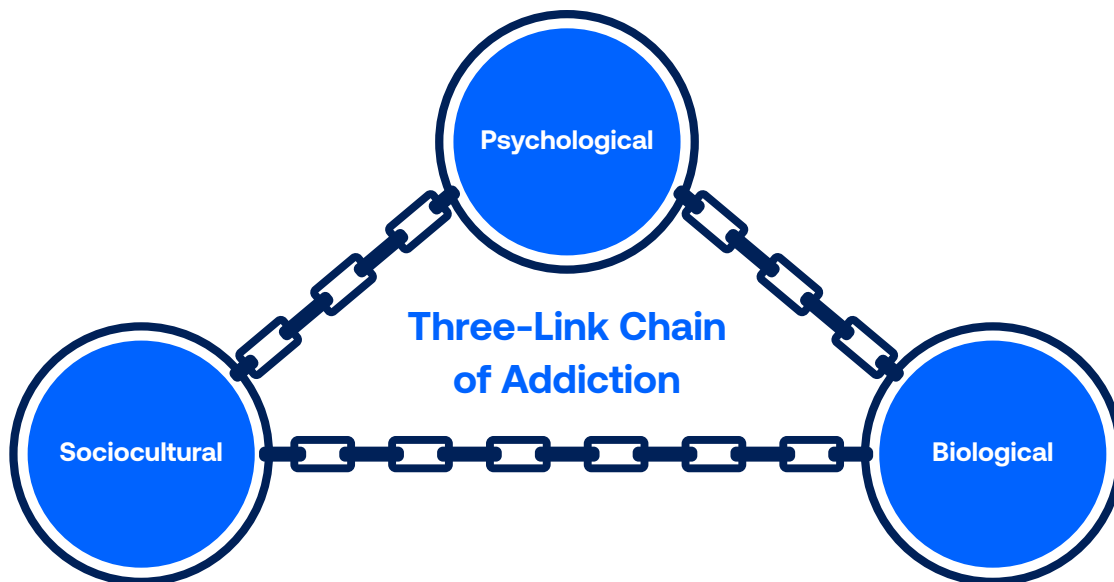


Why It's Hard to Quit

Quitting tobacco use and maintaining abstinence is a learning process and not a single event. Individuals taught themselves how to smoke, vape or chew tobacco products. They practiced so well and so long that it became as automatic a behavior for them as breathing, eating or sleeping. Quitting, then, is also a process.

Individuals must learn to thoughtfully manage nicotine addiction, unlearn their automatic behavior of tobacco use and substitute them with healthy new alternatives. Because tobacco dependence is a chronic condition, Freedom From Smoking® identifies quitting tobacco use and maintaining abstinence as a process in which a person may cycle through multiple periods of relapse and remission before experiencing long-term lifestyle and behavior change. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests 8–11 attempts before quitting permanently.² Many practitioners believe that it takes five to seven attempts.²

It's important to have a plan to address all three challenges associated with quitting.



Psychological (mental) Link of Addiction

Over time, using tobacco products becomes an automatic behavior that needs to be unlearned. Certain activities and environmental cues can trigger the urge to use. After quitting, emotions can overwhelm a quitter. Grief can also play an important role in the quitting process.

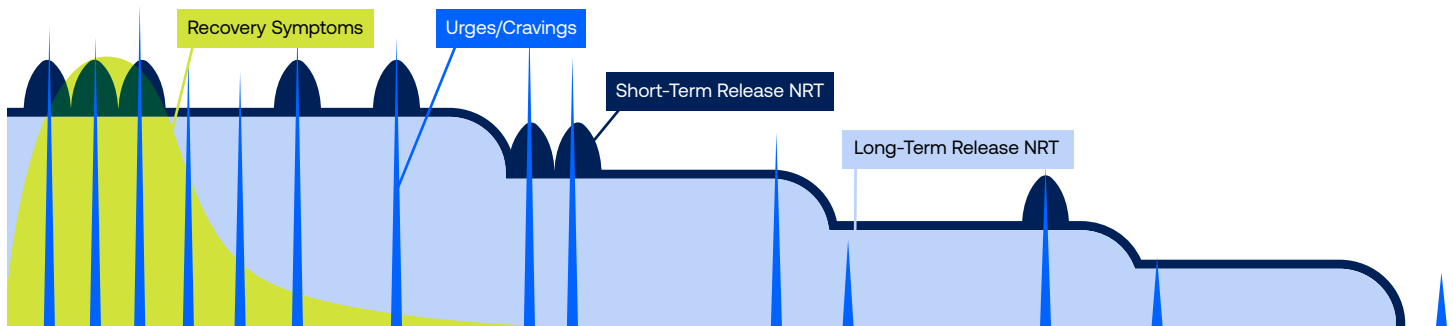
Sociocultural (social and cultural) Link of Addiction

Our natural desire to socialize and fit in with peers can also be a major reason people begin to use tobacco products. As we mature, social factors play a role in our continuing to use. Smoking, vaping or chewing tobacco products with co-workers, friends or family members can provide opportunities to socialize not otherwise available. People who use tobacco products may be reluctant to give up those connections.

Biological (physical) Link of Addiction

Addiction occurs when a substance—like nicotine, alcohol or cocaine—enters the brain and activates the brain's receptors for that substance, producing pleasure. When we quit, our brain's nicotine receptors activate, creating cravings and withdrawal symptoms. But over time, the receptors become inactive, and the withdrawal symptoms and urges to use fade away.

Benefits of Combination Therapy



Medications reduce recovery symptoms and support in cessation. This image highlights the benefits in using combination therapy—for example, both a 24-hour nicotine patch plus a short term, fast-acting lozenge as needed. This ensures all day coverage with the ability to get an extra “boost” when urges hit.

The yellow area represents recovery symptoms. They peak in their intensity during the first few days of quitting. As time goes on, the recovery symptoms become milder and then resolve.

The sharp blue spikes depict urges/cravings which are typically brief, lasting one to two minutes. At first, urges are more frequent and intense. As days and weeks pass in refraining from tobacco use, urges become less intense and less frequent.

The dark blue line showcases the benefit in using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). NRT helps cut down on the intensity of urges/cravings.

The large light blue mountains represent long-term release NRT such as the nicotine patch. You step down to lower and lower doses as you move through your quit journey. The smaller dark blue bumps on top represent short-term release NRT, such as the gum or lozenge. With the nicotine replacement therapy properly in use, individuals experience less intense urges and milder recovery symptoms as their body reverts back to its normal state.

Behavior change is a process. For those individuals wishing to go tobacco-free, it is important that they find their own internal motivation for quitting and remaining abstinent. Whether that motivation be financial reasons, health related, or personal reasons, it is important that a person is quitting because they want to.

To learn more on proven-effective strategies for countering the challenges associated with the three link chain of addiction, visit [Lung.Training](#) and complete the free modules, [Tobacco Basics](#) and [How to Help People Quit](#).

**For more information about quitting tobacco use,
visit the American Lung Association website at [Lung.org](#)
or call the free Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872).**

¹ US Department of Health Human Services. Women and smoking: a report of the surgeon general. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2001. [[Google Scholar](#)]

² Sharecare.com. How often do people try to quit smoking? <http://www.sharecare.com/health/smoking-treatment/how-often-do-people-try-to-quit> (accessed 26 Jul 2013).