



## The Sure-fire, Fifty-day Way to Stop Smoking

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*You can do it*

Think about it like this:

When you smoke, it's very much like you have a ravenous dragon living inside your head. When you feed him nicotine, he says, "That was good! Do it again!" And you obey, because when you don't feed him, he messes around in your mind and makes his hunger become your obsession.

You can't *kill* the dragon of nicotine addiction — but you can put it to sleep.



## The good news:

What most people don't know is that *if you don't feed the dragon for a month or so, he will go to sleep — and you will be freed* from the power of his gluttonous appetite.

Sound fanciful? It's actually pretty accurate. You just need to understand the biological process.

What's really happening is a change in your brain chemistry. Nicotine triggers a variety of chemicals, which in turn trigger a genetically programmed "pleasure" message: "Do it again," the brain program says. "Again! Do it again! Now!" That message is very persuasive, as you know.

Unfortunately, nicotine is an addictive, destructive drug. What's more, tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 substances, including arsenic, butane and formaldehyde. Together, they cause heart disease, many cancers, emphysema and a host of other terrible, deadly illnesses. Plus, cigarettes are expensive. But you already know all of that. The problem is that the dragon is so darned insistent. You need to learn how to put him to sleep.

*"I don't want to make nicotine sellers rich at the expense of my health."*

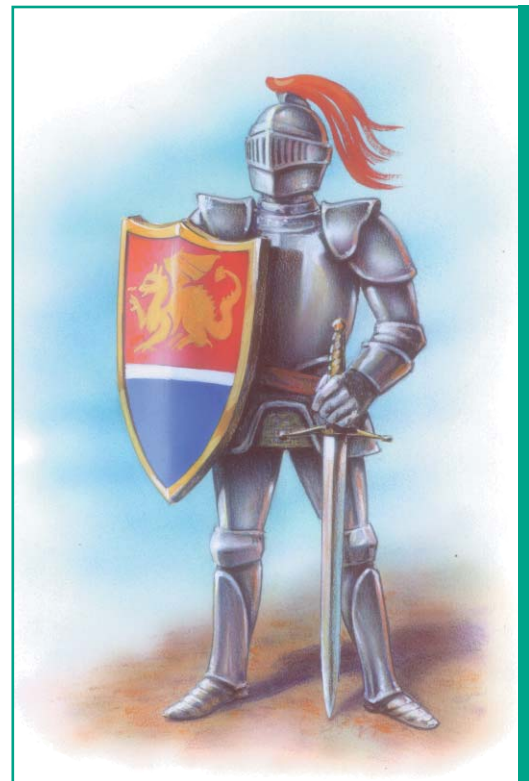
Let's be honest. Quitting is hard *initially*. That powerful dragon doesn't go to sleep without a fight. He screams at you to light up again. He gives you headaches and other side effects if you don't. *But the most important fact to know is this: He only keeps it up for a limited time!* The dragon's energy is limited! It runs out—and fairly soon. After a few weeks of hollering and sulking, he stops his tantrums, slinks away, quiets down and goes to sleep. *The trick for you is to outlast him — to starve him until he sleeps.*

Stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your risk for many diseases. ***And you can do it.***

This 50-day calendar will help you conquer the dragon and set yourself free from tobacco's terrible effects. Check off each smoke-free day and *before you're through with this calendar, the dragon will be asleep!* Celebrate your success by checking off every day between now and freedom. You can do it! You can also talk with your health care provider about additional ways to help conquer the dragon.

