

# Killing off your habit where it is strongest

This advice is only for you if you have identified yourself as being situationally dependent (i.e., only needing to smoke in a few situations). It is provided because some of the advice for more strongly addicted smokers does not really apply to you.

The normal advice for strongly addicted smokers is to avoid high risk situations in the early days of their quit attempt (when they can). However, if you as a situationally addicted smoker did this, you wouldn't achieve anything as it means you would have only been in situations in which you wouldn't have smoked anyhow. That is, you wouldn't have 'quit' anything, but just acted normally. When you do return to a situation in which you normally smoke, you are likely to crave a cigarette. This is a common cause of relapse in young smokers. When you decide to quit, you need to adopt a different strategy that involves either (a) never again entering the situations in which you smoke, or (b) confronting those situations, and learning not to smoke in them. As the first is unlikely to be realistic, we recommend confronting your developing addiction.

## **CONFRONT YOUR DEVELOPING ADDICTION**

In the days after you quit spend as much time as possible in the situations in which you used to smoke. If you aren't sure what these situations are, write down all of the situations in which you smoke and then think whether you are ever in that sort of

situation without smoking. The ones where you seem to always smoke (even if the situation is infrequent) are your high-risk situations. Common high-risk situations are hanging around with friends who are smoking, particularly if you are also drinking; times when you are bored and feel like a bit of a lift, and times when things are not going well.

Quitting involves confronting the desire to smoke that you feel (your addiction talking) and overcoming it. Treat this as a challenge. After you have been in a high-risk situation a few times without smoking, it will start to get easier, as long as you have convinced yourself that smoking is not a good thing for you. One mistake some people make is holding on to the idea that smoking makes these situations more enjoyable or easier to cope with. We understand that it sometimes can seem to. Addiction works by making you feel like doing whatever will give your body the drug it craves. You need to resist this. The challenge is to reframe how you think about these situations so that not smoking is seen as a good thing, not as a sacrifice. A persistent feeling that you are depriving yourself of something good can push you back to smoking. After a while, you will actually come to enjoy your old smoking situations without smoking, and be glad that you are no longer harming yourself in them. In the meantime, you just have to keep believing that this will happen.