



Avoid Tobacco-Use Relapse During COVID-19

Are you a former smoker or a person who used tobacco by chewing or vaping? Is stress making you think of your old habits? You worked hard to become tobacco-free. Don't let COVID-19 derail you. COVID-19 may be new, but managing stress and the cravings it can trigger is a challenge you've already conquered at least once. Remember and practice the good habits that helped you kick tobacco:

Get enough sleep. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule is important because this plays a main factor in your overall wellbeing. According to the World Sleep Society, adults should be getting seven to eight hours of sleep per night. Making sure your body is getting plenty of rest will aid your health and can help relieve any stress you may be feeling.

Drink lots of water and eat healthy foods. It's important while staying at home that you are drinking water and staying with healthy food choices. Taking care of yourself in this way can help keep the stress at bay and ease any urge to use. Also, this is a time to lessen your caffeine intake, as too much caffeine can leave you feeling more stressed in the long run. So, now would be a great time to experiment with new recipes you've always wanted to try. There are various apps for your smartphone that can help you discover new recipes or remind you to drink water and track your daily water intake, like MyFitnessPal (<https://www.myfitnesspal.com>).

Exercise! Exercise can be one of the most helpful ways to relieve your stress. When you are physically active, your body releases chemicals to help boost your mood. So, step outside and go for a walk or run, or try some indoor workouts. If you feel like monitoring your progress with physical activities, there are also smartphone apps that track this information as well.

Stay social. While everyone stays at home, it can be easy to lose contact with friends and family. Don't let

that happen. Remember when you are feeling stressed that you can still reach out to check in with them. There are so many ways to stay social while maintaining social distancing—call, text, or even video chat. This can be beneficial for both of you during this stressful situation.

Take a break and breathe. When you feel yourself getting stressed, it is essential that you take a step back and allow yourself time to relax. Deep breathing techniques are helpful to refocus and release some of the stress you're carrying. Also, avoid watching news sources or looking at social media. Take some time to do an activity you enjoy, whether it's going for a walk, reading a book, listening to music, or playing a game. Make time for you.

Things may feel very uncertain right now, but these tips can help you relieve stress without going back to tobacco.

Reference

World Sleep Society. World Sleep Day. (2020). *Ask the sleep experts*. Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <https://worldsleepsociety.org/sleep-resources> & <http://worldsleepday.org/ask-the-sleep-experts>

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