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Everything You Need to Know to Stop Smoking Now

By Patricia Krenik

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Freedom from Smoking Starts Now

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1. Introduction

More and more people are now becoming aware of the health risks of smoking. This has made the need to find efficient smoking cessation plans more imperative than ever.

There is nothing as important to stopping smoking than a clear-cut decision to quit. Regardless of the reasons you had for doing so, if you have already made the vital decision to quit smoking then well done to you! If you haven't made a decision or have doubts that you can really do it, arm yourself with the dry facts in this book and then talk yourself into it. Convince yourself that you really do need to stop the habit. Deep down you know it is the right course of action.

Those who do decide to be non-smokers will be a part of millions of health-conscious people who have given up tobacco and have decided to stick to this new lifestyle change forever. They will live longer and have a better quality of life.

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. Cigarettes kill more people in this country than do the car accidents, AIDS, alcohol, suicide, homicide, and illicit drugs all taken together. Sadly, many people who have become aware of the reasons to quit smoking and made up their mind, did so too late and are left with some permanent damage such as emphysema.

Reports suggest that around 46.2 million people in the US currently smoke. This is 22.8% of the entire adult population - almost one in every four people. If they continue to smoke, they are likely to become a victim of the atrocious

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effects of tobacco and probably succumb to lung, throat or mouth cancer, the most deadly consequences of smoking. Thus, by quitting smoking, you can drastically reduce the propensity to get cancer and will certainly live a lot healthier and longer life.

The world can be just as healthy as the people in it can. Moreover, as we yearn for the betterment of this world, it is the responsibility of every one of us to strive to improve ourselves on an individual basis.

Quitting smoking will not only cut back the burden of various dreadful tobacco-associated diseases and perk up public health, but will save millions of dollars spent in health care on all these diseases. Smoking prevents athletes from giving their top performance owing to breathlessness. If they quit smoking, they will excel. It is not only athletes, but in every field, whether it is technology, medicine, architecture ... a healthier person can certainly do much better. We can do a lot to make this world a better place to live in just by quitting smoking.

Quitting smoking may not be easy, at least for many people. Nicotine is a tough chemical to give up. Nevertheless, do not dishearten, about 44 million people in US have already given up smoking for good. The challenge that many people face is how to quit smoking. For that, approaching a professional addiction specialist company is the finest way of putting yourself on the right track to a healthier, smoke-free life!

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2. Health Risks

Cigarettes possess over 4,000 chemical compounds, approximately 10% of which are toxic substances (including some that are known carcinogens). A cigarette burns at a temperature of 700° Celsius. This is a temperature high enough to cause the breakdown of tobacco to produce toxic constituents, which liberate into the atmosphere thereafter. Inhalation of these toxic substances over a certain period has various devastating effects on health.

Among the most injurious constituents of cigarette are tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide, which mainly affect your lungs and blood circulatory system. The effect of smoking is dependent on a number of factors, for instance:

- The number of cigarettes you smoke.
- How you smoke? Ironically, the 'side-stream smoke,' which is liberated between puffs, has a higher risk than smoke that you inhale directly. So avoid taking puffs.
- The construction of a cigarette (whether or not it has a filter)
- The method of preparation of tobacco it contains.

Smoking causes various short-term and long-term health hazards. Smokers have 25% greater sick days than the non-smokers do. Studies have revealed that the life span of smokers is seven or eight years shorter than that of the non-smokers.

According to one research study, there were as many as 1,690,000 premature deaths worldwide among the smokers due to cardiovascular problems alone. All these deaths were in a single year. One of the studies came up with an

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interesting calculation--it suggested that each cigarette you smoke takes away seven to eleven minutes from your life.

Smoking has an injurious effect on almost all body parts, but it affects your lungs most adversely.

Here are the effects smoking can have from your head to toe...

Hair – Smoking can stain the hair

Brain -- *Stroke* (a disruption of the blood supply to any of brain's part due to blockage of artery in the brain, invariably damaging the brain tissue); *anxiety* and *addiction*.

Eyes -- The effect smoking can have on eyes range from as mild as *watery eyes* to as dangerous as *cataracts* and *blindness*.

Nose -- *Attenuation of the olfactory sense*; smokers no longer have a strong sense of smell.

Skin -- Smoking often leads to drying out of the skin and premature aging shows up as unwanted wrinkles.

Teeth -- Smokers invariably have *discoloration and loosening of teeth*. Their teeth are also much more susceptible to *plaque formation* and their gums to *gingivitis* than the non-smokers are.

Mouth and Throat -- The most devastating effects of smoking on mouth are *cancer of lips, mouth, larynx and throat*. Among the milder effects is a decrease in sense of taste.

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Hands -- Smokers have poor blood circulation in their hands, and their fingers often get tar stained.

Esophagus – Smoking can cause *cancer of esophagus*, usually of its lining.

Respiration and Lungs -- Smoking has the most injurious effect on the respiratory system. Smokers are as much as twelve times more susceptible to *lung cancer* than the non-smokers are. Moreover, it is only after about 15 years or so of totally quitting the smoking that one's risk for lung cancer becomes the same as that of the non-smokers. There is a rapid decline in the function of lungs among smokers after the age of 35; most smokers develop '*smoker's lung*' (*Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)*) during this age. Initially, they show symptoms like bronchitis, and with the progress of disease, even a little exertion causes breathlessness.

Cardiovascular System -- Smoking also has a profound effect on the cardiovascular (blood circulatory) system. The resting heartbeats of an adult smoker are often two to three beats more than that of the nonsmoker. Smokers have greater chances of hypertension and a heart attack. They are also particularly prone to Atherosclerosis (narrowing and rigidity of arteries due to deposition of fatty material), Coronary thrombosis (formation of a blood clot in the artery that supplies to the heart). Smoking also increases a propensity of a blood clot in the arteries supplying the brain, and that may end in collapse, stroke or paralysis. In the event that the arteries or kidneys are affected, kidney failure might occur.

Liver -- Chances of *liver cancer* are greater among smokers.

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Abdomen — Smoking leads to an increase in *acid formation* and *ulceration*. Smokers are also more prone to *cancer of pancreas, stomach and colon*.

Kidneys and bladder -- Smoking enhances the susceptibility to *cancer of kidney and bladder*.

Male reproductive system -- Men who smoke are at a risk of *impotence*. The sperms they yield are lesser in number, sometimes deformed and can even cause an absence of fertility.

Female reproductive system -- Women smokers have *painful periods* and have menopause much earlier than women who don't smoke. Smoking may also cause *infertility* and *impediment in conception*. Furthermore, smoking during pregnancy holds additional hazards for women. There may be conditions like premature separation of the placenta from the uterus during pregnancy, serious pregnancy problems such as a pregnancy growing outside of the cavity of the uterus, *miscarriage* and *pre-term delivery*.

Bones — Smoking may weaken the bones (especially among women) leading to *osteoporosis*.

Blood: Nicotine present in cigarettes enhances the levels of cholesterol in the blood that may cause atherosclerosis as mentioned before. Smoking also enhances the risk of leukemia.

Immune System: It is also weaker in smokers. Thus, smokers are invariably more *prone to infections*.

Skin: It looks rougher and thicker.

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Legs and feet: Smoking may cause pain in legs and problems like *Buerger's Disease*, which is principally inflammation of the arteries, veins, and nerves in the legs leading to restricted blood flow.

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3. Ways to quit smoking

Cold Turkey

The phrase 'cold turkey' means to quit smoking suddenly, without any preparation or groundwork. The smokers who choose this method do not go for a gradual cutback in number of cigarettes smoked nor do they take any quitting aids such as nicotine patches or gums. They just abruptly cease cigarette consumption.

Although cold turkey is the method that more people try than any other, the success rates are very low with this method.

Strong willpower, determination and self-control are the key to quitting smoking by this method. I could add one other common key; a life-threatening situation. My husband succeeded with the cold turkey method after failing many other attempts to cease the cigarette habit, but not until he really realized that he had to stop smoking or die. Determined people and also desperate people are the ones most likely to win using the cold turkey method. On the other hand, people who come up with excuses like "I'll stop after this cigarette" or, "this is the last pack I'm buying," fall short repetitively and never succeed in giving up tobacco.

