

STOP SMOKING  
FOR GOOD

# SMOKING & WEIGHT

BOOKLET 3

**This is Booklet 3 in the *Stop Smoking For Good* series. This booklet covers how smoking and weight are related, the reasons that people often gain weight after quitting, and ways to control weight after quitting.**

**This booklet may be of interest even to people who are not worried about their weight. Exercise and diet are important for everyone who wants to live a healthy lifestyle.**

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## Why a Booklet on Weight Control After Quitting?

Are you concerned about gaining weight after quitting smoking? Have you already gained some weight since quitting? You are not alone.

Four out of every five people who stop smoking gain some weight. Even though smoking is worse for your body than gaining weight, many people do not like gaining even a few extra pounds.

Did you know that 6 months after quitting, most people have lost at least some of the weight that they gained? You can quit smoking and control your weight. It may take some time and effort, but it can be done!

This booklet should help you understand why people gain weight after quitting smoking. It also offers tips on how to slow down or stop weight gain. Remember, staying smoke-free is your top goal. Staying off of cigarettes is much more important than losing a few pounds. Some people return to smoking to lose weight. You want to avoid this thinking, even if it means living with a few extra pounds.



## Who Gains Weight?

The average person who quits smoking gains between 6 and 10 pounds. The more someone smoked per day, the more weight he or she could gain after quitting. Someone who quit smoking two packs per day might gain more than someone who quit smoking one pack per day.

But these numbers are only averages. You may be above average or below average. Half the people who quit smoking gain less than the average 6 to 10 pounds. And, about 1 of every 10 ex-smokers gains as much as 25 to 30 pounds.

People usually gain the most weight in the first six months after quitting. After six months, many people start to lose the weight as they adjust to being an ex-smoker.

## Why Do Ex-Smokers Gain Weight?

One reason people gain weight is eating more calories than they use. There are 3500 calories in a pound of body fat. If you eat 3500 more calories than you can use, you will gain one pound. And if you burn 3500 more calories than you eat, you will lose a pound. How many calories you burn each day depends on age, sex, body weight, metabolism, and amount of exercise. These factors determine how many calories a person can eat without gaining weight, or while losing weight.

**Metabolism.** Metabolism is when your body uses the calories from what you eat and drink to make energy. This energy is needed for the body's functions. Like the daily work done by your heart and brain. About 70% of the calories burned each day are for these functions.



Smoking cigarettes raises the “metabolic rate” of smokers. That means more calories are used. After smoking a cigarette, your “metabolism” increases right away. Your heart may beat faster, sometimes 10 to 20 more beats per minute. This extra stress on your heart is one reason for the high rate of heart disease in smokers.

When you quit smoking, your metabolic rate slows down to a healthy level. Sometimes, it slows down even more. It can take a few weeks or even months for your metabolism to get back to a normal level. So you may be burning fewer calories during this time.

There are healthier ways than smoking cigarettes to increase metabolism. Exercise is the best way, and it will be discussed later in this booklet.

Nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) like the nicotine patch may also help stop the metabolic slowdown after quitting. Studies show that those who use NRTs have less weight gain after quitting.

**Changes in Eating Habits.** Changes in what you eat can also cause weight gain after quitting smoking. The nicotine in cigarettes keeps your appetite low. Studies show that people want to eat more after quitting. This increased appetite is a common nicotine withdrawal symptom. It tends to last somewhat longer than other withdrawal symptoms. The nicotine in NRTs may help keep your appetite low after quitting tobacco.



**Marlene** had never really liked sweets. She didn't like cake or ice cream as a smoker. But, since she quit smoking, she orders dessert after dinner and goes into the freezer for ice cream while watching TV at night.

Increased appetite is not the only thing that can change after quitting smoking. Your likes and dislikes might also change. You may have heard people say that they never ate sweets before quitting but now they love sweet foods. Studies show that people want more sweet and fatty foods after quitting smoking. Even rats in nicotine withdrawal want more sugar. Of course, sweet and fatty foods also tend to have more calories.

Ever since **Dennis** quit smoking two months ago, he's been enjoying the taste of steak and imported beer. He likes the smell and taste of these foods in ways he had not for the 25 years that he had smoked. He has been drinking beer and eating steak dinners at every chance. Yet he wonders why he gained 11 pounds since his last cigarette.

