



Go to the movies, take a walk to get past a craving, or take a bike ride together.

**Try to see** it from their point of view. Their habit may feel like an old friend who's always been there when times were tough. It's hard to give that up.

**Make your home** smoke free, meaning that no one can smoke in any part of the house.

**Remove** all lighters and ash trays from your home. Remove anything that reminds them of smoking.

**Wash clothes** that smell like smoke. Clean carpets and drapes. Use air fresheners to help get rid of the tobacco smells. Don't forget the car, too.

**Offer to help** with a few chores, childcare, cooking, running errands – whatever will help lighten the stress of quitting.

**Celebrate progress** along the way. Quitting smoking is a BIG DEAL!

**Thank the person** who's quitting for not exposing others to harmful secondhand smoke.

## What to avoid

**Don't** doubt their ability to quit. Your faith in the person who's quitting helps remind them they can do it.

**Don't** judge, nag, preach, tease, or scold. This may make the person who's quitting feel worse. You don't want your loved one to turn to a cigarette to soothe hurt feelings.

**Don't** take grumpiness personally when the person who's quitting is having nicotine withdrawal. Be patient and positive. Remind them withdrawal symptoms won't last forever. The symptoms usually get better in a few weeks.

**Don't** offer advice. Just ask how you can help with the plan or program they are using.

## If the person who's quitting “slips”

**Don't:**

- Assume they will start back smoking like before. A “slip” (taking a puff or smoking a

cigarette or two) is pretty common when a person is quitting.

- Scold, tease, nag, blame, or make them feel guilty. Be sure they know that you care about them, whether or not they smoke.

#### **Do:**

- Remind them how long they went without a cigarette before the slip.
- Help them remember all the reasons they wanted to quit.
- Help them figure out the reason they slipped and help them create a plan in case it happens again.
- Help them keep track of situations and places that make quitting harder.
- Continue offering support and encouragement.
- Congratulate them for making a quit attempt and remind them that it can take many attempts before quitting for good.

### **If the person who's quitting relapses**

Most people try to quit tobacco several times before they succeed. This is called a relapse. If a relapse happens, think of it as practice for the next time. Don't give up your efforts to encourage and support your loved one.

If the person you care about fails to quit or starts smoking again:

**Praise them** for trying to quit, and for whatever length of time (days, weeks, or months) they didn't use tobacco.

**Remind them** that they didn't fail, they are just learning how to quit. Let them know you're going to be there for them the next time and as many times as it takes.

**Encourage them** to try again.

**Don't say**, "If you try again..." **Instead say**, "When you try again..." Studies show most people who don't succeed in quitting are ready to try again in the near future.

**Encourage them** to learn from the attempt. Things a person learns from a failed attempt to quit may help them quit for good next time. It takes time and skills to learn to how to be a person who doesn't use tobacco.

**Tell them**, "It's normal to not succeed the first few times you try to quit. You didn't

smoke for (length of time) this time. Now you know you can do that much. You can get even further next time.” Most people understand this and know that they have to try to quit again.

## **If you use tobacco and are in contact with someone trying to quit**

**Do** smoke outside and always away from the person trying to quit.

**Do** keep your tobacco products and things like lighters, matches, and ash trays out of sight. They might be triggers.

**Don’t** ever offer the person trying to quit a smoke or any other form of tobacco, even as a joke! It’s not funny and could make it harder for them to stay quit.

**Do** join the person in their effort to quit. It’s better for your health and might be easier to do with someone else who is trying to quit, too.

**Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 to find out what resources might be available to help someone quit and stay quit.**

## **Hyperlinks**

1. [smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/](http://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/)

## **Written by**

Developed by the [American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team](#) with medical review and contribution by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

This content has been developed by the American Cancer Society in collaboration with the [Smoking Cessation Leadership Center](#)<sup>1</sup> to help people who want to learn about quitting tobacco.

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