Determination is what quitting by the cold turkey method is about. To help you strengthen your will to quit smoking, educate yourself about the injurious effects of tobacco and recall them all each time you experience a craving for cigarette.

The plus to the cold turkey method is that your body becomes free of the nicotine within three days since there is no consumption of nicotine in any

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other form (such as gums, patches or lozenges). Thus, if you are determined and feel confident about being able to conquer your cravings for nicotine, cold turkey may be the method of choice for you. It may take up to twenty-one days to conquer the cravings, but many people are pretty much free of them in ten days. If you can overcome the cravings during that time, you will make it.

You may experience a number of discomforts when you refrain from smoking, but sticking to your goal of freeing yourself from the effects of tobacco/nicotine will help you not reach for a cigarette.

To help you quit smoking with the cold turkey method, I have a few useful tips here:

- Remember that the withdrawal symptoms like tiredness, irritability, etc. that you may experience soon after giving up cigarettes will last for only a few days.
- Drink a lot of water so that the toxic substances wash out from your body.
- Conquer the cravings by closing your eyes and then counting to ten; slowly and simultaneously breathe deeply.
- Use a straw or some other substitute to keep your hands and mouth occupied.
- When you feel a craving for a cigarette, notice that your body is sabotaging you and redirect your attention to something else.

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- Take at least one thousand milligrams of Vitamin C Complex while you are ceasing and desisting your habit. It will ease the withdrawal symptoms.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a technique involving insertion of thin needles of different lengths into the skin to cure numerous conditions. Acupuncturists believe that various energy channels (called meridian lines) run throughout our body in a specific pattern. Inserting needles into these energy channels facilitate the body's electricity to flow in its natural course. After taking an acupuncture treatment, a person experiences a physical and emotional lift. It is this relaxed state that helps one quit smoking.

Nicotine in cigarettes is responsible for addiction. After you smoke, the body retains nicotine which subsequently causes the cravings. Acupuncture therapy actually stimulates your immune system to cleanse this chemical so there are no more cravings.

In one of the studies, a test group of smokers had needles inserted at the 'acupoints' relevant to smoking-linked organs like mouth, lungs and airways. In the control group, which also comprised of smokers, the needle treatment was given in the areas that were not relevant to smoking. Following the treatment, smokers of the test group reported a weaker urge to smoke and their blood contained lesser amounts of smoking-related chemicals.

Hypnosis

Most "quit smoking" programs depend on a person's willpower, and this attribute makes them ineffective for most people. Willpower ebbs and flows

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like emotions and moods; strong one day and weak the next. Hypnosis works by putting people into a relaxed state of mind in which they are more receptive to a suggestion.

Most hypnotherapists offer one or two sessions to quit smoking and a few free follow-up sessions, if needed. A therapist first gathers information about smoker's personal reasons for taking to smoking, "*What purpose did it serve in his life?*" Finally, he works on purging the desire to smoke.

Usually there are two reasons for people to take up smoking: identification or replacement.

Identification is the reason when the person smokes because he admires other people who smoke, such as peers, or celebrities, and wants to be like them. This is especially true when a loved family member smoked.

Also in this category would be what is commonly referred to in our society as "social smoking", the urge to light up with friends and share the experience.

Replacement is when smoking is taken up to replace some other habit, like overeating or to replace something that is lost, such as love, friendship, confidence, self-respect. Or to cure loneliness or fill up emptiness created by worry or monotony. The taste of tobacco or the sense of a cigarette in their mouth gives pleasure to these people. Essentially it is a substitute, and people who smoke for this reason have many "triggers" that they need to learn to spot if they are to effectively not smoke.

Smoking is both a mental and physical process for both identification and replacement smokers. Thus, to be successful, the quit smoking program ought to attend to both these aspects.

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To deal with the mental aspects of smoking, the hypnotherapist takes benefit of the mind's natural aptitude to envisage and picture. The smoker envisages himself to have given up smoking and thereafter be healthier, full of energy and vigor. He can see himself as appearing more attractive, and being more energetic.

To attend to the physical aspect of smoking, the therapist tends to change the perception of the fondness from pleasant to unpleasant. The smoker can envisage cigarettes as unpleasant, disagreeable, foul-smelling and bad tasting. This facilitates him to quit smoking.

Once the smoker has successfully given up smoking, a need is there to reinforce the program that led to quitting to prevent any relapse.

Hypnotherapists deal with this by giving the clients smoking CD's or tapes to take away. The clients are advised to continue reinforcement by themselves.

Not everyone wants to turn over control to the hypnotherapist. Quitting smoking is really best when done with one's own self-determinism. Then one can truly say, "I did it!"

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4. Quitting Smoking Gradually

This method involves quitting smoking gradually, either by gradually cutting down the number of cigarettes you smoke or by switching over to an approach that would produce less nicotine. Thus, there are the following two available options in gradual reduction method (GRM):

Self-control: This involves gradual cut back in the number of cigarettes you smoke. For instance, if you smoke 30 cigarettes a day, you would reduce them to 29 the first day, 28 the second day and so on. Once you are down to around 20 cigarettes a day, you might find it difficult to cut down any further. Probably making the reduction in cigarette consumption more gradual would help you in this situation. You may adopt strategies like enhancing the time gaps between cigarettes you consume or smoking less of each cigarette.

This method is useful for pregnant women or people who are advised not to go for Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT). People who have tried various other methods but failed might also benefit from it. Even if they were not able to attain the goal of total cessation, GRM would drastically reduce their cigarette consumption.

Nicotine Fading: This involves switching over to a strategy that would yield less amounts of nicotine. This maybe done in various ways:

Plastic filter system: A plastic cigarette holder with three or four different filters to trap nicotine is used. The drawback of this method is that people find use of a holder old-fashioned and may become too lazy to clean the holder after every 5 cigarettes.

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Computer monitoring: Wristwatch or hand-held appliances instruct the user when to smoke, gradually cutting back the number of cigarettes. The drawback of this method is that it might instruct you to smoke when you actually do not want to.

Aerating devices: In this method, air is introduced into the smoke stream to dilute it. This is done either by use of filters or by punching holes into the cigarette. The drawback is that smokers take deeper puffs to compensate for the diluted smoke, which is actually more dangerous.

Occlusion fluid: Here, a food-based liquid is put on the cigarette filter just before smoking it to block the quantity of nicotine and tar.

Zyban®

Zyban® is a brand name for the drug known as Bupropion Hydrochloride. It is an anti-depressant drug but works fine as a quit smoking aid as well. A plus of Zyban® is that a smoker, using it as a quitting aid, experiences much less nicotine-linked withdrawal symptoms. Therefore he is able to give up smoking with relative ease. However, it might produce side effects like dry mouth, insomnia, dizziness and (rarely) seizures as well.

Formerly, Zyban® was used as an anti-depressant drug. Its value as a quit smoking aid became apparent when depression patients taking it developed a remarkable lack of interest for smoking. In 1997, the FDA approved the use of Zyban® as an aid to quit smoking.

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Zyban® is not for everyone. The following people must refrain from taking it as a quit smoking aid:

- × If you are taking Wellbutrin® or any other medicine that contains Bupropion HCl
- × If you have an eating disorder
- × If you are pregnant or nursing
- × If you have a history of seizures
- × If you are or recently were on monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI)
- × If you have suddenly discontinued taking sedatives or alcohol

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5. Get someone to quit with you

It is quite likely that you know another smoker who wishes to quit; advise him to quit along with you. Studies reveal that chances of succeeding are greatly enhanced if you join up with a 'quit buddy.'

Two of you can offer support and encouragement to each other by calling up daily or even hourly if necessary. Share with each other what you are going through; assist each other by your cheering words and by lending an ear. You might even exercise together. Exercises are a proven mode to successfully quit smoking and you are more likely to exercise when someone is dependent on you. So find yourself a quit buddy--check with your friends, local hospitals and churches!

