



**MGH Quit Smoking Service**  
(617) 726-7443

## ***YOUR FUTURE AS A NON-SMOKER:***

### ***Remaining Smoke-free for good!***

#### **Planning for Urges**

Planning ahead is one of the most important things you can do to resist urges to smoke. Cravings can take you by surprise, so it is important to prepare for those urges now. There are three steps in the planning process:

1. Identify triggers. Think ahead to those times when you might really want a cigarette.
2. Select coping skills. Plan how you will cope with each of your trigger situations ahead of time.
3. Put your plan into action. Review the plan and even practice it a few times.

#### **Step 1: Identify triggers**

Read through the list of situations below. If you are absolutely certain that you would not smoke in a certain situation, write “100%” in the space to the right. If you think the chances of resisting the urge are low, give yourself a low number. If you are not sure, pick a number somewhere in the middle.

#### **Confidence Questionnaire**

How confident are you that you can resist the urge to smoke in the 14 situations below?

**Not at all  
Confident**

**Slightly  
Confident**

**Fairly  
Confident**

**Very  
Confident**

0%    10%    20%    30%    40%    50%    60%    70%    80%    90%    100%

*write number here*

1. When you feel bored or depressed \_\_\_\_\_
2. When you see others smoking \_\_\_\_\_
3. When you want to relax or rest \_\_\_\_\_
4. When you are watching TV \_\_\_\_\_
5. When you are driving or riding in a car \_\_\_\_\_
6. When you have finished a meal or snack \_\_\_\_\_
7. When you feel frustrated, worried, upset, tense, nervous, angry,  
anxious or annoyed \_\_\_\_\_
8. When you want to snack but don't want to gain weight \_\_\_\_\_
9. When you need more energy or can't concentrate \_\_\_\_\_

10. When someone offers you a cigarette \_\_\_\_\_
11. When you are drinking coffee or tea \_\_\_\_\_
12. When you are in a situation involving alcohol \_\_\_\_\_
13. When you feel smoking is part of your self-image \_\_\_\_\_
- Add your own high-risk situations not on the above list:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 2: Select Coping Skills

Look at the Confidence Questionnaire. You have just identified the situations that are the most risky for you. Now you can figure out what to do about each of them. Situations where you gave yourself 30% or less are high-risk situations for you. Focus on those first. How are you going to cope with cravings to smoke in these situations?

My coping techniques/skills will be:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Remember: “ACE” = AVOID – CHANGE – ESCAPE

It helps to plan ahead for situations where you can anticipate a craving to smoke. You may have to **AVOID** some situations (e.g. drinking alcohol) temporarily until you feel ready. It may help to **CHANGE** certain activities (e.g. drinking tea instead of coffee) temporarily until you feel more comfortable resisting the urge to smoke. If a situation comes up and the urge becomes too strong, **ESCAPE** until your confidence returns (“Excuse me, I’ll be right back.”)

Situations where you gave yourself between 40% and 60% may also be high-risk situations for you. Now look at those and decide what you will do to cope with cravings that may arise.

**Step 3: Now, put your plan into action!** But remember, you can get cravings out of the blue, too. What will you do? Take a deep breath and

**STOP !      THINK !      ACT !**

*Adapted from the American Heart Association: an Active Partnership for the Health of Your Heart*

*Here are some coping skills  
you can use when dealing with urges to smoke!*

**Situation**

**Coping Skill**

After Dinner

- Change your routine
- Get active right away
  - Brush your teeth
  - Take a walk (walk the dog)
  - Get up from the table & wash the dishes

Driving the Car

- Change a familiar route (e.g. a commute)
- Listen to a different radio station
- Bring a bottle of water with you
- Buy a new CD or tape to listen to

Working on the Computer

- Bookmark quit smoking websites &/or chat rooms
- Create a file with non-smoking messages
- Keep a bowl of low cal snacks nearby – pretzels, carrot sticks, sunflower seeds, sugarless gum or candy

On the Phone

- Move the telephone to a different location
- Hold the phone with your other hand
- Hold a pencil, straw or toothpick in your fingers

Bored, Alone, Waiting

- Do something with your hands - knit, do a crossword or other puzzle
- Read a good book
- Call your support person

Stress

- Take a deep breath
- Drink water (remember the 4 D's?)
- Take a walk
- Call a friend (call your therapist)

**Other Tips for Staying Quit!**

- Think about the positive benefits of not smoking.
- Think about the negative effects of smoking.
- Encourage yourself. You can do this!
- Remind yourself how hard it was to quit in the first place. Do you want to go through that again?
- Imagine something relaxing, like a favorite spot.
- Distract yourself by thinking about other things.
- Go over your reasons for quitting. They are on pg. 7 in the “Little I Can Quit” booklet.
- Tell yourself “I don’t do that anymore!”