

# Life after cigarettes

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Life without cigarettes is not all doom and gloom. In fact, successful quitters are more satisfied with their lives and feel healthier, both one year and three years afterwards, than those who continue to smoke. That's according to new research by Dr. Megan Piper, from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in the US, and her team. Their work, which looks at whether quitting smoking can improve psychological well-being, is published online in Springer's journal *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*.

There is no doubt that giving up smoking improves health and saves lives. What is less clear is how [quitting smoking](#) affects ex-smokers' quality of life.

Smokers hold strong beliefs about how stopping smoking will reduce their quality of life. Positive experiences of smoking cessation, including improved well-being, could be used by clinicians to educate and motivate individuals to stop smoking.

The authors assessed overall quality of life, health-related quality of life, positive versus [negative emotions](#), [relationship satisfaction](#) and occurrence of stressors among 1,504 smokers taking part in a [smoking cessation](#) trial in the US. Smoking status and quality of life were assessed at both one year and three years post-smoking cessation.

Quality of life measures included health, self-regard, philosophy of life, standard of living, work, recreation, learning, creativity, social service, love relationship, friendships, relationships with children, relationships

with relatives, home, neighborhood, and community.

While some smokers have concerns that their quality of life may deteriorate if they stop smoking, the authors found that smokers who quit successfully, long-term, experience no such deterioration due to quitting. If anything, they see some noticeable improvements. Specifically, compared with those who continued to smoke, quitters scored higher on measures of overall quality of life, health-related quality of life and positive emotions, both one year and three years on. They also felt they had fewer [stressors](#) by the third year.

The authors conclude: "This research provides substantial evidence that quitting smoking benefits well-being compared to continuing smoking. Smokers might believe that quitting will decrease life satisfaction or quality of life - because they believe it disrupts routines, interferes with relationships, leads to a loss of smoking-related pleasure, or because cessation deprives them of a coping strategy. Our findings suggest that, over the long-term, individuals will be happier and more satisfied with their lives if they stop smoking than if they do not."

**More information:** Piper ME et al (2011). Smoking cessation and quality of life: changes in life satisfaction over three years following a quit attempt. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. [DOI 10.1007/s12160-011-9329-2](#)

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