When you quit smoking, your senses of taste and smell improve and return to normal. This may also increase your appetite, as Dennis found out. Also, studies show that alcohol use often increases after people quit smoking. Alcohol is very high in calories, so increased drinking may cause weight gain.

This is a normal nicotine withdrawal symptom. Quit-smoking products that contain nicotine can help stop cravings and reduce your appetite. Using these products can help you control your weight.

**Oral Gratification.** Another reason that people gain weight after quitting is because of what ex-smokers often call "oral gratification." Many ex-smokers say they miss the feeling of having something to do with their mouth and hands. Eating or snacking is like the action of smoking. The need to have something in your mouth goes away over time. Keep your hands and mouth busy with objects, such as toothpicks or straws. Or you can chew on foods such as carrots, celery, or even sugar-free mints.



**Other Reasons for Eating.** Research shows that people tend to use food in the same ways they used cigarettes. Stress, boredom, reward, passing time, or being social. It is important to know why you eat even when you are not hungry.

Are there ways you use food even when you are not hungry?

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✓ \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Is Weight Gain a Sure Thing?

We have described reasons for putting on pounds after quitting smoking. But weight gain does not have to happen! When heart patients were told to make diet and lifestyle changes while quitting smoking, they did not gain as much weight as those who did not get this advice.

Another study looked at Air Force recruits going through six weeks of "boot camp" in Texas. The recruits were forced to quit smoking during this time. At the end of camp, the recruits had not gained weight. How could this be? If you think about it, boot camp means a lot of exercise. Snack foods are not allowed. Alcohol is not allowed. Meals are well planned. Of course, going to boot camp to keep the weight off is pretty drastic, and we are not saying to do this. But this study does show that it is *possible* to quit smoking without gaining weight.



## Effects of Smoking & Weight Gain on Health and Looks

As stated before, the average smoker gains 6 to 10 pounds after quitting. This weight gain is small compared with the huge health benefits of quitting. Smoking harms your health and your looks much more than the added weight. The stress on your heart of smoking one pack of cigarettes per day is equal to being 90 pounds overweight!

And remember that quitting smoking decreases your risks of many diseases, including lung and other cancers, heart attack, stroke, and other lung problems. For most people, smoking is far more dangerous to your health than the extra weight.

And think about how much more attractive you can look as a non-smoker. Your teeth are whiter, your skin is healthier, and you don't smell of smoke. Today, someone with a cigarette hanging out of his or her mouth is not considered good looking.



*Susan had been without cigarettes for 3 months. During that time she had gained 16 pounds. She was very concerned about her weight. Others barely noticed the extra pounds. When Susan's son got engaged, she decided that she must lose the weight before the wedding; she wanted to look good. Three months before the wedding, Susan began smoking again in order to lose the weight. She told everyone that she would quit again after the wedding. By smoking, Susan was able to lose the weight she had gained after quitting. She did, however, miss her son's first dance at the reception because she was outside smoking a cigarette. Her son later told her that he would have much preferred if she had stayed quit rather than worry about a few pounds of weight. He said that he was embarrassed that everyone at the wedding saw that his mother was a smoker.*

### Susan's story has many lessons in it:

1. Often the only one who notices the weight gain after quitting smoking is the ex-smoker.
2. Smoking can lead to weight loss, but losing weight this way is very unhealthy. Cutting off your arm or removing your liver will also reduce your weight, but you would not consider doing those things. Smoking is a harmful way to lose weight.
3. Smoking is no longer sexy. In today's world, smoking is seen as less attractive than being overweight.
4. Although Susan said that she would quit again after the wedding, she probably will have other events when she will feel she must lose weight. As long as her weight is more important to her than her health, Susan will have a hard time staying off cigarettes. This is why quitting smoking – and staying quit – needs to be your goal.



## Weight Control After Quitting

As stated before, weight gain after quitting smoking is likely, but not a sure thing. Even though 80% of people who quit gain weight at first, most lose weight with no special action. But there are things you can do to reduce the chances of gaining weight after quitting. If you take in more calories than you use, you gain weight. Weight is controlled best when calories are reduced and metabolism is increased. Calories can be reduced with a proper diet. Metabolism can be increased with regular exercise. But remember it is very important to talk to your doctor before making any major changes in diet or exercise.

### Nicotine Replacement

As mentioned before, the sudden loss of nicotine is what causes withdrawal symptoms. Nicotine replacement products like the nicotine patch or gum are ways to ease these symptoms. That includes helping with increased appetite and a slowed metabolism.

### Eating Right

**The types of foods you eat can help you control or lose weight.**

1. Limiting fats is one way to control weight. Fats are loaded with calories. Each gram of fat contains 9 calories. Proteins and carbohydrates only have 4 calories per gram. If you choose low fat foods, you can eat the same amount of food and still lose weight. There are many low-fat choices. Also, most foods have labels that make it easy for you to check the fat content. You may be surprised at how much hidden fat there is in common foods. Find low-fat foods you most enjoy and keep these in mind when preparing or purchasing meals.
2. A better way may be to focus on foods you can eat, not on ones you should not eat. Fill your diet with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and lean meats.
3. If you have the urge to snack, try cut-up carrots, melon, and strawberries., Or eat pretzels instead of chips. Some ex-smokers also like drinking ice water or sucking on ice cubes or popsicles.

### TIP

There are many free apps or web-sites available to help track the calories and nutritional information about food you eat. Just tracking it will help you make healthier choices.



### Some low-fat foods include:

1. Fruits and vegetables
2. Lean meat/fish
3. Pretzels and baked tortilla chips/salsa
4. Skim milk
5. Yogurt

4. Remember that sweet foods tend to have more calories. And many people seem to want sweets after quitting. Try to reduce or avoid those high-calorie sweet foods. If you must have sweet foods, you can find choices that use low-calorie sweeteners. Doing this will make weight gain less likely.



List some high-fat or sweet foods that you will try to avoid:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

Now, list some healthy foods you can add to your diet:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Another way to control weight gain is to change your eating habits. For example, perhaps you are used to having a cigarette after a meal. Now you find yourself eating more after quitting. Try to leave the table right after your meal and find something else to do.

Some people eat to deal with stress. If this is the case for you, find other ways to deal with these feelings. Relax with a book or music or try deep breathing exercises.

### HELPFUL HINT:

You may also want to write down what you eat each day for a week in a Diet Diary (or use an app created for tracking food). Tracking helps you see if you are eating more than you should. Eating, like smoking, is something that we sometimes do without noticing how much we do it. We often do not realize how all the snacking between meals adds up until we see it on paper. Do this for a week and see how you can make changes.

## Exercise

Exercise after quitting smoking is good for many reasons:

### 1 Exercise burns calories.

Exercise burns calories and increases metabolism. Walking, jogging, or swimming can burn off 200 to 600 calories per hour. You also burn calories at a higher rate for up to 24 hours after exercise.

### 2 Exercise reduces appetite and makes you want to eat less.

Most exercise reduces appetite. When you exercise, fat is broken down and released into the bloodstream. This acts as a built-in appetite depressant. This makes you want to eat less.

### 3 Exercise cuts down urges for cigarettes.

Exercise is hard to do while smoking. Smokers have less oxygen reaching their heart and muscles. During exercise, this can cause cramps and shortness of breath. Quitting smoking makes exercise easier and more fun. Without the carbon monoxide from smoking in your system, exercise may become more fun. You may not want smoking to get in the way of those good feelings.

### 4 Exercise helps you to deal with stress and boredom.

You can also use exercise as a healthy way to deal with stress and boredom. Exercise can also relieve tension. It has been found to improve well-being. Exercise also improves skin, body tone, and strength.



How many calories are burned by different forms of exercise? Here is a list of calories burned per hour for a person weighing about 160 pounds. A heavier person will burn more calories per hour.

