

I've got a plan!

Are you ready?

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By Mark Brennaman

Congratulations! You're either thinking about quitting or have decided to quit smoking. You're at the beginning of one of the most important journeys of your life and this guide will help you map your way and you'll have extra confidence in your quit because of the preparation that you're about to do.

This is a playbook. You'll be asked to write a few exercises so you can better plan your quit. The more you plan your quit the easier you will make it. Knowing what to expect and what to do about gives you confidence.

Once you complete all the tasks you will be ready to set a quit date and begin your journey. Use this playbook when you feel you are losing focus. By continually referring to your playbook you'll always know what to do next.

Quit for life

By having a positive attitude and an expectation of success you will find it much easier to quit. Be playful as you create new daily rituals that will replace your old habit of smoking.

Try to have fun with your quit. Smile often.

It can't be said enough, "Concentrate on what you're *starting* instead of what you're ending." I wish you well on your new journey for life. Enjoy!

Are you ready to become a nonsmoker?

What do you value more? Smoking another cigarette or skipping it so you can start quitting? If you continue to place more value on smoking than you do on quitting you'll find it impossible to quit.

There's no use in trying to "trick" your mind into believing you're ready to quit if you're not really ready. Nothing will happen except you'll start to feel guilty and depressed because you tried, and failed, at quitting smoking. Again.

Discover where your true feelings are. If you aren't ready to quit smoking, but you want to, it'll help if you can see where you place your values. When you write your thoughts in the four spaces on the next page you'll recognize where you are in terms of being ready to quit.

You might find that you have equally strong feelings about wanting to smoke as you do about wanting to break the addiction. That's being ambivalent and that's perfectly normal. To make a change you'll have to tip the balance toward one value over another.

Write your thoughts in all four areas on the next page. This will give you an idea where you really stand and how strongly you value certain choices you're making.

So, before you begin your journey it's important to find your bearings. Where are you right now?

Once you know where you are you can then plan the next step of your journey.

Positive Self-Talk

Your inner voice is with you every step of the way. What you allow your inner voice to say is how you behave. If you don't pay attention to and get rid of negative affirmations you will continue to do the very thing you're trying to change.

You get to write the scripts for your inner voice. Create positive affirmations that you can repeat to yourself over and over and over. Positive self-talk works and you're in charge of the script!

Positive Self-Talk Works. Train your Mind What to Think!

Plot your position

**Good things
about smoking**

**Good things
about quitting**

**Not so good things
about smoking**

**Not so good things
about quitting**

Becoming a lasting nonsmoker

There are three distinct parts of smoking that must be addressed for a person to successfully break an addiction: 1) Physical, 2) Behavioral, and 3) Psychological.

Physical

With smoking, the physical aspect is our body's dependence or craving for the chemical, nicotine. Nicotine will flush out of your body in about three days after your last dose (whether smoked or via patches, etc).

The reason many people have success with nicotine replacement therapies (patches, gum) is that it satisfies and decreases over time the physical need for nicotine WHILE you work to change the routine and mental elements of your smoking.

Behavioral

Look at your smoking routines. How do you pair the act of smoking with other activities? Do you wake up and immediately smoke?

Answer the phone and light one up? Have coffee and smoke? Run into a sudden and stressful situation and reach for a cigarette? Most smokers have paired many routines with smoking.

On the next several pages write all the smoking routines you can think of. These are your triggers to smoke – the routines you created when you started smoking. When you get ready to quit you will want to change your routines



just enough to break the association with cigarettes and smoking.

If you always smoke when you drink coffee try switching to tea for a few weeks. If you pair smoking and talking on the phone avoid using the phone as much as possible for a couple of weeks. If you normally smoke as soon as you get out of bed try running to the shower as soon as your feet hit the floor.

The idea is to know your triggers so you can alter your routines as you learn how to not smoke.

Psychological

The psychological aspect involves how you view yourself and how you perceive the benefits of smoking and how you perceive the benefits of quitting. This is also where you allow your inner voice to lead the way.

Your inner voice will lead you back to smoking if you let your old scripts play in your mind. If you change the scripts your inner voice will lead you to a life free from the cost, the smell, the mess and the hazards of smoking.

If you can get your inner voice to become your biggest cheerleader you'll make your quit far easier than you ever thought possible.

To dismantle the addiction to nicotine it's important to consider each aspect to figure out how you relate to them.

To change the routines of smoking you have to figure out how to *"mess with your habit"*.

