

PART 5

Strengthening Your Defense

Keep practicing the urge tamers you learned in Part 4. These tools can help you get through cravings when they happen.

This section will explore how to manage a lapse and prevent relapse. You will learn about common relapse triggers so you can be on the lookout for them. If you are prepared for a trigger, you are much more likely to respond in a positive way.

You will also learn how lifestyle habits like sleep, physical activity, and nutrition can help you reduce triggers and feel better. These tips are helpful for all stages of quitting.

Managing Slip-Ups

Start to plan your response to slip-ups even before you have fully quit. Slip-ups are very common, especially in the first few weeks of trying to be tobacco/nicotine free. A slip-up is also called a 'lapse'. The better you manage a lapse, the easier it will be to avoid full relapse. Relapse refers to going back to a regular habit of using tobacco/nicotine products.



No one is perfect. Try not to view the slip-up as a failure of willpower or strength. Remember, you are so strong.

Become hyper-aware of what just happened. It is important to understand the triggers related to a slip-up.

- Where are you? Is this place still a trigger for you? If possible, try to avoid this area for now. Or, make sure you have substitutes handy, like NRT gum or cinnamon candies.
- Who are you with? How can this person support you in the future?
- How are you feeling? Learn to separate your emotional response from situations and feelings. Smoking/chewing won't change anything about the situation.

What do you need to work on so that you can respond differently next time? Review the urge tamers, call your support person, or give your mind a quiet moment to really answer the question.

How do you want this situation to go next time? Imagine responding differently to the trigger. Use the creative imagination exercise. See yourself doing what you want to do.

Know Your Triggers

Relapse triggers can be placed into one of four groups:

1. Emotional relapse triggers
2. Interpersonal relapse triggers
3. Internal relapse triggers
4. Environmental relapse triggers

Emotional Relapse Triggers

These are events in which either uncomfortable feelings, such as boredom, sadness and worry or positive feelings, such as joy, happiness, or being relaxed increase the chances you might use tobacco/nicotine.

Which of the following have been triggers for you in the past? Put a star/asterisk (*) next to any items that may be relapse triggers for you.

- When I am happy and celebrating
- When I am relaxed
- When I feel tired
- When I am bored or have nothing to do
- When I am alone and feeling sad
- When I am frustrated or angry about something
- When I feel unsure and rejected by someone
- When I am worried about a loved one
- When I am afraid
- When I am tense and restless
- When I am put under pressure at my job

List other emotional relapse triggers you are on the lookout for:

Interpersonal Relapse Triggers

These are events in which you may feel either direct or indirect pressure from other people.

Which of the following have been triggers for you in the past? Put a star/asterisk (*) next to any items that may be relapse triggers for you.

- When other people around me are using tobacco/nicotine
- When someone offers me tobacco/nicotine
- When I want to show how tough, sophisticated, or liberated I am
- When I want to fit in with others who are using tobacco/nicotine
- When I want to feel different from other people
- When I become angry with someone
- When my friend or spouse goes back to using tobacco/nicotine after quitting
- When I want to avoid talking to a friend or spouse
- When I feel “trapped” in a relationship
- When I am upset that I cannot solve a problem with another person

List other interpersonal relapse triggers you are on the lookout for:

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Internal Relapse Triggers

These are times when you may have an urge without having a clear-cut reason.

Which of the following have been triggers for you in the past? Put a star/asterisk (*) next to any items that may be relapse triggers for you.

- When I get a strong craving
- When I have intense withdrawal signals
- When I have a feeling of emptiness
- When I want to test my willpower by smoking just one cigarette (or having just one dip, etc.)
- When I am curious about the taste of a cigarette, e-cigarette, or chew
- When I have a difficult time paying attention
- When I think smoking/vaping/chewing is going to make a situation more fun
- When I've had too much to drink
- When I am hungry
- When I have trouble falling asleep
- When I wake up at night and can't get back to sleep
- When I'm having pain in my body (back pain, headache, cramps, etc.)

List other internal relapse triggers you are on the lookout for:

Environmental Relapse Triggers

Certain times, places, and activities may be linked with your tobacco/nicotine habit.

Which of the following have been triggers for you in the past? Put a star/asterisk (*) next to any items that may be relapse triggers for you.

