they are abusing their bodies. What a shame it will probably take them years to work up the desire to quit, if ever. What a shame such a deadly activity is so ingrained and accepted. What a shame I did that to myself for so long. What a shame I watched most of my parents,

grandparents and uncles die from smoking-related illnesses. What a shame I smoked while I was pregnant both times and breastfeeding both times. What a shame. I feel it is important to acknowledge all those disappointments I suffered and denied behind a cloud of smoke for so long.

And just as important as acknowledging all those disappointments, is the part where I'm learning to celebrate myself honoring my body by not smoking anymore. Part of honoring includes moving through the fears and finding the comfort. Honoring my children and the memories of all those dead smoker relatives by breaking the cycle of addiction with me. Honoring my thoughts and feelings - painfully honest as they are now that they aren't smudged up my nicotine running interference. Me quitting smoking and learning to live with an inactive-but-constant addiction (but not constant craving) is the most personal and important work I've ever done. After seeing those kids smoking, as soon as it was safe to do so (got parked), I gave myself a big hug!

So, how many seconds a day do I still want a cigarette? Are you kidding?

 Melissa

8 Months 1 Week 5 Days 21 Hours 35 Minutes 36 Seconds Free, 5,157 Less, \$747.91 More, 1 Mo 4 Days 19 Hrs 39 Mins 56 Secs Added

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#104 | 05 Feb 2002 | languatron (green)

Thanks, Toast! The situation you described is very familiar. Sometimes I'll be watching a movie or even a real scene like the one you described, and people are lighting up. My first instinct is to romanticize it. Sometimes it's tough knowing I permanently installed a little demon in my mind when I took my first puff. Helps to be reminded that it can and must be overcome. Much more romantic and lasting to say I'll never take another puff.

By the way--love your GIFs! As you can probably tell from my posts.

YQS,  
Mary 

Still obsessed with GREEN because I just turned 4 days ago.

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#105 | 05 Feb 2002 | John (Gold)

Well said Melissa! Mary, as an ex-smoker it's entirely normal to notice those still engaging in the activity that was once so central to our lives. It doesn't hurt a bit to do so and it doesn't mean that we're having a crave. It's just part of life.

What will hopefully change between Green and Bronze is how quickly, upon seeing them, that you realize that they are simply fulfilling a mandatory need to replenish their falling blood serum nicotine level in order to avoid experiencing the onset of withdrawal. You may have to think about it a bit now but by the time your quit turns Gold your immediate reaction might be a thought like, why do alcoholics, cocaine addicts are heroin junkies hide from view while nicotine addicts get featured in movies? Like Melissa said, what a shame that I went thirty years before learning why my quits kept failing.

How long each day do I still WANT? NOT!!!!!!

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#106 | 15 Feb 2002 | S Sweet

What is smoking like now for me at over a year and four months? I never think of smoking. I will never allow myself to forget what it was like to be a smoker but I can definitely say that my old "smoking days" are a complete part of my past ... I am completely content with my non-smoking life and have learned how to face things without turning to that terrible addiction.

I have become such a health-oriented person now ! I am very into eating well and exercising. i couldnt have even THOUGHT of exercising as a smoker and food never tasted good when i smoked. I guess I couldnt breathe well enough for the exercise and I had no sense of smell or taste for the foods. Once I was able to put those cigarettes away it was only a matter of time until I was trying to make everything else in my life healthy too.

How many seconds a day do I still want a cigarette? absolutely NONE... I can't remember the last time I thought of smoking but I was trying to come up with an actual #... and I can definitely say, I have not even THOUGHT of smoking for atleast 7 months now! If you had told me that when i first quit.. if you had said "in a year you will go months on end without even thinking of smoking" I would have thought you were a complete liar! I didnt think it was possible to quit and actually want to STAY quit... and here I am, quit and wondering why on earth anyone would ever want to go back!

Beccy  
16+ months

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#107 | 25 Feb 2002 | Joel

For all the people who lurk in and still think that quitting smoking is impossible and that the thought for cigarettes becomes and stays an all consuming way of life that will last forever. Spend time reading all of the over 100 replies from individuals here and you will

start to get a pretty comprehensive and accurate picture of what life really becomes like after quitting--and how it will get progressively easier and more comfortable over time and stay on that course as long as the ex-smoker always keeps in practice his or her initial desire to never take another puff!

