

BUTT OUT!

Find out how to stay on the non-smoking bandwagon

By Cara Latham

More than 46 million Americans have quit smoking for good, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

If so many people have been successful at their attempts, what is preventing the typical college student from keeping his or her New Year's Resolution of kicking the butt without lapsing?

The simple answer is this: he or she has to really want it.

"The most important thing when it comes to quitting smoking is being ready to do it," said Dr. Valerie Kamin, director of Student Health Services at Rider University. "You have to be motivated, because if you're not there, you're not going to be successful."

Kamin said that some people come to her and say that they're ready to quit, while other people say, "I think I'm ready, but I'm not sure."

"If they think they're ready, they're usually unsuccessful," she said. "They may give it up for the four weeks of smoking cessation, but for the most part, they will go back to it."

Once smokers have decided to quit for good, it can almost be guaranteed that two hours after their last puff, they'll be fiending for those lovely "cancer sticks" again. So what's next?

On occasion, the ever-popular nicotine patches and medications like Wellbutrin and Zyban will work. However, they could do more harm than good.

After the final cigarette, nicotine leaves the human body within 48 hours—for good. If you are up to the challenge, those first two days can be crucial to getting on your way to quitting. Sleep is also a factor, giving you a time frame of 7-8 hours a day where it is easy to resist the urge.

"After 48 hours, you are done with nicotine [for good]," stressed Kamin.

So why do smokers still get cravings?

Things like Zyban or nicotine patches can sometimes act as crutches to many people in finding success, Kamin added, because they get smokers to slowly taper down.

"If you can go 48 hours without a cigarette, there's no more nicotine craving—it's purely psychological."

This is why behavior modification is critical in helping those who are easily subdued into falling into old patterns.

Tabitha (who is not permitted to give out her last name), a counselor with the NJ Tobacco QuitLine, says that noticing things or activities that trigger cravings to smoke is a big step in the right direction.

"When people are able to recognize time frames that trigger them throughout the day, some people can look at different aspects that could help them—they could change around their routines," said Tabitha.

Changing the order in which a person showers or reads the newspaper can help throw off these triggers.

What some people don't realize is that smoking may only be a solution to oral fixations. There are alternatives to aid ex-smokers if this is the case.

"Most smokers need something to do with their hands. Try redirecting your attention elsewhere," said Tabitha. "Some people might chew on gum or hard candy."

Chewing gum is one of the easiest substitutes. Drinking bottled water is also good and it keeps ex-smokers hydrated and full.

A unique alternative is chewing on plastic cigarettes, which last between one and three months and provide the hand-to-mouth simulation of smoking.

A popular brand of dummy cigarettes is Crave Away, a light-free cigarette that gives off a tobacco taste when a smoker inhales, but minus the smoke, tar and nicotine. These alternatives last up to four weeks and can be used along with nicotine patches or gum.

Kamin also recommends Sen-Sen licorice-flavored squares.

"It's a tiny little black square, which has a strong licorice taste—it's an odd flavor," she said. "If you put it on your tongue, and you let it melt in your mouth, it actually gives your mouth the feel that you've had a cigarette."

Some smokers even try picking up knitting or solitaire, something to redirect their attention.

Smoking cessation programs like Fresh Start, which is offered by the American Cancer Society, are highly recommended because they offer help from support groups of people who are trying to quit. Talking to people is a must.

How about that stressful exam time?

The key is to deal with anxiety in other ways. A lot of smokers attribute stress to factors that hinder them from quitting, but they need to realize that everyone deals with stress; some people find other ways to deal. Smoking is not the only answer.

"When you're cramming, leave breaks in between," said Tabitha.

No, not smoke breaks.

"Redirect your attention—make hot tea or go for a walk," she said. "Give yourself an actual break. When you're dealing with feeling pressured, stress management techniques and meditation are different pointers to try out."

Some ex-smokers do yoga or other types of relaxation.

However, scare tactics clearly won't cut it. Despite the known risks and the surplus of educational facts surrounding the dangers of smoking, like cancer, emphysema and heart complications, people usually don't get an actual health scare until later on in their lives.

"Smokers need to realize that very few people will walk away unscathed. When you're 19, 20, 21 years old, you're not going to care about it—you're never going to be old," said Kamin. "But I promise you—you will be."

Attention Students:

If you wish to enroll in a smoking cessation at Rider, try Fresh Start, a four-week program consisting of a group of people who deal with the stress and withdrawal that accompany the process of quitting smoking. Throughout the program, groups are encouraged to stay motivated and discuss strategies to keep their resolutions. Also, beginning the first week of March, a cold turkey themed quitting cessation program will be initiated. To start one of the programs, call x. 5060 or visit the Health Center, located in Poyda Residence Hall.

Campus Corner

FRIDAY

FEB. 18

SEC Film: *Team America*
7:30 p.m., BLC Theater
The Homecoming
8 p.m., Yvonne Theater

TUESDAY

FEB. 22

PCM Faith Matters: The Love and Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr.
7 p.m., Gill Chapel

SATURDAY

FEB. 19

CCM Mass
4 p.m., Gill Chapel
University Ball
6 p.m., Cavalla Room
SEC Double Feature:
Team America & National Lampoon's Vacation
7:30 p.m., BLC Theater
The Homecoming
8 p.m., Yvonne Theater
WCC Monte Carlo Night
8 p.m., Williamson Hall

WEDNESDAY

FEB. 23

PCM Lenten Series and Brown Bag Lunch
12:00 p.m., Gill Chapel
Book Club & Evening with Albert French
TBA., Fireside Lounge

THURSDAY

FEB. 24

SEC Film: *Saw*
7:30 p.m., BLC Theater
Pub Alcohol Night
9 p.m., BLC Pub

SUNDAY

FEB. 20

CCM Mass
11 a.m. and 7 p.m., Gill Chapel
SEC Film: *Team America*
7:30 p.m., BLC Theater

FRIDAY

FEB. 25

SEC Film: *Saw*
7:30 p.m., BLC Theater
The Homecoming
8 p.m., Yvonne Theater
Pub Alcohol Night
9 p.m., BLC Pub
Bronc Buffet
10 p.m., Daly Dining Hall

MONDAY

FEB. 21

PCM "Sunday Worship on Mondays"
5:30 p.m., Gill Chapel
Pub Alcohol Night
9 p.m., BLC Pub