

Cutting Costs in an Unstable Economy

Car companies and major corporations are not the only ones trying to figure out how to remain solvent in the current economy. Individuals are also struggling with their own personal budgets. Out of necessity, individuals and families are making their own financial plans. One question that cigarette smokers may be asking is, “Do I want butts or bucks?”

Smoking is an expensive habit. What an individual invests in cigarettes per year varies due to the cost of cigarettes that are available, how many cigarettes they smoke a day, and the taxes required to pay on them. The one-pack-a-day smoker who pays \$5/pack is investing \$1,825 a year in his or her smoking habit. A two-pack-a-day person invests \$3,650/year on \$5/pack cigarettes. In families where two members smoke, those costs suddenly double. What do they have to show for their investment? Butts.

For some individuals, \$1,825 represents money that could pay for rent, gas expenses, groceries, or other essential needs for the family. For others, it becomes a choice of cigarettes or some of their wants. For example, let’s take the one-pack-a-day smoker who invests \$1,825 a year in cigarettes. That individual could take that money and buy the following items instead:

iPod Nano	\$170
Laptop computer	\$600
iPhone	\$190
Wii	\$360
Gym membership (1 year)	\$480
CD of choice	<u>\$ 18</u>
Total	\$1,818

Everyone’s want list will vary, but the point is that you can invest in items that have a longer-term value than a cigarette, and those items can enhance your life.

Giving up cigarettes can have a monetary cost to it if the smoker is using nicotine replacement products such as the patch, prescribed drugs, or counseling. However, the long-term savings will be there for you and your family after you quit using tobacco.

According to the American Lung Association, for every smoker who quits, there is a lifetime savings of \$20,000 in tobacco-related health care costs.

So, if you were given \$1,825, what would you buy?



**Cancer Prevention &
Research Institute
of Texas**

I’d Buy:

Cost:
