

## 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.

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#501 | 17 Apr 2006 | nancy999

If you're a newbie, you're going to find it hard to believe but it's true. This was the single MOST encouraging thread to me! I couldn't believe that cravings in the very beginning lasted no more than 3 minutes (I would have bet the house they lasted for hours). And now, Kristie has the correct answer... ZERO! If the thought (not even an urge) pops into my head, it's a fleeting nano-second. SWISH and it's gone.

You can do it. It's SIMPLE (and increasly easier).....NTAP!!!

Nancy

One month, three weeks, three days, 13 hours, 39 minutes and 27 seconds. 1314 cigarettes not smoked, saving \$318.04. Life saved: 4 days, 13 hours, 30 minutes.

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#502 | 18 Apr 2006 | Vito Silver

Zero seconds today!!!

I didn't even think of one, at least until I checked my email account and find the Freedom newsletter, which remembered me I'm a recovered addict, and that I must remember that there's not such thing as one, and that remaining nicotine free is as simple as never take another puff! Now that I remembered, what I think of the idea of a cigarette is: I don't want one, and I don't want the thousands that come with that one, and I don't want the smell, the smoke, the holes, the dependancy, the cancer, the emphisema, the heart attack...and I'm glad I quit more than TWO AND A HALF YEARS ago!

Take it one day at a time and NTAP!!!

Vito

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#503 | 18 Apr 2006 | anhef

Most days, ZERO. 😊

Now and then, I think about it for a second or so...and at the same time think how stupid that would be....and it's over. But just the other day, I had a trigger that just wouldn't quit. Once I understood it, I really laughed at myself.

I had gotten up on a beautiful spring morning, grabbed my coffee and proceeded to my garden to enjoy it. There I pulled a weed, then another, then noticed that there was a place where the fence needed repair, etc. After a while, I also noticed that I was "craving" a smoke! Now that really rattled my cage, cause I haven't had a real crave in weeks.

So I sat down to figure this one out, and happened to look at my watch as I did so. GEESH! It was 10:30!! I'd been puttering in the yard for over 3 hours and hadn't had a bite of breakfast yet!

HMMMMMM.....Does this ring any bells??? Well, it does if you've read the same articles I have. SO,I went inside, made myself some breakfast, took it and a fresh cup of coffee back out to the garden. GEE.... imagine that! Crave just up and disappeared, and never did come back.

For years, I would have just lit a cigarette and never even figured out that what I REALLY wanted and needed was food! But that was when I was a "dumb addict" and didn't know any better. Now I'm a "smart addict"! Smart enough to know that I'll always be an addict and can't ever take another puff....and smart enough to realize that my body no longer needs nicotene, so if I'm craving, it's got to be for something else entirely!

Thanks FREEDOM, for helping me to become a smart addict.

annie

addicted for 44+ years and quit for 2M 1W 1D 3h 40m 41s (67 days).

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#504 | 20 Apr 2006 | OvergrownStretford

As a newbie all I could say is thank you thank you for this thread. I can't wait to get to where I rarely or never even think about smoking anymore. Tonight will be two weeks quit for me and thoughts , not even really strong cravings usually, about smoking are on the brain. I'm going to keep reading again and again this entire thread. thanks to all

neil

1w 6d 11:45 smoke-free, 185 cigs not smoked, \$69.38 saved, 15:25 life saved

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#505 | 21 Apr 2006 | whosthisitsmesilly

Absolutely None 😊 Happy to NTAP

I have been quit for 1 Month, 1 Week, 5 Days, 22 hours, 18 minutes and 44 seconds (43 days). I have saved £182.30 by not smoking 878 cigarettes. I have saved 3 Days, 1 hour and 10 minutes of my life. My Quit Date: 08/03/2006 00:00

Cathy

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#506 | 21 Apr 2006 | DizyLizy10508

Hi. I am a newbie and I still think about smoking but not very often. I think now I just have to learn how to be an ex-smoker. Everything I did revolved around smoking before always had to have enough smokes if you were going here or there or was there enough left for morning or did I need to get to the store before it closed ect..

But now I come and go as I please nothing holding me back Thank you soo much Freedom is a great great thing NTAP.

I have been quit for 6 Days, 1 hour and 57 seconds (6 days). I have saved \$19.58 by not smoking 90 cigarettes. I have saved 7 hours and 30 minutes of my life. 😊

Henriette

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#507 | 10 May 2006 | John (Gold)

We're free! Unless we insist on clinging to our smoking rationalizations and the outright lies and faulty behavioral observations we fed our mind to maintain sanity and dignity inside our prison cell, with each passing day we have no choice but to put more distance between us and destructive chemical relationship we've left behind. Be brave. Get excited! Let go and join us!

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#508 | 10 May 2006 | Kristie

Still happy to report:

**0**

Kristie - Free and Healing for Two Months, Twenty One Days, 13 Hours and 28 Minutes, while extending my life expectancy 5 Days and 17 Hours, by avoiding the use of 1651 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me \$268.41.

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#509 | Unread post 10 May 2006 | johneh

the former junkie mentality resurfacing in me for a second or two:  
-not very often at all. i can say for sure that it happens less and less as time passes.

\*\*\*\*really truly wanting: same here as kristie, 0!\*\*\*\*

Free and Healing for One Month, Twenty Five Days, 11 Hours and 9 Minutes, while extending my life expectancy 3 Days and 20 Hours, by avoiding the use of 1109 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me \$389.14.

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#510 | 10 May 2006 | 4Taylor

Most days only a few times throughout the day. Evenings are little harder. I've noticed each day is a little easier. Can't wait until it's ZERO! 😊

Kristin

I have been quit for 1 Week, 2 Days, 8 hours, 17 minutes and 59 seconds (9 days). I have saved \$46.72 by not smoking 233 cigarettes. I have saved 19 hours and 25 minutes of my life.

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#511 | 10 May 2006 | spots Gold

I have to admit I still think about them, the triggers still come up, about a couple of times a day for about 1/10 second! 😊 After 37 years of servitude, it's definitely doable.

Vicky

I have been quit for 1 Month, 1 Week, 6 Days, 21 hours, 48 minutes and 15 seconds (43 days). I have saved \$64.37 by not smoking 307 cigarettes. I have saved 1 Day, 1 hour and 35 minutes of my life. My Quit Date: 3/27/2006 5:19 PM

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#512 | 11 May 2006 | kennyjets

I don't REALLY have craves anymore but I will find myself throughout the day sometimes feeling like "something is missing". I usually combat that by thinking about some of the multiple good things that NOT smoking is doing for me! That usually clears the thought in about 1-5 seconds.

I have to be careful not to play with the idea that something is missing or I can create a crave all on my own and then I have to suffer the consequences until it goes away (always less than 3 minutes).

Ken

I have been quit for 1M 4D 2h 10m (34 days). I have saved \$237.76 by not smoking 1,022 cigarettes. I have saved 3D 13h 10m of my life. My Quit Date: 4/6/2006 2:00 PM

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#513 | 23 May 2006 | Toast (GOLD)

My Freedom Friends,

Today marks end of five full years of not smoking and the beginning of my sixth. Amazing! Wonderful! And nearly effortless these days, but OH not so effortless in the beginning. No, indeed! I wanted to post here, to testify a little for any of you just starting your quit journey.

When I first joined here, I remember being both intimidated and impressed with John's & Joanne's & Linda's quit stats - over a year! Would I ever go a whole year without smoking? That was an unimaginable feat to me. It was hard enough to get thru an hour sometimes. Days peeled so slowly. Turning Green took FOREVER. And then I had to wait 3 times longer to celebrate again! Torture! (chuckle)

Not smoking became a passion for me. Reluctantly. When I quit, I wasn't so sure. I had a pretty rocky time of it at first. Those difficulties instilled in me that passion. First, it was a passion to not have to suffer like that again! Then, it became a passion to not dishonor myself, not disrespect my body anymore. Now, it is a passion to see what wonderful things I can do and experience with the courage and belief in myself built

upon, in large part, my quit.

As my passion for my quit grew, as my investment in staying quit grew, the smoking dreams began. Without fail, in my smoking dreams, I would look down and see a cigarette in my hand or had just taken a drag, etc. and realize - to my horror - that not only was I smoking again, but I had been sneaking cigarettes all along and lying to everyone about it! Mortification! Oh, the confusion when I would wake up from those early dreams and have to really pull myself out of it to realize it was all only a dream. Don't we know how to push our own buttons, hm?