You can figure out how to mess with your habit by taking an inventory of how you actually smoke. The more precisely you can write down your smoking routines, the easier it will be to eliminate all routines that work as a trigger to smoke.

Have some fun remembering all the routines you have that involve smoking. You'll be amazed at how pervasive nicotine has become in your life.

The changes don't have to be permanent. You should change your routines significantly during the first couple of weeks and months of your quit. After you have gone a few months without smoking you can begin to reintroduce previous routines, but this time without the link to smoking that they once had.

The psychological aspect is where the real battle is won or lost. We all know that the mind is very powerful. The good news is we can get the mind to work either for or against us. It's totally up to us!!

List all of your activities that also involve smoking:

What are your favorite times to smoke?

Smoking gives me . . .

To change the psychological aspect of smoking it's important to take an inventory of how you perceive smoking satisfies your needs, think about why you smoke and then think about why you want to quit. Now you can create some new beliefs about yourself as a nonsmoker.

Create new scripts for the self-talk that goes on inside you.

I can quit!
I'm a non-smoker!
I love smelling fresh!
I'm a nonsmoker!
I'm doing it!
I'm proud of me!"

The self-talk will take place whether you control it or not. If you're passive, the self-talk will continue to reinforce your addictive beliefs, and that's where fear of quitting and doubt as to your ability to quit comes from. However, if you're proactive in controlling your self-talk with positive reinforcements you'll respond that way.

Setting and pursuing your goals

Look at your Decisional Balance Sheet and look at what you wrote under Good Things About Quitting Smoking. You have already listed several goals you want to accomplish.

Now look at what you wrote under Not So Good Things About Smoking and you've got more goals to work toward.

I smoke because . . .

List new hobbies or new routines that will replace your old smoking behavior:

Write some positive affirmations you can tell yourself as you become a nonsmoker:

Look at all the notes you've made about the physical, behavioral and psychological changes you need to make to become a nonsmoker. Write goals on every aspect. Make a list of your goals so you can see it throughout the day.

State your goals as if they're already true

Instead of saying, "I want to be a nonsmoker." write your goal like this: **"I'm a nonsmoker!"**

If one of your goals is to set a better example for your children or grandchildren, write your goal like this: **"I'm a**

nonsmoker and set a good example for my children and grandchildren."

Go back over all the goals you've written based on the physical, behavioral and psychological aspects of smoking and rewrite each goal as if it is already true. Start believing that reaching your goals is not only possible, but believe you have already accomplished them.

Make posters and little signs you can put around the house. Tape your goals on the bathroom mirror. Get creative as you write your goals and as you put reminders around your house, your office, your car, **and especially in places where you used to smoke.**

Write your goals as if they're already true:

Make little signs with your goals and place them throughout your home, office, car, and especially in places where you used to smoke.

Preparation is the key to an easier quit

The more you know about the quit process the easier you can make it. There are plenty of websites devoted to quitting smoking. Unfortunately, many of them exist to try to sell you unnecessary products.

Arming yourself with information about the quit process can help you overcome urges to smoke, and you'll have a better understanding of what to expect. By preparing for your quit you increase the odds that you'll become a lasting nonsmoker.

Visit <http://quitsmoking.about.com> to read articles on all phases of quitting. Other helpful websites include <http://whyquit.com> and <http://www.quitnet.com>.

Read about the benefits of stopping smoking when you visit <http://www.lungusa.org>.

Mess with your habit!

As you get ready for your quit day, really “mess with your habit” by switching brands, smoking at totally different times and in different places. Make sure the last few weeks and days of your old habit that you make smoking as difficult as possible.

Have a practice quit. Decide to go a half-day without smoking so you can become aware of the thoughts you'll confront with you quit for real.

Decide up front that you are going to have some fun even if the thought of quitting scares you. The message from the song *Whistle While I Work* is very appropriate. Quitting isn't pleasant, but you can make it bearable simply by having a positive attitude about it.

In addition to the websites listed to the left, visit other sites. Do a search for key words like:

stopping smoking

quit smoking weight loss

quit smoking support

withdrawal symptoms

nicotine addiction

Visit your doctor

Enlist the help of friends who want to see you succeed

Join several online support groups

Find out if there are weekly support groups meeting in your area

Make a bunch of signs you can tape to your mirrors, put on your desk, and in places where you used to smoke.

Start saying to yourself, “I'm a nonsmoker! I'm a nonsmoker!”

Get excited about setting yourself free!

