



STOP SMOKING
FOR GOOD

THE ROAD AHEAD

BOOKLET 10

This is Booklet 10,
and the last booklet in
the *Stop Smoking For
Good* series. This short
booklet takes a look
down the road at life
as an ex-smoker. The
road gets smoother,
but there may still be a
few curves and bumps
ahead. You can get
through them!

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On the Road to Quitting Smoking

Quitting smoking can be thought of as a long road trip. Some users think of their quit attempt as free of their nicotine addiction for good. As with many road trips, there may be bumps, turns, and detours along the way. Where are you on your journey as a non-smoker? Are you still near the start of your trip? Or are you somewhere in the middle, with just a few bumps and curves in the road ahead? Or are you past most of the tough driving, with a straight, smooth road ahead?

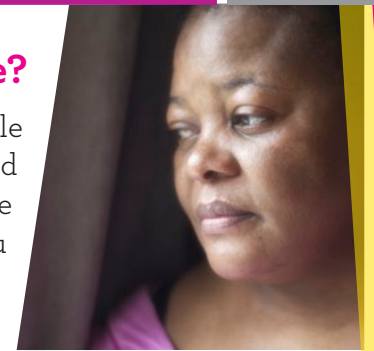
Wherever you are, being free of your addiction is worth the drive.

Where are you on the road to quitting smoking?

- **“I never quit smoking cigarettes.”** If you never quit smoking, you are still at the start of your trip. But don’t worry, it is not too late to get going! Go back to the beginning of this series of booklets and try jump-starting the engine.
- **“I quit smoking, but I started again.”** If you quit, but have since returned to smoking, then you are a little further along. You probably learned a few things from your quit attempt that will help you when you try again. Most smokers try many times before they quit for good. Remember the lessons that you have learned, and give it another try.
- **“I have been free of cigarettes for a short time.”** If you have quit smoking now for a few weeks or months, you are somewhere in the middle of your trip toward being completely smoke-free. You may still find some hills and curves in your road ahead, so you must drive carefully. Stay alert!
- **“I have been free of cigarettes for a long time.”** If you have gone six months or more without a cigarette, you are pretty far down the road. It should be mostly smooth and straight driving ahead. But you don’t want to fall asleep at the wheel. An unexpected strong craving or other challenge could still dart in front of you. You need to keep your hands on the wheel and stay on the road.

How much stress do you have in your life?

Stress is one of the major causes of smoking relapse. People with more stress are more likely to have some continued cravings to smoke. Think of stress as holes in the road. There may be bumps, but if you stay alert and drive carefully, you can get through them. And a major stress (such as job loss, a divorce, or death in the family) may require all of your attention and skills to avoid an accident.



How much are you exposed to other smokers?

Other smokers can be strong triggers that cause cravings to smoke. Being with other smokers means you are around cigarettes and that can be very tempting. So, if you live or work around people who smoke, you need to stay alert to possible road blocks ahead.

Frequently Asked Questions by Ex-Smokers

1 Will I ever reach a point when I don’t think of smoking and want a cigarette?

The answer to this question is PROBABLY YES. But it takes time to reach this point. As more time passes since you last smoked, your cravings to smoke should become less and less strong. But even after many months, a major stress, such as loss of a job or death of a loved one, can bring back memories of smoking. And those strong cravings may also come back. But many ex-smokers say that even these memories and cravings go away with time.

2 If I smoke a cigarette now, would I respond in the same way as a nonsmoker?

The answer to this question is PROBABLY NOT. Back when you started smoking, your brain cells actually changed in how they respond to nicotine. Your brain got used to having nicotine. These changes in your brain seem to last forever—even after you quit smoking. For this reason, if you went back to smoking, you can easily become addicted again. And it would happen more quickly than to someone who never smoked. For example, a new smoker may take years before working up to a pack a day. But a former smoker who starts up again may reach that level of heavy smoking within a few weeks. So, it is very important to not have that ONE cigarette.

If you do have that first cigarette, there are still things that you can do. Please review Booklet 4: *Quitting Smoking: What If You Have a Cigarette?* There are ways to reduce your risk of returning to regular smoking.