Tips: If you smoke Menthol cigarettes, observe that the Menthol may be somewhat addictive, too. Nicotine itself varies in intensity of addiction - people who take a lot of drugs, medicines or street drugs may find it much more difficult to quit than people who only have a cigarette habit. Taking a powdered form of Vitamin C Complex can help with the withdrawal symptoms.

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6. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy involves taking in nicotine in forms other than cigarettes, for instance *patches, gums, lozenges, inhalers, nasal sprays* and gradually tapering off their use. The replacement products offer nicotine much more slowly than cigarettes do. This is done by making it leach, either across your skin (as in the case of patches), or within the membranes of the mouth, (as in case of gums and lozenges). Therefore, with these products, a strong surge of nicotine is missing.

Once the smoker starts using these products, he can resume his daily routine activities comfortably without cigarettes. Typically, he will require the initial level of replacement products for several weeks. During this time, he will become accustomed to handling daily events without cigarettes. Thereafter, he can gradually and more systematically cut back the levels of replacement products to zero amounts.

Nicotine Gum

Nicotine gum (technical term "polacrilex") is a nicotine containing substance that slowly releases nicotine when chewed or placed in between the cheek and gum. The gum gives you much lower amount of nicotine than a cigarette, at the same time decreasing your cravings for cigarettes. You need to stabilize yourself on gums until you habituate to living without your cigarettes and then gradually taper off the amount of gum you chew.

Nicotine gum is not designed to be used as a normal gum. The right way to use it is "*chew and park.*" Chew the gum a few times; it will release a peppery

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taste, which is an indicative of parking the gum. Then place the gum in between your cheek and gum. Park it until you lose the peppery taste; once it is lost chew it again and so on. If you continue to chew it like a normal gum, it will release all its nicotine quickly, which your saliva would absorb almost instantly, leaving you with a horrible stomach ache and the cravings for nicotine would be back again. On the other hand, when you park the gum, it will release nicotine very slowly. A common mistake that most people make is spitting it out too soon. Use each piece for about 30 minutes.

The amount and frequency of gum you need to use varies from brand to brand. Ensure you read all the manufacturer's instructions prior to using the gum. Usually a user is off the product in three to six months (inclusive of the tapering period).

Nicotine gum is not for everyone. The following people must refrain from using them:

- ✗ People with cardiovascular problems like angina, cardiac arrhythmias, myocardial infarction
- ✗ Pregnant or nursing women
- ✗ People with stomach ulcers, hyperthyroidism or diabetes

Warnings

- ✗ Nicotine gum, like all other nicotine replacement products, must be treated with respect. Do not abuse it.
- ✗ Seek your health care professional's advice before using nicotine gum.

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- ✗ Do not take any acidic beverages 15 minutes before or after the use of nicotine gum.

Nicotine Patches

Nicotine patches are self-adhesive strips that contain nicotine andk like a Band-Aid™. You need to apply one patch a day to your skin, which should be clean, non-hairy and dry. The patch releases small quantities of nicotine that is absorbed into your bloodstream through your skin.

Put on the patch in the morning and remove it before sleeping - otherwise it might hamper your sleep. In the beginning, you might need to use the highest strength - 21 mg (the actual amount of nicotine in the patch). This is the usual dose if you were smoking 20 cigarettes a day. Follow the manufacturer's instruction on how long to use the same strength and then gradually taper off (again, according to manufacturer's guide).

The two common side-effects with nicotine patches are local irritation and sleep disturbance. Hydrocortisone cream can relieve skin irritation. Sleep disturbance generally occurs in people who use the patch for 24 hours, so use the patch for perhaps 16 hours only.

If you have any of the following conditions, you must not use patches:

- ✗ Cardiovascular problems like angina, irregular heart beats, hypertension or recent heart attack
- ✗ stomach ulcers
- ✗ thyroid problems

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- × allergies to bandages or medicines
- × skin diseases
- × diabetes
- × kidney or liver disease

Nicotine Lozenges

Nicotine lozenges are hard candies which dissolve and slowly release nicotine into the mouth.

To use a lozenge, put it in your mouth and move it back and forth to allow it to dissolve. Each lozenge should last for about 25-30 minutes. Typically, you can use about 9 lozenges a day during the first 6 weeks and then start tapering off. Do not use lozenges beyond 12 weeks. However, different brands might have different specifications so ensure that you read through the entire manufacturer's instructions.

The common side effects with lozenges are soreness of gums, throat irritation and stomach upset. However, just like the side-effects of other nicotine replacement products, these side-effects are short lived.

Warnings

- Never bite or chew a nicotine lozenge; it will release more nicotine into your mouth.
- Seek a doctor's advice on type, dose and duration of the lozenge you are to use.

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- Patients of Phenylketonurics should avoid nicotine lozenges.

Nicotine Nasal Spray

This is nicotine in an aerosolized form packaged in a spray pump. The user sprays it into their nostrils and the nicotine is quickly absorbed into the nasal membranes. Unlike other replacement products, nicotine is absorbed much faster by this mode, so highly dependent smokers may find this mode particularly attractive.

The usual dose of nicotine nasal spray is 1-2 sprays into both nostrils/hour. Five times each hour or 40 times per day is acceptable but do not go beyond that. Typically, you need to continue your initial dose for a period for eight weeks and then begin to taper off over four to six weeks. However, the dose and duration may vary from product to product, so ensure you follow the instructions supplied with the product.

The common side effects of nasal sprays include nose and throat irritation, cough, sneezing, watery eyes. However, most of these side effects disappear after a week or two.

Warning: Ensure to seek your health care professional's advice before you start taking any of these products. He will take your history into consideration and prescribe you the best available nasal spray.

The Nicotine Inhaler

This is also referred to as "the puffer." It comprises of a slender plastic cartridge containing a porous nicotine plug. When you puff on to the cartridge, nicotine vapors are absorbed via the lining of the mouth. A single cartridge can yield 400 nicotine vapor puffs.

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To use the nicotine inhaler, place it in your mouth and suck in with either deep or shallow breaths. The vaporized nicotine will make its way into your throat. During the first three months of its use, you can use six to sixteen cartridges a day and then start reducing the number during the next six to twelve weeks. Avoid the use of inhalers beyond six months.

The plus of an inhaler is that the handling and inhaling procedure of the cartridge does match the behavioral aspects of smoking. Moreover, the quitting rates with nicotine inhalers are the same as with nicotine gum, patches and Zyban®. However, the method is not without side effects. The most common are irritation of the mouth's lining, runny nose, coughs and digestive problems. Most of these symptoms, however, go away with regular use.

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7. Second Hand Smoke

Secondhand smoking, breathing in of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is also called passive smoking. It is when a person breathes in smoke given off into the environment by other people.

Secondhand smoke or ETS is a combination of side stream smoke coming straight from the burning tobacco and the mainstream smoke that is exhaled by the smoker. It comprises of over 4000 chemical constituents, a large proportion of which are the inducers of respiratory illnesses and around 40 are known or suspected carcinogens. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified ETS as a class A (known human) carcinogen along with other known carcinogens such as arsenic, asbestos and benzene etc.

Secondhand Smoking is Injurious

ETS is unfiltered, thus the levels of carcinogens in it are much more than in smoke inhaled directly by an active smoker. Smoking of a cigarette produces smoke from two major places, mainly from the tip of cigarette and from the rest of the cigarette as the hot vapors liberated through the cigarette and its filter. About 70% to 80 % of ETS is from the burning tip of cigarette and comprises of the highest levels of nicotine, carbon monoxide, tar and various other carcinogens. Therefore, a constant exposure to an ETS is apparently even more injurious than directly smoking a cigarette for an equivalent period.

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Effects of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Immediate effects

Immediate effects of secondhand smoking comprise of eye irritation, cough, sore throat, headache, nausea and dizziness.

Long-term effects

Lung cancer: The major cause of lung cancer among non-smokers is secondhand smoke. One of the studies revealed that hospitality workers who were exposed to secondhand smoke became three times more prone to lung cancer.

Cardiovascular problems: ETS can induce short-term and long-term harm to the heart by decreasing its functional capacity and lowering the capacity of blood to carry oxygen. Some of the chemicals in secondhand smoke can block or harden the arteries, causing problems like atherosclerosis, hypertension and later heart attack. In one of the studies, it was found that secondhand smoking enhances the risk of a heart attack by at least two times.

Stroke: Non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke run at least 80% more risk of stroke than do the non-exposed people.

Asthma: One of the studies revealed that the non-smokers exposed to ETS at work showed at least twice the risk of asthma than the non-exposed people did. Those who were exposed to ETS at home as well, showed as much as five times greater risk for asthma than the non-exposed people did.

In individuals who already suffer from asthma, exposure to ETS can significantly decline their lung function.

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Breast Cancer: Some of the recent studies have revealed ETS to increase the risk of breast cancer among women.

Effects on the fetus: Smoking by a pregnant woman can have various serious consequences on the developing fetus.

- Babies born to women who smoked during their pregnancy have a low birth weight and are often born prematurely.
- Their organs, chiefly the lungs, are smaller than of other babies and these babies are more susceptible to cot death.
- They are more prone to illness all their life and are more likely to become addicted to the tobacco later in their life.

Effect on Children

- Kids that are exposed to secondhand smoke from either parent during the first year of their lives are far more likely to be afflicted with asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, bronchiolitis and other respiratory problems than kids who were not exposed.
- Secondhand smoking may also predispose children to the impairment of the blood circulatory system, behavioral problems and olfactory (nasal) problems.
- It also increases their susceptibility to develop cancer during their adulthood.

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8. You are Quitting Two Habits... Nicotine Addiction and Habit

Most heavy smokers assume that they smoke so much because they are addicted to nicotine. They say that they need to smoke every half an hour or even sooner to satisfy the nicotine cravings. However, the truth is that a large proportion of cigarettes they smoke are out of their 'psychological addiction' or 'habit' to smoke rather than 'physiological addiction' or 'chemical addiction' to nicotine.

Addiction to Nicotine is not merely a physiological addiction. It is a psychological addiction or a habit more than an addiction. Over time, smoking takes the form of a learned unconscious reflex: a habit, done without any thought, many times a day, every day. It is then, the delineation between addiction and habit blurs.

Habit and addiction are two different things. These two can be separated this way; the addiction is to the nicotine and the rest is all habit.

If you are a heavy smoker and seriously addicted to nicotine, you just need four fully smoked cigarettes a day to satisfy your nicotine urges and most of your nicotine addiction. Still, smokers who smoke around 25 cigarettes a day assume that every cigarette they smoke is out of chemical addiction to nicotine. This is just not so. Nicotine is certainly an addictive substance but most cigarettes that heavy smokers smoke are because of their habit to smoke and have a behavioral element associated with them.

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To make the distinction between addiction and habit more clear, let us analyze another example. Some people become addicted to the caffeine present in coffee, just like the nicotine in tobacco. Most of the coffee drinkers claim that they cannot give up drinking coffee because they are addicted to caffeine. If they happen to switch over to decaffeinated coffee, they find they are still unable to quit drinking coffee. Decaffeinated coffee has almost no substance that can cause addiction. So, why are they unable to quit? It is merely a psychological addiction to coffee or the habit of drinking coffee that does not allow them to quit.

Coming back to nicotine again, many people claim they have nicotine addiction even after using a nicotine patch. A patch supplies enough nicotine to the body to satisfy the cravings for nicotine. The only thing missing while using a patch is the physical act of smoking. If these people say that they feel addicted to nicotine, they are actually addicted to the habit of smoking.

Therefore, a smoker smokes out of his habit to smoke and from addiction to nicotine. When you are striving to give up smoking, you need to deal with both in order to be successful, and you need to differentiate between them.

Bear in mind the first step to beat nicotine addiction is to be familiar with all its aspects; physical, emotional, mental, and social. It is only then that you can win the battle against smoking.

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9. Replacing Bad Habits with Good Habits

If we try to understand how big a part our habits play in our lives, we would simply be flabbergasted. We are all creatures of habit. Whatever we do depends largely on our habits. If our habits are good, they help us succeed and step forward in life. If our habits are bad, they invariably cause failures. As they say, “Habit is either the best of servants or the worst of masters.”

Our positive habits pilot our success, helping us up the ladder while our bad habits, such as smoking or self-criticism, shorten our lives and cause failures and let-downs. Usually our bad habits are the hardest things to remove. They stick to us for a long time in spite of our repeated efforts to alleviate them. Vain endeavors to modify them lessen our self-esteem.

So, how do we go about eliminating them?

The only way to break an old, bad habit would be to replace it with a good, more desirable habit. If a new habit is more acceptable, it can conveniently replace the unwanted habit. For instance, one could replace smoking with chewing gum.

Here are the steps to replace a bad habit with a good, more acceptable habit.

- ✓ Identify your bad habit and decide firmly that you do not want it any more. You might consider asking your good friends to point out your undesirable habits.

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- ✓ Once you decide that you want to eliminate a particular habit, take action immediately. If you delay, your intentions might fade away and the old habit could take an even stronger hold.
- ✓ Schedule your bad habit. For instance, if you are trying to stop smoking, let yourself smoke only during a limited period; for instance between 10 am to 11 am.
- ✓ As a next step, replace the old habit with a desirable habit. If you always have a cigarette with your morning coffee, skip the coffee and drink orange juice instead.
- ✓ Sometimes, while we are in the process of making the new habit, the old habit might quietly sneak back. Keep checking on that and, if you find the old habit taking over again, reinforce the new habit with more verve.
- ✓ Avoid focusing on the bad habit. If you do that, your undesirable habit might take a stronger hold instead of being eradicated.
- ✓ Envisage yourself with the positives of a new habit or, alternately, envisage yourself without the negatives of an undesirable habit.
- ✓ Publicize your decisions; let people that you trust know about the new change of habit.
- ✓ Chuck out self-pity. This applies particularly to smoking. You might begin to feel that smoking was supporting or helping you and by quitting it, you are depriving yourself. If self-pity arises, you might resume smoking again so you will never be able to give it up.

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Replacing Habits. Regarding smoking as a habit, here are some suggestions for replacing smoking with a better habit:

- ✓ Try a hobby like woodcarving or whittling, to keep your hands busy.
- ✓ Take a walk after meals instead of smoking.
- ✓ Exercise. Numerous studies show that, if you indulge yourself in exercises or vigorously physical activity, the urge to smoke greatly diminishes. When you get the “urge” to smoke, do ten jumping jacks.

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10. Withdrawal Symptoms

When you first give up smoking, you may feel rather awful for a while. You may experience a set of symptoms designated as “Withdrawal Symptoms”. These symptoms are actually your body’s reaction to lack of nicotine and various other constituents of tobacco, to which it had become addicted after years of usage. When the body is accustomed to having elevated concentrations of a particular substance in the blood and it is abruptly withdrawn, the body expresses its protest by a set of symptoms as it demands that you replace that substance.

Although these symptoms are temporary, they can be pretty uncomfortable while they last. Since most of the nicotine withdrawal symptoms mimic the symptoms of cold or flu, these are given a nickname of “quitter’s flu.”

Here is a list of commonly experienced nicotine withdrawal symptoms. Not all the symptoms are necessarily present; most people experience only some of them. It is a rare case when a quitter gets all these symptoms. However, each individual goes through this course a bit differently. While some might experience more irritability and insomnia, others might have headaches as a major symptom. See your healthcare professional if you are concerned about any of the symptoms you experience soon after quitting smoking or if some symptoms persist.

Headache: These are often occur occasionally through about the first four or five days only.

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Irritability and mood swings: These are closely linked to the physical action of lack of nicotine in your body after you cease smoking and will decrease over one to three weeks.

Indigestion, nausea and diarrhea or constipation: These are some of the most common symptoms, but will last only for the first four or five days.

Coughing: You are likely to have built up muck in your lungs over the period while you were smoking. When you quit smoking, your lungs will tend to clear up, making you feel like coughing.

