



Stay strong: using the HALT method to help you quit smoking

So you're trying to quit! When you're about to cave in to the craving, stop for a moment and determine why you may be wanting a cigarette. This may then help you identify the best way to curb that craving. Using the H.A.L.T. method provides a framework for determining what may be behind your desire for a smoke. Do the following quick-check which will help you identify what is really going on, and give you a leg up on staying strong. Read on!

The H.A.L.T. Method

When you are trying to quit smoking and you find yourself craving a cigarette, check to see if you are experiencing any of the following:

- **Hungry:** It is amazing how our minds tell us one thing that we interpret as another. When you crave a cigarette, check your watch to determine the last time you ate. You may really need to eat instead of smoking a cigarette. (Be sure to choose healthy snacks!)
- **Angry:** If you are angry, your mind may tell you that you need a cigarette to cope. Until your mind learns that it does not need a cigarette to cope, try to avoid situations that might upset you. Avoid people who may bother you. If there is substantial tension at work, try to come up with a solution or take a day off to come up with a plan. Use caution here as anger can be very destructive to your efforts to stop smoking.
- **Lonely:** It is good to be around people who support your decision to stop smoking, and who are there to talk about your challenges. Make sure that when you have a craving that it isn't just to provide you comfort. Keep a list of people you can call or visit when you feel all alone and are craving a cigarette.
- **Tired:** If you are tired, your perceptions may not be as accurate and you are more easily irritated. When you get irritated, your mind will tell you that a cigarette will help calm you down. Our overall resistance becomes weak and it is easy to give in and have that cigarette. Take time to distract yourself from the moment. Take a walk, call a friend, watch TV for a few minutes, read the paper—whatever!

If you feel you need cigarette, just remember to HALT. Take a moment to find out why you may be craving a cigarette, then try to find an alternative. And remember, the craving WILL pass in a relatively short period of time!