



# Relaxing . . . without smoking

ARIZONA SMOKERS' HELPLINE 1-800-556-6222 - WWW.ASHLINE.ORG

## ***What to Expect***

- ▼ You may still want to reach for a cigarette whenever you start relaxing if you had been doing so for years.
- ▼ You may reach for a cigarette in order to ease the anxiety.

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## ***Frequency***

- ▼ Recent studies have found that 60-90% of quitters report feelings of increased (higher) anxiety within one week of quitting.
- ▼ If you feel anxious, it will usually begin within the first 24 hours after quitting, peak in the first 1-2 weeks, and disappear within a month.

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## ***Self Management***

- ▼ Repeat this to yourself, "I can learn to relax without having a cigarette."
- ▼ Engage in activities that use your hands, like sewing, carving, working puzzles, playing cards, etc.
- ▼ Make an extra effort to share your leisure time with a friend, a child or even a pet.
- ▼ If the urge to smoke gets too strong, stop relaxing and start doing something physical until the urge passes.
- ▼ Deep breathing is a good way to deal with tension almost anywhere and at any time.

## ***Nicotine and Your Body and Mind***

- ▼ When nicotine enters your brain, it acts just like some of the natural chemicals that control arousal, alertness, and mood. So, when you smoke, these chemical changes can make you feel happy, less anxious, and more relaxed.
- ▼ When you quit smoking, your brain activity slowly returns to normal. The natural chemicals in your body will stabilize.

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## ***Related Notes***

- ▼ It isn't "just in your head"...cigarettes did make you relax and now that they are gone you have to replace them with something else.

*References available upon request.*