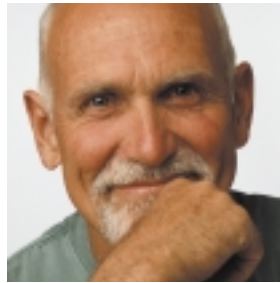




FOREVER  
*FREE*<sup>™</sup>

A Guide  
To Remaining  
Smoke Free



Smoking  
And Weight

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*This is the third booklet in the Forever Free series. This booklet covers how smoking and weight are related, the reasons that people often gain weight after quitting smoking, and what can be done to control weight after quitting.*

*This booklet may be of interest even to people who are not worried about their weight. Exercise and diet are important for everyone who wants to live a healthy lifestyle.*

## Why a Booklet on Weight Control after Quitting?

Are you concerned about gaining weight as an ex-smoker? Have you gained some weight after quitting smoking? You are not alone.

Four out of every five people who stop smoking gain some weight. While the health benefits of quitting far exceed the problems of gaining weight, many people do not like it if they put on a few extra pounds.

However, six months after quitting, most people have lost at least some of the weight that they gained. It is important to know that you can quit smoking and control your weight. It may take some time and effort, but it can be done!

This booklet should help you understand the reasons that people gain weight after quitting. It offers tips on how to lessen weight you might gain. Remember, staying smoke-free is your top goal. Staying off of cigarettes is much more important than losing a few pounds. Some people return to smoking to lose weight. You want to avoid this thinking, even if it means living with a few extra pounds.

## Who Gains Weight?

The average person who quits smoking gains between 4 and 10 pounds. It turns out that the average smoker weighs 4-10 pounds less than the average non-smoker—even if they have the same levels of exercise and food intake. Thus, it seems that the weight gained by quitting smoking brings most ex-smokers up to what they would weigh if they had never smoked.

The more cigarettes that a person smoked per day, the more weight he or she is likely to gain after quitting. Someone who quit smoking two packs per day may expect to gain more than someone who quit smoking only one pack per day.

Please note that these numbers are only averages. You may be above average or below average. Half the people who quit smoking gain less than the average 4-10 pounds. And, about one out of ten ex-smokers gains as much as 25-30 pounds.

Most weight tends to be gained in the first six months. Then, after six months many people start to lose the weight they gained as they adjust to being an ex-smoker.

## Why Do Ex-Smokers Gain Weight?

One of the reasons we gain weight is that we eat more calories than we use. There are 3500 calories in a pound of body fat. When a person eats 3500 more calories than he or she can use, the person will gain one pound. When a person burns 3500 more calories than he or she eats, the person will lose a pound. The number of calories that a person burns each day depends on age, sex, body weight, metabolism, and amount of exercise. These factors determine how many calories a person can eat without gaining weight, or while losing weight.

### Metabolism

Metabolism is the energy needed for the body's functions, like the functions performed by the heart, brain and liver. About 70% of the calories burned each day are for these functions.

The nicotine in cigarettes raises the "metabolic rate" of smokers, which increases the amount of calories used. But it is a very unhealthy way to burn calories. After smoking a cigarette your "metabolism" increases right away. Your heart may beat 10-20 more times per minute after you have a cigarette. This is one reason for the high rate of heart disease in smokers.

When you quit smoking, your metabolic rate slows down to a healthy level. It may even slow down an extra amount before going back to normal. It can take a few weeks or even months for your metabolism to rise back to a normal level. Meanwhile, this slower rate burns fewer calories.

There are more healthy ways than smoking to increase metabolism. Exercise is the best way, and it will be discussed later in this booklet.

### Changes in Eating Habits

Another reason you might gain weight after quitting is because of changes in your diet. It is normal for your appetite to increase after quitting smoking. Studies show that people who quit smoking increase their food intake. Increased appetite is a common withdrawal symptom after quitting. It tends to last somewhat longer than other symptoms.

*Marlene had never really liked sweets. She didn't like cake or ice cream as a smoker. But, lately, she orders dessert after dinner and goes into the freezer for ice cream while watching TV at night.*



Not only does appetite increase, but after quitting people's likes/dislikes might change. It is common for people to say that before quitting they never had much of a sweet tooth but now they find that they eat sweet foods. Studies show that people want more sweet and fatty foods after quitting. Even rats in nicotine withdrawal show more desire for sugar. And, as you know, sweet and fatty foods also tend to be high in calories.

*Ever since Dennis quit smoking two months ago, he's been enjoying the taste of steak and imported beer. He likes the smell and taste of these foods in ways he had not for the 25 years that he had smoked. He has been drinking beer and eating steak dinners at every chance. Yet he wonders why he gained 11 pounds since his last cigarette.*

When you quit smoking, your senses of taste and smell improve and return to normal. This may also increase your appetite, as Dennis found out. Also, studies show that alcohol use often increases after people quit smoking. Alcohol is very high in calories, so increased drinking may cause weight gain.

## Oral Gratification

### (Feeling the Need to Have Something in Your Mouth)

Another reason that people gain weight after quitting is because of what ex-smokers often call "oral gratification." Ex-smokers often report that they miss the feeling of having something to do with their mouth and hands. Eating or snacking is like the action of smoking. The need to have something in your mouth goes away over time. Keep your hands and mouth busy with objects, such as toothpicks or straws. Or you can chew on foods such as carrots, celery, or even sugar-free mints.

## Other Reasons for Eating

Last, research has shown that people tend to use food in the same ways they used cigarettes. They use them to deal with stress or boredom, to reward oneself, to pass time, or to help be social. It is important to know why you eat even when you are not hungry.

Name some ways that you use food even when you are not hungry.

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

## Is Weight Gain A Sure Thing?

While there are reasons for putting on pounds after quitting, weight gain does not have to happen. Studies of heart patients showed that patients who were told to make diet and lifestyle changes while quitting smoking did not gain as much weight as those who did not get this advice.

Another recent study looked at Air Force recruits going through six weeks of “boot camp” in Texas. All the recruits were forced to quit smoking during this time. The results were that the recruits did not gain weight while in boot camp. How could this be? You have to think about what boot camp is like. There is a lot of exercise. Snack foods are not allowed. Alcohol is not allowed. Meals are well planned. Most ex-smokers would not want to go through boot camp in order to keep the weight off and we do not recommend such drastic action. But this study does show that it is *possible* to quit smoking without gaining weight.

### CONSUMER ALERT

Weight gain after quitting smoking is not a sure thing. There are some steps you can take to reduce weight gain (good diet, exercise). Remember, no smoking cessation program has ever been developed that prevents weight gain among quitters. Beware of smoking cessation programs that promise quitting without weight gain! Often these promises are made by those who place large ads in newspapers. They may promise that one session of hypnosis will “cure” you of smoking, without withdrawal symptoms or weight gain. These are promises that they cannot keep.

**Remember:** “If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.”

## Effects of Smoking and Weight Gain on Health and Looks

As stated before, the average smoker gains between 4 to 10 pounds after quitting. But, with this gain, most ex-smokers return to the weight that they would have been if they never smoked. This weight gain is small compared to the health benefits of quitting. Smoking does much more harm to your health and to your looks than does the added weight. The stress on your heart of smoking one pack of cigarettes per day is equal to being 90 pounds overweight!

And remember that quitting smoking decreases your risks of lung cancer, other cancers, heart attack, stroke, and lung problems. For most people, smoking is far more dangerous to your health than is extra weight.

And think about how much more attractive you can look as a non-smoker. Your teeth are whiter, your skin is healthier, and you don't smell of smoke. Today, someone with a cigarette hanging out of his or her mouth is not considered good looking.