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#108 | 26 Feb 2002 | JERGOLD1

I am 9 months today smoke free. All I can say is if you have not quit yet start today, because it will mean one more day closer to freedom. I cannot believe it took me 31 years to finally put a true effort into quitting. It takes work but after the first couple months it just becomes maintenance. I do not crave or have urges for smokes anymore. Just once in a great while, usually when stressed, I think I need something. Not sure what it is but I put a cigarette label on it. It goes away in a couple seconds.

It is so so so nice to be free!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

John

Nine months, 7 hours, 47 minutes and 26 seconds. 5526 cigarettes not smoked, saving \$1,285.10. Life saved: 2 weeks, 5 days, 4 hours, 30 minutes.

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#109 | 04 Mar 2002 | Joel

From: Carmella (Original Message) Sent: 3/4/2002 7:48 AM

I am happier than words can express. It has been 90 days and what a great feeling. The urges are barely there (maybe twice in the past month) and I feel like a million bucks. Seeing other people smoking just makes me feel sorry for them, I no longer envy the puffs they are taking.

Thank you Joel- This site helped motivate me to quit, and helped me keep my quit. Thank you all for your words and honesty.

Good luck to you all and remember to NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

I lifted this from Carmella's bronze announcement string. Thanks Carmella for giving me an excuse to bring up this string. Your message of how often you really think about smoking now is of great importance for all our newer members and lurkers. Being placed here will insure that it is around to help people for a long time.

Joel

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#110 | 05 Mar 2002 | Ladybird is Gold

I'm a newbie, but I felt I must add my 2 cents worth for the newer newbie's . . . it does get easier! ✨

I have been quit for 3 weeks & 1 day & I must say that the only time I really think about smoking is when I finish a meal, when I have tea while sitting on my couch (I avoid this usually) & only a few other odd moments. All in all about 3 minutes total in a day thinking about smoking - that's great when you think about how much wasted time you spent arranging to smoke, smoking & cleaning dirty ashtrays!

Glad to be FREE!!!

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#111 | 05 Mar 2002 | childofnite GOLD

Well, I guess having a forth entry in a thread is okay, right? At 7 MONTHS and 1 WEEK, I am very content, calm, and never think of me smoking. in fact, the only time I think about it is if it is in the context of talking to someone who smokes, or by being here.

How many minutes per day do I think of picking up a cigarette and smoking it? NONE! And I never will. It has been said MANY MANY times here that a crave is not a thought - and it is true! Lurkers or newbies: it can be done! I know how badly I needed to hear those words when I started this journey, and I hope you will take mine to heart!

I would much rather be an X-smoker who thinks about smoking in general and thinks about her smoking days once in a blue moon than a smoker thinking about quitting with every puff. You have a choice - choose to be yourself, and choose not to be brainwashed by a nasty, noxious smelling weed encased in a white tube.

It's great to be FREE!! 😎

Yqs, Diana

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#112 | 05 Mar 2002 | Alice

Today I didn't think about smoking AT ALL 😊 until I got home and clicked on this website. Funny thing, this Freedom Group makes me think about smoking more than real life. So that is EXCELLENT!

4 months ago I thought about cigarettees many times a day. 4 months ago I wanted to be a NON smoker. I wanted a magic pill. Then I found the Freedom website and GOT EDUCATED AND DID IT. First 72 hours. Phew. Then a month. Hit some tough spots in my 2nd month.

IF I CAN QUIT ANYONE CAN QUIT. What a rotten love affair that was. Boy am I glad it's over. BUT, it's still war. I lost a 6 week quit in 2000 due to taking one puff.

One minute at a time I remain.....

YQS

Alice

Bronzed and Amazed 😎

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#113 | 10 Mar 2002 | OBob Gold

You know, last night at the pub was fairly amazing. I did ALL of the things I've always done, (darts, beer, conversation, singing...), and cigarettes literally didn't even OCCUR to me all night long (10 - 2) except for 2 occassions.

The first was after my dart partner left, and I was at a loose end as to what to do next. For a fleeting moment, smoking occurred to me in a positive light. That lasted maybe 5 or 7 seconds. I thought, "hmm," got distracted by something else, and forgot that I'd thought about them.

The second was a couple of hours later at the bar. I suddenly realized that, other than that 5 - 7 seconds, I hadn't even THOUGHT of smoking all night long. So, I guess the second one really wasn't even a thought about smoking, but about not thinking about smoking.