Quit methods

There are several ways to quit smoking. Whatever works best for you is the quit method you should follow. Many people quitting smoking believe the method they've chosen is the only way to quit. Nonsense! Don't pay attention to people who tell you their way of quitting is better than other methods.

You should always be eager to learn from other quitters what's working for them and what's not. Not to take their advice, but to learn more about your own quit.

Cold Turkey

The first method is going cold turkey. You decide to quit, you stop buying cigarettes, you don't light up another one, all without the help of patches, pills or other items. Many people have successfully quit smoking using this method.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Probably the most discussed aid to quitting is the nicotine patch. Should a quitter use them? What do the "step down" dosages mean to a quitter? There are as many questions about patches as there are people who wear them and are trying to quit.

Patches, if worn properly, can help you quit by decreasing your need to get a new dose of nicotine by lighting up. The patch allows you to gradually eliminate nicotine from your body. Looking back at the description of dismantling the nicotine addiction you'll see the patch is only an aid so you can change your routines and your mental outlook.

Patches keep your body on an even keel while you pay attention to changing your old routines and changing the way you see yourself in your new role as a nonsmoker. The patch gives you the minimum nicotine dose you need to remain comfortable while you are eliminating cigarettes and smoking accessories, and while you're building new routines where you go about life doing your stuff while happily smokefree.

Nicotine gum does nearly the same thing although most of the people I know of who are quitting don't use the gum. The same can be said of the nicotine lozenges that recently became available.

Zyban®

Many people quitting see their health care provider to learn about medication to help the quit process. People who want to quit smoking are sometimes prescribed **Zyban®** or **Wellbutrin®**. To be effective, my doctor told me to start taking my medication 14 days before my quit date. These pills have helped a lot of people cope with the discomfort of quitting.

Positive Self-talk

My favorite quit method is the use of your self-talk, your biggest cheerleader. Your inner voice works every day. Think about what you tell yourself throughout the day. Self-talk is our strongest tool to change from being a smoker to living a smokefree life. The more you pay attention to the message that your inner voice tells you the easier it becomes to become a successful quitter (More about Self-talk later).

Zyban® and patches

A lot of people quitting are doing so with a combination of the patch and the medication. That's the way I quit, and I think it worked very well. In my situation I stopped wearing the patch less than a week into my quit. I know of others who are taking their medication, but have decided to quit their intake of nicotine completely.

No matter which method you (and your health care provider) select your quit will be unique in some respects, but you'll share a lot of things that millions of successful quitters have experienced when they quit. With the right support you will become smokefree.

You simply can't go wrong if you'll visit your health care provider to discuss all your options, including your decision to quit smoking.

I'm a nonsmoker!
I'm a nonsmoker!
I'm a nonsmoker!

Break your hand-to-mouth memory

Find ways to keep your hands busy. Avoid using food as a replacement for smoking. Your body has a very strong habit of moving an object to your lips and then ingesting.

Try some new hobbies that will keep you busy. I used woodworking extensively during the first month of my quit. I kept my hands busy handcrafting a piece of wood. If you've always wanted to try something new now's the perfect time!

Healthy selections

Many people quitting do use food as a replacement for smoking. If you find yourself handling food and eating it to help satisfy a craving to smoke, use healthy foods instead of sugary or salty snacks. Cutting up carrot sticks keeps your hands busy and it gives you a healthy snack. Carry a small box of raisins and plop a handful in your mouth when you hear nicotine begging for a smoke.

Drink lots of water and fruit juices to help flush nicotine out of your system.

You'll be amazed how your sense of taste will come alive.

Concentrate on what you're starting!

The best advise I ever got when I quit was "Concentrate on what you're **starting** instead of what you're **quitting**".

This shift in thinking makes all the difference in the world. You're about to start breathing better, have more money, smelling things better, tasting things better and you're about to live a healthier life. When you concentrate on these instead of thinking about how you're missing smoking you will get through withdrawal with far fewer troubles than those who always think about the negative things.

**Use positive self-talk to drive away
all negative thoughts!**

Just in case . . .

Many people who quit smoking slip the first time they are confronted with sudden or unexpected stressful situations. It's normal to attempt to quit and go back to smoking for a while. Slipping just because you face extra stress can be avoided by planning ahead what you'll do in a crisis to remain smokefree.

Find someone you can visit when you need support, plan now so if the need arises you can stay smokefree and have a friend to talk to.

In a crisis I'll remain smokefree by . . .

