

Cutting down gradually vs quitting abruptly on your quit date:

I recommend NOT cutting down gradually before quitting, unless you strongly prefer to do so.

Not only is cutting back gradually often a difficult and frustrating process, but research suggests it may be less effective in the long run than simply quitting “cold turkey” on your planned quit date.

A randomized, controlled trial of 697 smokers funded by the British Heart Foundation divided the smokers into two groups, so that one group quit abruptly on their quit date, and the other gradually cut down prior to their quit date.

At 4 weeks, **39.2%** in the gradual-cessation group were abstinent compared with **49.0%** in the abrupt-cessation group

At 6 months, **15.5%** of the gradual-cessation group were abstinent compared with **22.0%** in the abrupt-cessation group

Participants who preferred gradual cessation were significantly less likely to be abstinent at 4 weeks than those who preferred abrupt cessation (38.3% vs 52.2%; $P = 0.007$).

So you can skip the work of forcing yourself to cut down gradually, and instead focus on mentally preparing for your quit date.

(Note: If you're taking an smoking cessation medication and find you want to smoke less, then by all means, smoke less.)

For more information, see:

<http://annals.org/aim/article-abstract/2501853/gradual-versus-abrupt-smoking-cessation-randomized-controlled-noninferiority-trial>