

Coping With Withdrawal: Common Symptoms

When you stop smoking, be prepared for feelings of withdrawal over the first few days, which is the physical discomfort you will feel from a lack of nicotine in your body. But not all smokers will go through the same withdrawal symptoms, or the same intensity of symptoms. And remember, for many people, the most intense withdrawal symptoms will lesson a few days after quitting. The symptoms begin to lesson after 3 to 4 days, and after a week to 10 days, all physical withdrawal symptoms should be done.

Because the symptoms are most intense in the first few days after you quit smoking, this is when you are most at risk to start smoking again. Therefore, it is important to know what to expect and to find ways to cope with these symptoms. If you can get through the first few days, you will have a much better chance of quitting for good.

Here are a few tips on how to deal with the most common withdrawal symptoms:

Symptoms	Strategies for Coping
Intense craving to smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider stop-smoking medications ▪ Cravings come in waves and only last a few minutes ▪ Practice the 5Ds: Delay-Do something else-Deep Breathing-Drink water-Dial a friend ▪ Drink lots of water to help cleanse the body of nicotine & reduce the urge to smoke
Mood swings, irritability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aware that it will pass ▪ Let people know you have quit and ask for their patience
Anxiety, tension or restlessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take deep breaths ▪ Take up a new hobby or activity ▪ Exercise ▪ Try mind-relaxation techniques
Difficulty concentrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take time to exercise ▪ Try to focus on one thing at a time ▪ Reduce alcohol intake
Trouble sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase your exercise ▪ Avoid alcohol and caffeine ▪ Try relaxation techniques or meditation before bed ▪ Take a hot bath

Coughing and dry mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try warm drinks ▪ Eat cough lozenges or low sugar candy to keep throat moist <p>Note: if coughing persists, visit your doctor as tobacco use can “mask” other existing medical conditions.</p>
Headaches & Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take a warm bath or shower. ▪ Cut down on caffeine and colas ▪ Try relaxation or meditation techniques
Constipation or upset stomach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drink plenty of water ▪ Eat more fibre, whole grains, fruit & veggies ▪ Exercise regularly
Increased appetite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drink lots of water ▪ Leave table immediately after eating and brush teeth ▪ Increase physical activity; walk after meals ▪ Eat healthy snacks like fruits and veggies
Feeling down or sad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remember that smoking was a big part of your life and it’s normal to feel down ▪ Remember all your reasons for quitting and that there is life after smoking ▪ Talk to your health care provider about stop-smoking medications <p>Note: If depression is strong or you have a history of depression, see your doctor.</p>