## Arm Yourself with These Two Secret Weapons:

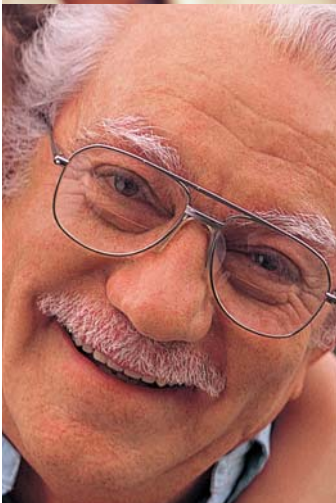
1. Know that you're in for a rough ride for a month or two — *but that the rest of your life will be much better when you get past the dragon tantrums.* You won't have to spend the rest of your life fighting cravings. You'll just have to do it for a few weeks, *until your brain chemistry normalizes.* Once you reach that point, you'll have more energy, you'll feel better, your sense of taste and smell will be better, you'll have more money in your pocket and you'll be at a much lower risk for many diseases. It's worth the effort. It takes only a few weeks of misery and commitment. ***You can do it.***
2. Know that the dragon won't be dead. He'll only be sleeping. *You can awaken him with full force at any time by smoking another cigarette.* Then, when he's awake, you'll have to spend another month or more putting him back to sleep. It's a lot easier not to wake him up! Ever again.



## *The Dragon Slayers ...*



*“The key issue for me was knowing that the obsession would go dormant in a few weeks if I just waited it out. The first time I tried to quit, I didn’t know that. When I still had cravings after three weeks, I said ‘the heck with it,’ and lit up. This time I knew that it was just a matter of time. That made all the difference — knowing what that time was and holding on ’til it was past.”*



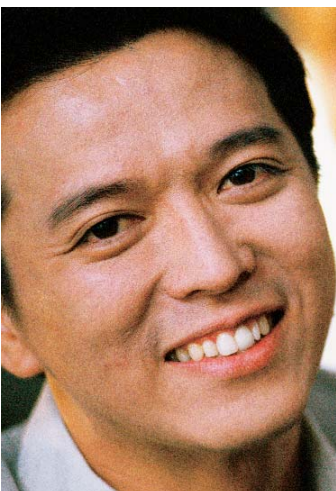
*“I needed to know that the cravings wouldn’t last forever. I can be tough for a month — but I couldn’t live with that obsession hitting me every day for the rest of my life. That’s why I always failed before when I tried to quit. Knowing that there was a limited time to suffer gave me the strength to win.”*



*“I tried every program there was. I went through classes, used nicotine gum and even tried hypnosis. What finally worked was my strong commitment and a desire for good health.”*

Go online to [healthpartners.com](http://healthpartners.com) to learn about programs to help you quit smoking for good

