

Stop Smoking – Today!

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Why Stop Smoking?

Do you REALLY need to ask? You'd have to be living under a rock for the past 10 years if you haven't heard the news casts, been bugged by friends and relatives, given the 'talk' by your doctor or read in a magazine all of the nasty things that happen to your body with each and every puff of the cigarette.

But let's assume for a minute that you know the general things that go wrong but you aren't sure what happens to the body on the short term and the long term. Let's take a quick minute to review them to help you find a great reason to stop smoking.

1. You are 10 times more likely to die from cancer of the mouth, throat, and esophagus than those who don't smoke.
2. 12 times more likely to die of lung cancer or some form of lung disease
3. 10 times more likely to die of cancer of the larynx
4. 6 times more likely to die of heart disease
5. 2 times more likely to die of a stroke
6. Tobacco causes more than 430,000 deaths of adults per year in the US
7. 5 million under 18 will die prematurely from smoking related diseases
8. There are over 4,000 chemicals identified in cigarettes – over 43 of which are known to cause cancer in humans
9. Over 3,000 people exposed to passive smoke die of lung cancer each year
10. Between 150,000 and 300,000 children less than 18 months experience lower respiratory illnesses each year with an exacerbation of asthma triggered by smoke.
11. Smoking of any and all cigarettes damages your health
12. Filtered cigarettes don't filter out the chemicals that do the damage

Some Statistics

1. More men smoke than women
2. American Indians or Native Alaskans have a higher rate of smoking than other ethnic groups
3. People with 16 or more years of education are the least likely to smoke.

But there's more

Smoking is an addiction. But then that is fairly obvious to anyone who has ever smoked more than one cigarette and then tried to quit. The addiction goes beyond the body's craving for nicotine, which leaves the blood stream within 48 hours after smoking your last cigarette.

The addiction is pervasive. It is social and psychological in nature as well. Smokers equate a cigarette with stress reduction, weight control, oral fixations, nervous habits and social situations.

So why, when this habit seems to invade every part of a persons life, should you stop smoking? There are numerous reasons from health, to social, to psychological, to biological. And though there are many reasons here about why should I stop smoking, you'll probably be able name 10 others that are personal to your life.

Let's start with the physical reasons why should I stop smoking.

Smoking affects the condition of your lungs. The bronchioles and bronchiole tree become inflamed and swollen which decreases your ability to take in adequate amounts of oxygen.

The swollen cells secrete liquid which causes the wheezing and smokers hack and cough.

Each cigarette contains over 100 toxic chemicals and carcinogenic chemicals that change the chemistry of your body.

When you breath in the smoke you are also taking in carbon monoxide. This chemical takes up space on the hemoglobin that is normally taken by oxygen. By taking up this space you don't have enough oxygen in your body and experience fatigue.

The constant inflammation of the cells in your lungs decreases your ability to breathe and increases your risk for lung cancer.

Smoking increases your blood pressure. This increase affects your risk of heart attack and stroke, which is significantly greater than that of a non-smoker of any age, gender or race.

Smoking leads to emphysema, high blood pressure, fatigue, shortness of breath, heart failure, stroke, heart attack, lung cancer and death.

Moving on to the social aspects of why I should stop smoking. At the top of the list is usually that a loved one can't stand to watch you kill yourself.

The habit is dirty, leaving ashes and soot all over your clothes and your home.

Smoking smells bad – both to those around you and anyone who may be thinking about kissing you.

Smoke damages the paint on the walls and permeates the cloth cushions on any furniture as well as the clothes you wear.

Most public buildings no longer allow smoking inside.

Many employers and insurance companies will discriminate against smokers – let's face it – they have a high illness rate and a higher risk of catastrophic illness. Your insurance company charges higher rates for smokers and employers who have a low ratio of smokers who work at the company pay lower insurance rates.

Cigarettes cost well over \$30.00 per week. That's another \$1560.00 per year that you could spend on gas in your car, taking your girl friend out to eat, or buying yourself a new wardrobe.

On the psychological end of things cigarettes are a poor substitute for stress reduction since the nicotine doesn't reduce your stress but makes your body work harder instead.

You aren't able to use this 'stress reduction' technique in all situations which leaves you unable to cope in certain situations.

You are reliant on a product that is killing you to make you look cool and reduce the stress you are feeling.

These are just a few reason why should I stop smoking. I am sure with just a couple of minutes you'll be able to come up with 5 more that fit your particular situation. Don't wait.

Why Start Smoking?