That was it. The whole night! People came in and out of the pub to smoke, and, other than the 5 - 7 seconds, it didn't even enter my mind to leave the building. The pub owner congratulated me on giving them up at one point, (I guess he and Tess had been discussing it), and it actually took me a sec. to figure out what he was congratulating me for. I gave him kind of a blank look, thought for a sec., and realized, "OH, the smoking. Yeah. Cheers."

MAN, the top of this mountain is truly AMAZING! We're always saying to recent quitters around here, "This is not what it feels like to be an ex-smoker. This is what it feels like to be an addict in withdrawal." Or, "This is what it feels like to be navigating the minefield of triggers we've accumulated." Well, THIS IS what it feels like to be an ex-smoker. A passing thought now and again. The knowledge that there will still be triggers to confront, but the experience that tells me how simple it will be to defeat them (by not taking a puff ... period).

Y'know, Bob the Junky used to believe that he liked interrupting conversations at the pub every 15 - 20 minutes to go outside and smoke. He used to thank his addiction for liberating him from potential pauses or lapses in conversation. In fact, he used to wonder how on Earth he'd managed to deal with conversational lulls before he found his addiction.

Bob the free man now knows that that sort of thinking was devised by Bob the Junky to make feeding his addiction more palatable. He now knows that the need to feed was INDUCING conversational lulls as an excuse to inhale the fume. He now understands that the reason he couldn't think of anything to say suddenly was the result of the fact that his thoughts were too distracted by the onset of early withdrawal to focus on keeping up his end of the conversation.

To those of you still struggling up the steeper parts of this mountain, it's WORTH it. Keep ascending step-by-step. It's steep now, and it may be a struggle, but the trail levels out. It gets easier and easier. And then, one day... you mightn't even notice it when it happens, but one day, you arrive at the summit. You still have to be careful -- don't want to get careless, and fall over the edge, 'cause the fall is a NASTY bugger -- but the view up here is INCREDIBLE!!!

 Bob the Liberated Addict (9 weeks free today)

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#114 | 24 Mar 2002 | Joel

From: Susanne (Original Message) Sent: 3/23/2002 1:53 PM

Hello quitters. I so rarely think about smoking now, it seems like a very distant part of my past. I haven't touched a cigarette in 20 and a half months, and I haven't been struggling - really struggling - for over a year. I'm just out of it.

I just happened to think about you here because a friend of mine wants to quit smoking - so of course I sent her here. I've been doing that with every smoker who seriously wants to quit so far, and I do know several who made it.

You certainly saved my life, it's changed so much since I quit, and by now it's really hard not to take all that health and good feeling for granted. It's just how I feel, and cigarettes don't even occur to me at any time any more - not that I wouldn't be on guard just in case. I know where to turn.

I just wanted to post a little reminder here to all newbies - I've started out just like you... desperate to quit, miserable while quitting, but determined. I'm living proof that the struggle is worth it. Keep your quit!

Susanne

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#115 | 24 Mar 2002 | MaryG

I'm still a newbie at three weeks, two days, 20 hours, 9 minutes and 56 seconds, but I feel compelled to put my 2 cents in. First off, I must thank Joel for giving me this new life. All you newbies must read [Joel's Library!](#)

I think about smoking about 6 times a day now, I guess that might be about 20 minutes in all for the day. Please see I said "think"-I just think of it in passing, because I smoked doing so many things, that it's just normal to connect the cigs with daily things. But when I think about actually putting a cigarette in my mouth and lighting it-----YUCH !!!!! What was I thinking of for the last 31 years? I must have been insane. I love not smoking --looking forward to exercising again now that I can breathe. This truly is Freedom.

NEVER GIVE IT UP-NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF.

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#116 | 27 Mar 2002 | John (Gold)

If you're still in early recovery, you may not be able to see or sense it but with each and every hour that passes your mind is adjusting and growing a bit more comfortable in facing life without nicotine.

Yes, there may be times during recovery when a triggered crave or smoking memories will flood your mind and challenge your resolve but these periods are necessary steps in your adjustment and recovery. Don't fight them, accept them! The craves are less than 3 minutes and the thoughts and reasoning that at times can seem to fill our mind are all within our ability to analyze in a truthful way, to sort and catalog, to store or discard, and to move beyond!

We don't know the exact date upon which you'll first experience an entire day without ever once having a "thought" of "wanting" to smoke some nicotine, but if you'll only remain patient, we can promise you that your first day of complete comfort is coming!

Tomorrow there will be over one billion comfortable ex-smokers alive on earth and each and every one of them will have one thing in common, today they didn't take puff!

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#117 | 06 Apr 2002 | NevadaGal Gold

Hmmm, I still THINK about cigarettes all the time, but that is just thoughts, no big deal.. I just recognize those thoughts and they disappear...

How many seconds per day do I want a cigarette....NONE!! Even when the infrequent crave hits I do not WANT a cigarette, I just look for the trigger, recognize it, and it disappears...

I am Loving being FREE!!

Rachel

Three weeks, 9 hours, 30 minutes and 0 seconds. 213 cigarettes not smoked, saving \$13.91. Life saved: 17 hours, 45 minutes.

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#118 | 06 Apr 2002 | MzzHumble

I too am a newbie, it has been only 14 days, 1 hour, 13 minutes and 7 seconds smoke free, 280 cigarettes not smoked, and \$101.47, and 2 days 3 hours of my life saved.

I think about cigarettes about 3 times a day, they last about 3 mins each, which is the actual time it took to smoke one cigarette. I don't want one, it is just a thought that does not last long, and it goes away. I feel awesome and now have a much better life with my children and husband. Barbara.

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#119 | 06 Apr 2002 | Alice

When NOT HERE I thought about cigarettes for maybe 25 seconds. NO LIE, apple pie, motherhood, fresh air and blue skies and Rock 'N Roll, and never taking another puff is what makes America Great! freedom!!

yqs alice  
bronze designation

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#120 | 06 Apr 2002 | Kina gold

At a year, the last serious craving I had was after I spent 4 days on a road trip with my sisters, both of whom smoked incessantly, which I resisted :-). Now, almost never, not even daily.

YEAH FREEDOM!!!!!!

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#121 | 06 Apr 2002 | Glenys Goldx3

One week ago I thought about a cigarette for about 5 seconds. Have not thought about one since. Prior to that, it was probably a month or two since my last thought. Geez, this really is getting easy. Newbies - doesn't that sound unbelievable? I used to think about cigarettes constantly when I was newly quit - it would take all my energy to concentrate on "not smoking" - now it is as natural as breathing. Take heart, this freedom will be yours as long as you remember the golden rule! Never Take Another Puff.

Cheers to all from Glenys ❤️ @ 11 months 1 week 5 days

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#122 | 18 Apr 2002 | OBob Gold

Today? Zero.

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#123 | 19 Apr 2002 | OBob Gold

Today? 3 so far. I'm moving, so I've had the string of various, "just exerted myself, I'm tired, and now it's time for a cigarette break" triggers. They're subtly different from other triggers I've had and conquered. They have each been mild, and lasted less than 30 seconds...

🕒 (3 months, 1 week, 6 days)

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#124 | 26 Apr 2002 | Joel

I just hung up with a person who is likely to join Freedom today--just passing her 74 hour mark nicotine free. The issue of how many urges happen over time and how strong they may be came up, so I told her I would bring up this thread as a point of reference. While I am bringing it up for her today, it is an important string for all. Actually, over the past few days I saw a number of posts that probably should be attached here from members who had just passed a 6 month or 12 month mark who clearly stated that smoking thoughts now are pretty much rare occurrences now. These people may want to write some personal insights here in this string for we do bring it up often and their words will continue to help many new people over time realize that life gets progressively better as people stay committed over the long-term to never take another puff!

Joel

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#125 | 26 Apr 2002 | Joel

Here is one of them...

From: Tommo (Gold) (Original Message) Sent: 4/24/2002 4:54 AM

Hi Everyone. Well here I am and the journey is amazing. The early days are spent always thinking about smoking. This lessens and lessens on the journey to Gold. I thought it was great to turn Green then even better to turn Bronze. I turned Silver and was rarely getting any kind of trigger. The last 6 months has been incredibly easy and satisfying. This is not to say that I can let my guard totally down but I can honestly say that I have not craved for the last 6 months. I have had thoughts of smoking but as the time has gone on these thoughts are weaker and weaker. For anyone starting out on this journey it is the most satisfying thing to count the days, weeks, months and now YEARS. I will always remember to Never Take Another Puff.

Thank you to all the great people on here who devote their time to help me and all our fellow freedom members.

Tommo

I have chosen not to smoke for 1 Year 28 Minutes 12 Seconds. Cigarettes not smoked: 9125. Money saved: £1,761.22.

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## Knowledge is a Quitting Method

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