Am I ever going to answer the request of this thread? Tell a newbie how many seconds a day you still want a cigarette? Yes, I'm getting there. 😊 And here it is: Not one. Less than zero. I can't remember the last time I craved a cigarette. Really! I can't even remember the last time I had a smoking dream. Years, I know. There hasn't been a time I can remember looking at anyone smoking and feeling denied. In fact, automatically now, every time I see someone smoking - or even just smell it! - I always think, and often say aloud: I am so glad I don't smoke anymore! Ask anyone who hangs out with me, they know. It's like a delightful broken record that brings me happy little self-pats on the back. And I don't care if they roll their eyes. 😊

Dear Newbies: this is SO doable. Not necessarily easy, not necessarily hard. Definitely doable! Keep holding on tight to your quit and the days will pile up, the craves will go away, the doubts will melt, the confidence will build. It's an awesome thing to go from that first hour, first day to years and years! I highly recommend it.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Melissa**

Five Gold Stars for me!

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#514 | 23 May 2006 | flymikee1

5-10 Seconds

I wouldn't use the word "want"!

It's more like a mental blank spot or trigger that fires off like pavlov's dog .

Each day get's easier after 1st 4 days for me!

Mike - Free and Healing for Sixteen Days, 1 Hour and 48 Minutes, while extending my life expectancy 1 Day and 22 Hours, by avoiding the use of 563 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me \$84.45.

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#515 | 28 May 2006 | Katielucky

None. Not even one second do I crave it anymore. Ahhhhh such freedom. But I will forever be vigilant and NTAP!

Katie One year, ten months, three days, 14 hours, 12 minutes and 25 seconds. 26903 cigarettes not smoked, saving \$5,380.73. Life saved: 13 weeks, 2 days, 9 hours, 55 minutes.

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#516 | 28 May 2006 | LeoEx Smoker

Hi Newbies and Middlebees and Oldbies, This is hard to assess well. Here's my best honest guess:

My worst days are nights when I am partying/drinking alcohol. Then, over say 6 hours, I might think once or at most twice 'Gee I'd like a cig'. It lasts about 5 or 10 seconds, max, and it's a thought, not a crave. It's an old-addict yearning thing... it's something from my past... maybe the best way to describe it is 'Gee I'd like to date Brad Pitt' - it has about that much validity!!! There is no way I'd have one. Cig that is, not Brad 😊

On normal days, maybe once or twice a day I will think (again 'think', not 'crave') about smoking. For example when someone else lights up, or I do something for the first time without smoking (go to a certain place/have an argument with someone and not have a smoke break etc). That will be say... 5 seconds or so. I don't want one, I just notice that my life has changed and am sort of subconsciously puzzled for a moment. Or I rifle through my handbag and then think - how weird, I'm looking for cigs to take outside!

I had a monster crave (maybe a few minutes long) a week or so ago and there were two amazing things about it: (i) I haven't had one for so long it shocked me and (ii) I was then shocked by how shocked I was!!! I used to have those craves every 30 minutes of the day, and now just one quick one is a shock and startling!!!

I still love the smell of smoke - passive smoke. But oddly although I love it, it doesn't make me want to smoke. I just want to smell it. I think its old associations from when I was a kid.

If you are reading this and thinking of giving up, I say three things:

DO IT. It is truly a joy to be nicotine free and truly, truly it is vastly easier than you will ever imagine or have ever experienced, if you do this one thing:

READ here, stay on this site, do not read it once and do it alone, post messages, read again, read every day, encourage others... do not believe you are wonderwoman or superman - utilise these quit angels all you can!

I am much happier as an ex-smoker than I was as a smoker, and that happened to me very, very fast. I never believed that was possible, after almost 30 years of smoking up to 35 a day. It is, it was, and it will be for you too. Leap off the fence, come and get happier and healthier with the rest of us!!!

Hugs and best wishes for your astonishing and mind bending journey towards

Freedom,

NTAP rocks!!!