Psychologists have identified several reasons why people pick up a cigarette in the first place. Once in the hand it becomes very difficult for people to put them back down again.

Researchers have also found that college students who smoke socially – while out with friends – but not the rest of the day don't view themselves as smokers. That means that stop smoking programs and protocols don't affect them because they don't see themselves as smokers.

People start smoking because cigarettes give them:

1. A sudden burst of energy to combat stress
2. A means of concentration
3. Overcome frustration
4. Bridge the gap between what we want and what is reality
5. Friends are addicted
6. Style
7. Avoid boredom

8. Tradition in the family
9. To enjoy the rush of adrenalin

Know Your Enemy

Nicotine creates a biochemical reaction in your body that has an immediate effect on your mood, your ability to reason, and your metabolism. Even if you only smoke a few cigarettes a day your body feels the results and side effects of the more than 4,000 chemicals being pumped in through the lungs.

The more that you smoke, the higher the level of chemical dependency that is reached. Light smokers also become dependent on cigarettes through a physical dependency on the nicotine as well as the psychological and stress related dependency on the act of smoking.

It is only a matter of seconds after that first puff that nicotine starts to have an effect on your central nervous system, and the rest of your body. Certain areas of the brain, when stimulated by nicotine, help you think more clearly. Other areas of the brain lie in a pleasure center which when stimulated can make you feel more relaxed and less anxious.

Nicotine also affects the hormones produced by the body, which creates a chemical dependency to nicotine and the accompanying craving. Heavy smokers have become dependent on heightened levels of hormones, stimulated by nicotine, which can have an addictive quality. They need a cigarette at certain intervals of time. After the stimulation of the hormones starts to fall, they need another cigarette to bring them back into the comfort zone. If they do not get that cigarette, the craving begins.

Interestingly when you smoke and exhale all of the smoke you dragged into your lungs with each puff isn't exhaled. It takes several hours to rid the lungs of the last cigarette – some say 24 hours. And we all know that smokers don't wait 24 hours between each cigarette!

In an experiment the nicotine and tar of 2,000 cigarettes were collected (10 cigarettes a day for 6 months; 20 cigarettes a day for 3 months). Researchers found that diluted further and painted once on the skin of mice cancer developed on 60% of the animals within a year.

Considering that many chemicals are banned when they cause cancer in 5% of the time this statistic is extraordinary.

Nicotine also will cause an initial release of adrenaline, a fight or flight hormone. This will cause the heart rate to increase, increase blood pressure and cause rapid shallow breathing. It also tells the body to dump more glucose into the blood stream to help

defend you and blocks the release of insulin which will help the cells take up the glucose in the blood. Smokers often feel that cigarettes are an appetite suppressant and this may be the reason. When there is a hyperglycemic effect, more glucose in the blood, this may suppress the appetite of the smoker.

Nicotine may also slightly increase the basal metabolic rate – or the base rate at which the metabolism runs and burns calories. However, exercise will also increase the basal metabolic rate while not causing the damaging health effects that smoke does.

In the long run nicotine and the other chemicals will also increase the level of bad cholesterol (LDL) that damages your arteries. This increases the likelihood that the smoker will have a heart attack or stroke.

In fact, one myth that has been perpetuated for years is that smokers have a higher risk of death from lung cancer. While their risk of developing lung cancer is much higher than the general population they are also at a much higher risk and have a much higher rate of death from circulatory issues such as heart attack or stroke.

Nicotine also has an effect on the brain and its function. Like a computer your brain process information and then stores it for future use. In a computer this information is stored in the form of electricity while in the brain neurons are the cells that transfer and integrate that information. Each neuron has thousands of bits of input from other neurons in proximity in the brain. These signals help the neuron to calculate if the signal it receives will be passed to other neurons in the pathway.

The signals that run through the neurons are conducted as electrical current but between neurons there are chemical transmitters called neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters move over the space between the two neurons and fit into a special receptor in the cell. Once in place they set in play a physiological change that allows the neuron to send the signal.

Each neurotransmitter has a specific family of receptors or places to bind on the cell. Nicotine works by inserting into a receptor that normally takes acetylcholine. Depending upon the area of the body acetylcholine is responsible for delivering signals from the brain to the muscle, controls heart beat and breathing, oversees the flow of information in the brain and plays a role in learning and memory.

Nicotine will lead to a burst of activity in those receptors but there is no regulation to the distribution of the chemical like there is for acetylcholine when the body releases it. This increased stimulation will lead to an increased amount of body and brain action that the smoker interprets as a way of re-energizing themselves. Using these pathways reaction time and ability to pay attention will improve.

