

Research shows that undertaking exercise whilst stopping smoking can increase your chances of being successful. However, knowing where to start can be a daunting experience. That is why **QUIT** (the UK charity that helps smokers to stop) has designed this exercise programme, specifically for smokers, to aid them in their quitting attempt.

This step-by-step programme focuses on two of the areas most likely to be affected by smoking – lung capacity and cardiovascular health. However, these are just two of the numerous benefits that will be experienced from taking part in this exercise programme. These benefits include:

KEEP QUIT (Benefits of quitting)

20 minutes

Blood pressure and heart rate return to normal. Circulation improves in hands and feet making them warmer

8 hours

Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by half, oxygen levels return to normal

24 hours

Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from the body. Lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris. Chances of a heart attack start to fall

48 hours

There is no nicotine left in the body. Ability to taste and smell greatly improved

72 hours

Breathing becomes easier. Airway passages in the lungs begin to relax. Energy levels increase

2-12 weeks

Circulation improves making walking and running a lot easier

3-9 months

Coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve

1 year

Risk of heart disease is reduced to about half that of a continuing smoker

10 years

Risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a continuing smoker.

15 years

Risk of heart attack is similar to someone who has never smoked

KEEP FIT (Benefits of exercise)

Benefit 1

Increased fitness levels

Benefit 2

Increased overall strength

Benefit 3

Distraction from smoking by providing a change of focus

Benefit 4

Reduced stress – removing one of the reasons why some people feel they need to smoke

Benefit 5

Improved psychological well-being - exercise causes the release of natural chemicals in your body, which makes you feel more positive and increases your self esteem

Benefit 6

Minimising weight gain – which can sometimes result from stopping smoking



Jamie Baird, celebrity fitness trainer

STEP 1 – PLAN

– 01



Keep QUIT: Planning is an important part of your quit attempt. To maximise your chances of success go and see your GP for help and advice on available treatments to help you quit, and enlist the support of your friends and that of QUIT through our Quitline – 0800 00 22 00 – stopsmoking@quit.org.uk

Keep FIT: Planning is important to ensure that you have created a space within your daily schedule during which to carry out your exercises. Additionally, you need to plan to ensure that you have the right equipment (e.g. proper training shoes) before embarking on this programme

STEP 2 – SET A DATE

– 02



Keep QUIT: Setting yourself a date gives you time to plan both mentally and physically for quitting and will prevent you from making excuses to delay

Keep FIT: Setting a date to start the programme will help to build motivation and allow the necessary time to prepare – e.g. gauging your starting fitness, finding a good route to run, finding a space at home to exercise in etc

STEP 3 – SET REALISTIC GOALS

– 03



Keep QUIT: Don't expect to be able just to stop – maximise your chances by avoiding tempting places, like the pub, until you have the confidence to say 'no' to smoking

Keep FIT: If you've not exercised for some time, be realistic about what you can achieve and by when – set yourself achievable goals and a realistic deadline. Write them down in a training diary

STEP 4 – KEEP A DIARY

– 04



Keep QUIT: Keeping track of your progress will remind you of how far you've come and why you don't want to give in – call QUIT for a free quitting diary on 0800 00 22 00 – stopsmoking@quit.org.uk

Keep FIT: Keeping a note/diary of when you exercise and what you did is also an important motivator. It will help as a "self-checker" and will keep you on your toes, especially if you start missing a few training sessions. The training diary allows you to compare workouts and find out if you're getting fitter, stronger and healthier

STEP 5 – MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

– 05



Keep QUIT: Keep a money box and every day put into it the money you would have spent on smoking, then use it to treat yourself as a reward to acknowledge how well you are doing

Keep FIT: Knowing how well you are doing helps to keep you on track, so first establish your fitness level then periodically retest yourself. For example, time yourself to see how long it takes you to run a circular route. Then repeat the test every 3 weeks to see how you're doing

STEP 6 – COPING STRATEGIES

– 06



Keep QUIT: Identify situations where you think you might have an urge for a cigarette and write as many of these down as possible. These may include certain moods (such as stress or boredom), points in time (after work or with a drink) or locations (such as in the pub or at home) that trigger the urge. Having identified these situations, endeavour to avoid these urges by doing something that will take your mind off wanting to have a cigarette – i.e. exercise

Keep FIT: At times you may not feel like exercising, so try a change to your routine. This may involve going dancing instead of the cardiovascular side of your exercises, or perhaps doing the exercises to music

STEP 7 – NUTRITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – (THIS IS NOT A DIET!!)