Sore throat

Fatigue

Feeling dizzy or light headed

Insomnia and enhanced inclination to dream

Increase in appetite and possibly weight gain

Tiredness and lack of concentration

Easing Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms

Get more rest during the first few weeks.

Going for walks and other physical activities.

Focus on your reasons to quit smoking.

Indulge in deep breathing exercises.

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Drink plenty of water. This will help you overcome an increase in appetite and prevent weight gain.

Keep yourself busy. Whenever you find yourself reaching for a cigarette, divert your attention by talking to a friend, going for a walk, reading a book or doing arm exercises.

A good way to get rid of insomnia is to cut back the consumption of tea, coffee or other caffeinated products since caffeine is a known stimulant and can make you sleepless. Drinking plenty of water or fruit juice may make you feel better.

To ease constipation, eat more whole-grain foods and take lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. Vitamin-C can prevent constipation, too.

To cope up with a lack of concentration, get adequate rest and exercise.

Discussing how you feel with your spouse or a close friend may make you feel better.

Do not let the withdrawal symptoms overwhelm you. Remember that these are only temporary and will go away in two or three weeks.

Reward yourself. At the end of each smoke free day, reward yourself for the great job that you are doing. I'm not suggesting that you reward yourself with food, however, unless you want to gain weight.

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11.Easing Worry about Weight Gain

Around 80% of smokers may put on weight after giving up smoking. As compared to women, men are more likely to gain weight after quitting smoking.

The inclination to gain weight after quitting has always been a source of worry to smokers who wish to quit. The fret of putting weight on is so overpowering that many smokers, especially women who otherwise would wish to, never quit smoking. Moreover, many of those who lately gave up smoking resume it again after being overwhelmed by a bathroom scale that bounces up several pounds. The truth is that the gain is rarely permanent and can be avoided by adopting balancing measures such as a healthy diet and an exercise plan.

The causes of weight gain

There are two major causes of weight gain:

1. Nicotine-associated changes in your metabolism (body's food processing system).
2. Increased urge for food.

Nicotine-associated changes in metabolism

Nicotine brings about the release of adrenaline that stimulates the body to release more glucose in the blood. Nicotine also impairs the activity of insulin, whose function is to assimilate blood glucose into a form that can be stored in the body so that the blood glucose level is maintained constantly. Owing to nicotine-associated impairment in the activity of insulin and because of

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adrenaline action, blood glucose levels stay high. When nicotine is absent (after quitting), more of the glucose is available for use and this leads to weight gain. Had nicotine been there, this glucose would have been used up because of the higher metabolic rate (explained in the subsequent point).

Nicotine has a boosting effect on metabolism so, when you quit and there is an absence of nicotine, your metabolic rate drops and you burn a lesser number of calories than when you were smoking. This explains the increase in weight of ex-smokers who actually did not eat much. An effective exercise plan is the best way to prevent weight gain after quitting smoking.

Eating more after quitting smoking

A number of ex-smokers experience a change in their eating habits after quitting smoking. Some of them eat more often in an effort to satisfy their withdrawal cravings. They find nicotine withdrawal and hunger pangs very much alike.

Some ex-smokers might take to eating their favorite snacks to comfort themselves from the withdrawal symptoms, particularly if they are having a tough time managing them.

Many smokers take a cup of coffee and a few cigarettes as their breakfast. When they quit smoking, however, they start eating a proper meal which might lead to them gaining weight.

Many ex-smokers find the taste of food better after they quit smoking so they eat more.

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Tips on preventing weight gain

Some suggestions to maintain your original weight (or even lose a few extra pounds) while you are giving up smoking include:

- ✓ Exercise for about half an hour a day. If possible, include a couple of weight training sessions in your exercise plan, as this will burn your calories faster.
- ✓ Try to satisfy your withdrawal cravings in ways other than eating, such as drinking a glass of water instead of having another snack.
- ✓ If it is an oral craving that bothers you, put non-edible items like a toothpick in your mouth or chew a sugarless gum instead of food.
- ✓ Curtail the consumption of fatty foods; eat more raw vegetables, whole grains and fruits instead.

Consider seeking your healthcare professional or dietitian's advice and help to manage weight gain after giving up cigarettes.

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12. Quit Smoking Tips

Here are some useful tips which could help in your endeavor to quit smoking:

Have faith in yourself. Believe that you can live without tobacco. To encourage yourself, recall the hardest things that you have done in life and realize that quitting cigarettes is no big deal for you.

Get support from your family and friends. Ask them to be helpful and tolerant. Tell them that you might be irritable and maybe irrational as well, explaining to them the reasons for the change in your behavior.

Throw away all your cigarettes.

Write down all the reasons why you want to give up smoking.

Examples;

- ✓ for the sake of your health or your family's health,
- ✓ to save money,
- ✓ to live longer,
- ✓ you do not want to smell bad,
- ✓ to protect the environment.

Keep the list of your reasons with you. Read it every time you get a craving for a cigarette.

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Develop a stance that giving up smoking is for your good. Change your attitude if you think that you are depriving yourself of a cigarette.

You made a decision to quit because you are concerned about yourself.

Don't be overwhelmed by nicotine withdrawal symptoms. They are temporary and will go away, just stick to your decision of not smoking again.

Set yourself a quit date, a day after which you will never light another cigarette. Tell everybody that you are giving up smoking forever. You might even consider a small ceremony in which you will smoke your last cigarette.

Talk to your caregiver about quitting smoking, seeking their help and advice to avoid any impending problem so you have a better chance of quitting.

Do a deep breathing exercise every morning or every time you get cravings for a cigarette. The deep breathing exercise is explained in Chapter 17.

Envisage yourself as a non-smoker while you indulge in breathing exercises.

Imagine yourself:

- ✓ refusing a cigarette offered by someone.
- ✓ a lot healthier, attractive and fit.
- ✓ Imagine people appreciating you a lot more as a non-smoker.

Work on creating your own visualizations as they really help.

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Start collecting the money that you would have spent on cigarettes and use that money buy your loved one or yourself something that you have wanted but felt you couldn't afford.

Request that your family and friends avoid smoking when you are around or just go to another room.

Start an exercise plan. Indulge in vigorous physical activity for at least half an hour daily. Exercising is known to cut back an urge to smoke so you improve your chances to give up smoking.

Educate yourself about all the available methods to quit smoking. Think hard and long, then select a method that you think would be most convenient for you.

If you are a strong willed and determined type of person, perhaps going “cold turkey” would be the method of choice for you. In the end, cold turkey is the easiest and most efficient method of breaking the cigarette habit.

If you think that the gradual cessation method would work better for you, then gradually cut the number of cigarettes you smoke or use nicotine replacement therapy.

Drink plenty of water. It helps to flush nicotine out of your body and the reduction of nicotine cravings.

Discover the triggers of your desire for a cigarette:

? is it the end of a meal?

? when you are on the telephone?

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- ? do you just “have” to light up when you have coffee or a beer?
- ? Do you smoke while driving? (Make sure there are no cigarettes in the car.)
- ? Is it lunch break at work,
- ? sudden upsets,
- ? sitting in a bar,
- ? standing next to someone who is smoking?
- ? Do you always have a cigarette before going to sleep or after sex?

Try to tackle these triggers by some other strategy.

Drink more fruit juice. It supplies antioxidants to hasten the repair of damage that was caused to your system by nicotine, saltpeter, and the other constituents of tobacco.

If you encounter an emergency like a flat tire or illness of a member of your family or any situation that might induce you to smoke, remember smoking is definitely not the solution to your problem. It will create another problem - a nicotine addiction relapse.

Spend your free time at places that prohibit smoking, for instance - movie theatres, libraries etc.

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Purchase a quality Vitamin-C complex, mix at least a teaspoon-full with your orange-juice or other fruit drink every day. You may purchase such a product at <http://www.abcvita.net/vitac.html>

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13. Herbs that Can Help Smokers

Some herbs are particularly helpful when you are quitting smoking. These herbs can help you with different aspects or symptoms of stopping smoking. While some herbs promote cleansing activity and stimulate the body to get rid of nicotine, menthol and other constituents of tobacco faster and more effectively, other herbs relieve different symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. Therefore, with the intake of these herbs, you can avert or lessen the cravings and withdrawal symptoms associated with nicotine.