Leonie

x

Leo - Free and Healing for Four Months, Twenty Four Days, 5 Hours and 52 Minutes, while extending my life expectancy 17 Days and 12 Hours, by avoiding the use of 5049 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me AUS\$2,234.59.

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#517 | 04 Jun 2006 1 | Joel

"The only time I think of cigarettes is when I receive one of your stupid letters!"

"The only time I think of cigarettes is when I receive one of your stupid letters! Recently, a clinic graduate expressed this sentiment when I inquired as to how life without smoking was going. He was trying very hard to forget that he had ever smoked. It was a part of his life that he no longer wished to dwell upon. But my follow-up correspondence was making forgetting impossible. He was now at the point where he threw out my letters without even opening them.

The fact is that I continue to send these letters so that the ex-smoker will never forget about smoking. For if he is like most ex-smokers, he will never totally forget his smoking past. He will forget the cigarettes that made him sick, the ones that made him feel socially ostracized, and the countless ones he smoked daily without even being aware that he was lighting them. Most important, he will forget the cigarettes he didn't want to light but which were alleviating urges that were too powerful to control. In essence, he will forget about the majority of cigarettes he had smoked, and then, only occasionally, he will remember a "good" one.

And then it happens. One day at a party, under stress, or just out of boredom, he will get the desire for that "good" cigarette. By having distanced himself from his past addiction, he will have forgotten or just no longer accept the fact that even "one puff" is almost certain to result in full and complete relapse. Because he no longer accepts his addiction, he sees no reason why he shouldn't be able to enjoy a good cigarette. So he tries one. Maybe it will be a great cigarette, maybe it will be a horrid one. It really doesn't make a big difference. Good or bad, it will take control and he will once again be an addicted smoker. He must now suffer all the physical, emotional, social, financial and health consequences that accompany nicotine addiction.

I actually sent the letters to everyone from my clinics for two reason. First, as stated above, to keep the ex-smoker from getting complacent and losing a quit. The second was in the sad cases when the smoker had relapsed, the letters were to serve as a



constant reminder (usually referred to as pestering) that smoking was a problem that needed to be dealt with. There were plenty of times that people came back saying that one of the letters brought them back to quit again. Those were some of the most wonderful effects I felt these letters had.

Never allow yourself to forget your smoking past. Yes, there may have been some "good" cigarettes, but there were certainly a lot more bad ones and even the "good" ones were slowly killing you. What is sad is that the man who made the comment, as well as all the others like him who really need to read the letters, will never see this one before it's too late. They will have thrown the letters out without ever having opened them. Maybe next time they quit smoking they will know better - if there is a next time. Consider the full ramifications of just one cigarette and then choose to - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

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#518 | 04 Jun 2006 | Bonniequit

Honestly, the number of seconds a day I still want a cigarette is approximately 30. About three times a day, I am blindsided by a thought of "Ohhhh, what I would give to have a cigarette right now". That thought lasts for a maximum of ten seconds before my logical brain kicks in and I acknowledge that I do not want a cigarette because 1 - All, and I do not ever want to smoke them all again. I do not ever want to go back to the slavery of being a practicing nicotine addict. The thought terrifies me. I wish I didn't still have those thoughts, but in some ways, they help to keep me on guard. When I do have them, they remind me of all the bad things about smoking, and they send me right back to Freedom where I can continue to reinforce my quit.

Bonnie

Happily nicotine free for One month, four days, 19 hours, 19 minutes and 4 seconds. A grand total of 800 nicotine sticks not ingested, saving \$272.17 of my hard-earned money. Life saved: 2 days, 18 hours, 40 minutes.

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#519 | 04 Jun 2006 | kysbrlady

That is a very good question. Why would anyone continue to come here if they no longer have a desire to smoke. I no longer WANT to smoke at all. In the last few weeks the desire has totally left me. I still get occassional fleeting thoughts of smoking. That does not mean I want to smoke. It means that I am still retraining my brain to live without nicotine. It is more of an automatic, " gee, I used to smoke when I did this". I relapsed once after 2 years because I really didn't understand my addiction. I NEVER want to forget how easy it was to smoke that first cigarette. I am a recoverING nicotine addict. I well always be an addict. One puff is all it takes to begin the cycle of addiction all over again. I do not want to become complacent in my quit.