– 07



- Learn to enjoy your food and experiment with different herbs and spices – as you stop smoking your taste improves, so use it to the full
- No more fried foods – start to grill, poach, steam or bake
- Drink more water, this will make you feel full, but avoid fizzy drinks which contain a lot of sugar
- Eat small, well-balanced meals over the course of the day
- Try and make each meal as colourful as possible using vegetables and fruit
- Eliminate snackie foods such as crisps, cakes, chocolate, peanuts etc

SELECTING YOUR LEVEL

It *can* take up to 9 months after your 'quit-date' for coughs, wheezing and breathing problems to show any great improvement. Consequently, if you exercise too hard too soon, you will find yourself out of breath very quickly. It is therefore important to select a realistic starting point so that you aren't put off exercise before you have even started to reap the benefits. The key to clearing out your lungs and getting fit is to maintain a steady progressive exercise programme over a period of 6 weeks. Realistically, you're not going to get fit in a week, or even 2, so be persistent and stick with it.

You choose where you start, but bear in mind you're better off taking it easier early on rather than 'going for it' straight away.

If you have a history of coronary heart disease, or have not participated in a fitness programme for sometime, you should seek advice from your doctor before starting any type of fitness programme.

Those who rate themselves as either unfit or relatively fit, should start with **LEVEL 1**.

Those who rate themselves as very fit, should start with **LEVEL 2**.

LEVEL 3 should only be started once level 2 has been successfully completed.

MOVING ON UP – CHANGING INTENSITY LEVELS

The programme has 3 levels of intensity, which have been designed to cater for a wide range of fitness and abilities. It also enables you to work through each level, as you get fitter and stronger.

At the end of the first 6 weeks your lungs will have relaxed in the absence of damaging smoke and your circulation will have significantly improved. You will feel healthier and you'll be ready to step up to the next stage of the programme.

HOW HARD SHOULD I WORK?

Remember – you're not an Olympic athlete, so take it easy and listen to your body and what it has to say. There are several ways to measure how hard your body is working when exercising, and a simple test for this is called the "Talk Test". If you can hold a full-blown conversation while training, then you're probably not working out hard enough. However, if you're unable to talk then you're probably trying too hard. So try to pitch your workout intensity somewhere between the two.

CARDIOVASCULAR – AEROBIC FITNESS

Your cardiovascular fitness will improve quickly with exercise and more so as you continue to be a non-smoker. Walking and running will become a lot easier and you should see encouraging progress in your exercise diary. **ANY** activity that raises the heart rate is an effective way to encourage this process, and will subsequently help to improve your fitness level and increase your lung function.

WARMING UP & STRETCHING

It's not essential to stretch before your workout, but if you feel that some muscles might benefit from a stretch then go ahead and give them a stretch once you have warmed up. It's more important to stretch your muscles after you have worked out as part of your cooling down process.

When stretching the muscles after your warm up hold each stretch for between 10 and 15 seconds. When cooling down hold them for slightly longer – 30 seconds plus.

The most important thing to remember is to do something that you **ENJOY** doing. If you do something that you don't enjoy, there is a high probability that you won't stick at it and will eventually give it up. You don't necessarily need to go to the gym or embark on the newest fad to hit town. By far the cheapest and easiest form of exercise is walking.

The cardio programme outlined here can be used for any form of exercise, be it cycling, jogging, running, stepping, rowing or swimming – **YOU CHOOSE**.

DISCLAIMER: Participants are reminded that QUIT cannot be held responsible for any injury incurred during or after participation in the KEEP QUIT exercise programme and QUIT would thoroughly recommend that all participants consult their doctor prior to starting the KEEP QUIT programme