Its Not Easy to Butt Out

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Mintel uncovers challenges in quitting smoking

Breaking the habit is hard to do. Recent findings from Mintel reveal that two-thirds of regular smokers have tried to quit and failed. Furthermore, nearly 40% of these smokers have tried to quit more than four times but failed every time.

"Everyone knows quitting smoking is tough," comments Billy Hulkower, Senior Analyst at Mintel, "but many people don't realize how hard it actually is. The majority of current smokers have tried to quit but they haven't been successful. It's a difficult battle and people have mixed views on the best methods and products to help them quit.â€•

Mintel found that the overwhelming majority of adults who successfully quit smoking (74%) said they did so by going cold turkey and just stopping the habit. Another 8% reported using nicotine replacement products such as the patch or gum to quit. Six percent successfully quit by slowing cutting back on cigarettes, and just 4% said they quit with the help of an oral prescription medication, according to Mintel.

â€œOur research points to cold turkey as the most successful way to quit smoking,â€• explains Hulkower, â€œbut cold turkey is smokersâ€™ most commonly attempted method for quitting.â€• Mintel found that 81% of people who quit or attempted to quit tried going cold turkey. Only 21% attempted to quit using a nicotine patch, while only 16% tried nicotine gum.

â€œManufacturers need to find new creative ways to get more people to try their nicotine replacement products. The market is definitely ripe for a smoking cessation product or method that helps people learn to live without cigarettes for the long term,â€• states Hulkower.

Approximately one in five Americans smokes cigarettes, despite health warnings, rising cigarette prices and local anti-smoking laws. Cigarettes and tobacco products accounted for over $103 billion in sales last year, while smoking cessation products only pulled in $536 million.