- When I come across a pack of cigarettes, can of chewing tobacco, or discarded e-cigarette
- When I'm in a store where I used to buy tobacco/nicotine
- When I take a break from work
- When I drink coffee
- When I finish a meal
- After sex
- When I first get up in the morning
- When having fun/doing activities that were triggers in the past (e.g. playing cards, during a concert intermission, fishing, hunting, golfing)
- When driving
- When partying
- When I'm on vacation
- When I put off an unpleasant task

List other environmental relapse triggers you are on the lookout for:

Relapse Rehearsal

Choose three events from that could cause you to return to your old habit. Choose situations that you are almost sure you will come across after you have quit. Think about your plan for these times. These plans can include thoughts and actions. They may include someone else's help. Use the tools learned in this program to write a short plan.

Event:	
Response Plan:	

Event:	
Response Plan:	

Event:	
Response Plan:	

You may need to update your plan or improve it over time, after you have gone through the situation.

Be Assertive

Learn the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive communication.

PASSIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">You lack expression for yourself.You do not stand up for your rights and needs. Result: You usually do not achieve your goal. You may feel like someone is walking all over you.	AGGRESSIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">You stand up for your rights and needs, but at the expense of someone else. Result: You usually put down or hurt someone else. You gain no respect and may even start a conflict.	ASSERTIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none">You stand up for your rights and needs without putting down or hurting someone else. Result: You build self-respect and feel good about yourself. You are likely to achieve your goal.
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Example: Your co-worker offers you a cigarette, saying that you can have just one, even though you recently quit. This person wants to smoke with you for old time's sake. You know this could send you back to using tobacco.

Passive Response: "All right, I'll have a cigarette with you, but just this one."

Aggressive Response: "You really have some nerve offering me a cigarette. I hate cigarettes and I think it's disgusting that you smoke. You should smell your breath. Don't ever come near me with a cigarette again."

Assertive Response: "No, thank you. I have quit smoking and I plan to stay that way. Even one can trigger my old addiction. You can help me remain an ex-smoker by not offering me any."

What Assertive Looks Like

- **Body Posture:** Be relaxed and natural. Avoid slouching, putting your hands in your pockets, or facing away from the person you are speaking with.
- **Eye Contact:** Good eye contact is vital to convey self-confidence and interest. Don't stare at the other person—this comes across as a challenge.
- **Voice, Tone, and Quality:** Use a strong, varied tone. Speak clearly and firmly. Don't shout or speak too softly. Don't whine.
- **Distance from the Person:** Don't position yourself too far or too close.
- **Facial Expression:** Let your face convey the same message as what you are saying.
- **Content:** Use short sentences. Be specific, clear, and firm.

Practice First

Plan or write down what you want to say. Have responses ready ahead of time to deal with questions and comments. Reinforce your remarks by saying what positive outcomes will occur for you and the other person. Practice in front of a mirror or with a friend.

Benefits of Being Assertive:

- You can feel comfortable saying “no.”
- You have more confidence to ask others for help.
- You gain more respect from others.
- You feel less angry with yourself and with others.
- You feel justified to say what you want to say.
- You feel comfortable requesting clarification.
- You accept compliments graciously.
- You can change your mind without feeling guilty.

Use the L.A.D.D.E.R. Technique

This is a step-by-step way to become more assertive.

L	Look at your needs, wants, rights, and feelings about the situation.
A	Arrange a meeting that is convenient for you and the other person to talk.
D	Define the problem clearly to the other person.
D	Describe your feelings using “I messages.” I message statements let you take charge of your feelings. The other person is less likely to get defensive.
E	Express your needs and desires in an assertive manner using a few clear sentences. Be aware of your eye contact, hand gestures, posture, voice, and facial expression.
R	Reinforce your remarks by saying what positive outcomes will occur for you and the other person.

Example:

L	I could use support from my close co-worker while I'm quitting vaping and I don't want him to give me a hard time.
A	I'll arrange to speak to him first thing tomorrow.
D	“Jack, I'm trying to quit and can really benefit from your support. I want to be able to take breaks with you, but it's tough for me to do that if you offer me your vape.”
D	“I feel like I could really achieve my goal with your help. Quitting is really important to me.”
E	“I would like to take a walk with you instead of vaping, if you will join me. Or, we'll have to catch up after work. Standing next to you while you vape is tough for me right now.”
R	“I love getting away from hectic stuff at work by taking a break with you. I think taking a walk will help us both clear our heads and feel more ready to tackle the rest of the day.”

