

Clean Ocean Action's ~10 Tips for Smokers~



1. There is no such thing as an “environmentally-friendly” cigarette. Cigarettes are bad for you, others, wildlife, and the environment. Quit Smoking!

2. Never toss or flick cigarette butts into the environment – that’s littering. Cigarette filters are the most common piece of litter collected during beach clean-ups nationally. In just 6 hours, volunteers collected 21,998 cigarette butts during the 2018 COA Beach Sweeps. Nearly 842,837 cigarette filters were found in the US during Ocean Conservancy’s 2018 International Coastal Cleanup Day.

3. Cigarette butts discarded onto streets and sidewalks are washed into storm drains with rain, travel through storm drain systems, and end-up in our waterways and on our beaches. Always use an ashtray or other receptacle, or your pocket, if necessary. *Altoid* tins can be re-used as ashtrays.

4. Tobacco is not a green crop. Tobacco is commonly grown in developing countries, where it is cheap and easy to clear forests to allow for plantations to expand. Also, it is estimated that 600 million trees are cut annually to provide the fuel for the fire that is used to dry tobacco leaves. Tobacco is extremely sensitive to disease, therefore, requires many pesticides, which pollute waterways. In the US, tobacco farmers use an estimated 27 million pounds of pesticides every year. Quit smoking or switch to an organically grown leaf. Organic products, such as American Spirit, are grown without pesticides and fertilizers.

5. Never litter cigarette or e-cigarette related waste. Put cigarette lighters, packages, wrappers, matches, and all single-use plastic e-cigarette waste in the trash bin.

6. Avoid using disposable plastic lighters; invest in a refillable lighter. Also, matches are a great choice for fire as they are biodegradable.



7. Cigarette filters are designed to absorb harmful compounds like cadmium, arsenic, lead, and 162 other chemicals during the smoking process. Just open a used filter to see the toxic substances. Studies show that the toxins released from one cigarette butt left in a gallon of water for one day will kill approximately 80% of aquatic life added to that water. Never throw cigarettes directly into a waterbody.

8. Cigarette butts are deadly to birds, fish, and other wildlife that mistake them for food. The animals that eat filters also ingest and absorb the toxins. Children can also accidentally ingest cigarette butts. Cigarette filters are made from synthetic materials that remain in the environment for as long as 25 years. Make sure to collect and remove cigarette litter if found.

9. Businesses should have a convenient ashtray at their entrances and should sweep up butts and litter from parking lots and sidewalks. If not, make the suggestion.

10. Educate others. Help spread the word by passing on these tips to your friends and family.



Nonpoint source or “pointless” pollution is the #1 cause of coastal water pollution. This pollution has many sources, including stormwater runoff that carries litter, pet waste, fertilizers, pesticides, soil, and waste from leaky sewage systems into waterways. Every time it rains polluted stormwater travels to the nearest storm drain or waterbody that ultimately drains to the ocean. Though people and their everyday habits are often the source of pollution, we can easily become the solution. By making small changes we can make our ocean fishable, swimmable, and healthy.

For more information and the complete 10 Tip Series visit:



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