



TRIGGERS: Smoking

“Do not be misled, bad associations spoil useful habits”

A **trigger** is something that precedes an urge to use. It places you at risk by stimulating either a conscious or unconscious desire to use a substance, (such as cigarettes)

Triggers can be **INTERNAL** or **EXTERNAL**:

External Triggers: These are much easier to identify because they are **OUTSIDE** of you. They can be people, places, or events. The best way to deal with **EXTERNAL** triggers is to simply **AVOID THEM**. However, this is not always possible to do, therefore, you need to develop a plan of action for these triggers **BEFORE** you encounter them, otherwise you may be too late.

TRIGGER

PLAN

People:
(i.e friends, coworkers)

Places:
(i.e restaurants, bars)

Things:
(i.e commercials, lighters)

Events:
(i.e parties, crisis)



Internal Triggers: These are much more difficult to identify because they come from within. We may have a tendency to deny they even exist so it is important to be aware of our **THOUGHTS** and **FEELINGS** as well as **HABITS** and **CONDITIONS**:

TRIGGER

PLAN

Thoughts:
(i.e. I am never going
to be able to do this!)

Feelings:
(**STRESS**, anger, etc.)

Habits:
(i.e. Going to convenience store
to buy lottery ticket – and cigs)

Conditions:
(i.e. Pre-existing medical
or psychological condition,
HALT: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)



SMOKING TRIGGERS and STRESS

STRESS is a twofold problem when quitting smoking for two reasons: First it is a major **TRIGGER** for smoking. Second, it will almost definitely **INCREASE** as a direct result of **NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL**. **THIS** emphasizes the importance of **NRT** as well as effective coping skills for stressful situations. *Failure to effectively cope with stress leads to more stress*, which may eventually lead to relapse.

POOR COPING MECHANISMS (Do not work in the long run):

- Drug/alcohol use
- Suppression
- Passivity (Simply waiting for others to help you)
- Acting Out (Revenge, Abuse, Destruction of Property)
- Blaming/Complaining

EFFECTIVE COPING MECHANISMS:

1. Know your stressors and avoid **UNECESSARY STRESS** if possible (i.e traffic, long lines, certain people, etc.)

- **RECOGNIZE** – Are you aware of when you are getting stressed out? Do you know the warning signs?
- Know your limits (time, money, etc.)
- Set goals
- Be **ASSERTIVE** – Know when to say “NO!!”
- Avoid procrastination
- Seek help/support
- Simplify – Can you simplify your life to reduce stress?
- Re-organize – Can you rearrange your life to make it less stressful?
- Re-prioritize - Are you putting first things first?

2. **RELAXATION:**

- Counting
- Deep Breaths
- Stress Ball
- Relaxation Audio/Video
- Scheduled relaxing activities: bath, walk, hobbies, etc. (“Me” time)
- Learn to take one minute vacations
- Visual Imagery (i.e beach)
- **HUMOR**
- **COMMUNICATE**



3. POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE (PMA)

- Be GRATEFUL for what you have
- Enjoy your achievements
- Plan good things for your future
- ACCEPTANCE – Accept the things you cannot change
- Put things in perspective – COGNITIVE REFRAMING – (Is it really that bad?)
- POSITIVE SELF TALK
- Resolve Cognitive Dissonance – (Do you need to clear your conscience?)
- Conflict Resolution/Letting go – Holding on to resentments is STRESSFUL
- Anger management

4. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Balance work, recreation, and rest
- Diet
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Avoid Caffeine and Substance Abuse

5. *Other? What else works for you?*

WHICH OF THE ABOVE ARE YOU GOING TO WORK ON?