When you’re quitting tobacco and nicotine cravings hit, sometimes they can feel really strong. This is especially true in the beginning. But as with any project with big goals, the key lies in planning ahead and being prepared. You can get control of your cravings for nicotine by remembering the 4 Ds:

**Delay.**
Instead of reaching for a cigarette or chew right away, wait 5 minutes. The urge to smoke or chew will pass whether you give in to it or not. Count to 200, chew some gum, or take a walk. The point is to do anything to put off lighting a cigarette or chewing.

**Drink water.**
When you start itching for nicotine, drink a large glass of water instead. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day, which will keep you feeling hydrated and able to work better. It also helps flush the nicotine from your system.

**Deep breathe.**
When you get the urge to smoke or chew, take deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose, hold the breath while counting to 3, and then breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat 4 or 5 times.

**Do something else.**
Keep your mind off smoking or chewing by doing something you like. See a movie, go for a walk or drive, or work on a hobby or project.
So you’ve got the info you need about how to handle withdrawal symptoms and nicotine cravings. But what about habits, the things that make us human? Some people who use tobacco always do it at specific times or connect it in their minds with certain activities. It can be hard to break habits like these.

But like everything else, planning is key. To help cut the links between your tobacco use and your activities, think about what you’re doing when you use tobacco and what you could do instead. Here are a few examples to get you thinking about it:

**Always have a cigarette with your coffee?**

*Change your routine.* Drink tea or juice instead, eat a piece of fruit, or take a walk when you drink your coffee.

**Always smoke when you go out drinking with friends?**

*Hang out in places that make it harder for you to smoke.* Try spending more time with non-smoking friends or co-workers, and sit in non-smoking parts of restaurants. Ask co-workers and buddies to help by not offering you cigarettes.

**Always chew while you work?**

*Chew something else.* Try sugar-free gum, hard candy, or sunflower seeds. Bring cut-up vegetables or fruit to crunch on and keep your mouth busy. Drink water.