

KICK THE HABIT

What you need to know

INTRODUCTION

Most people have a pretty clear idea of what's good for them and what's not.

We all want to eat healthily; get plenty of exercise and not give into bad habits.

But it's not always that easy, especially when at work.

You can probably remember a time when you grabbed a chocolate bar from the vending machine, even though you knew an apple was better for you...

Why do we so often make decisions that aren't really the best choices for us?

When we're busy at work, it can be easy to prioritise workload over wellbeing and you might feel like it's difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle when on the job.

But given most of our waking hours are spent in the workplace, what we do during those hours has a big impact on our overall health.

So let's focus on some of the daily choices you can make that can help your work life be happier, healthier and more productive.

KICK THE HABIT

It's a familiar site: outside an office, a group of workers gather in the smoking area for a cigarette break. Smoking remains a common workplace habit.

Employees from all occupations smoke, and in fact, around 1 billion people use tobacco worldwide.

Far from the harmless office break it's sometimes perceived as, smoking kills up to half of its users, which results in around 6 million smoking related deaths each year.

If you are a smoker, it's really important to consider why you smoke and start to think about quitting.

Giving up smoking is never easy, but it's the most important thing you can do to look after your health and the good news is there is plenty of help available.

This next section will cover some simple steps you can follow:

While some smokers successfully quit by going cold turkey, most people do better with a plan to keep themselves on track. Try the START plan.

S = Set a quit date.

Choose a date within the next two weeks, so you have enough time to prepare without losing your motivation to quit. If you mainly smoke at work, quit on the weekend, so you have a few days to adjust to the change.

T = Tell family, friends, and co-workers that you plan to quit.

Let your friends and family in on your plan to quit smoking and tell them you need their support and encouragement to stop. Look for a quit buddy who wants to stop smoking as well. You can help each other get through the rough times.

A = Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

Most people who begin smoking again do so within the first three months. You can help yourself make it through by preparing ahead for common challenges, such as nicotine withdrawal and cigarette cravings.

R = Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work.

Throw away all of your cigarettes (no emergency pack!), lighters, ashtrays, and matches. Wash your clothes and freshen up anything that smells like smoke. Shampoo your car, clean your drapes and carpet, and steam your furniture.

T = Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit.

Your doctor can prescribe medication to help with withdrawal and suggest other alternatives. If you can't see a doctor, you can get many products over the counter at your local pharmacy or grocery store, including the nicotine patch, nicotine lozenges, and nicotine gum.

No matter how bad the addiction or how powerless you feel, there is hope and help available. Don't give up, even if you've tried and failed before.

FINAL SUMMARY

You now have the tools and information to make some simple adjustments that will help you break any bad work routines and start enjoying a healthy life at work.

However, we do recognise that sometimes factors specific to your workplace, or even outside work, that affect your ability to do your job well can lead to physical and mental health concerns.

The best thing you can do is talk to somebody early on, be it your manager, colleague or HR department, and get the support you need.

The Health and Wellbeing policy is in place to protect and support you whilst at work. So why not set some time aside to read and understand the policy.

Be active, be healthy and be happy at work.

DECLARATION

I have read and understood my employee responsibilities outlined in the Health and Wellbeing policy:

Name

Date