



Top Tips for Stopping Smoking



COVID-19 & smoking

There are always many health and financial benefits to quitting smoking, but now more than ever, quitting means you can:



1. Reduce the likelihood of complications from COVID-19. Smoking damages your lungs putting you at more risk of serious complications. Stopping smoking will give your lungs a chance to start to repair, reduce the risk of complications and increase the likelihood of a quicker recovery.

2. Protect the health of others. Exposure to secondhand smoke also increases the risk of complications from respiratory infections. During this time, when we are all at home, smokers should make every effort to protect others from their smoke.

3. Reduce the burden on the NHS. Stopping smoking brings immediate health benefits particularly to your heart and lungs, so you will be less likely to need the NHS for reasons other than COVID-19.

**THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO QUIT –
QUIT NOW FOR COVID**

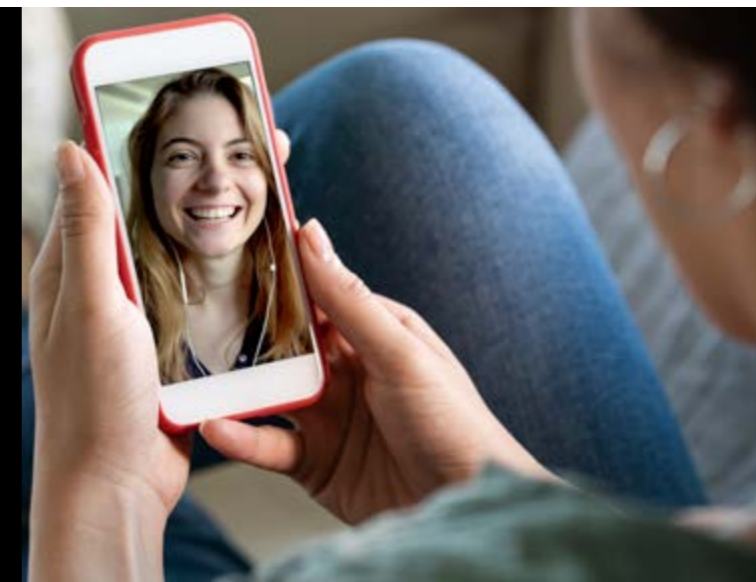
1 Make a plan

Quitting smoking isn't an easy task. Create a plan that works for you to help you reach your goal.

First, set a quit date! Choose a date to quit smoking and stick with it. It's a great way to mentally prepare to stop smoking.

Make a promise, sticking to the "not a drag" rule can really help. Whenever you find yourself in difficulty, say to yourself, "I won't even have a single drag", and stick with this until the cravings pass.

Think ahead to times where it might be difficult and plan your actions and how you can cope in that situation. It may be stresses you face with being at home more, it may be being on your own and not able to go out. Whatever it is, have a plan in place to help you deal with those situations. This may include having people you can call or video chat if you're feeling low, taking yourself out into the yard/garden to breath fresh air in and get some peace etc. Try and make a plan to avoid whatever would normally cause you to reach for a cigarette.



2 Get support- you are 3 times more likely to quit with it

Help is at hand to support you to QUIT and you are 3 times more likely to quit with help of a stop smoking service.

In Coventry, we have a FREE service that you can access. Our coaches will work with you over the phone or by video chat and will support you right through your QUIT.

They can provide you with NRT, great support and loads of tips and hints to get you through. Just give us a call on 0800 122 3780, we are ready to start helping you straight away.

3 Make a list of why you are quitting

You might have tried to quit smoking before and not managed it, but don't let that put you off. You can do this. It all starts with setting your quit date.

Look back at the things your experience has taught you and think about how you're really going to do it this time. Don't think of yourself as a smoker, think of yourself as someone who used to smoke.

Make a list of all the benefits that not smoking is bringing you. Copy it and keep it where you can see it all the time. Some benefits you may want to include are:

- To reduce my risks of COVID
- To help protect myself
- To protect my family from the dangers of second hand smoke
- To save money.



4 Use nicotine replacement therapy

Cigarettes contain nicotine. By smoking regularly and over a long period of time, your body becomes dependent on it. Giving up smoking can cause nicotine withdrawal symptoms, which include cravings, headaches, feeling irritable and not being able to sleep. Stop smoking medicines can help you manage these withdrawal symptoms.

If this sounds like you, then there's no need to worry. There are plenty of stop smoking medicines out there and they can give you the extra support you need to beat the addiction. There are lots of options to help provide a background level of nicotine to reduce cravings and also ones that work very quickly and can help you when you are having a strong craving. Have a chat with one of our coaches and they can support you to find the ones that will best suit you. Give us a call on 0800 122 3780



5 Do it together

Get the help and support from others who are going through the same journey as you. It is great if you can have a quit partner and you can support each other. You may choose to quit with your family and friends or join one of the main online groups.

If you don't have a partner to quit with, try and get family and friends to support you. Help them to understand the support you need and what they can do to really help you.

