

CIGARETTE STAND-INS

It's hard to give something up that's been a part of your life. And if you've smoking for years, it's likely that cigarettes play an important role in how you get through each day. Many smokers reach for a cigarette first thing in the morning and take a final puff just before they go to bed – not to mention all the times in-between. That's why it's often a good idea to have something else to reach for instead of that cigarette. It may be something sweet to put in your mouth, or it may be something to keep your fingers busy. What you need is a non-nicotine cigarette "stand-in."

Think of all the reasons you reach for a cigarette? Those will be the same reasons you reach for your cigarette stand-in. It will distract you when you are waiting in traffic jams or movie lines. It will help when service at a restaurant is slow. You can use your cigarette stand-in as a reward when things are going well, to collect yourself in an awkward situation, or just as a prop to help you relax. And even if you have decided to use a nicotine product temporarily to help you quit, you still should substitute something else for cigarettes. Don't exchange one nicotine habit for another.

Your cigarettes went everywhere with you, and so should your cigarette stand-ins. You should never be without them while you are trying to quit. Be creative. Here are some suggestions. Consider whether your cigarettes help you with an oral fixation, nervous hands – or both. (Hint: Did you suck your thumb as a kid?)

- candies – mints, sugar-free, lollipops,
- worry beads or a worry stone
- cinnamon sticks
- healthy snacks – carrots, apple slices
- needlework
- straws or sticks
- sugarless gum

If you start having a cigarette craving, pick up a fancy pen and pencil and start doodling. Carry around a pack of colorful postal cards to send quick notes to distant friends. (Tapping out a rhythm on the nearest flat surface with your pen may be a great for you – but it will drive everyone around you absolutely batty.)

Remember to keep the stand-ins for your cigarettes in all the same places where you used to put your cigarettes – the glove compartment of your car, your handbag and pockets, the table beside your bed. Make sure that your cigarette stand-ins are handy at all the times when you used to puff on a cigarette. Have them available when you get up in the morning, when you relax at the end of the day in your favorite chair, when you get fed up with the office or the assembly line and go outside for a quick break. Never leave yourself vulnerable to the call of cigarettes.

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