

## KEEPING A SMOKER'S JOURNAL

Smoking, for most folks, is automatic. You just pick up a cigarette and smoke it. However, in order to quit, you have to truly understand your smoking. And that means questioning every cigarette you smoke. So, get a small notebook and begin keeping a Smoker's Journal.

For an entire week (7 days!), make a note of each cigarette you smoke, 24-hours a day. That means you should have your journal available at all times. For each cigarette, write down:

- How much of the cigarette you smoked.
- Time of day – and any associated activity.
- Exact location and any special circumstances.

Be as precise and accurate as you can be. Were you at work, at home, at a restaurant or bar, or somewhere else? Were you alone or with others? All of these details can help you to better understand why you smoke and the best way to quit.

If you forget to write down a smoking event immediately, write it as soon as you remember.

Information is important. So, it helps to write down as much information as you can about every cigarette you smoke – at least in the beginning. After a few days, you should begin to see a pattern emerging.

Here are some other questions to ask yourself about each of the cigarettes you smoke.

- Did I have to go far to light up or could I stay where I was?
- What made me want a cigarette at that moment?
- Was it a smoking area or was I sneaking a cigarette?
- If there were other smokers around, did I know them? Did I talk to them?
- How did I feel right before I lit up?
- What else was I doing while I was smoking?
- Was there anything about the location that was dangerous or uncomfortable?
- Could I have waited until later or would that have been difficult?
- How much did I really need to smoke?
- How enjoyable was the cigarette?
- How did I feel immediately afterwards?

At the end of the day, go over the entries carefully. Take note of when, where and why you smoke. This will help you develop some quit strategies that will work.

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## Sample Notes from a Smoker's Diary

For 7 days, jot down every time you smoke in your diary. Carry it with you all the time. Don't wait until the end of the day to remember. Write your smokes down as they occur and make a note of what you were doing. Begin first thing in the morning and continue all day long. Don't worry about quitting, cutting back or feeling guilty at this point – just get a good record of your smoking. It will be helpful later on in planning the best way to quit. However, if you think of anything that relates to your smoking, jot that down as well. Every piece of information can help you quit.

Here are notes for a single day of a typical smoker:

### Monday, January 3, 2002

smoked first cigarette of the day at 6:30 a.m. while waking up and getting dressed

next smoke was at about 7:00, with morning coffee.

2 cigarettes in the car, while driving to work and listening to news radio

at work: 1 cig with coffee and donuts at the desk about 15 minutes after arrival

(note: closed the office door so that no one would see me smoking)

on the phone, 1 while talking with a good friend

just 1 cigarette during a meeting with co-workers (very tense!)

2 cigs at break (nice day outside, good conversation with other smokers)

(note: still very upset from earlier meeting, the cigarette helped me relax and refocus)

1 cig on the street while walking to lunch at a no-smoking restaurant

(note: thought that it would bother me not to smoke at the table, but got through it.

the food was very good.)

smoked another cigarette after lunch while walking back to the office

(back from lunch late with lots of work to finish. no cigarettes for the rest of afternoon!)

2 cigarettes while driving home – it was very relaxing after a hard day at work

smoked 1 cig while reading the evening newspaper at home. (this is a habit for me)

smoked another cig right after dinner

smoked 3 cigarettes and drank beer while watching a 2-hour movie on tv with friends

smoked final cigarette right before bed at 11:15 p.m., as a way to relax and wind down

Total: 20 cigarettes (1 pack)