Here is a list of helpful herbs. Most are available from local health food stores or on-line herbal companies.

Burdock Root: This herb cleans up nicotine deposited in your body.

Echinacea: It helps to resist the cravings for nicotine.

Lobelia: This is one of the most important quit smoking herbs and a major ingredient of many herbal smoking cessation remedies. It has a depressant activity on the central and autonomic nervous system and is helpful against lung diseases such as asthma and bronchitis.

Ginseng: This herb can help you handle nicotine cravings. Ginseng can also help with the lack of concentration that most people experience soon after they quit cigarettes.

Where people have an oral fixation with tobacco, ginseng chew can prove to be great. Since ginseng is believed by many to have anticancer properties, use

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of ginseng chews may help prevent oral cancer, which is one of the most common forms of cancer among smokers and those who chew tobacco.

Golden Seal Root: This help clean your digestive system.

Hyssop: This herb can be especially helpful since it is known to help remove toxins from the lungs. It also relieves constipation.

Kelp: It makes your body rid itself of toxic heavy metals, a number of which are present in tobacco.

Passion Flower: This herb is helpful for symptoms associated with the nervous system, e.g., tension, insomnia and nervousness.

Sarsaparilla: This herb helps prevent weight gain.

Argemone Mexicana: A tea made of leaves of this plant is claimed to be especially helpful to quit smoking.

St John's Wort: This herb is an antidepressant. Some people have reported success in quitting smoking with its use.

Herbs are available in tablets, capsules, tea and essential oils. Enjoy!

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14. Medical Benefits to Quitting Smoking

Tobacco is destructive and deadly with a plethora of exceedingly toxic constituents. It is known to have an injurious effect on almost every system of the body (for details, see chapter 3). This makes the life span of a smoker much shorter than that of a non-smoker; the longer you smoke shorter you live. Of course, there are exceptions. We have all heard of someone who smoked all his life, lived to a ripe old age and never got cancer. However, the odds are heavily against this. Be satisfied with the fact that the human body is amazingly resilient; it can heal a great deal, even after years of exposure to the surfeit of potent toxicants that cigarette smoke is.

Smokers who give up smoking by their thirties can thwart some or all of the peril of smoking-induced diseases and premature death due to these diseases. However, this does not mean that if you quit beyond that age, your efforts are worthless.

Even if you quit smoking at age 60 or over, you will still have many health benefits that continuing to smoker will not give you.

Giving up smoking drastically cuts the health hazards caused by it, irrespective of how heavily you smoke, how impaired your health is or what your age is. The improvement in your health starts within a few hours of quitting cigarettes.

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Here are some key benefits of quitting smoking, starting from the initial couple of hours to 15 years of refraining from smoking.

Within 20 minutes

- ✓ Your blood pressure becomes normal.
- ✓ Pulse rate drops to a normal value.
- ✓ Body temperature of your hands and feet become normal.

Within 8 hours

- ✓ Nicotine levels in your blood decrease to almost half.
- ✓ Carbon monoxide levels in your blood will drop to normal.
- ✓ Oxygen levels in your blood will become normal.
- ✓ “Smoker’s breath” will disappear.

Within 24 hours

- ✓ Chances of a heart attack will decrease.
- ✓ The cilia (minute hair like structures present in lungs that propel the mucus out of lungs) will begin cleaning the tar from your lungs.

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Within 48 hours

- ✓ There will be re-growth of some damaged nerve endings.
- ✓ Your ability to smell and taste will increase.
- ✓ Nicotine will be removed from your body.

Within 72 hours

- ✓ You will breathe much easier.

Within 96 hours

- ✓ You will feel more energetic.
- ✓ You will breathe easier.

Within two weeks to three months

- ✓ Your blood circulation will improve.
- ✓ You will be able to walk more easily.
- ✓ The function of your lungs will perk up by about 30%.
- ✓ You will be able to exercise more easily.

Within one to nine months

- ✓ You will cough less.
- ✓ The congestion of your sinuses will decrease.

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- ✓ Shortness of breath will decrease.
- ✓ The cilia in your lungs will grow back and clear up the lungs.
- ✓ You will feel more energetic.
- ✓ You will feel less tired.

Within three to nine months

- ✓ Your breathing problems such as wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath will lessen.
- ✓ The congestion of your sinuses will improve.
- ✓ Functions of your lungs will improve.

Within one year

- ✓ The risk of coronary heart disease will decrease to half that of a smoker.

Within two years

- ✓ Your heart attack risk drops to near normal.

Within five years

- ✓ Risk of death due to lung cancer will decrease by almost half.
- ✓ Risk of cancer of the throat, mouth and esophagus will be almost half that of a smoker.

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- ✓ Risk of stroke will also drastically reduce.

Within 10 years

- ✓ The precancerous cells will be replaced.
- ✓ Risk of lung cancer death will be similar to that of people who never smoked
- ✓ Risk of cancer of mouth, throat, esophagus, pancreas, kidney, and bladder will lessen.

Within 15 years

Risk of coronary heart disease will be similar to that of a nonsmoker.

Risk of death will be of almost a similar level to people who never smoked

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15. Starting a Daily Journal

Start a daily journal to keep a record about when you smoke, where you smoke most, with whom and why.

Write down everything from big to small, and leave some space to add more to it. In addition to inserting the information about your smoking behavior, add other useful information such as the names and phone numbers of the people who support you and include a list reasons of why you want to quit, preferably in the beginning of your daily journal.

This kind of smoking journal will be helpful to you, both while preparing to quit and even after you have stopped smoking.

Prepare your journal prior to your quit date. Write down the record for four days, which should include two weekdays and one weekend.

Enter:

- The time, place, and situation (what you were doing at the time of an urge for a cigarette) for each time you smoke.
- The level of your cravings for a cigarette

Analyze your data for the four days to determine when it will be hardest for you to refrain from smoking. Think of the ways you can shun these situations. If you cannot, think of what other things you can do rather than smoking.

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Here is a sample of the journal you need to prepare...

Cigarette	Time	Place	Situation	How you were feeling	Craving level(1-5)
1	7:15 pm	In car	On way home	Stressed out	4
2	9:15 pm	Dining table	After dinner	I just like to smoke after the dinner	3
3	2 am	In bed	After sex	Lots of togetherness	
4					

Uses of your daily journal:

Maintaining a daily journal helps you identify your smoking triggers. Once you are aware of triggers you can formulate alternate solutions to the triggers and keep yourself from smoking. This effective strategy makes quitting convenient and permanent.

Another reason for keeping a daily journal is that, if you fail to quit smoking after three or four attempts, you can use that journal with its record of when and why you smoked to guide you when looking at what triggers your smoking urge.

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This gives you an opportunity to find a more effective solution to your smoking craving triggers so that you do not fail with your next attempt to quit.

Sometimes you are able to quit successfully but, after four or five months of quitting you resume smoking again.

The daily journal from your last attempt will show you what helped you and what did not. Think of appropriate solutions to increase the chances of your success next time.

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16. Getting Support from Friends and Family

People whose family and friends assist them to quit are far more likely to succeed in giving up smoking.

If you are a teenager, chances are that your family is unaware of your smoking habit. It is alright if you do not want to let them know about it. However, ensure that you confide in a friend an adult person who you trust or perhaps consider confiding in a counselor. Let them know about your plans and ask them to support you and help you stay motivated.

If you are an adult, your family is probably aware of your smoking habit. Maybe you do not realize, but the support of your loved ones can be very useful in helping you quit. Sometimes your family may be unsure how exactly to help you in such a situation.

Their help with the following can be useful.

- Lend a hand with chores to decrease the daily stress
- If they are smokers, ask them not to offer you a cigarette, not to smoke when you are around or ask them to quit smoking along with you. Chances of quitting greatly improve in the presence of a “buddy”.
- Give you small rewards for each day you spent without smoking—a special hug, a nice dinner, a movie, a small gift.
- Ask them to observe the positives of your quitting and compliment you for the same - a little validation helps a lot.

