

# Make a sudden switch

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I remember talking about the dangers of smoking in health class, and one of my classmates told a compelling story. When Emily was born, her parents told her grandmother she wasn't allowed to visit the baby because she was a smoker. She quit cold turkey and never resumed (or at least she hadn't by the time her granddaughter was in 10th grade). Talk about a sudden switch! Surely the grandmother was aware of the dangers of smoking (even if just from the Surgeon General's warning on the package) and perhaps had tried quitting before, but she was able to make this sudden change because the consequences of not changing were just too big.

There are lots of reasons people can make a sudden switch. Sometimes there's a "lightning bolt moment" and all of a sudden, you're doing something completely differently than you were doing before. This was the case for Emily's grandmother. Other times, it's a conscious choice to make a sudden switch.

For about a year, I'd had a consistent routine of working out at the fitness center in town on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. But I really wanted to add more exercise by walking or running on Tuesdays and Thursdays too. Every time I tried this spring summer, I failed, doing it for a day or two and then making a variety of excuses. But when we turned back the clocks on November 5, I made a sudden switch. That Tuesday, I ran (okay, I mostly walked) to the fitness center, walked in to say hello and let them know I was going to start doing that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and then walked out and continued on my way. I've kept it up for a month and see myself easily continuing. One day last week I couldn't exercise in the morning because I had to leave the house so early for a speaking engagement, so I scheduled in a walk in the afternoon (this may sound like an obvious solution, but it's an unprecedented level of fitness planning for me). Now I can say, "I've exercised every weekday since we turned back the clocks."

I'll start your sudden switch story for you: "Ever since I read a blog post about making a sudden switch, I've...."