3 Is it OK if I smoke once in a while?

It is tempting to think about having a cigarette. Perhaps just one cigarette when going out with friends. Or just one when you feel really stressed out. You may know some smokers who do this. However, because you were once a regular smoker, your brain has changed. It is very hard for an ex-smoker to have just one cigarette. One cigarette often leads to another...and then another...and then another...

Why take that chance? Save yourself the trouble and stay away from that very first cigarette!

4 Now that I don't smoke, should I stay away from my friends who smoke?

When you first quit smoking, it is a good idea to stay away from "triggers" to smoke. These triggers include other smokers. For a while, it is good to stay away from them, even your close friends. Once you are a non-smoker for a few weeks, it is OK to slowly return to some of your normal lifestyle. When you are ready, you may go back to being around people who smoke. But go slow. Don't test your limits. Your good friends will respect that you are now a non-smoker who has a right to clean air.

5 Can I keep some nicotine gum with me — just in case I need it?

Yes. Some ex-smokers like to keep a few pieces of nicotine gum (or lozenge, inhaler, or nasal spray) handy even many months after they stopped using it regularly. These can help if you get a sudden, strong craving to smoke.



There is nothing wrong with keeping a few pieces in your pocket or purse. The longer you go without smoking, the less likely it is that you will have strong cravings to smoke. But these cravings can happen. If they do, nicotine gum is far better than a cigarette!

Remember All That You Have Achieved

This is a good time to look back at everything you have achieved by quitting smoking. People often forget what a big deal it is to quit smoking. Think back for a moment and fill in some blanks:

1. Year that you started smoking:
2. Year that you quit smoking:
3. Number of years that you smoked (subtract #1 from #2):
4. Number of years that you wanted to quit smoking:
5. Number of times that you tried to quit smoking:
6. How long you have now gone without smoking: Years Months Days

Bonus Questions (these require more math):

7. About how many cigarettes did you smoke in your life?
8. Since quitting, about how many cigarettes did you NOT smoke, that you otherwise would have?

Think about these numbers. They should remind you of what you truly achieved. No doubt there were bumps and curves along the way. You may have made many attempts before you finally quit smoking. After all, nicotine is highly addictive.

If you have quit smoking cigarettes, you have done something very special. Think about the benefits of quitting smoking. Write down three reasons that you feel good about being smoke-free.

I am glad I have quit smoking because:

1.
2.
3.

Do not take quitting for granted. Take a moment now to give yourself a big pat on the back and tell yourself... "Great Job!!!" You have done something fantastic for your health and for the health of your family. To celebrate, fill in your name into the certificate below. You have earned it. Way to go!



If You Are Still Smoking...

By the time you get this final booklet, the chances are good that you have quit smoking. But that will not be true of everyone. If you have not yet quit for good, the main message here is that you should not give up. Most people attempt quitting many times before finally quitting for good. Remember: most people can quit smoking if they keep trying.

So, please, keep on trying. Now would be a good time to review the other booklets in this series. There are lots of good tips to read. As a reminder, here is a list of the 10 booklets that you should have received by now:

- Booklet 1:** An Overview
- Booklet 2:** Smoking Urges
- Booklet 3:** Smoking and Weight
- Booklet 4:** What If You Have a Cigarette?
- Booklet 5:** Your Health
- Booklet 6:** Stress and Mood
- Booklet 7:** Lifestyle Balance
- Booklet 8:** Life Without Cigarettes
- Booklet 9:** Benefits of Quitting Smoking
- Booklet 10:** The Road Ahead (this booklet)



Happy Travels



Best Wishes!

You have reached the last booklet in the Forever Free: Stop Smoking for Good series. We want to wish you well in your journey through life without smoking. If you can now call yourself an ex-smoker, we give you one last, well-deserved CONGRATULATIONS on your achievement! You will likely enjoy a happier, healthier, and longer life because you quit smoking.

If you have not become completely free of your nicotine addiction just yet, keep trying. The fact that you are still reading these booklets means that you truly want to quit. If you keep trying, and if you use the tips you have learned along the way, you will reach your goal of a smoke-free life.

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

Take a moment to think about where you are on your journey to a smoke-free life.
- 2

Take steps to move to the next phase of the journey.
- 3

Make lifestyle changes to reduce stress and reduce exposure to smokers in order to help you quit or stay quit.
- 4

Remember all that you have achieved.
- 5

Review booklets 1 -10 to help you back on or continue on the path to freedom from cigarettes.

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