



**Quitting smoking...  
but worried about weight gain?**





Are you afraid of putting on weight when you stop smoking?

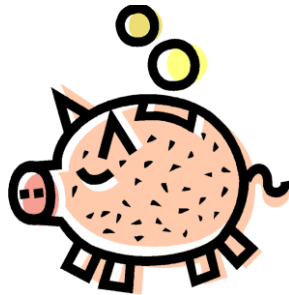
Some people gain weight after quitting, but the average weight gain is only 2-4 kg (less than half a stone) after 6 months.

The reasons for this are:

- Your sense of smell and taste improve, so you enjoy your food more
- You may use snacks as a substitute for cigarettes
- Nicotine affects your metabolic rate, so as a non-smoker you burn fewer calories, unless you exercise more

The following tips will help to minimise any weight gain whilst you become healthier and smoke-free.

## Top Tips to Gain ££s not pounds



### *Snack Attack*

It's easy to use food as a replacement for cigarettes, and start eating more snacks like biscuits, crisps or chocolate for comfort. It may help not to have these tempting foods in the house, just as you wouldn't have cigarettes around.

Stock up instead on healthy nibbles such as grapes, apples, carrot or cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, breadsticks or rice cakes.

Switch to drinking more water or sugar-free drinks instead of tea or coffee as you may be less likely to want snacks or cigarettes at the same time.

Try to have regular meals, including breakfast.

### *Taste the Difference*

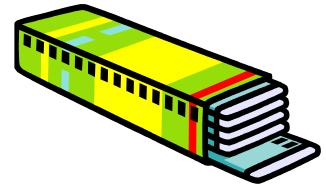
Smoking reduces appetite and spoils your sense of smell and taste. As a non-smoker you may find that you're hungrier, enjoy your food more and want to eat more than before.

Nicotine replacement therapy can help offset this.

Try to eat slowly, savour your food and fill up on wholegrains + five portions a day of fruit and veg and plenty of water or sugar-free drinks.

## *Chew it over*

Chewing a nicotine gum can help when quitting smoking. Sugar-free mint gum can reduce the desire for sweets and snacks.



Cleaning your teeth may also help and your breath will already be fresher...



## *Vitamin vitality*

Smokers tend to have lower vitamin levels in their blood than non-smokers. Give yourself a natural boost with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, especially citrus fruits, tomatoes and broccoli. Supplement pills are not advised.



## *Alcohol*

Alcohol is high in calories and can be a trigger to lapse into smoking again. Be very careful about drinking in the early weeks after quitting.

## **Being active**

Physical activity is a great way to beat cravings.

A brisk 30 minute daily walk, or 3x10 mins, helps to reduce stress levels, improves your mood and gets your heart and lungs fitter.

Perhaps you could walk to the shops, work or a friend's house instead of taking the car or bus all the way?

Being active will also keep your body burning off the calories (you need fewer as a non-smoker) and help to prevent weight gain.

Choose something that:

- you enjoy
- is realistic for you
- you can do regularly
- you can build up gradually

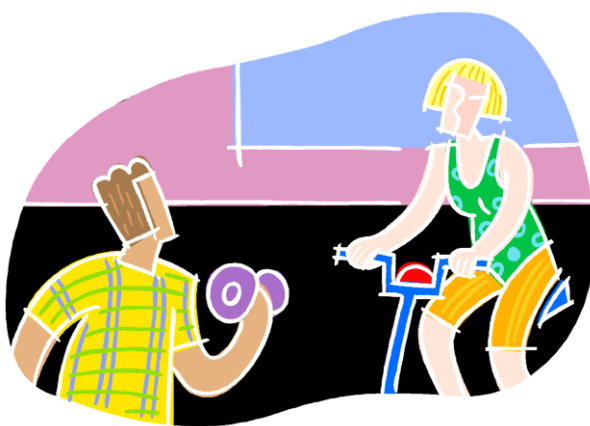
Swimming, cycling, gardening, vigorous housework and walking are all ideal. A pedometer may help to encourage the steps.



## *Treat yourself*

Quitting smoking is a great achievement. Why not use some of the money you have saved on a treat such as a magazine, exercise class, clothes, make up or trip out?

You could save around £2000 a year by stopping a 20 a day habit!



Stopping smoking and losing weight both need determination and support.

Try not to worry too much at first if your weight is creeping up. However, as smokers tend to have a less healthy 'apple' body shape that puts them at greater risk of diabetes and heart disease, it is important to try to control your weight in the long term.

Once you are coping without cigarettes you can concentrate on the weight.

## Helpful Resources

### Useful Websites:

[www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell) (NHS Choices)

Change 4 Life: <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life>

Smokefree: <http://smokefree.nhs.uk>

Smokefree Helpline 0800 022 4332 (M-F 9am-8pm; Sat & Sun 11am-5pm)

If you would like some extra help with weight management, ask your GP to refer you to a practice nurse, dietitian or health trainer.

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