*Susan had been without cigarettes for 3 months. During that time she had gained 16 pounds. She was very concerned about her weight. Others barely noticed the extra pounds. When Susan's son got engaged, she decided that she must lose the weight before the wedding; she wanted to look good. Three months before the wedding, Susan began smoking again in order to lose the weight. She told everyone that she would quit again after the wedding. By smoking, Susan was able to lose the weight she had gained after quitting. She did, however, miss her son's first dance at the reception because she was outside smoking a cigarette. Her son later told her that he would have much preferred if she had stayed quit rather than worry about a few pounds of weight. He said that he was embarrassed that everyone at the wedding saw that his mother was a smoker.*



### Susan's story has many lessons in it:

1. Often the only one who notices the weight gain after quitting is the ex-smoker.
2. Smoking can lead to weight loss, but it is a very unhealthy way to lose weight. Cutting off your arm or removing your liver will also reduce your weight, but you would not consider doing those things. Smoking is a harmful way to lose weight.
3. Smoking is no longer sexy. In today's world, smoking is seen as less attractive than being overweight.
4. Although Susan said that she would quit again after the wedding, it is likely that other things will come up when she will feel she must lose weight. As long as her weight is more important to her than is her health, Susan will have a hard time staying off cigarettes. This is why quitting smoking—and staying quit—needs to be your goal.



## Weight Control after Quitting

As stated before, weight gain after quitting is likely, but not a sure thing. About 80% of people who quit smoking gain weight at first and most lose weight over time with no special action. But there are things that can be done to reduce the chances of gaining weight after quitting.

Weight gain occurs when people take in more calories than they use. Weight is controlled best when calories are reduced and metabolism is increased. Calories can be reduced with a proper diet. Metabolism can be increased with regular exercise. But remember it is very important to talk to your doctor before making any major changes in diet or exercise.

### Eating right

**The types of foods you eat can help you control or lose weight.**

1. Limiting fats is one way to control weight. Fats are loaded with calories. Each gram of fat contains 9 calories compared to 4 calories per gram in proteins and carbohydrates. So you can eat the same amount of food that is low in fat and still lose weight. Today many foods have less fat. Also, most foods have labels that make it easy for you to check the fat content. You may be surprised at how much hidden fat there is in common foods. Come up with low fat foods you most enjoy and keep these in mind when preparing or purchasing meals.
2. A better way may be to focus on the foods you can eat rather than on what you should not eat. Your diet can include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and lean meats.
3. If you have the urge to snack you may want to cut up carrots, cantaloupes, and strawberries, or eat pretzels rather than chips. Some ex-smokers also like drinking ice water or sucking on ice cubes or popsicles.

### Some low fat foods include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Lean meats and fish/spices
- Pretzels and baked tortilla chips/salsa
- Skim milk
- Yogurt



- Remember that sweet foods also tend to add calories. As stated before, people seem to like sweet foods after quitting. If you reduce or avoid high calorie sweet foods weight gain will be less likely. If you must have sweet foods, there are now a lot of products with sweeteners in them that are low in calories.

**List some high-fat or sweet foods that you will try to cut down:**

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, list some healthy foods that you will add to your diet:**

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

- Another way to reduce caloric intake is to change your eating habits. For example, perhaps you are used to having a cigarette after a meal, but since quitting you have been eating more. You may want to get up from the table right after your meal and find something else to do.

Some people eat to deal with stress. If this is the case, you may want to find other ways to deal with these feelings. Try relaxing or deep breathing exercises.

**Helpful Hint:**

You may also want to write down what you eat each day for a week in a Diet Diary. This might help you see you are eating more than you should. Eating, like smoking, is something that we do sometimes without noticing how much we do it. We often do not realize how all the snacking between meals adds up until we see it on paper. Do this for a week and see how you can make changes.

## Exercise

Exercise after quitting smoking is good for many reasons:

### 1. Exercise burns calories.

First, exercise burns calories. Exercise such as walking, jogging, or swimming can burn off 200 to 600 calories per hour. Not only do you burn calories but your metabolism increases and you burn calories at a higher rate for up to 24 hours after exercise.

### 2. Exercise depresses appetite and makes you want to eat less.

Most exercise depresses appetite. When you exercise, fat is broken down and released into the bloodstream. This acts as a built-in appetite depressant. This makes you want to eat less.

