Becoming a detective

Trigger logs

A trigger log can help you.

Identifying your triggers is an important step in the process of changing your behavior around tobacco use.

Even though we experience triggers every day, we are often unaware of them. If you simply try to remember events, you run the risk of forgetting the details—and the details are so important!

Memories can be inaccurate, but words on a page will be just as meaningful next month as they are today. When we write things down, we can begin to see patterns in our behavior.

Take a look at the sample trigger log. When you work on your own log, you don't have to fill in every box in every column—only the ones that seem appropriate to your situation. The important task here is to identify your triggers, write down the information, and look for patterns.

Keep the 5 dependencies in mind and think about how they affect your behavior. You don't have to fill in your log perfectly. Trying to be perfect is one of the reasons that some people find keeping logs to be difficult. Just make some observations and write them down.

As you do this, you will begin to recognize patterns that will help you—particularly during the early stages of your quitting process.

Sample trigger log

Time of day	Place or activity	Who I was with	Thoughts or feelings	Need	Dependency	Intensity of discomfort (1–5)
Early morning	Getting up	Spouse	I need one	I need tobacco to get going	Physical	5
Morning	Driving		I'm bored	Tobacco stimulates me		2
Mid-morning	Taking a break at work	Smoking co-workers	This will relax me	I want to be part of the group	Social	2
Noon	Argument	Spouse	Anger			3
Mid-afternoon			I'm depressed		Emotional	5
Early evening	On phone	Talking to parents	Stressed	It calms me		4
After dinner	Sitting around table	Family	I want my regular after-dinner smoke		Behavioral	1

from Cultivating Health® *Freedom from Tobacco Kit*
©Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest

KAISER PERMANENTE®

229850_1-21

All plans offered and underwritten by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.
500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232. ©2021 Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest

My trigger log

Time of day	Place or activity	Who I was with	Thoughts or feelings	Need	Dependency	Intensity of discomfort (1–5)

from Cultivating Health® *Freedom from Tobacco Kit*
©Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest

KAISER PERMANENTE®

229850_1-21

All plans offered and underwritten by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.
500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232. ©2021 Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest