

Stress is a normal part of life. Some stress is good – it helps us get things done. However too much stress can make life hard and even make us ill.

Quitting smoking might make you feel stressed. You might:

- have daytime tiredness
- feel moody
- have broken sleep
- find it hard to make decisions
- forget things
- lose interest in family, friends, activities and work
- feel you just “can’t be bothered” about things
- cry for no reason
- get more colds or flu.

Why quitting can make you feel stressed

He aha koe e taimaha ai i te mahi whakamutu

When you smoke, your body becomes addicted to nicotine. When you stop smoking, your body still craves nicotine for a while. Even the nicotine in patches, lozenges or gum may not be enough to stop the stress. You might have been in the habit of lighting up at stressful times, such as when you’re

stuck in traffic, or things have gone wrong for you, or you’ve had an argument, or when you’re bored, or to “relax” between tasks at work or at home. When you quit, you need to choose other ways of dealing with stress.

Choosing new ways to deal with stress

Te whiriwhiri ara hei whakamāmā i ngā taimahatanga

You might like to try:

- talking to someone close to you – perhaps an ex-smoker
- listening to music
- squeezing a stress ball
- a karakia or prayer
- screaming, shouting (warn people first!)
- buying yourself something with some of the money you’ve saved by not smoking.

Staying active

Nga korikoritanga

Try to be active for at least 30 minutes a day – brisk walking, housework, gardening, swimming, cycling or exercising. Even if you have only 15 minutes to spare, go for a short walk – or even up and down some stairs! Get off the bus at an earlier stop and walk the rest of the way.

Relaxing your body and your mind

Te whakatau tinana me te hinengaro

Quitting smoking can place heavy demands on your mind and body, so try some of the following relaxation methods to unwind.

Relax your body

- Lie down, or sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes and take a few long, deep breaths in and out.
- Tighten your feet and toes, keep them tight for three seconds, then release them.
- Now do the same with your leg muscles, tummy and chest.
- Move on to your hands, arms, shoulders, neck, jaw, mouth, face and scalp muscles until you have tightened then released all the muscles in your body.

For more help, call

Quitline
0800 778 778

infosheet

Relax your mind

When your body is relaxed:

- Think of a peaceful place – maybe under a tree on a hot day, or by some water. Think of sounds you like – maybe leaves rustling in the breeze, or water flowing over stones. Let your mind drift with the breeze or water, or whatever you have chosen.
- When you are ready, open your eyes and come back to the present, holding on to your peaceful relaxed feelings.

Breathing

Stand in a comfortable position and breathe deeply using this exercise:

- Close your eyes, relax your arms, shoulders and body.
- Breathe in deeply, pushing your tummy out.
- Slowly breathe out, saying the word “relax” to yourself.
- Repeat the exercise a few times.

To stay in control of your own stress, practise the suggestions above, or find some ideas of your own.

The Quit Group

TE ROOPU ME MUTU

About the Quit Group

The Quit Group is a non-profit organisation established in 1998. It employs more than 90 staff and operates the following services to encourage people to stop smoking:

- **Quitline** 0800 778 778, the highly successful advice and support service
- The Quit website **www.quit.org.nz**
- **Quit campaigns**, including *Video Diaries*, *Every cigarette is doing you damage* and the Health Warnings campaign in support of the Ministry of Health’s graphic pictorial health warnings programme
- **Quit Cards**, which enable health providers to distribute cards for low-cost nicotine patches, gum or lozenges
- **ProQuit** services to support health professionals and community providers to implement the ABCs of smoking cessation
- **Quit@work**, which provides smokefree policy advice and support to workplaces
- **Txt2Quit** – a world-leading, text-based interactive smoking cessation support service
- **Research and evaluation**, which ensures Quit Group services are based on sound evidence.

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Quitting smoking and stress

*Ka Mutu ana me ngā
Taimahatanga*



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