Stimulating these neurons will also promote the release of dopamine in the reward pathway of the brain. Simply put these chemicals make you feel pleasure and feel good which encourages the smoker to seek that peace and happy feeling again and again. It

will also increase the release of glutamate which is a transmitter involved in learning and memory. Researchers have found that glutamate may create a memory loop of the good feelings that you receive from the nicotine and further drive the desire to use the source of the drug.

Nicotine may cause all of these effects in the body but it is only ONE of the over 4,000 chemicals KNOWN to be in cigarette smoke. The real damage that happens to the lungs happens from the smoke itself. While inhaling smoke particles are also deposited into the lungs. These particles are bits of hydrocarbon that damage the lung tissue and cause cancer.

These particles are deposited into the alveoli (small air sacs in the lungs) and because of their weight they do not leave. The body scrambles quickly to try to neutralize the hydrocarbons and other chemicals that are deposited but unless the smoker smokes only one cigarette every 3 days the body is unable to keep up the housekeeping duties.

Why People Smoke

People give many reasons that they keep smoking – all of which can be refuted. Here's the short list:

Because I like smoking
Because I'm self destructive
Because I'm a smoke-a-holic
To relieve my stress
It's safe with filters
I can quit anytime
I can't quit
Quitting is a fate worse than death
I've smoked so much and so long what's the point in quitting now?

But the real question is – Have you found your reason to quit smoking?

There are only two questions you need to ask and have answered in order to assure your success in quitting.

1. Do you WANT to quit?
2. How will you address the urges when they happen?

The first question will be the reason you quit. It will carry you through the rough times when the urges may become intense or you watch your old friends smoking. But you will KNOW why you are quitting and you'll stick with it.

It might be that you wake up one morning and realize that you're slowly killing yourself.

You might have suffered through a three or four day cold without being able to smoke, and realizing that you've gotten through the worst of the physical withdrawal, just continue.

You might be asked by your spouse or your children and realize that you can make a difference in their lives by modeling strength.

The reason doesn't have to matter to anyone but yourself. And no one else really needs to know what the reason is. But you must have a reason that is powerful, strong and pulls at you.

And the second question – what will you do to address the urges when they do come? That answer lies in your willingness to try things that are designed to help you instead of just 'toughing it out'. Winners ask for help, find ways around their problems and get answers.

Nicotine - The Drug

Nicotine is only one of the more than 4,000 chemicals found in tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco. Nicotine is the primary component of tobacco that works in the brain on the neurological system.

It is an alkaloid found in liquid form made out of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen and sometimes oxygen. Their potent effect on the human body is also shared with another alkaloid that people enjoy many mornings – caffeine.

Nicotine is addictive and is recognized by experts as the most frequently used addictive drug. It is a naturally occurring substance – meaning that it isn't manufactured in a lab. Nicotine, the drug, is a colorless liquid that turns brown when it's burned and acquires the odor of tobacco when it's exposed to air.

Nicotine was first identified in the early 1800's and since that time has been studied extensively. Researchers have discovered that it has a number of complex and sometimes unpredictable effects on the brain and the body of those who ingest it.

Nicotine mimics the affect of acetylcholine (a nerve signal transmitter) and it acts primarily on the autonomic nervous system – that part of the nervous system that cares for the automatic parts of living such as fight or flight, heart rate and hormonal release.

A large dose of nicotine, greater than found in tobacco products, can cause respiratory failure and paralysis – smaller amounts can cause dizziness, nausea, low blood pressure and heart palpitations.

Although nicotine is found in all tobacco products cigarettes are the most common form of nicotine addiction in the U.S. Most of the cigarettes sold over the counter today contain 10 milligrams or more of nicotine. When inhaling cigarette smoke the average smoker will take in between 1 and 2 mg of nicotine per cigarette.

This small amount of nicotine will cause blood vessel constriction, increased heart rate, and confers a feeling of well-being and alertness in the smoker.

Nicotine is a drug that is absorbed in a variety of ways. It can reach the blood stream through the mucosal lining of the mouth, through the skin, or absorbed through the lungs. Depending upon how the drug is ingested it reaches the bloodstream and brain very rapidly – a matter of seconds.

Because cigar and pipe smokers typically do not ‘inhale’ the smoke they absorb the nicotine through the mucosal membranes of the mouth while the smoke is in their mouth. This method is also the means of absorption of nicotine from smokeless tobacco products.