ACTIVITY	CALORIES BURNED PER HOUR
Sitting	95
Bowling	220
Housework	256
Bicycling (5 mph)	256
Walking	256
Rowing a boat	256
Calisthenics	256
Gardening	278
Volleyball	293
Chopping wood	329
Golf	351
Salsa dancing	403
Mowing lawn	403
Horseback riding	403
Swimming	439
Paddle boarding	439
Basketball	476
Roller skating / Rollerblading	512
Jogging	512
Tennis	534
Dancing	571
Bicycling (12-14 mph)	586
Running (6 mph)	717
Handball	878

Ainsworth BE, Haskell WL, Herrmann SD, Meckes N, Bassett Jr DR, Tudor-Locke C, Greer JL, Vezina J, Whitt-Glover MC, Leon AS. (2011). Compendium of Physical Activities: a second update of codes and MET values. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 43(8),1575-1581.

# Make Exercise Part of Your Day

Different people find different types of exercise more fun. You do not have to have a formal exercise routine. Make small changes each day to increase the amount of calories you burn. Take the dog for a walk, use the stairs not the elevator, play ball with your kids.

Think about setting time to exercise into your normal day. Planned exercise, such as going for a walk after dinner, joining a dance class or gym, or playing sports, are great ways to improve your health. (Just think of all of the money you can save by not smoking – over \$2000 per year for most ex-smokers. Perhaps you can use this money to pay for a special activity or class.)



**Jim** gained 8 pounds after he quit smoking. He has started to cut down on snacking between meals. He knows that if he increases his exercise it will be easier for him to not gain any more weight and even lose weight. One thing Jim loves to do is golf. Jim decided that with the money he is saving from not buying cigarettes he will golf once a week. Jim also decided that he will begin taking his dog for a walk three times a week.

Jim found fun ways to increase his exercise and calorie use. People often have trouble getting into the habit of exercising. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Start slow. Set a goal that works for you. It does not make sense to plan 5-mile runs when you have not exercised for the past 10 years. Instead, begin by walking around the block 3 times per week.
- Set aside some time for exercise. Exercise tends to get squeezed out by other activities unless you plan for it. So schedule, for example, a half-hour on Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday for your walks.
- Make it a regular social event. We tend to enjoy things more if we do them with others. So exercise with a friend or your partner. Or join a class at the YMCA or community center. The other benefit of exercising with someone else is that you are less likely to skip.



Take a few minutes right now to:

- 1. Think about the types of exercise that you like to do.
- 2. Think about how you can make exercise a part of your day. Think about things that might get in the way of regular exercise, such as time or money, and how you can overcome that.
- 3. Think about the benefits of exercise.

Now, write down how you can make exercise part of your day.

✓

✓

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Write down types of exercise that you like and that can work for you.

✓

✓

✓

✓

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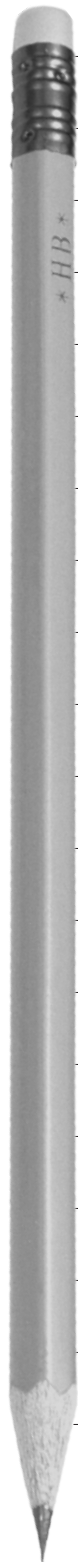
*Remember, exercise helps both your physical health and your psychological health.*

Remember that gaining weight after quitting smoking is normal. Most people gain less than 10 pounds, and most of this is lost later. However, studies show that people who make changes in their eating and exercising habits do not gain much, if any, weight. NRTs may also help keep the weight off while quitting smoking. If you do gain weight, you are still far better off than if you were smoking.

Notes



# Notes



## The Most Important Messages

You should be proud for deciding to quit smoking and taking a step toward a better and longer life. Once again, congratulations!

We ask that you save this copy of *Stop Smoking For Good* and re-read it many times during the first year or two after quitting. People often forget the important points. To help you remember, here are some important *Stop Smoking For Good* messages.

1

Make “not-smoking” your number one goal.

2

Check your weight: weigh yourself at least once a week.

3

Know what you are eating.

4

Eat well-balanced meals.

5

Do not eat more than you use in calories.

6

Limit snacks.

7

Avoid sweets.

8

When you eat out, eat wisely.

9

Eat slowly and put your fork down between bites.

10

Exercise regularly.

11

Consider nicotine replacement therapies (patch, gum, lozenge) to avoid appetite increase and metabolism slowdown.



# STOP SMOKING FOR GOOD



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