### 3. Exercise cuts down urges for cigarettes.

Third, exercise is hard to do while smoking. Many smokers do not enjoy exercise because less oxygen reaches their heart and muscles. This can cause cramps and shortness of breath. Quitting smoking makes exercise easier and more fun. Without the carbon monoxide from smoking in your system, exercise may seem more fun. You may not want smoking to get in the way of those good feelings.

### 4. Exercise helps you to deal with stress.

Last, you can use exercise as a healthy way to deal with stress, boredom, and tension. Exercise helps relieve tension. It has been found to improve well-being. Exercise also improves the skin, body tone, and strength.



How many calories are burned by different forms of exercise? Here is a list of calories burned per hour for a person weighing about 150 pounds. A heavier person will burn more calories per hour.

ACTIVITY	CALORIES BURNED PER HOUR
Sitting	100
Housework	180
Bicycling (5 mph)	210
Walking	210
Gardening	220
Golf	250
Lawn-mowing (power)	250
Rowing a boat	300
Swimming	300
Calisthenics	300
Walking	300
Horseback riding	350
Square dancing	350
Volleyball	350
Roller-skating/ Rollerblading	350
Chopping wood	400
Bowling	400
Tennis	420
Basketball	500
Handball	600
Bicycling (13 mph)	660
Running (10 mph)	900

## Make Exercise Part of Your Day

Different people find different types of exercise more fun. You do not have to have a formal exercise routine. Make small changes each day to increase the amount of calories you burn.

You may want to set aside time to exercise and/or fit exercise into your normal day. Planned exercise such as going for a walk after dinner, joining a dance class or gym, or playing sports are also great ways to improve your health. (Just think of all of the money you can save by not smoking—\$1000 per year for most ex-smokers. Perhaps this money could go towards something special.)

Take the dog for a walk, or take the stairs rather than the elevator, play basketball with the guys.

*Jim quit smoking 4 months ago and he has gained 8 pounds. He has started to cut down on snacking between meals. He knows that if he increases his exercise it will be easier for him to not gain any more weight and even lose weight. One thing Jim loves to do is golf. Jim decided that with the money he is saving from not buying cigarettes he will golf once a week. Jim also decided that he will begin taking his dog for a walk three times a week.*

Jim has found fun ways to increase his exercise and calorie use. People often have trouble getting into the habit of exercising. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Start slow. Set a goal that works for you. It does not make sense to plan 5-mile runs when you have not exercised for the past 10 years. Instead, begin by walking around the block 3 times per week.
- Set aside some time for exercise. Exercise tends to get squeezed out by other activities unless you plan for it. So schedule, for example, a half-hour on Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday for your walks.
- Make it a regular social event. We tend to enjoy things more if we do them with others. So exercise with a friend or your partner. Or join a class at the YMCA or community center. The other benefit of exercising with someone else is that you are less likely to skip a session.

Take a few minutes right now to:

- 1. Think about the types of exercise that you like to do.
- 2. Think about how you can make exercise a part of your day.  
Think about things that might get in the way of regular exercise, such as time or money, and how you can overcome that.
- 3. Think about the benefits of exercise.

Now, write down how you can make exercise part of your day.

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

Write down types of exercise that you like and that can work for you.

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

***Remember, exercise helps both your physical health and your psychological health.***

## Summary

1. Make “not-smoking” your number one goal.
2. Check your weight: weigh yourself at least once a week.
3. Know what you are eating.
4. Eat well-balanced meals.
5. Do not eat more than you use in calories.
6. Limit snacks.
7. Avoid sweets.
8. When you eat out, eat wisely.
9. Eat slowly and put your fork down between bites.
10. Exercise regularly

Remember, that gaining weight after quitting smoking is normal. Most people gain less than 10 pounds, and most of this is lost later. However, studies show that people who make changes in their eating and exercising habits do not gain much, if any, weight. If you do gain weight, you are still far better off than if you were smoking.

# Notes:

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