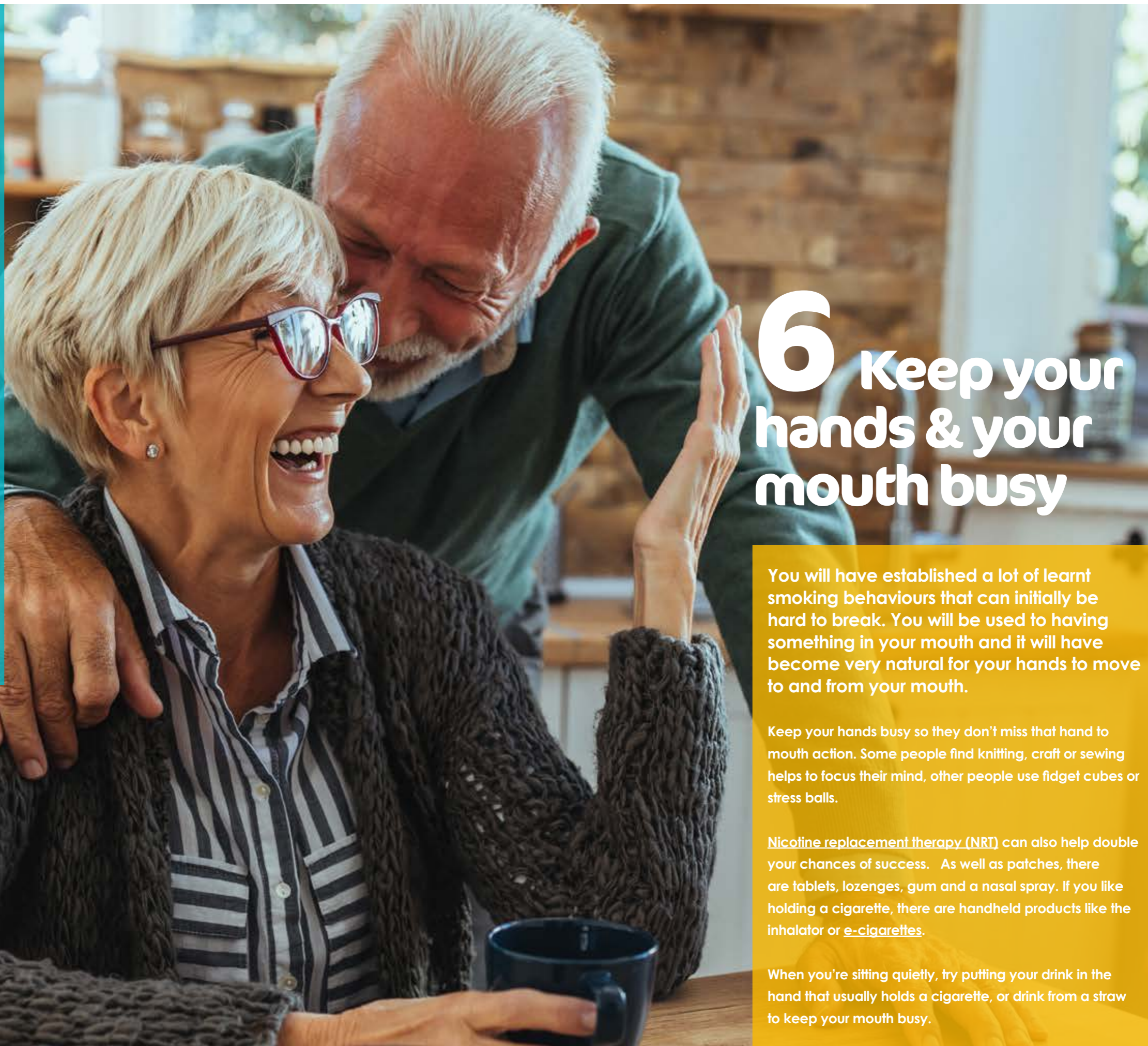
6 Keep your hands & your mouth busy

You will have established a lot of learnt smoking behaviours that can initially be hard to break. You will be used to having something in your mouth and it will have become very natural for your hands to move to and from your mouth.

Keep your hands busy so they don't miss that hand to mouth action. Some people find knitting, craft or sewing helps to focus their mind, other people use fidget cubes or stress balls.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can also help double your chances of success. As well as patches, there are tablets, lozenges, gum and a nasal spray. If you like holding a cigarette, there are handheld products like the inhalator or e-cigarettes.

When you're sitting quietly, try putting your drink in the hand that usually holds a cigarette, or drink from a straw to keep your mouth busy.



7 Get active

A review of scientific studies has proved exercise, even a 5-minute walk or stretch, cuts cravings and may help your brain produce anti-craving chemicals.

You can download our Top Tips Activity sheet here <https://hiscoventry.org/covid-19-resources>

8 Think about your routine

Many smokers have routines in which smoking is a natural part. It makes sense to change these as you quit. For example, if the first thing you do in the morning is have a coffee and a cigarette, think about changing it so you get up, have a shower and then sit and eat breakfast. You may even decide to replace the coffee with a fruit juice for a while, until you break the association with morning coffee and tobacco.

Make a list of your smoking habits and plan how you can change them. Breaking some of these habits will really help you to maintain your quit.



9 Practice relaxation & mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness and relaxation can boost your confidence to handle problems but it also has many benefits, including:

- Slowing heart rate
- Lowering blood pressure
- Slowing your breathing rate
- Improving digestion
- Maintaining normal blood sugar levels
- Reducing activity of stress hormones
- Increasing blood flow to major muscles
- Reducing muscle tension and chronic pain
- Improving concentration and mood
- Improving sleep quality
- Lowering fatigue
- Reducing anger and frustration.

To get the most benefit, use relaxation techniques along with other positive coping methods, such as thinking positively, finding humor, problem-solving, managing time, exercising, getting enough sleep, and reaching out to supportive family and friends. There are some great Apps and resources online. One of our favourites is the Mindfulness App <https://themindfulnessapp.com/>

10 Be kind to yourself

Quitting smoking isn't easy. Some people use smoking as a way to manage things like stress. It won't always be easy to quit and you need to give yourself a big pat on the back for setting your quit date and starting on your journey.

Make sure you make time for you in the process. Reward your progress and do things that you love to do. Take some time out to listen to favorite music, connect with friends or make time for a hobby.

You may even decide to save the money you would have used on cigarettes and use that to treat yourself in the future.

No matter what you do, be proud of yourself. You have just taken a really important step that will positively impact your health and the health of your family.



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