

PART 6

Maintaining Your Course

This section will help you stay quit. If you haven't quit yet, you can still read through this part. Continue to use the tools and thought guides in Parts 1-5 of this guide to get to your first tobacco/nicotine-free day. If you are practicing quitting, read ahead to help you get through your practice days. Practice days can turn into weeks!

Once you have quit, your task will be staying quit. You can expect future urges to be shorter and milder. They will happen, so get ready for them.

This section will help you stay on course.

There are 14 maintenance messages that follow, one a day for two weeks. Read only one message per day. You can read your daily message any time—first thing in the morning, on a break, last thing at night, or with the first urge of the day (if you have one).

Day 1

Mirror Talk

Stand in front of a mirror and be your own cheerleader. "I am tobacco free. I want to be a healthy dad/mom/grandma/grandpa/friend (say an important role you have). I am going to succeed!"

What you say to yourself is powerful. These strong statements are called affirmations. You may not strongly believe it at first, but keep going.

1. State your affirmation in the present tense.
2. Say what you want, rather than what you don't want.
3. Include feeling words that add positive emotion.
4. Be specific about what you want, rather than being vague.
5. Make the words simple and easy to remember.

Here Are a Few Affirmation Ideas

I am special and unique.	I am proud to be me.
I take care of my body.	I trust myself.
I am thankful for my life.	I love to play and have fun.
I am a good friend.	I love to learn.
I am courageous.	I am lovable.
I am strong.	I am learning from this experience.
I choose to respect myself.	I choose to be in control.

Write today's affirmation here, using the tips and examples above.

Write this statement on a sticky note and put it where you will see it, like the bathroom mirror or in your wallet. Create a reminder on your phone that will pop-up during the day. Say it out loud or repeat it to yourself.

Day 2

Unscramble Slowly

If you enjoy your new tobacco-free routines, keep doing them. If you want to go back to your old triggers, do so slowly, one trigger at a time. For example, if it has been awhile since you went out to the bar with smoking friends, plan to go briefly and only drink a little.

Events in your life that you linked with tobacco may trigger new urges: meeting a deadline, having a few drinks, golfing, a hunting trip, or coping with loss.

What new triggers have already arisen since you started quitting?

What new triggers do you anticipate in the coming weeks or months?

Use creative imagination to picture yourself going through these situations without your old habit. If this trigger involves others, make sure at least one person knows you have quit and you can count on them to help you.

Today's Affirmation:

I don't have to do this alone—others will support me, if I ask them to.

Day 3

Note Positive Changes & Celebrate Success

Make a list of the good things you have noticed since you stopped using tobacco/nicotine products:

- Easier breathing
- Better sense of taste
- Better sense of smell
- More money in my pocket

What are you especially proud of?

What situations have you gotten through that would have led to tobacco/nicotine use in the past?

What daily habits have changed for you?

Today's Affirmation:

I am taking care of my body by quitting.

Day 4

One Day at a Time vs. “I’ll Never Smoke/Dip Again”

There are two common outlooks in people who have quit. They are:

1. “I am taking this one day at a time—I am not going to use tobacco/nicotine for the next 24 hours, but I am not looking beyond that.”
2. “I have used tobacco for the last time and I will never use it again.”

Either outlook that works for you is fine. In time, most everyone reaches “I’ll never use again,” and it’s a wonderful feeling of freedom.

However you view this change, let others know you have kicked the habit. By admitting this openly, you will be more likely to resist future urges. In most cases, people will admire you for your efforts and cheer you on.

Of course, there may be some who view your quitting as a threat. It may be that their own failure to quit causes them to tease and tempt you. How do you deal with “saboteurs”? Have an answer ready for them that is assertive, but not aggressive.

When in doubt, keep it simple. “No thanks, I don’t smoke.”

The more you repeat this statement to yourself and others, the more likely your new healthy habit will stick.



Today's Affirmation:

I chose to quit my own way. I can talk about it my own way too.

Day 5

Stay Accountable

Make a point to stay in touch with your accountability buddy. If you have moved, changed jobs, or just drifted from this person, you may need to find a new person to help you stay accountable. It is okay if this person changes over time—it likely will. It’s more important that you have someone who deeply supports your goals and wellbeing.



There are other people besides your buddy who can help make things easier for you. There are millions of ex-smokers and ex-chewers in this country. Find one among your friends or online on social media or a chat forum. Share your story, whether easy or difficult. Learn how others manage triggers and share what works for you as well.