# I Won't Smoke Today Because ...



*"I want more years of youth. Tobacco ages me faster."*

1. I know I can do it.
2. I won't be a slave to a habit.
3. I'll cough less.
4. I'll smile more.
5. I'll start to walk.
6. I'll take the stairs.
7. I'll lower my blood pressure.
8. I'll live longer.
9. I can gain control of my life.
10. I can do it for 24 hours.
11. Every puff weakens my heart.
12. Every cigarette invites cancer.
13. My hair won't smell like smoke.
14. My house won't smell like ashes.
15. My clothes won't smell like fumes.
16. I'll be able to smell.
17. My pets will quit too.
18. I'll get fewer colds.
19. I'll get fewer glares.
20. I'll save \$3.50.
21. My friends will stop scolding.
22. I'll be welcome in any restaurant.
23. I'll enjoy going to the movies.
24. Flying will be more relaxing.
25. I'll grin at No Smoking signs.
26. Smoker's voice sounds old.
27. I'll run out of songs before I run out of breath.
28. My breath will be sweeter.
29. My skin will be smoother.
30. My teeth will be whiter.
31. I won't have to clean ashtrays.
32. I don't want bronchitis.
33. I don't want emphysema.
34. I'm practicing to quit.
35. Practice makes perfect.
36. Cigarette machines eat my change.
37. I hate convenience stores.
38. The only stroke I want is a hole-in-one.
39. I owe it to myself.
40. I don't want a nicotine hangover.
41. I won't burn my furniture.
42. I won't burn my fingers.
43. I won't burn my house down.
44. Smoking ads are smoke and mirrors.
45. I don't need a cigarette to feel confident.
46. I'll be more attractive without one.
47. My hands and nails will be clean.
48. My child wants to be just like me.
49. My family will respect me.
50. I want to be a good role model.
51. My hands can learn new activities.
52. I'd rather knit or play the piano.
53. An apple a day beats a pack a day.
54. I want healthier teeth and gums.
55. My dentist bill will go down.
56. My doctor bill will go down.
57. I'll stop hacking.
58. I'll stop wheezing.
59. I'll stop gasping.
60. No one carries a lighter.
61. The glamour is gone.
62. Humphrey Bogart died of lung cancer.
63. I want to protect those I love.
64. My grandchildren play with candy cigarettes.
65. I believe the Surgeon General.
66. I'll get more kisses.
67. Food will taste better.
68. I don't want anything slowing me down.
69. My circulation will improve.
70. Tar belongs on the streets, not in my lungs.
71. This ending is the beginning.
72. I plan to celebrate my 100th birthday.
73. It's a challenge I can master.
74. I'll feel great about myself.
75. I'm tired of smoking.
76. I'm tired of lying.
77. I'm tired of smoking alone.
78. I won't tire as easily.
79. It gives me heartburn.
80. It aggravates my ulcer.
81. It gives me brittle bones.
82. My house won't be littered with butts.
83. There's no time like now.
84. I'll sleep better.
85. I'm getting wiser.
86. The first few times were practice.
87. My doctor said to quit.
88. My friend died of cancer.
89. My friends will support me.
90. Co-workers will applaud.
91. My car won't smell like a chimney.
92. I've had a heart attack.
93. I never want a heart attack.
94. Smoke films my windows.
95. Smoke stings my eyes.
96. When the smoke clears, the facts are clear.
97. If 43 million people can quit, so can I.
98. I have the power to stop.
99. Why send my life up in smoke?
100. There are no ifs, ands or butts.
101. **It's never too late to quit.**

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Open to the calendar inside

 HealthPartners®

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# Check off each day of your success.

**Start by listing your reason for stopping smoking:**

**I want to be tobacco-free because:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Keep this goal in mind as you go day by day to freedom.**

- Day 1.** Nicotine addiction is a basic chemical process that happens in your brain. You can beat it! You can outlast it. Hurray for your courage to be nicotine-free today. Good work! Check off Day One and celebrate.
- Day 2.** Smoking triggers a program in your brain that says, "That feels good! Do it again!" If you resist that urge, it will eventually go away-and you'll be tobacco-free. Resist it today! Time is on your side.
- Day 3.** Change your environment. Get rid of cigarettes and ashtrays at home, at work and in your car. Doing so will help you avoid temptation.
- Day 4.** Your blood pressure, heart rate and the temperature in your hands and feet have normalized. That's great! Keep going!
- Day 5.** Cravings for other substances-like sugar and fatty foods-will pop into your mind when you first give up nicotine. Those cravings will subside just like your nicotine cravings will-whether you give in to them or not. Just wait them out. Time them to prove to yourself that they go away on their own. For most people they will go totally away in a few weeks.
- Day 6.** You're doing really well! Remember, you're waiting out a normal, genetically inherited chemical process that takes time. It's not your "fault." Be patient with yourself. Be strong. You've already made an investment of six days; it would be a shame to waste those days.
- Day 7.** You've made it a whole week. Congratulations! Stay with it. You can conquer this addiction dragon. Your courage is being tested. You've passed the first test! So don't waste the gains of a courageous week!
- Day 8.** Studies show that by now you should notice an improved sense of taste and smell. What a nice reward for being smoke-free.
- Day 9.** Look back at your own reason for giving up tobacco. Being smoke-free reduces your risk for heart disease, many cancers, emphysema and more. You will feel better and smell better. Hang in there.
- Day 10.** Don't expect to feel free of nicotine yet. That dragon grew strong, big and mean from all the nicotine you fed him before. Research tells us that your brain chemistry is still getting back to normal. Remember, withdrawal symptoms do end. You just have to wait them out! The urges and symptoms you're feeling won't last forever. Time is completely on your side.

