Tobacco Use & Physical Activity

what’s the link?

CAMH Nicotine Dependence Services Fact Sheets

How are tobacco use and physical activity connected?

Smoking affects your ability to get active and to recover from injuries. It damages the lungs, causing:

- Asthma
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing and wheezing
- Less lung growth

Smoking also affects bone growth and makes individuals more vulnerable to fractures.

Why should I get active while quitting tobacco use?

- Delays development of tobacco-related disease and death
- Reduces withdrawal symptoms (e.g., anxiety, irritability)
- Become more likely to quit
- Improves exercise performance
- Helps manage cravings
- Better stress management

Individuals in exercise programs are also more likely to be successful in quitting smoking, and those who are active smoke fewer cigarettes.
How can I get active?

1. Set a goal
2. Create a plan
3. Pick a time and place

On the way, you might stumble across obstacles.

- What if I fail?
- What do others think?
- I've never done this before.

Overcome challenges by:
- Using your support network
- Finding safe and affordable options (e.g., free yoga in the park)
- Starting small (e.g., walking, gardening, and fishing)

You can also try...
- Different activities to see what feels right for you
- Getting into a routine
- Limiting TV, computer, and social media time
- Becoming part of a team
- Challenging a friend to join you
- Walk, bike, or run instead of driving (when possible)
- Spread activity throughout the week
How can I quit using tobacco?

When you are ready, here are a few ways to get started:

- Talk to a health professional.
- Join a support group.
- Eat well.
- Stay active.

Resources

- Smoker’s Helpline (1 877 513-5333)
- Tobacco Atlas (tobaccoatlas.org)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (phac-aspc.gc.ca)
- ParticipACTION (participaction.com)
- EatRight Ontario (eatrightontario.ca)


