

# STAY STRONG THIS CHRISTMAS

**A CHRISTMAS STOP SMOKING  
SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR NEW QUITTERS**



**From the Healthworks Stop Smoking Service**

[www.healthworksne.org.uk](http://www.healthworksne.org.uk)

# 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**

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# 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**



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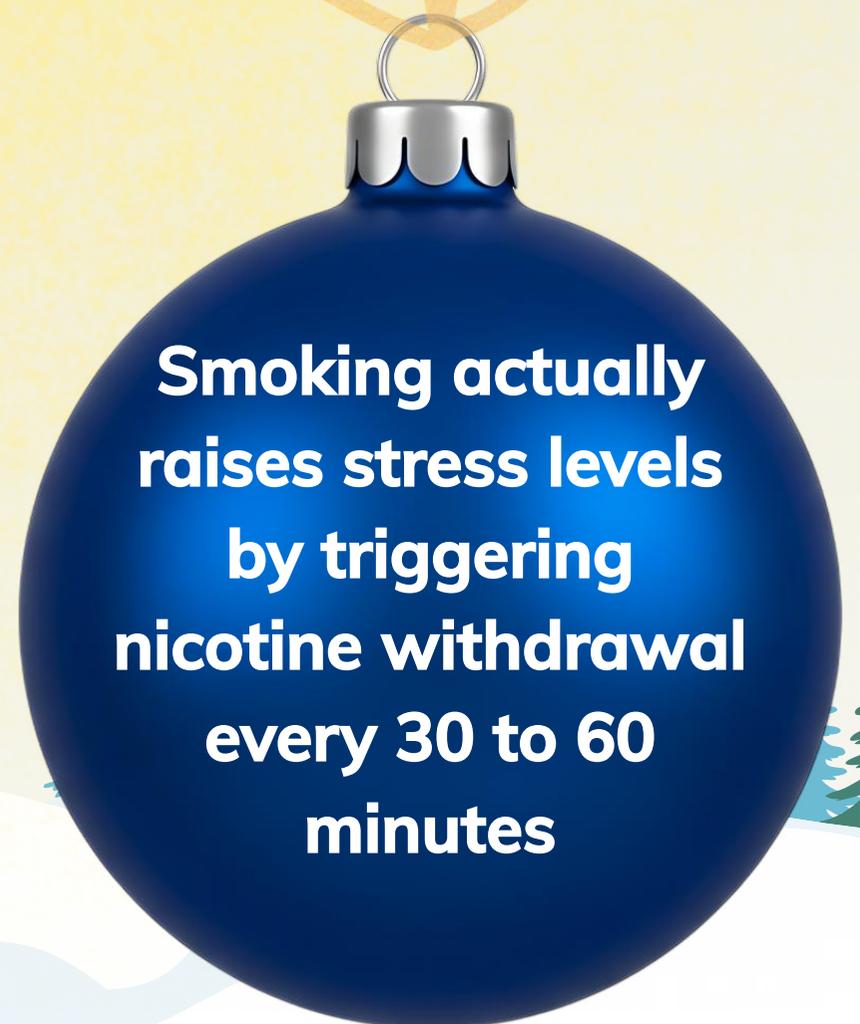
# Reframe the festive stress

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**

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# 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!



## DRINK WATER

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

## DEEP BREATHING



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

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

## DISTRACT



Talk to a friend, focus on a task  
or get up and 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!**

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# 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**

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# 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

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# Use your support network

**You're not meant to do this alone!**



**Reach out to:**

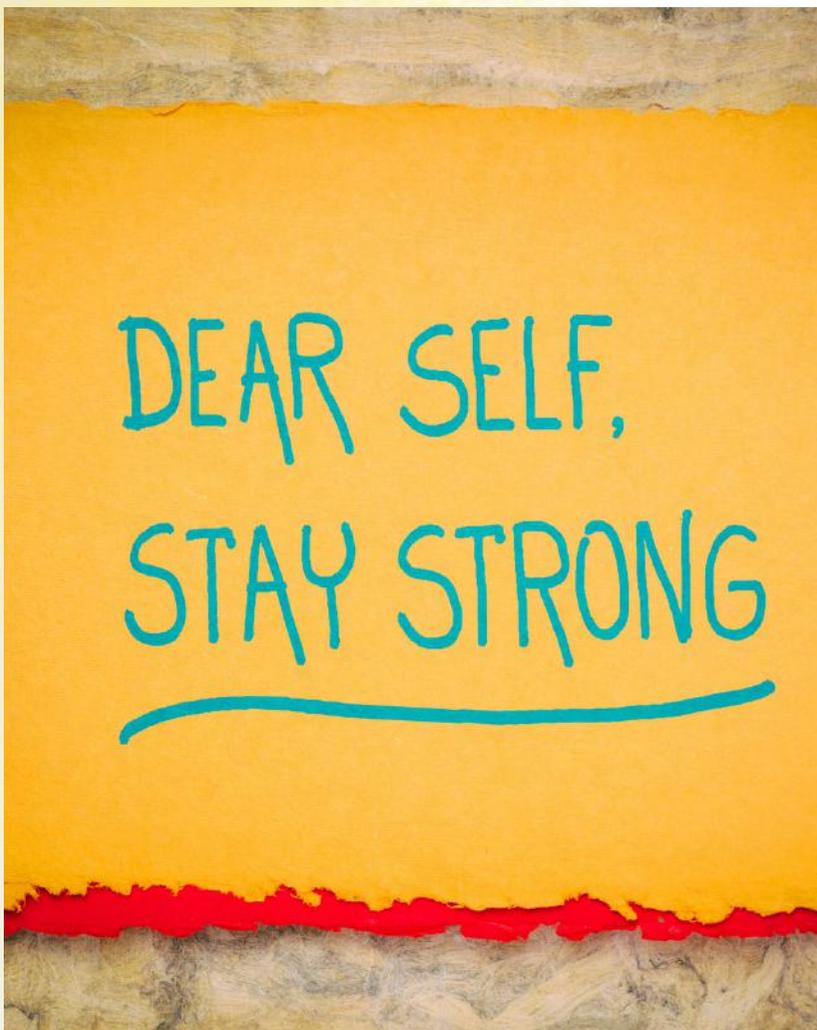
- Your stop-smoking advisor
- A friend you trust
- A family member who will cheer you on
- A WhatsApp buddy who knows what you're doing
- The Healthworks Quit Facebook Group if you live or work in Newcastle



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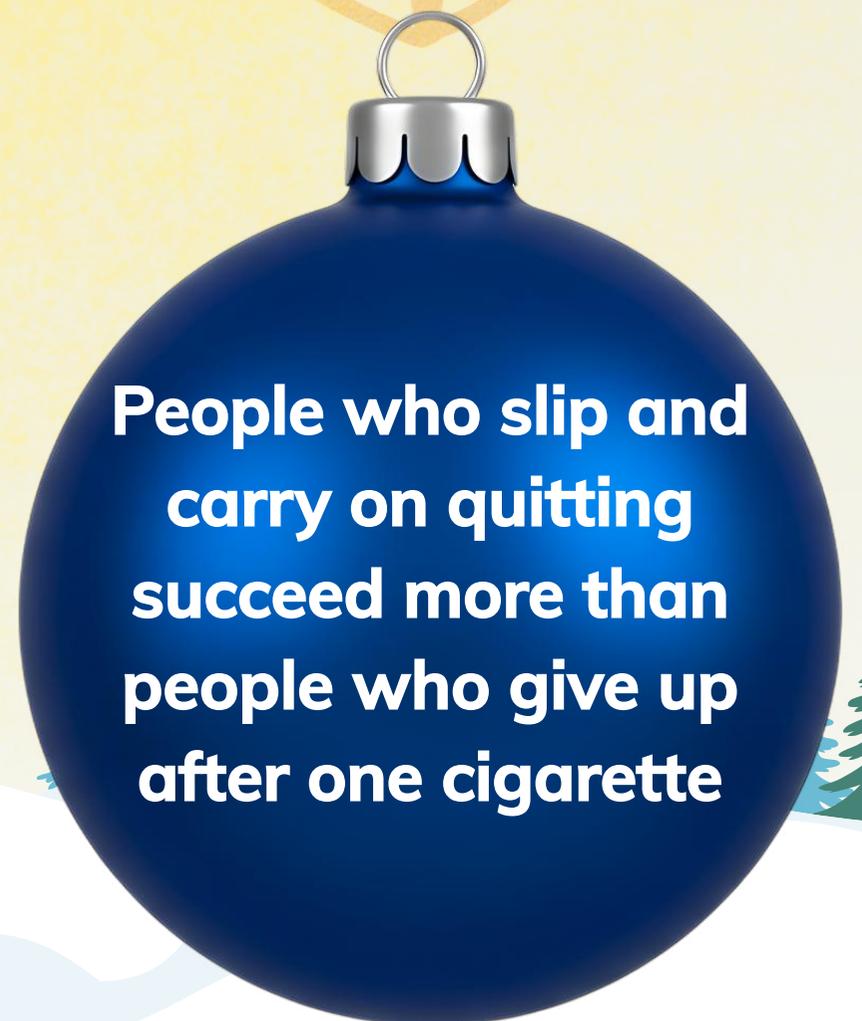
# Don't fear a slip - recover from it

**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**

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# 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

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# 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.



**Join our Quit Community on facebook and visit our stop smoking service webpage by scanning the code**

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