- Day 11.** You are a great person doing a great thing. Keep it up.
- Day 12.** Your likelihood of having a heart attack has already decreased. How's that for a quick reward? Draw a heart in the check-off box to celebrate.
- Day 13.** You're making great progress. But if you start smoking again, your nicotine addiction will be reinforced and reactivated. One puff can start the cycle all over-wasting the last two weeks of misery. The brain chemistry is just waiting to be reactivated. Don't do it. Hang in there.
- Day 14.** You've made it two weeks. Hurray for you! Physical symptoms of withdrawal should be subsiding. Your brain chemistry is now beginning to change. Unrewarded obsessions eventually become dormant. That's the way the brain works. That's perfectly normal. Use that knowledge to be strong and committed.
- Day 15.** This is the key point to remember: You don't have to go through these withdrawal symptoms and cravings forever. You just have to wait them out for a few more weeks — and then you'll be free. Lots of people have done it. You can, too.
- Day 16.** Think of nicotine cravings as the voice of a slimy, hungry, coldly selfish, mean and destructive dragon who wants to control you and put your health at risk. He's getting really scared now, because you are winning! You're nearly there. Resist him. You can do it.
- Day 17.** Remember, nicotine is a powerful chemical that literally changes your brain chemistry. It makes you engage in behavior that's destructive to you and those around you. Hang in there.
- Day 18.** Stopping smoking is a deal you make with yourself, for your own special reasons. It generally won't work if you're doing it for someone else. You are the winner. Your life gets better. Be strong, and you get the prize. It's worth it. (You'll undoubtedly have to stop smoking sometime-why go through all this misery again later? Put that dragon to sleep now.)
- Day 19.** Smoking is not an issue of ethical standards or moral character-it's just brain chemistry. You are addicted because that particular chemical is addictive-not because you're a bad person. But you can stop, once you understand what's driving you.
- Day 20.** You're at a critical point. Don't give up now! If you need support, reach out to friends or family. Ask your health care provider about additional resources that may be available through your health plan. Look for support programs in your community.
- Day 21.** You've gone three weeks without tobacco. This is a great achievement! You are conquering your addiction. Stay with it. It won't be long now before the great slimy dragon lies down to sleep. It's drowsy now. You are winning!
- Day 22.** The "do it again" program in your brain is losing its power over you. Hang in there.
- Day 23.** Remember, if you start smoking again - even if it's just one cigarette, even if it's a year from now or 10 years from now - you'll be back at the beginning of the addiction cycle.
- Day 24.** If you've made it this far, your chances of staying smoke-free are excellent. You've crossed an important threshold. You're now on the winning track. It's downhill from here. You're winning.
- Day 25.** Be aware of "psychological withdrawal" pitfalls. Avoid places and situations that tempt you to smoke until you feel you can handle them. Know that each of those places triggers your memories of smoking and each one causes the dragon to wake up for a moment to see if he can talk you into feeding him. He will try hard when awakened. Ignore him, and he'll go back to sleep. Feed him, and he's got you again.