Creative Imagination

Creative imagination is the acting out of an event or activity in your mind before it really happens. It allows you to work through the event or activity ahead of time so that you will be better prepared to deal with it. Many athletes practice an upcoming game in their heads before stepping onto the playing field.

A study was done to compare “creative imagination” to actual practice with a group of basketball players. Three groups of students were used.

- **Group 1** – Practiced making free throws every day for 20 days.
- **Group 2** – Threw the ball on the 1st and 20th days, but did not practice in between.
- **Group 3** – Threw free throws on the first day and then spent 20 minutes a day for the next 20 days imagining that they were throwing the ball. If they missed, they had to imagine changing their aim.

On the 20th day:

- Group 1 – Improved their scores by 24%
- Group 2 – No improvement
- Group 3 – Improved their scores by 23% by using creative imagination

Mental practice can help you change your feelings about day-to-day events. Picture yourself succeeding with your goals and getting through trigger situations. The power of your mind to change what you imagine to be real is vast; all it takes is a little thinking and practice.

What would you like to imagine doing differently? Picture yourself doing things the way you want. Repeat this practice every day for at least 2 weeks.

Get Enough Sleep

Not getting enough sleep can affect nearly every aspect of your day:

- Less energy and desire to work on your goals
- Feeling down, anxious, or other negative feelings
- Decreased creativity, making it harder to solve problems or imagine doing things differently
- Increased cravings for tobacco/nicotine to stay alert
- More unstable blood sugar levels, leading to less healthy eating and stronger cravings for nicotine

Tips for Improving Sleep

- Get to bed a little earlier than normal when quitting. This may help cut out an evening cigarette and can help your body recover.
- Create a comfortable place to sleep. Make sure your bed, pillows, and bedding are comfortable.
- Maintain a slightly cooler temperature in the bedroom.
- Avoid looking at a screen (TV, laptop, smartphone, tablet, etc.) 30 minutes before bed.
- Create a bedtime and waketime routine.
- Reserve the bed for sleep and sex. Avoid doing other activities in bed, like work or having a tough discussion.
- Have a small snack before bed if you are hungry.
- Avoid foods high in sugar or refined carbohydrates just before bed. The rise in blood sugar can provide a burst of energy that keeps you alert and makes it difficult to fall asleep.
- Avoid foods that are likely to cause acid reflux (heartburn), gas, cramping, or indigestion if you are prone to these problems. Fatty or spicy foods, beans, garlic, peanuts, and dairy cause discomfort for some people.

What action can you take tonight to improve your sleep?

Move Your Body



All physical activity has benefits for the body and mind. View exercise as a break from your day. Use this time to focus on the present, instead of past or future problems and worries. What are your favorite ways to be physically active?

Physical activity can help you quit and stay quit. It can also improve your energy level, ability to learn, and focus.

Emotional Health

Exercise releases endorphins and increases levels of serotonin and dopamine in the brain. These brain chemicals help create feelings of happiness and euphoria. You may start to feel these benefits after just a few minutes of moderate exercise. This leads to a happiness buzz and overall mood boost!

Stress Management

Norepinephrine is a chemical that can moderate the brain's response to stress. Exercise helps to increase that chemical. Exercise can decrease worry and tension. These may be triggers for you to smoke, dip, or vape. Exercise also enhances the mind's ability to deal with daily stressors. Managing stressors can reduce urges to reach for your old habit. The calming effect of exercise can last at least four hours after the exercise is over.

Physical Health

Exercise helps strengthen your muscles and bones. This helps you have good posture and keeps your joints and body more aligned. Exercise strengthens your heart muscle so your heart is more efficient. This also helps reduce your risk of having a heart attack or blood clot. Exercise can also help lower your blood pressure. Your ability to breathe also improves, especially as you reduce and eliminate smoking. Exercise improves the circulation of immune cells in your blood that fight off viruses and bacteria. Exercise also helps combat damage done to cells, tissues, and organs.

Recommendation: Be physically active for at least 2 ½ hours (150 minutes) per week. You can do this for 10, 15, 20, or 30 minutes at a time. Consult your doctor before beginning an exercise routine if you:

- Have a chronic health problem, such as heart disease or diabetes.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Feel faint or dizzy when you try to exercise.
- Have an injury or bone or joint problems, such as arthritis, that have been or could become aggravated by exercise.