Feel encouraged by their success. Know that others may benefit from your experience as well. Don’t be surprised if you find others looking to you as living proof that it is possible to make big changes.

If you are a parent, your kids may also learn this lesson too. Just because you have done something for a long time doesn’t mean you are stuck doing it forever. Change is possible—especially if you work with others to succeed.

Today's Affirmation:

I am not alone. Others can help me, and I can help them.

Day 6

Embrace the Ripple Effect

Now that you have quit, you may want to make positive changes in other areas of your life:

- Self-image
- Managing stress
- Eating more nutritious food
- Moving more/being more physically active
- Getting more involved with your community
- Helping others work on their goals

You have learned many skills in **QuitWell™** that can be helpful in other areas of life. The information in this guide only scratched the surface for these topics.

What do you feel inspired to do next?

What personal strengths can you apply to another project? For example, maybe being assertive helped you avoid a slip-up or mindfulness helped you be more aware of the unexpected triggers during your day.

Today's Affirmation:

Quitting has set me up for success. I choose what I do next.

Day 7

Post-Quitting Depression

Some people feel mildly depressed after they have quit. You may feel a letdown when such a major goal has been reached. You may also find that the people around you are taking less notice of the fact you've quit. This is why self-rewards are more long-lasting than those given to you by others.

- Acknowledge that you had a relationship with cigarettes, dip, or your e-cig. It may have been long or short, but due to the nature of nicotine and the habits that form, it was probably a powerful relationship for you.
- Try to see your experiences through a different perspective:
 - Missing out on times with family & friends while going outside to use
 - Worrying about the smell on your clothes or breath
 - The mess of cigarette butts or a spit bottle
 - The nagging cough that took weeks to go away (if at all)
 - Guilt, fear, anxiety, or other negative emotions using tobacco/nicotine stirred up in the moment or right after
 - The cost that just kept going up
- Look at the gains you've already made
 - More free time
 - Easier to breathe
 - Money saved
 - Freedom to go anywhere not worrying about when the next opportunity to smoke, dip or vape might be

Be cautious of the nostalgia that may come with old, unhealthy habits. It may have felt like a friend, but tobacco/nicotine products are like a friend that stabs you in the back down the road. The tobacco companies are not trying to be your friend—they just want your money.

Today's Affirmation:

Tobacco is a bad friend I have left behind.

Day 8

Shake a Stale Feeling

Smoking, dipping, vaping, or whatever habit you left behind may have given you something to do when you were bored. Perhaps it filled the gap between activities and responsibilities.

In the next ten minutes, pick one of the following to do:

- Get up and move. Stretch, go for a short walk, do bodyweight squats, or walk up and down a flight of stairs.
- Get a drink of water.
- Eat a healthy snack, if you are hungry.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. The next few moments belong to you.
- Call a friend or write a card.
- Find something funny and laugh.



A few minutes may seem like a really small part of your life. However, success is built on what you do in short amounts of time—or right now. Don't take the present for granted.

Today's Affirmation:

I choose my own adventure, even in the small parts of the day.

Day 9

Banish the Bully in Your Head

Imagine you have a parrot. This parrot repeats everything you say about yourself, over and over again. It comments on your life, especially the things that go wrong.

For example, you snap at a co-worker and say something you later regret. The parrot squawks, “You can’t handle a tough day without a cigarette. You’re just not a nice person without your fix. You can’t change. You’re going to be this way forever.”



How do you feel? How long would you put up with this parrot? Don't put up with a bully in your head. Notice this “parrot” and cover the cage to silence it. Dispute these unhelpful thoughts. Remind yourself of your strengths and what you are working to improve.

Today's Affirmation:

I control how I think about myself.
I choose kindness and believe in myself.

Day 10

Put Off Starting Again

Isn't it great to discover that you can quit? Doesn't it feel good to be tobacco/nicotine free? In fact, if you can go one week, there is no reason you can't go another. You know that if you were locked up for a month with no tobacco, you would survive. If someone offered you a million dollars to stop, don't you think you would do it? A large part of kicking the habit is the way you look at it.



It is also a good idea to think of a plan to help you avoid having "just the one." One of the best ways is to put off starting again. What do we mean? Remember how long you put off stopping? You meant to get around to it and some nights your resolve was so strong, you were sure you would stop the next day. Yet, when morning came, there you were with your tobacco again.

From now on, promise yourself you will wait until the next day. You may find it was just another urge coming and going. As you become more secure, you will be able to stretch out the time to a week, then a month, and soon you will find that a year has passed without your having any tobacco/nicotine.