Make a list of all your friends who will help you stay smokefree and will help you celebrate your victories:

Journey with a positive attitude

If you say to yourself over and over that you can't quit smoking, and if you believe you can't quit for more than a few days, you just aren't ready to quit.

A positive attitude is your most important tool to quit and stay quit. Maintaining a positive attitude will help you have a sense of humor about the quit process, will help you deal with stress in new ways, it will help make your quit easier.

Our minds are incredibly powerful and operate from what we tell ourselves.

Positive affirmations result in positive outcomes. Negative thoughts result in staying the same or worse, going backwards.

Luckily, you can write the positive affirmations you want and tell yourself over and over.

Or, you can leave whatever chatter is going on inside you to chance.

Seize the moment. Be proactive in directing your inner voice to repeat positive affirmations about your quit.

From the very beginning of your journey to be smokefree you've got to be "the little engine that could".

You've seen "self-talk" referred to several times now. Why is it so important? To me, self-talk is the single best tool to use to break the nicotine addiction, to move from being a smoker to being a nonsmoker.

Self-talk

I repeated positive affirmations to myself during my withdrawal period until my face turned blue. Well, I didn't really turn blue, but I did stay smokefree.

The advice to concentrate on what you're starting, not on what you're ending makes a lot of sense. If you sit around and think about how much you miss smoking you won't miss it too long. You'll light one up.

If you sit around and think about how great it feels to breathe fresh air you are more likely to stay smokefree.

When you're going through nicotine withdrawal it's helpful to know that some of that discomfort is the body healing itself. Keeping the mind focused on the positive, the humorous and the importance of quitting will make your quit far easier.

Getting Support

Having the right kind of support can make or break your quit effort. The more support you have the easier your quit will be.

Local Weekly Group Meetings

Call your local hospitals, HMOs, universities and other agencies to find out if there are weekly support groups you can attend. If you're a veteran call your nearest VA Medical Center. Look in your Yellow Pages under United Way agencies to find your local lung association and cancer society office.

If you can find local meetings go to them. In-person support is the best help as you go through withdrawal. It's worth the time and effort to locate groups you can visit before you set your quit date.

Family and Friends

Your family and friends can be a source of tremendous support if they better understand what you need as you quit. Tell all your friends and family about your decision to quit. Tell them why you're quitting and what it means to you to become a nonsmoker. Let your friends know of your new desires. Your family and friends will be so happy you're working toward a healthier lifestyle.

Online Support Groups

Most internet service providers have online groups you can join. Yahoo, MSN, AOL and others offer hundreds of groups made up of people quitting and can be a great source of support. Go to your favorite provider and do a search for "Quit Smoking Support Groups". You'll want to join more than a few so you can find a group that suits you and your method of quit.

Positive self-talk – your biggest cheerleader!

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The advice to concentrate on what you're quitting, not on what you're ending makes a lot of sense. If you sit around and think about how much you miss smoking you won't miss it too long. You'll light one up.

If you sit around and think about how great it feels to breathe fresh air you are more likely to stay smokefree.

Write a couple of your favorite positive affirmations you'll be repeating to yourself:

I'm a nonsmoker!

I'm a nonsmoker!

I'm a nonsmoker!

I love breathing fresh air!

I don't smoke!

I can quit!

I don't need to smoke.

No thanks, I don't smoke!

Setting your quit date

There are several things to get done before you set your Quit Date. To begin your journey well prepared means your journey will be familiar and compelling.

___ I have completed all the exercises in this journey guide.

___ I understand the stages of change and I believe I'm ready to quit.

___ I agree about the importance of Positive Self-Talk and have written my own affirmations.

___ I've visited my doctor and am following prescription advice. (If you've opted).

When you believe you are ready to quit smoking your next step is to set the date for the big day.

I have decided to become a nonsmoker by quitting smoking as of _____.

Your signature

Witness

Date

Life as a nonsmoker

It's odd, but to continue to be a successful nonsmoker all you have to do is *nothing*.

Doing nothing means you're not longing for a cigarette, you're not buying any cigarettes, you're not asking anyone for a cigarette, you're not lighting a cigarette, you're just doing *nothing*.

Questions

If you have questions about any part of this playbook or questions about the process of quitting please email

mark@startquitting.org

No part of this playbook is meant to replace the medical advice of your healthcare provider. This information is presented as peer education and support. Consult your physician if you ever become concerned about any recovery symptom you experience. You can become a nonsmoker!