

STOP LOOK & LISTEN

As part of your decision to quit smoking, Try the "STOP, LOOK & LISTEN" approach to stress management.

1. STOP

When you feel yourself beginning to get stressed, stop doing whatever you are doing immediately. STOP! Take a time-out to get your bearings and decide exactly how you will handle the situation. After all, that's many smokers use cigarettes for – giving themselves an excuse to stop. Taking deep breaths is another way to put the breaks on. Inhale deep breaths of fresh air instead of smoke. It's better for you.

2. LOOK

Check what's around you and what's inside you to determine exactly why your stress level is escalating. Is it something that is actually happening now or something that you are afraid will happen in the future? Are you stressed because you've been through this before – or because this is something brand new that you don't know how to face. Understanding why you are stressed is an important step toward handling your stress in a healthy way. Smokers often use the time that they are puffing to think through various alternatives when they are stressed. But you really don't need a cigarette to do that. If you need something to help your thoughts along, try worry beads instead of a smoke.

3. LISTEN

Stress is loud and noisy. So if you are feeling stressed, it is important to do something that lowers the volume. Cigarettes *are* quiet – but they are also deadly. So find another quiet way to calm down. Listening to nature is always an excellent option. Taking in the sounds of a flowing river, the chirping of songbirds or the rush of the wind is a great way to relax. Or you could listen to some of your favorite music. If you are a musician, play something on your favorite instrument. Learn to listen to the sound of your own voice – say a prayer or a poem, quietly and to yourself.