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- Ask them to look after your child for a couple of hours while you attend yoga classes to practice breathing techniques.
- you can probably also ask one of your family members or friends to learn relaxation techniques along with you (this technique is helpful to combat any kind of stress, so it might help them as well). This can encourage you.
- Ask them to continue to be as caring and loving as they can.

When you give up smoking, you are likely to become irritable, anxious, impatient and crabby. If your family/friends are all non-smokers, they will probably be unaware of what you are going through.

In such circumstances, you are likely to get more irritable and may want to yell at them over trifling disagreements. Never do that! They are just trying to help you.

Instead, tell them exactly what you are going through and what the medical reasons are behind it. Ask them to be patient and non-judgmental when you may appear to be irritable. Tell them plainly that, “It is the nicotine withdrawal which is talking”.

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17. The Basis of a 12 Step Program

Various 12-step programs including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA), Pills Anonymous (PA), and Nicotine Anonymous (NA) are fellowship programs which play an strong role in the recovery process. The first of these was Alcoholics Anonymous, which was developed by a group of alcoholics about 65 years ago.

Thereafter, a number of other programs were formulated to help people that wanted to recover from addiction of alcohol, drugs, smoking and even gambling, by offering the addicted and afflicted simple tools by which to live their lives based on spiritual principles.

Nicotine Anonymous (NA) is a non-profit 12-step fellowship of people helping one another to live their lives without nicotine. It welcomes all people who want freedom from nicotine addiction and would like to quit any form of tobacco or nicotine.

Here is the basis of the 12 step principles that assist people in refraining from nicotine or tobacco products.

Admit powerlessness: Smokers show behaviors like that of other addicts. They continue to smoke despite being aware of its adverse consequences. They fall short to quit through mere willpower.

Ask for help: Smokers use various strategies to quit smoking. For instance, they restrict themselves to smoking a limited number of cigarettes a day, go for low nicotine brands and cut down progressively to meet a set quitting date.

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The users of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that such tactics do not work. They think a better option is to go for outside help. The Steps call this source of help a Higher Power. Some smokers take a Higher Power to be God. For others, the Higher Power may be family members, friends, a quit smoking program, or a Nicotine Anonymous group.

Putting relationships on a new basis: The Twelve Steps help people recover by taking an inventory of the consequences of their smoking in their lives. People are asked questions like:

- How smoking affected them, including their health, finances and personality.
- How does their smoking affect other people?
- What triggers their smoking? And, in addition,
- What temperament flaws, such as impatience, urge them to smoke?

After admitting the answers to these questions to themselves, to a Higher Power and others, people are intensely stimulated to quit smoking. The smokers can follow up by providing suitable compensation to people they have harmed owing to their nicotine addiction.

Nicotine Anonymous offers meetings and literature to people looking forward to quit smoking and those in recovery. More information on NA meetings can be obtained at www.nicotine-anonymous.org

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Here are the Twelve Steps of Nicotine Anonymous

(Source: <http://nica-norcal.org/literature/steps.html>)

1. We admit we were powerless over nicotine – that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human beings the exact nature of our wrongs
6. We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and are willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and promptly admit it when we are wrong

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11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will and the power for us to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to nicotine users and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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18. Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises help the smokers manage their cravings for smoking.

When you quit smoking, there will be moments when your hands fidget to find a cigarette. This will occur most often in situations where you used to smoke.

Instead of thinking that you would have been more comfortable with a cigarette in your current situation,

- ✓ Remind yourself that you have traversed a long path and accomplished a lot.

- ✓ Remind yourself you do not need a cigarette any more.

Probably the best way to get over the cravings for a cigarette is to take a long, deep breath and continue with what you are doing. The cravings will pass without doing anything about them.

Focusing on breathing will allow you to concentrate and will remind you of your commitments.

The urge to smoke nearly always occurs when you find yourself emotionally disturbed. While you smoke, you alter your breathing pattern and this alters your mood as well.

Breathing and mind are closely interlinked - a change in breathing pattern, therefore, changes mood as well. This is the reason that you find smoking comforts you in difficult situations. Instead of comforting yourself by smoking a cigarette, learn the way to breathe that comforts you.

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Here is a way to do that...

Put your left hand on your chest and the right one on your tummy. Breathe in via your nose, letting your tummy inflate. Your right hand will move along with your tummy. While breathing in this manner, you are using your diaphragm and letting air right down into the lungs. Just move your tummy while you breath, keeping the movement of the chest to a minimum. Slowly exhale the air through your nose, taking your tummy as inward as you can. You must aim at taking eight to ten breaths a minute. "One breath" means the complete cycle of both breathing in and breathing out.

Initially, while doing the breathing exercise, you might cough. However, you will be able to do this exercise perfectly within a week or so.

To relax even more while doing this exercise, close your eyes and think of a pleasant experience, serene surroundings and relaxing thoughts.

Once your feel totally relaxed, think about specific parts of your body starting from your head to your toes while doing the breathing exercise. This will help you relax parts of your body.

1. Begin by closing your eyes and start breathing.
2. Take a deep breath and inflate your tummy. As you exhale, focus on muscles in your forehead. Doing this will ease tension in your forehead.
3. Think of your eyes; ease the tension there as you exhale.
4. Think of your face, exhale and release the tension from your face.

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5. Next, think of your neck - allow your shoulders to relax and ease the tension while exhaling.
6. Next, relax your arms and then your legs by breathing in deeply then focusing on these body parts (either arms or legs) and exhaling.
7. Open your eyes when you are done.

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19. Dealing with Stress

These suggestions will help you lessen stress or cope with it better:

- ✓ Practice a deep breathing exercise
- ✓ Meditate
- ✓ Get enough sleep
- ✓ Devote some time to yourself everyday
- ✓ Eat a healthy and nutritious diet
- ✓ Take a lingering bath
- ✓ Share your feelings with someone you trust
- ✓ Get a helping hand in difficult moments
- ✓ Go for a body massage
- ✓ Simply refuse something you know you won't be able to do
- ✓ Indulge in some physical activities such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling, swimming etc.
- ✓ Listen to relaxing music
- ✓ Listen to sounds from nature (waves, running water, chirping of birds.)
- ✓ Do muscle relaxation exercises.

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Find out if there are community classes near you with relaxation programs. Seek a tape or CD to help you relax.

Breathing and Stress Management

Our emotions have a profound effect on breathing. Our breathing is quick and shallow when we become anxious. When we relax, our breathing is slow and deep.

Likewise, our emotions can be influenced by our breathing pattern. We can relieve stress and relax ourselves by altering our breathing pattern.

Usually people smoke when tensed. They find smoking relaxing. This is, to a certain degree, because that while they smoke, their breathing pattern changes and they breathe deeply. If you breathe deeply without a cigarette, you can relax yourself without smoking. Once you become capable of that, then quitting smoking becomes more convenient. When you find yourself in a difficult time and consequently reaching for a cigarette, just divert your thinking and practice deep the breathing exercise.

Practice the breathing exercise as often as you can. The more you indulge in it, the more relaxed you will feel. An effective way to remind yourself about the breathing exercise can be to put a colored spot somewhere that it is easily visible (for instance, on a mirror, window or closet). Every time that you happen to look at the spot, start with the exercise.

The deep breathing exercise is best done while sitting in a chair that supports your back.

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Visualized breathing: While performing deep breathing exercises, close your eyes and breathe slowly in a rhythmic pace. Visualize relaxation coming into your body and tension leaving your body. Envision the breath entering your nostrils, going to your lungs and finally going up your chest and abdominal area.

Next, envision it to be leaving your body in a similar manner. Continue doing so and you will feel relaxed.

Combine relaxation exercises with music: While performing the breathing exercise, switch on your favorite soothing or calming music that improves your mood. Specially made relaxation audio tapes can offer you soothing sounds.

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20. Avoiding the Triggers

A crucial way to quit smoking is identifying and dealing with what stimulates you to smoke.