Newbies help the oldbies to remember what it was like. I never want to forget how much effort it took to get to this point in my quit. As I read post from new members I am reminded of what it was like. Oldbies help the Newbies to know what it can be like. If the older members just quit and never came back, who would share their experience, strength, and hope with the newbies?

Glad you are here. NTAP

Kathy

I have been quit for 2 Months, 1 Week, 4 hours, 53 minutes and 37 seconds (68 days). I have saved \$320.55 by not smoking 2,728 cigarettes. I have saved 1 Week, 2 Days, 11 hours and 20 minutes of my life. My Quit Date: 03/28/2006 6:00 AM

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#520 | 04 Jun 2006 | wannadanc

It has been two years of smobriety for me now - and there are no more urges. There are reminders. I notice other smokers. I smell the smoke. I don't shun or despise them for their addiction - for I am only one cigarette away from a carton myself.

v I know to stay away from slippery slopes - and the slippery one for me would be to be consuming alcohol in the company of smokers! Fortunately our state has now outlawed smoking in all public places. Fortunately my drinking is so seldom as to be almost non-existent. Therefore, I am not likely to encounter too many slippery slopes - but I will always be mindful of that weakness of mine.....and the extreme dangers of walking too near those slopes.

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#521 | 06 Jun 2006 | Flo Babe

Thanks for the reminder of our 'slippery slopes' - I think that drinking with smoking buddies might be a hard one for me too. For many smokers, we began smoking in the first place because we are social. Luckily for me too, I am not a big drinker and most often now when I am socializing, I drink water. But I am steering clear of it for now. I also don't think I will ever get intimately involved with a smoker.

NTAP 👍

Day 17 of freedom after 42 years of addiction.

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#522 | 06 Jun 2006 | Joel

[Alcohol - can people quit smoking and still drink alcohol? Avoiding Triggers](#) Last edited by Joel on 20 Mar 2009 11:46, edited 1 time in total.

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#523 | 06 Jun 2006 | Gold Massabe2006

Good Question? Hard answer...I think about it all the time, thinking about it now as I write this, as I read this website. I think about it because it is a major focus in my life at the moment. Staying focused and committed, constantly reading and re-enforcing my desire to stay quit.

How much time do I spend in a state of actual desire or craving for a cigarette...very, very, very little. Sometimes, not at all. Sometimes for 2 seconds after dinner. But always when I do crave or desire, it is brief and weak. All it takes to stop it is to say no and poof, it is gone. I am around people that smoke all the time and they do it often without my conscience recognition.

Yes, you will and should think about it often at first but this is not necessarily a bad thing...

Dave - Free and Healing for Twenty Nine Days, 15 Hours and 59 Minutes after 20 years as a nicotine addict. I have extended my life expectancy 2 Days and 1 Hour, by avoiding the use of nicotine 593 times that would have cost me \$103.96.

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#524 | 06 Jun 2006 | John (Gold)

From: ivanochiki007 Sent: 6/5/2006 9:03 PM

Well, it is probably around two seconds every three or four weeks. In other words, really not too hard to keep that under control. 😊 Actually, not wanting cigarettes anymore is what motivates me most to stay quit! Sounds strange maybe, but is actually very logical - I never want to go through the first hours and days again.

Ivano

I have been quit for 1 Year, 1 Month, 4 Weeks, 1 Day, 19 hours, 21 minutes and 31 seconds (425 days). I have saved \$1,182.75 by not smoking 4,258 cigarettes. I have saved 2 Weeks, 18 hours and 50 minutes of my life. My Quit Date: 05/04/2005 10:41 PM

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#525 | 08 Jun 2006 | Karmic Storm

I don't! I didn't want to smoke when I was still smoking, and I darned sure don't want to now! I'm still dealing with occasional triggers but have a plan to deal with them. The urges are mostly gone. It really is FREEDOM! NTAP!

Amy

I have been quit for 3 Months, 3 Days, 11 hours and 40 minutes (95 days). I have saved

\$372.21 by not smoking 1,432 cigarettes. I have saved 4 Days, 23 hours and 20 minutes of my life.

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## Knowledge is a Quitting Method

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