



# TakeCharge

WELCOA'S ONLINE SELF-CARE BULLETIN

10 WAYS

to Cope With Emotions

## Without Cigarettes

You might feel like smoking helps you get through times when you just can't deal with your emotions. Although you might feel better in the moment, smoking isn't really helping. You probably feel better while smoking because you're taking a time out. The actual smoking doesn't really have much to do with feeling better.

### 1. Take a time out

A short break from a stressful or upsetting situation can help you think more clearly and help you make a healthy decision about what to do next.

### 2. Express yourself

Call or text a friend who you can talk to about what's bothering you.

### 3. Distract yourself

Take a walk, play a game, or read a good book.

### 4. Get your body moving

If you're feeling low, take a walk or a jog around the block.

### 5. Rehearse and practice dealing with stressful situations

If your go-to response to uncomfortable emotions is to stuff them away and pretend they're not there, it may be time to try to express them. When we bury or deny feelings, they build up until we are on the verge of exploding at the slightest offense. This can be especially

tricky when you need to confront someone who has hurt or offended you. Sometimes talking through things in more neutral territory can help.

### 6. Make a list and set goals

Break down your larger tasks into smaller steps. Then cross off each step as you go to see your progress.

### 7. Don't let negative thoughts take over

If you're feeling down about yourself or life, make a list of things for which you are grateful.

### 8. Give yourself a break

Instead of demanding total perfection from yourself, allow yourself to be happy with doing a pretty good job. Just aim to do your best without having to be perfect.

### 9. Exercise, eat regularly, and get plenty of sleep

Being physically rundown can make it much harder to deal with a bad mood. Take care of yourself.

### 10. When you are feeling extremely upset, use the Stop-Think-Breathe method

Stop for a minute and think about the big picture. Sometimes things that don't really matter in the long run can get you all worked up in the moment. Count to 10, breathing deeply, and concentrate on calming down.

Use the tips on this list to help you figure out what works best for you. This might feel uncomfortable at first, but with practice, you can learn how to deal with emotions without cigarettes.

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## 6 Ways to Boost Your Mood After Quitting

Mood changes are common after you quit. You might be irritable, restless, or feel down or blue. If you're experiencing these feelings after quitting smoking, there are many things you can do to help lift your mood.

**1. Exercise. Stay active.** The type of exercise depends on how fit you are, but any kind of activity can help—from taking a walk to going to the gym to joining a team sport. If you need to, start small and build over time. This can be hard to do when you are depressed because feeling down saps all your energy. But making the effort will pay off! It will help you feel better.

**2. Structure your day.** Create a plan to stay busy. It is especially important to get out of the house whenever you can.

**3. Talk and do things with other people.** Many people who are feeling depressed are cut off from others. Having daily contact with other people will help your mood.

**4. Build rewards into your life.** For many who are depressed, rewards and fun activities are missing from life. It is helpful to find ways to reward yourself. Even small things, like reading a magazine or listening to music, add up and can help your mood.

**5. Do what used to be fun, even if it does not seem fun right now.** One of the common signs of depression is not wanting to do activities that used to be fun. It may take a little time, but doing fun activities again will help improve your mood. Some people like to make a list of fun events and then do at least one a day.

**6. Talk with friends and loved ones.** Your support system is a key to you feeling better. Having a chance to tell them your concerns can help things seem less scary.