You are already well on your way to becoming tobacco-free forever. Keep up the great work.

Today's Affirmation:

I choose to be tobacco free today.

Day 11

Do Things a Different Way

Remember how strong your old routines were? There were probably very predictable times of the day you would find yourself reaching for your pack or can. These urges that are linked to certain events, times, or places can be tough to break. Here are some reminders of how to handle common triggers.

After a Meal:

- Don't linger at the table.
- Take a brisk walk or do some deep breathing.
- Help with the dishes—wet hands and cigarettes don't mix.
- Brush your teeth and/or rinse your mouth with mouthwash.

With Coffee:

- Switch to another drink: tea, water, etc. Or, cut down on coffee.
- Pick up coffee to-go instead of having your coffee at home.
- Try to find people who don't drink coffee or smoke when on a break.

Watching TV:

- Keep your hands busy—fidget with a rubber ball or binder clip.
- Don't sit in your usual spot.
- Chew gum, a mint, toothpick, or other oral substitute.

With Alcohol:

- Do not drink liquor for awhile.
- Switch to a different drink or water down your usual choice.
- Make sure someone you are with knows you are quitting.

Today's Affirmation:

I can learn new habits and unlearn old ones.

Day 12

Now Awareness

Where your mind goes, you will go too. You can redirect your mind when you get an urge. Now Awareness is a simple, powerful tool to help you do this.

When an urge (or any unwanted thought) comes to mind, say to yourself, “Now I am aware of _____.” Finish the sentence by naming objects you can see. For example, if you are sitting in your kitchen, you might say: “Now I am aware of the stove”; Now I am aware of the clock”; “Now I am aware of the sink”, etc. Keep this up until your urge passes.

Keep your thoughts focused. You are flexing the muscle of awareness and mind control when you do this. This tool can also be used to get through a stressful situation or when you feel your thoughts spiraling out of control.



Come back to the present. You can use your own body for Now Awareness as well. Notice your hands. Notice your arms. Notice your shoulders. Notice any tension in your body and try to release it. Notice your breath.

When you are able to bring your mind under control, solutions to problems you may not have noticed before may appear. You may feel that something that seemed hard is now easier. You may feel more at peace. Try it!

Today's Affirmation:

I will direct my mind to calm, present thoughts when I have an urge.

Day 13

You can be very proud of your success so far. But, don't be so secure that you drop your guard. It can set you up for “just that one.” In the next few days and weeks, resisting “just that one” will make the difference between long-term quitting and a cycle of relapse. Keep in mind, one smoke, one smoker. Or, one chew, one chewer. Or, insert whatever your habit was before quitting.

The first month of quitting is the “crawling” stage. Most people who return to tobacco do it during the first few weeks after stopping.

Cautious Optimism

You should be hopeful, yet careful, about the fact you have quit. Feel proud of yourself for having quit, but don't let your guard down.

Continue to use the urge tamers and other strategies in this guide. You may find that what will help you now is different than what helped you get started.



The program works when you make it work for you!

Today's Affirmation:

I choose to be on this path to quitting for good.

Day 14

A Day to Remember

Recall the day you quit as a special day. Treat it like you would a birthday or anniversary. Celebrate this day every month for the first 6 months and once a year after that. In a way, it is a re-birth for your body—or a personal “Independence Day!”



As you probably have seen already, getting to this point does not mean you are “done” with quitting. The maintenance phase of quitting means you are working to maintain the change. A really big step has been completed—getting to your first tobacco/nicotine-free day. However, you will need to stay alert for relapse triggers and continue to improve how you respond to stress if you want to stay quit for good.



The maintenance phase of quitting is usually at least 6 months long, but it can take 5 years or longer to truly feel no temptation to go back. You may never feel like you are at 0% temptation, but it will get easier over time. Remember, the time will pass anyway—you choose how you want to spend it.

Today's Affirmation:

Quitting is freedom. I choose how I want to live my life.

Tobacco Scorecard

You can make copies of this page to use. Place a slash in the box which indicated the time you used tobacco or nicotine.

Action Planning

Remember, an “okay” plan today beats a “great” plan tomorrow. Use this template to write out your quit plan. By this point, you probably know most of your expected triggers during the day. Write both your planned urge tamer/response to the trigger and another idea, in case you need it.

My accountability buddy:		
Triggers:	Urge tamer/what I will do:	If that doesn't work, I will do:
When I wake up/before work		
On my way to work		
Work day		
Right after work/on my way home		
Time at home/after work		
Before bed		