

SARAH · LAWRENCE · COLLEGE

What You Should Know About: The Great American Smokeout

The Great American Smokeout is always the third Thursday in November. This year it is on November 17th.

Are you ready for 24 hours without cigarettes? That's what the Great American Smokeout is all about. Each year on the third Thursday of November, The American Cancer Society (ACS) organizes the Smokeout. According to ACS, more Americans try to quit smoking on this day than any other day of the year, including New Year's Day.

What does it take to participate? Just you. There's nothing to join or buy or sign up for. You simply commit to quit for one day. You can do that, right?

Here are some tips to make this year's Smokeout a success.

FOLLOW A PLAN OF ACTION

If you're reading this you have already started "the plan". You've already decided that you want to know more about quitting. The first step is to make a decision that you want to quit. Also, be sure you know WHY you are quitting. Is it to improve your health? Save money? Improve your love life? Get a clear picture in your mind of the reason why you want to quit, so you have a clear "end-goal".

PREPARE AND SUCCEED

The next step is to get ready to quit. Most successful quitters don't just finish a cigarette, then say, "That's the last cigarette I'll ever smoke," and quit on a whim. Instead, successful quitters prepare for the day when they will quit.

To prepare for your quit, decide what day you'll quit. In this case, plan to quit on the Great American Smokeout day. You'll have lots of other people around you doing the same thing, plus support on the radio, TV and other media.

DECIDE HOW YOU'LL QUIT

Decide on the method you'll use to quit. Will you quit cold- turkey and use sheer willpower to quit? Or will you opt to use nicotine patches or nicotine gum? Have you considered Zyban?

What about other methods such as gradually reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke each day?

Visit <http://www.quitsmoking.com> for many different methods, ideas and products that you can use to quit.

KEEP THE NICODEMON AWAY

Once you've decided on your method for quitting, and actually quit, you'll be tempted to smoke again. You can make staying quit easier if you follow some simple guidelines:

Stay away from other smokers. This may be difficult if you've made some great friends on your smoking breaks. But being around other smokers will tear down your resolve, at least in the beginning of your quit. Stay out of bars and other places where smoking is common.

Discard all your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays. Don't leave anything in your environment that might remind you or tempt you to smoke.

Stay out of convenience stores or other places where you commonly purchase cigarettes.

When you have a bad craving for a cigarette take a deep breath, drink some water, go for a short walk, or do something else to distract yourself. Cravings will subside in just a minute or two, whether or not you smoke.

Exercise. The benefits to smokers are tremendous. You'll improve your health, and find that quitting is much easier when you are exercising. Exercising can easily relieve stress that you tried to relieve by smoking. Smoking and exercise are not compatible.

Plan rewards for yourself. Quitting smoking IS a big deal and anyone who does it deserves a big reward. Of course, quitting itself is the biggest reward, but you should also make a list of rewards that you'll give yourself when you pass certain milestones. For example, after one week of being smoke-free, you might buy yourself a new CD or movie. After one month, go out to a nice dinner. After 6 months or a year, take a reward vacation.

Write down the rewards. Put them on your calendar and give yourself a goal to work toward. With all the money you'll save by not smoking, you'll be able to afford to reward yourself!

NOW GET STARTED

The Great American Smokeout is a great way to prove to yourself that you can quit for a day. But if you can quit for one day, you can surely quit for a week, or a month or a year. Give it a chance and next year you won't have to think about the Smokeout.

Re-read this article, then follow the directions. It's simple and within your reach.

For more information on the Great American Smokeout, visit the American Cancer Society website at <http://www.cancer.org/>

Article © Copyright Fred Kelley of QuitSmoking.com. Visit the web site at <http://www.quitsmoking.com> for great information and products designed to help you quit smoking.

Sarah Lawrence College Health Services also offers assist with your efforts to stop smoking. Call (395-2350) or stop by for more information on SLC Smoking Cessation Program.