Addiction to nicotine is characterized by compulsive drug-seeking behavior and use, even in the face of very negative health consequences. Researchers have documented that tobacco smokers can verbalize that smoking is harmful to their health and nearly 35 million people make a serious attempt to quit each and every year. Unfortunately for each that successfully quits there are more that are learning this hazardous addiction.

The physiological addiction to nicotine is linked to the increase in the flow of dopamine in the user’s body. This increases a feeling of pleasure in the user with a desire to maintain the feeling. When the level of nicotine in the body drops the smoker feels withdrawal symptoms which can include difficulty sleeping, irritability, and increased anxiety.

These symptoms can be unpleasant enough that without support a smoker will resume the habit in an effort to raise the levels of nicotine in the body.

Once absorbed into the body nicotine is removed through several steps. About 80% is broken down by an enzyme in the liver and excreted through the kidneys (urine). This enzyme has a half-life of 24 hours so you can test if someone has smoked in the last 2 days by screening the urine.

The remaining 20% is filtered through the kidneys and excreted in the urine with the nicotine that was broken down by the enzymes in the liver. There are some people who have a genetic mutation in which the enzyme that breaks down nicotine isn’t as effective. While most smokers will inhale throughout the day to keep the level of nicotine in their bodies high, these smokers will use less cigarettes because they don’t need as many.

What Happens to your Lungs When You Stop Smoking?

Smoking is a dirty habit that results in poor lung capacity, lung cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure. There are plenty of reasons to stop smoking and none to continue. One of the ways to become motivated to stop is to learn what happens to your lungs when you stop smoking.

It may seem that the benefits of quitting are far away. After all you don't have lung cancer yet. Your heart seems to be working just fine. You don't need blood pressure medication yet. But there is a timeline of events that happens to your body as you benefit from quitting smoking. That time line begins within 20 minutes of having smoked your last cigarette!

In the first 20 minutes your blood pressure will drop back to a normal level. If you've been smoking for years blood pressure may take longer to return to normal levels.

In the first eight hours what happens to your lungs when you stop smoking? The carbon monoxide gas that has dissolved in your blood stream will drop by half and the oxygen levels will return to normal. Carbon monoxide is a toxic gas that takes up room on the hemoglobin in your blood and doesn't allow your blood to carry as much oxygen. Carbon monoxide can't be used by the body and will decrease your trigger to breath deeply.

After the first 48 hours your chances of having a heart attack actually decrease. By this time all of the nicotine has left your body and your sense of taste and smell should be returning to a normal level. All of the changes up to this point should help you to maintain your desire to quit smoking.

By hour 72 your bronchial tubes, which have been constricted from the toxic fumes and gases from the cigarettes, will have relaxed and your energy levels will increase. You are able to breathe in more oxygen and your blood can now carry it to the cells in your body. This increases your energy level and gives you a feeling of well-being and health.

After the first 2 weeks your circulation will improve and will continue to show improvements for the next 10 weeks. Overlapping this time period is the three to ninth month period when your coughing, wheezing and breathing problems will decrease as your lung capacity will improve by 10%.

Throughout the next year you'll continue to feel the improvements as your body heals from the attack of the toxic chemicals. In 1 year your risk of heart attack has dropped by half and by 5 years your risk of stroke will return to that of a non-smoker. By 10 years of quitting your lungs will have healed enough that your risk of lung cancer returns to that of a non-smoker and by year 15 your risk of heart attack returns to that of a non-smoker.

It is important to realize what happens to your lungs when you stop smoking so that you remain motivated to continue your program and live a long and healthy life!

Smoking is a Drug Addiction

Smoking is a drug addiction. Just like heroin or cocaine produces drug seeking behavior and has negative effects on the body so does nicotine. What makes it different is that it is legal. And that is the only difference. Heroin and cocaine have similar dangerous affects on the health of the user but they are illegal. Nicotine produces a “manageable” high and is legal.

Physiological dependence includes an increased tolerance to the drug, dependence on the drug for body functions and withdrawal symptoms if the drug is withdrawn. Psychological dependence includes a number of reasons that smokers say they continue to smoke – tension reduction, habit, craving (also physiological), pleasure, stimulation and handling. Others have addictive social behaviors that are related to their specific social activities.

Other aspects of nicotine that have been found is that it is 1000 times more potent than alcohol, 10-100 times more potent than barbiturates and 5-10 times more potent than cocaine or morphine!

A smoker who inhales 1-2 packs per day takes approximately 200 to 400 hits daily for years. This consistent intake of a fast acting drug produces dependence on the drug.

What are the Steps?

The steps to quitting can be simple or they may be more complex. A simple approach might be to wake up one morning and determine that this day is your last day to smoke. Today you are quitting.

This approach – commonly referred to as cold turkey – can be an effective method over the long haul. But when quitting you don't have to quit alone. And falling short of the goal doesn't mean complete failure.

The goal is to fail forward. In other words, know your enemy, plan for the eventual and possible slip up and then plan for your next actions. Learn from the slip up and change your behavior to accommodate the problem you encountered.

Another approach is to plan your quit date, set up your support systems and go for it! (A discussion of support systems is below).

For now understand that those who use support systems have a greater chance of quitting than those who don't and those who do quit will most likely go back to smoking. It is the smoker who is determined to quit and who quits and quits and quits who succeeds in not smoking for the remainder of their life.

STRUCTURE:

Days 1 and 2

Examine your smoking behavior for the first two days. Every time you light up, ask yourself:

Why am I smoking this cigarette?
Would this be an easy one or a difficult one to do without?
If I did not smoke this cigarette, what would I do instead?

Day 3

Let's get out and test your weapons today.

At least once today, use your weapons to shoot down the urge to smoke.

During the five minutes that it will take for the urge to pass, try out some of your arsenal. Try one, or all, or find a combination that works for you.

Day 4

Today is the big testing day. If you haven't already tried it, skip those one or two cigarettes that you feel may be the toughest to give up in your daily routine. Pick the ones that you rated "difficult" during your monitoring period.

Remember, this is a practice period, and you must not get upset if you are unable to give up a difficult cigarette. You must practice and experiment with your different weapons to realize how you can be more effective.

If you found skipping that cigarette very difficult or even failed in the end, review any factor that got in the way of your success. The most common causes of difficulty or failure that a potential quitter faces are:

Chemical properties of addiction

When you do not have that cigarette, you feel lousy. If you are a heavy smoker, a nicotine patch may help to relieve your bad feelings.

Social pressures

You may find yourself in a situation (card game, party, coffee break) during which you would normally smoke. It may help to let others know of your desire to quit, and also

your reasons for quitting. Enlisting the aid of a non smoker to confide in may also help. Make sure that he or she is aware of your goals so that they do not say or do anything to instill a negative impact on your desire to quit.

If you feel that you may not resist the social pressures of smoking, consider the option of giving up these social encounters for two or three weeks until the urge passes and you can be comfortable again.

Tension and negative emotion

A crisis occurs during your work or personal day, and one of the main reasons for you to smoke has been tension reduction. Try to deal with your negative emotions and use the tension reducing methods that we talked about earlier. Get away from the area that the tension is associated with. Take a walk, or go to another room. You may also find that nicotine gum will give you enough tension relief to get through.

Days 5, 6, and 7.

You are now heading down the home stretch. In the next three days, your goal is to come out of this week smoking half the cigarettes that you would normally smoke. If you started as a one pack a day smoker, cut back to ten cigarettes per day, *or less*. The fewer the better. During days 5 and 6, set your goals toward achieving positive results on day 7. Maintain your smoking record during these three days, and continue to decrease your dependency on nicotine.

What do you do if you still have doubts? This is probably due to your chemical dependency on nicotine. It is a highly powerful drug, and many factors have been working together to make you dependent. Discuss with your doctor about the feasibility of a patch or nicotine gum. Nicotine is the hook that has gotten you to smoke which carries the harmful effects to your body. With the help from the patch or the gum, you will have all the tools you need to successfully quit. The patch or gum will give you a steady influx of nicotine into your system, which will be reduced slowly over a period of several weeks. **DO NOT SMOKE WHILE ON THE PATCH.** You could experience a dangerous overdose of nicotine.

NOTE; Pregnant women should not use the gum or patch. Smokers with any form of heart disease should consult with a physician before using.

Tips:

Before you use some the techniques listed here you should consult with your doctor. Some of the tips on to stop smoking will involve the input of your doctor but others don't. Whether they do involve their input or not you should consult your doctor about your current health and to be sure that you are able to complete these without risk of further injury.

Research has found that there are two major factors that predict your chances of success. You must have the desire to give up your habit. You must have a reason 'why' and it has to be strong.

And you must have the confidence to know that you can do it. You may not have stopped smoking before – in fact because you want to stop smoking now I know you haven't! – but, you have accomplished many things in your life. There have been many things that you have done, and done well. Draw on those times to know that you CAN do this. Even if you falter and take another cigarette or two it isn't if you'll fail but how you react when you do. Are you going to get up and finish?