- ❑ **Day 26.** Your circulation is getting better and better. You also should be finding that breathing is easier. Tests at this stage show a measurable difference.
- ❑ **Day 27.** Think of the process this way: You're going through a nasty but short-term battle with a self-serving mental dragon for some incredible long-term gains: better health; better-smelling breath, clothes and hair; a significantly reduced risk for deadly diseases; and freedom from addiction.
- ❑ **Day 28.** Think of all the money you were spending on coffin nails. Save it and buy yourself something nice.
- ❑ **Day 29.** You should be really proud of your efforts. You are stronger than nicotine. If you feel an urge to smoke, take a slow, deep breath - and don't smoke. Celebrate another smoke-free day. You're nearly there.
- ❑ **Day 30.** You've been smoke-free for a month! It's time to celebrate!
- ❑ **Day 31.** If you were a pack-a-day smoker, you've already saved more than \$75. Spend it on a great reward for yourself - a fancy dinner for two (you can sit in the nonsmoking section now), some new clothes (they'll stay fresh) or a houseful of flowers (you'll be able to smell their lovely scents, now that you're not smoking).
- ❑ **Day 32.** It's common to substitute another pleasure source (food, for example) for cigarettes. Your brain program misses the nicotine and wants a substitute. That craving will also go away if you don't give in. Make sure you make healthy food choices-fruits and vegetables-so you don't gain weight. Fight the fat and sugar obsessions right now and they, too, will fade away. (Weight gain isn't automatic. You just need to wait out these substitute cravings.)
- ❑ **Day 33.** Adding some physical activity to your day will help with cravings, psychological withdrawal and prevention of weight gain. Take a walk! It's very helpful to many people at this point. Join a walking club if you'd like company.
- ❑ **Day 34.** Every day you stay smoke-free is a day closer to being free of your addiction. You're almost there.
- ❑ **Day 35.** Remember, if you use nicotine in any form ever again, you'll trigger that powerful "do it again" program, and you'll be back in the terrible cycle of cravings and health risks. All nicotine feeds the dragon. Resist it! You've almost won!
- ❑ **Day 36.** You are doing really well. Congratulations!
- ❑ **Day 37.** The "do it again" program is getting weaker and weaker. That old dragon voice won't give up easily, but eventually it will fall silent. It's dozing part-time now.
- ❑ **Day 38.** Keep finding new ways to counter psychological withdrawal. Find new routines, new hangouts, new pastimes if the old ones wake the dragon.
- ❑ **Day 39.** Over the course of a year, a pack-a-day smoker who stopped smoking would save more than \$900 — enough for a vacation, a computer or a couple of new bicycles.
- ❑ **Day 40.** Think of what a great role model you're being for children and for smokers who want to stop. At this point, you can start bragging about your accomplishment. You've passed the really tough stuff. You're a winner.
- ❑ **Day 41.** Stay vigilant. Just because you're not feeling constant cravings anymore doesn't mean that you can have an occasional cigarette. Even one cigarette can trigger the whole nasty cycle again. A huge percentage of smokers lose the battle right here — believing that a sleeping dragon is a dead one. Wrong! One cigarette and he's right behind your face, wide awake and back in control.

- ❑ **Day 42.** You have more energy now than you did six weeks ago. Doesn't that feel great? You also should be noticing a reduction in coughing, sinus congestion, shortness of breath and fatigue.
- ❑ **Day 43.** Keep up the great work. It's hard, but it's worth it.
- ❑ **Day 44.** By staying smoke-free for a year, you can reduce your risk for heart disease to less than half of what it was when you were smoking. A year is easy now that you've gone through the really ugly times. Hang in there.
- ❑ **Day 45.** Half of all people who have ever smoked have now quit. Welcome to the club!
- ❑ **Day 46.** There is a light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, you're now in the light. Things are getting easier.
- ❑ **Day 47.** You've waited out the toughest part. You're winning the battle. You are a winner! Celebrate!
- ❑ **Day 48.** Every day brings you new rewards and benefits. But remember-for the rest of your life, that dragon will wake up periodically to see if he can persuade you to have "just one quick cigarette." Don't. You don't want to go through this again. Being in a smoke-filled room can cause him to wake up as well. If that happens, just wait him out. He goes back to sleep pretty quickly if you don't feed him. So don't feed the dragon. Ever.
- ❑ **Day 49.** You may still feel some urges, but compared to a month ago, they're lizards, not dragons. Hang in there and you are a winner. Congratulations! Celebrate your new official status as a smoke-free person.
- ❑ **Day 50.** You've won! You're a hero - and you know it! Tell your doctor you've beaten nicotine. Your doctor will love hearing the news. But best of all, congratulate yourself. You've won for you! Celebrate!

# You've Won! You've Conquered the Dragon!