

The rewards of quitting

Throughout this program we have written about the rewards of quitting, such as money saved, improved health both now and in the future, confidence and satisfaction. Here we want to focus on the positive consequences of quitting and on how you can use them to help you quit and stay quit.

Any major change in lifestyle, even a positive one like quitting, takes energy and effort. Rather than being on automatic pilot, doing what you would normally be doing, you are deliberately trying out an alternative way of living your life. That can be tiring. Focusing on the positives of quitting, and planning some short-term and long-term rewards for yourself as you quit, can often help to give you a boost.

ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

If quitting smoking has meant that you have stopped doing some of the activities you enjoy because they are associated with smoking, there is the possibility that you may start to feel a little deprived or resentful. This can be a particular issue if part of you believes that there are things you got from cigarettes that you can't replace. It is very common, for example, for people to avoid taking the breaks they normally would, at home or at work, either because they feel it might be too difficult to do so without smoking, or because it feels strange to take breaks without smoking. The result is that the quitter feels more and more tired and restless, which can undermine the resolve to stay quit. If this sounds like it could apply to you, we would encourage you to experiment with ways of taking breaks and enjoying some of your other positive rituals, like unwinding after work or relaxing after dinner, without smoking.

As well as your normal activities, in the first few days of quitting it can help to plan some extra activities, things which you enjoy doing which are not associated with smoking and which can be done in a non-smoking environment.

In the Advice Sheet entitled *Becoming a Nonsmoker*, we offer more detailed advice on challenging thoughts about the benefits of smoking.

REWARDS

Rewards are ways of congratulating yourself for quitting and staying quit. They could be positive messages you give yourself about your reasons for quitting, your progress, or the improvements you are noticing in your bank balance or physical health. On the other hand, they could also be something more tangible, such as a present bought with the money you have saved by not smoking. However you do it, it can help to plan both short-term and longer-term rewards, as it can improve your chance of quitting and staying quit. We have included a range of suggestions below.

SHORT-TERM REWARDS

Frequent short-term rewards are particularly important during the time leading up to and immediately following your attempt, when physical withdrawal from nicotine and cravings are likely to be most noticeable.

Before quitting we would encourage you to plan some small rewards for yourself for each day of the first week you are quit. These could be small treats, enjoyable activities or just giving yourself a mental pat on the back. The important thing is that whatever you do, remind yourself that you are doing it to reward yourself for your progress.

Many people find that one of the benefits of quitting is having extra money in their wallet. We encourage you to consider using some of your extra cash to plan your rewards. If you feel you need an excuse, perhaps you could tell friends and family that the QuitCoach recommended you reward yourself!

Many people find that it adds to their motivation and determination to stay quit if they plan rewards ahead of time through the first month, perhaps for the end of each week. Some of the suggestions we have heard include scheduling a massage, getting your teeth whitened, or buying a special outfit, but it doesn't have to be anything expensive. A special meal with family or friends to celebrate your progress might be just the thing at a milestone like two weeks or one month quit. If your family and/or friends have been supportive of your quitting you might even want to ask them to reward you by planning an unexpected treat, a bunch of flowers, a night out, or whatever you know will work for you.

LONG-TERM REWARDS

Planning longer-term rewards can help keep you focused on the continuing benefits of being quit. What you decide to do here will differ for every person. For one person it might be something for their family, for another, something specifically for them.

For some people one of the main motivations for quitting is saving money, either generally or for something specific like a holiday or new car. If that's the case, perhaps you could collect the money you are saving in a glass jar, so that you can see the financial result of your decision to quit every time you walk past. Sometimes people open up a special quitting bank account so that they can keep track of their savings. If that appeals to you remember to give yourself a pat on the back every time you make a deposit. Even if your focus is on saving for the long term, we still encourage you to give yourself the occasional more immediate reward.

If you are saving toward something specific, like a holiday, or new appliance, you might want to get a picture of your planned reward and put it where you will see it often - in your wallet, on the fridge or even as the screensaver on your computer. If you were already planning a holiday, you might consider upgrading your airfare or hotel booking with the money you are saving or just have extra spending money.

And of course, when you eventually set out on your holidays, acquire the car of your dreams, or complete those dance classes, remember to congratulate yourself again, and remind yourself that this is a direct result of your decision to quit and your determination to stay quit. You deserve it!

KEEPING TRACK OF REWARDS

PLANNED REWARDS

WILL REWARD MYSELF WITH...	WHEN	DATE REWARDED
<i>Dinner out from money saved from smoking</i>	<i>One week quit</i>	

OTHER REWARDS

e.g., the satisfaction of resisting a craving, or the joy of your family for your quitting

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE	WHEN RECEIVED