Reduce Sit-Time

Find ways to move more throughout the day.

- Set an alarm on your watch or phone to get up every hour, if sitting.
- Stretch and walk for a few minutes to get more oxygen flowing through your body.
- Drink water regularly so you need to use the bathroom every few hours.
- Get up during commercial breaks on TV to tidy up a room or dust.
- Walk outside for a few minutes. Take a deep breath of fresh air.
- Walk to get lunch.



Move in Different Ways

All exercise and movement help give you the benefits. Finding activities you like doing and that you will keep doing is important for long-term success.

Cardiovascular (cardio) training uses large movements that involve multiple muscle groups, such as your legs, buttocks, and abdominals, all at once. Popular aerobic activities are brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming, and dancing.

Resistance training uses body weight or weights to build muscle. Move slowly through exercises, breathing regularly. Squats, lunges, push-ups, calf raises, and bicep curls are basic resistance movements.

Stretching helps your body be more flexible. This helps you prevent injury during exercise and everyday activities. Stretching can also help you relax.

Nutrition

Here are more ways you can choose healthy foods to manage cravings and any weight gain.

Healthy Eating Behavior

How you eat is as important as what you eat. Weight control involves developing and maintaining healthy eating behaviors. Diets are hard to stay on for a long time because they are usually boring or too rigid. If you make a lasting change in your eating behavior, you will be able to maintain a healthy weight without depending on diets.



- Try to always eat in the same spot in your home. Eat at a table, if possible, and avoid eating on the couch or in bed.
- When you eat, only eat. Avoid TV or looking at your phone.
- Slow down your eating pace. While tobacco/nicotine raised your blood sugar in seconds, food takes a bit longer.
 - Chew and swallow each bite before the next.
 - Pause frequently to take a drink of water or engage in conversation.
 - Put your fork or food down between bites.
- Start your meal with a small salad or hot soup.
- Before having a second serving, wait 5-10 minutes to see if you begin to feel full or satisfied with your meal.
- Keep less healthy foods hidden in cupboards or in the back of the fridge.
- Use smaller plates and utensils—this will help you feel satisfied with a healthy portion and may help you eat more slowly.

Avoid turning to food to manage difficult emotions. Address what is bothering you, go for a walk, or call a friend. Emotional eating can lead to choices higher in sugar, salt, and saturated fat.

Choose Healthy Snacks

Your body may be giving you hunger cues more frequently when you quit. Your body's natural way of managing blood sugar and metabolism takes time to go back to normal. Choosing healthy snacks can help you manage your weight and energy level.

- Celery stalks
- Cantaloupe, cut into cubes
- Cucumber slices
- Broccoli or cauliflower florets
- Frozen veggies, microwaved
- Peaches
- Strawberries or other berries
- Dried fruit
- Bell peppers, cut into slices
- Raw carrot sticks or baby carrots
- Tomato wedges or cherry tomatoes
- Green beans
- Apples
- Oranges or grapefruit
- Bananas
- 100% fruit juice

Other Healthy Snacks & Combinations:

- Cut-up veggies with hummus, salsa, or nut butter
- Pita bread with hummus
- Granola bar (with less than 5g sugar)
- Raw nuts (low-salt or no-salt)
- Natural peanut butter on low-salt crackers, apple slices or celery sticks
- Mini whole-wheat bagel with natural peanut butter or cream cheese
- Hard boiled eggs
- Trail mix with nuts, dried fruit, and seeds
- Yogurt with berries and nuts (with less than 10g sugar)
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese
- Oatmeal with dried fruit and nuts
- Scrambled eggs with veggies
- Nut butter on a slice of whole-grain toast
- Whole-grain cereal with milk
- String cheese and low-sodium crackers
- Smoothie with fruit, protein powder, and milk. Try adding avocado or leafy greens.

Review & Prepare

This section gave you more strategies to add to your quitting toolbox. By knowing more about yourself and what may trip you up, you can be more prepared to succeed when challenges arise. Taking a whole-body approach to quitting by adding exercise and healthy eating to your quit plan can also help you quit for good.

Answer these questions as you review this section.

What are your top 3 relapse triggers you will prepare for?

What other lifestyle changes are you making to help improve your success with quitting?