Most smokers reach for a cigarette spontaneously in particular situation/circumstances, at a particular time or at a particular place. Habits, senses, emotions can “trigger” or turn on the urge to smoke.

To successfully and efficiently quit smoking, become acquainted with your personal triggers and start developing “trigger busters” to lessen the rate and effectiveness of your smoking urges.

To begin with, start keeping a record of the cigarettes you smoke in a day - answering the following questions just as you light up a cigarette.

- ? Where were you when you experienced the urge to smoke?
- ? What else were you doing when you experienced the urge to smoke?
- ? How were you feeling?

Once you know your triggers, work on finding an appropriate alternate solution other than going for a cigarette. This may not be easy for most people since it might mean a complete change of lifestyle.

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Here are some common triggers of smoking with effective alternate solutions to them...

After a meal

- Leave the table immediately after you have finished your meal.
- Go for a walk after a meal
- Indulge in a pleasurable activity, such as watching your favorite TV show.

Drinking coffee

- Try changing your coffee mug, the place where you used to drink coffee and all that you did when you used to smoke while drinking coffee.
- Preferably, have your first cup of coffee at your office.
- Try drinking fruit juice or tea instead of coffee.

Talking on telephone

- When you are at home, use the telephone in a different room than before.
- Keep a small object near your telephone to keep your hands busy.
- Switch hands on the receiver. Make sure there are no cigarettes in reach of the telephone. Better yet, throw out all cigarettes so you won't start hunting for them.

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Between Tasks

- Instead of smoking in between tasks, take a short walk or read a book.

After an argument

- Try avoiding an argument
- Instead of smoking, try walking briskly

In the car

- Empty and clean the ashtray so you don't breath the old ashtray smell.
Keep it closed.
- Play your favorite music while in the car.

When other people smoke around you

- Stay away from the smoking areas at your work or public places.

Work breaks

- Keep away from places where people usually smoke during the break.
- Spend your break time with people who don't smoke.

Parties

- Avoid following friends when they go outside to smoke.
- In case people are smoking indoors, step out and breathe fresh air.

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Alcohol

- Try to give up alcohol, for the first few days at least.
- Change the kind of alcohol you drink.
- Avoid drinking alcohol with your previous glass.
- Drink at a different place.

Stressful situations

- If possible, try to remove yourself from any smoking situation.
- Practice deep breathing exercises.

Social functions:

Talk to people.

Keep yourself busy.

Boredom

- Take a short walk.
- Listen to music or watch your favorite movie/TV show.
- Surf the Internet

End of a workday

- Reward yourself with a pleasurable activity such as a bubble bath.

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Facing a family crisis

- Use a support system.

Watching TV

- Try keeping your hands busy while watching TV.
- Take up knitting.
- Do breathing exercises.

Out of habit

- Keep hands busy with tools or stitching.
- Hold a straw or a pencil in place of a cigarette.

Cigarette ads They may be an important stimulating factor.

- Try reading magazines that do not allow cigarette ads
- Chew gum while reading a magazine or watch a cigarette commercial on TV.

When the alarm goes off

Some people have an urge to smoke soon after they wake up, just as the alarm goes off. If you are one of these people, drink some water instead of smoking.

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Smell of cigarette smoke

If someone around you is smoking and you get cravings from the smell of a cigarette, leave that place. Step out, breathe fresh air, and enjoy the fragrance of flowers.

Particular food

- If you feel like smoking after particular foods, simply avoid that food.

When your hands have nothing to do

- Hold a pencil or straw in your hand to keep it busy.
- Keep your hands busy by working - try pottery, gardening, writing; learn sign language.

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21. You Can Do This!

Most people reckon that quitting smoking is too hard, just next to impossible.

They say;

× "I'm addicted. It is simply beyond my willpower to give up smoking."

Or

× "You have no idea how hard I tried to quit smoking. If I could give up, I'd do it immediately."

The truth is that quitting smoking is not easy for most people. However, you can do this!

Most people succeed in quitting after more than one attempt. So do not despair - you may not be able to quit the first time you try.

If that happens, do not just buy yourself another pack of cigarettes, thinking that you failed and that cigarettes are a part of your life. Patiently think about what was the cause of your let-down. Make strategies that are more potent so you do not fail next time.

Then give it another try.

Remind yourself that it is essential to stop smoking, if you are serious about leading the kind of life that you would like to live. Remind yourself that the quality of your life is going to worsen dramatically as you age, if you don't stop smoking.

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The most important thing you need to have in order to quit is a comprehensive plan and full preparation.

Here is how you go about planning and preparing to quit smoking:

Opting to Quit

Be sure that you want to quit. If you 'opt to quit' rather than 'having to quit' you have a better chance to succeed.

For instance, when you decide to quit out of concern for your health all through your life, you are more likely to succeed than if you are asked to quit, because of your pregnancy or other factors.

In the latter case, chances are that you will resume smoking once you have weaned. In fact, most women who quit smoking because of their pregnancy and nursing just wait until weaning so that they start smoking again.

Therefore, the crucial thing is to opt to quit smoking. Quitting because you 'have to' does not possess the same power or keenness as a freely chosen option.

Tell yourself, "I am a non-smoker."

The reason for stopping

To opt to quit, you need adequate reasons to quit. So, enlist all your reasons - the most obvious reason can be for the sake of your own or your family's health.

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Some other reasons can be:

- √ You want to save money
- √ You want to look more attractive
- √ You don't want to be breathless and exhausted after walking a few steps
- √ Most non-smokers don't want to kiss smokers.
- √ To set a good example for your kids
- √ You do not want to be smelly. Smoking stinks up your breath, hair, skin, clothes, pets, and car. It offends the majority of people.

Keep the list of reasons always with you. It will keep you motivated and help you fight the craving to smoke.

Understanding what you like about smoking

Most people smoke because they feel more relaxed after smoking or they enjoy smoking.

People feel relaxed or enjoy it because smoking suppresses feelings. So be prepared, when you quit, to experience all the unwanted feelings. However, just do not go on expecting them. You will soon adapt and have ways to manage them without smoking.

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How should I stop?

Various methods to quit smoking are described in Chapters 3 and 4. You can choose the one that appears most convenient to you to enhance the chances of your success.

Reward yourself

Therefore, you plan which quitting method would suit you. Next, you need implement your plan of refraining from smoking. To make quitting more successful, reward yourself each time you make it through a stipulated period without a cigarette - buy yourself your favorite music CD or go to the library and find a good book.

Some people take a calendar and put up gold stars for every day they made it through without a cigarette. It works to reward the school children—why not you?

Some more planning

You have your reasons to quit, you have selected a method to use to quit and planned the rewards you will offer yourself.

Now, you need the following additional steps in your planning process.

1. Report your progress to your trusted friend. Ask him/her to be helpful and motivating.
2. Practice visualizing: Every morning, try envisioning yourself as confident, relaxed, successful and contented - not even needing to smoke. Think of yourself as a non-smoker who doesn't need or want a cigarette.

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3. Keep yourself busy to prevent the urge for smoking.

When to quit?

You must quit only when you have firmly decided to quit FOREVER. You are just not going back.

Decide a quit date, which must be only about three to four weeks away. Go ahead with your plan and stick to the quit date.

Staying stopped – make rules to help you stay stopped

Throw out the ashtrays. No more dirty ashtrays! You are not a smoker; you don't need ashtrays. If you have friends that smoke, make sure they smoke outside your house and bring in the butts when they are done to put in the garbage. Don't let them litter the lawn or sidewalk.

Make rules that help you stay a non-smoker and write them down. Stick to them after you quit.

Rule for your hands: "My hands are not permitted to touch a cigarette".

Speak out this rule three or four times aloud every morning.

Rules for your house and surroundings: "Smoking is Prohibited Here".

Rules for your friends and family members who smoke: "Please don't offer me a cigarette." Post it in your house. Post it on your front door.

Being a non-smoker will become a way of life - you will look back and wonder how you ever became so involved in something so stinky. You will notice just how bad cigarettes smell to others, because now you can smell good. You can

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be happy that you have lengthened your life so that your loved ones can have that person around that they care for so very much... YOU!

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