

#befreeachievemore

TOP TIPS

To be smoke-free, FITTER and achieve more



Be smoke-free

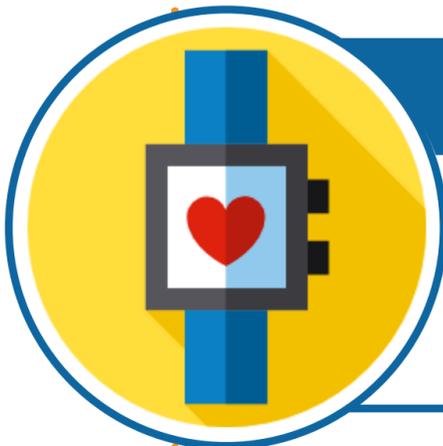
Smoking seriously harms your physical fitness and well-being, even by smoking small amounts or being a 'social smoker'. Not smoking has well known benefits to your physical, mental and financial health.

If you smoke and are thinking of quitting, visit www.quityourway.scot for information and advice.



Get active

Ok, so sweating it out at the gym every day may not be everyone's idea of fun, but walking more, dancing, yoga or just taking the stairs can actually make you feel happier. For those who are quitting smoking, nicotine withdrawal can make you feel stressed, irritable and you might find it difficult to concentrate. Physical activity reduces these feelings, boosts self-esteem and improves sleep.



Why be active?

Physical activity is something your body craves (even if your conscious brain isn't so sure!). So, to make it fun for you, your brain actually releases chemicals like serotonin, endorphins and a feel-good hormone called dopamine. The great thing is that even non-strenuous exercise, like a walk in the park, can help increase dopamine levels. If you've recently quit smoking dopamine also helps reduce cravings.



Move more

Think of ways to increase the amount you move. If you've been inactive for a while you can start by committing to just move more each day. You could get off the bus one stop earlier or park further away from the shop and walk the extra distance. Consider going for a walk outdoors, which will not only to increase your activity but could also help top up your levels of vitamin D, which is essential for your body and brain.



Pick up the pace

If you're been enjoying non strenuous exercise, you could consider picking up the pace. When out walking, increase from a leisurely stride to brisk pace or maybe choose a hilly route. If you are close to a community leisure centre, consider taking a class once a week. You could also kick the ball around with your friends at a local park or go out dancing on the weekend.



Build relationships

Being more active with friends isn't just fun but it provides time to chat and builds self esteem. You could even consider looking for a local sports club that you could join. Being part of a club can help you meet new, like-minded, people and gives you a sense of belonging. You could also improve your communication and teamwork skills which look good on a CV.



Get enough sleep

Aim for about eight hours every night. Poor sleep may lead to slow physical reflexes, clumsiness and reduced performance. Research with young adults found that smoking is associated with poorer quality of sleep and not smoking can improve sleep issues. Going to bed the same time each night, avoiding caffeine in the evening and having some social media free time can help your brain relax.



Good food

Eating five pieces of fruit or veg a day is not just good for your bodies but helps prevent you feeling sluggish and tired. For someone who's recently quit smoking, reaching for a healthy snack when feeling a craving for a cigarette is a useful distraction. Cravings usually only last for around 5 mins, so having an apple, nuts or some grapes will help the cravings to pass.



Live well

Enjoy getting active. Find an activity that you enjoy whether it's taking the dog for a long walk, jogging or joining the rugby club. Find an activity that you love and it won't feel like a chore. There are many activities that don't cost anything, start small and build your way up. If you've recently quit smoking, you could use some of the money you're saving to join a gym or club.