STAY STRONG THIS CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS STOP SMOKING SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR NEW QUITTERS



From the Healthworks Stop Smoking Service

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

Plan for your trigger moments

Christmas is full of classic smoking triggers: alcohol, stress, family, boredom, and social pressure.



Before the big days hit, write down these 3 things:

- My biggest Christmas trigger will be:
- My back-up strategy is:
- Who I can message or call if I wobble:

Having your answers ready = fewer surprises and fewer slips

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Manage alcohol like a pro!

Alcohol is the #1 trigger for festive smoking slips



Try the following:

- Choosing drinks you don't associate with smoking (e.g., mulled wine instead of prosecco, mocktails instead of beer).
- Alternating alcoholic drinks with soft drinks.
- Deciding before an event how much you'll drink.

Remember: cigarettes don't magically appear. Alcohol lowers your guard long enough to go looking

Scan Me
Healthworks Stop Smoking

Scan Me
Healthworks Stop Smoking

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Reframe the festive stress

You may think: *"Christmas is stressful I need a cigarette!"*



Try this instead:

- Step into another room and breathe deeply
- Tell yourself *"This will pass, and I'll feel proud I didn't smoke"*
- Make a cup of tea
- Play your favourite Christmas song (loudly!)

Smoking actually raises stress levels by triggering nicotine withdrawal every 30 to 60 minutes

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

Give yourself the gift of distraction

When the sudden urge hits, have your toolkit ready:



DELAY

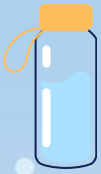
Wait out the urge.
Sometimes a few minutes is all you need!

DEEP BREATHING



Breathe in slowly and deeply.
Then breathe out.
Repeat x 5

Practise the 4D's to get you through a craving



DRINK WATER

Sip water slowly and hold it in your mouth for a while



DISTRACT

Talk to a friend, focus on a task or get up an move around.

Fast distractions:

- Chew gum or mints
- Play a game on your phone
- Step outside for fresh air without smoking
- Scroll photos that remind you why you're quitting

Slower but powerful:

- Start a conversation
- Help in the kitchen
- Go for a quick walk
- Wrap presents
- Do a breathing exercise (4 seconds in, 6 seconds out)

Remember:
Urges peak and pass...
They always pass!

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Celebrate the small wins

You're in your first weeks of quitting.
Every day you don't smoke is a win.



Track your progress:

- Money saved
- Cigarettes not smoked
- Breaths easier
- Hours of life regained

Seeing the numbers climb helps keep the momentum during the festive madness

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

Create a new Christmas ritual

Replacing smoking rituals with cosy, joyful ones helps rewire the habit.



Ideas:

- Lighting a festive candle after meals instead of lighting a cigarette
- A nightly slow walk to look at Christmas lights
- A special herbal tea each morning
- Wrapping presents with music instead of going outside for a smoke
- A Christmas “clean lung” playlist

Have someone ready to text when you get the *“just one won’t hurt”* thoughts

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

Use your support network

You're not meant to do this alone!



Reach out to:

- Your stop-smoking advisor
- A friend you trust
- A family member who will cheer you on
- A WhatsApp buddy who knows what you're doing
- The Healthworks Quit Facebook Group if you live or work in Newcastle



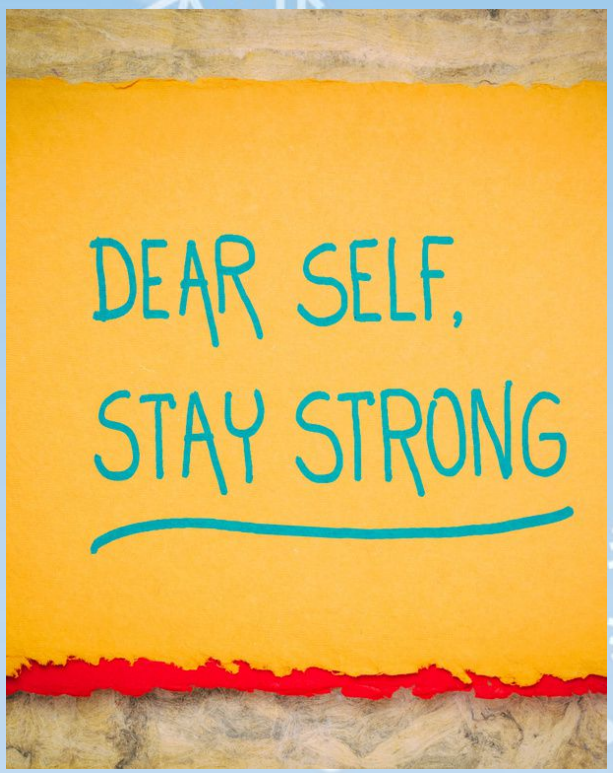
www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

Don’t fear a slip - recover from it

A slip is a moment, not a failure



If it happens:

- Stop immediately - don’t turn it into a pack
- Be kind to yourself
- Review what triggered it
- Get back to your plan within an hour

People who slip and carry on quitting succeed more than people who give up after one cigarette

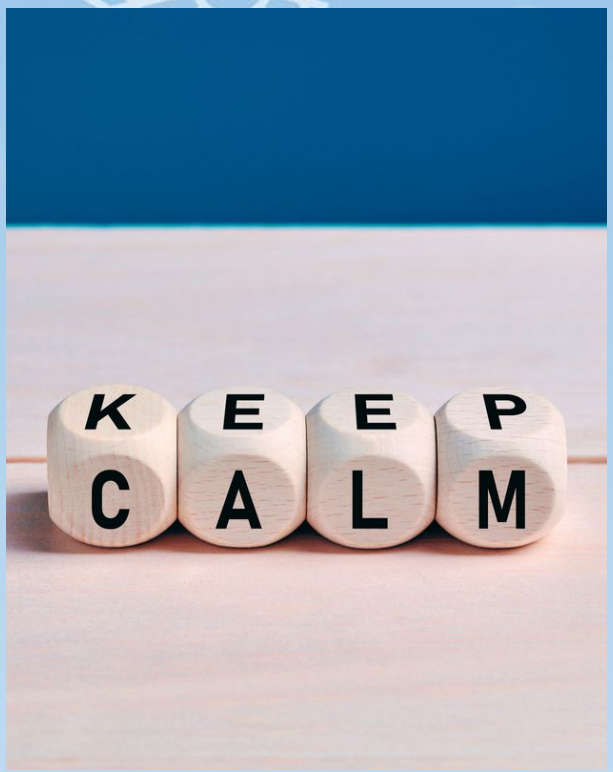
Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Remember Christmas is just a few days

Most of December is actually normal life



Christmas pressure is short - your quit journey is long and incredibly worthwhile.

Imagine:

- Waking up on Christmas morning without coughing
- Feeling proud instead of guilty
- Starting January already weeks into quitting

That's your reality if you get through these few festive hurdles

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking

A final message

You're doing something incredibly brave during the hardest time of the year.

- Every urge resisted is a win.
- Every day you don't smoke is a gift to your future self.
- And come New Year's Day, you'll be miles ahead of everyone starting their resolutions.



You've got this - and you deserve to feel proud!

Visit our stop smoking service webpage and contact the team by scanning the code

www.healthworksne.org.uk

Scan Me

Healthworks Stop Smoking