Now find your reasons – both the reasons why you want to quit and the reasons you smoke in the first place. If you can identify why you smoke, and then eliminate the reasons you'll be able to face those reasons when the cravings come calling.

Set a date and a goal. You know you want to quit but do you know when? You have to do more than think about quitting. It helps to set a date and a goal of when you'll quit and HOW you'll quit. You are guaranteed to fail and feel guilty if you decide today to quit and smoke your last cigarette right now but don't have a plan, a support mechanism or a process to complete your task.

Once you know you are going to quit find a program or medication or a process you will use to combat the addiction to nicotine and the cravings that will come from it. There are medications, support groups, patches, gum and even magnets that use acupuncture to decrease the cravings and desire for a cigarette.

Earlier you found your motivation to quit and now you'll write that motivation down and keep it in a place where you will be reminded. Use that when the cravings come and you are tempted to run to the corner grocery store.

Psychologically and physiologically you can make yourself feel better instantly and decrease your cravings by taking three very deep breaths. This means that you have a method at your finger tips to decrease your cravings and improve your health.

Remove all cigarette products and reminders from your home or your environment. Take 48 hours to clear the nicotine from your system (or use nicotine patches, gum, lozenge, spray, inhaler or straws) and stay away from anything that reminds you of cigarettes. That might be friends, television, alcohol, or stress. If you can pack up and go camping for the weekend that is the best option available.

Smokers often use breaks at work to grab a cigarette. Instead grab a walk or exercise of some nature. Get your body moving and keep it moving. During your work break you will crave a cigarette – it's a psychological event, not physical. You have to break the associations that go with the craving by developing a new association.

Watch your self talk. Sometimes you may have used smoking to get through a stressful situation. When you feel or 'hear' yourself saying you need a cigarette to get through this shout "STOP" in your head. These are old thought and an old, very unhealthy way of dealing with stress.

Find a way to reward yourself when you pass milestones such as a week, a day or a month.

Before you quit set up distractions for yourself that don't involve smoking or situations associated with smoking. Find 6 things you'd like to read, enjoy, try or appreciate and keep them in mind when you begin to feel cravings – or to keep yourself occupied and motivated.

Each time you feel the need for a cigarette get physical. The act of requiring more oxygen, breathing deeply and moving muscles will help to decrease cravings and motivate you to continue. Take up running, walking, rowing, stair climbing – it doesn't matter. As long as the doctor approves and you have access to the activity – go for it!

How to Handle the Urges

Handling the emotional as well as the psychological urges to grab a cigarette can be difficult – but never impossible. There are several tips that you can use and when planned they work wonderfully.

Do NOT wait until the urge is so great that you can't figure out how to stop yourself. Instead choose several of these tips and keep them with you at all times.

1. Don't fantasize about the cigarette but instead visualize what life would have been like as an addicted smoker, clothing filled with stench and lungs slowly turning black with tar.
2. Visualize that with each inhalation you are being robbed financially of thousands of dollars, of your health, your endurance and possibly your life.
3. Smoking is unacceptable in many circles; you'll be inhaling thousands of poisonous chemicals into your lungs and poisoning the children and friends who choose to stay around you.
4. Consider all of the consequences when you think about smoking again or watching another smoker. Feel pity and not envy. Consider the life they are

leading as compared to the healthier, simpler and wealthier life you are living today.

5. Take a deep breath, hold it for a few seconds, and exhale as if you had just taken your first puff on a cigarette. Part of the feeling you get from smoking is a direct result of taking a deep breath. A deep breath allows you to take in a maximum amount of oxygen, and exhaling lets out large quantities of carbon dioxide. This results in a feeling of relaxation. Try it, you'll see.
6. Take a sip of water several times during this five minute period. It can help to diminish the need to smoke, and gives you something to do with your hands. The extra water will also help to flush the nicotine out of your body.
7. Put something in your mouth that has no calories, such as a stirrer, gum, a toothpick, or another substitute for a cigarette.
8. Get busy with something, anything, to keep you busy for the next five minutes – walk, talk with a friend, talk with your boss. Make it something active and not passive – do NOT read a book or magazine or watch television. DO – use a medicine ball, take a walk, brush the dog, etc.
9. As long as it does not lead to a craving, chew a piece of gum or a piece of hard candy. Life Savers work well.
10. Get up and move around for five minutes. It will help the urge to smoke to pass.
11. Use a nicotine patch as replacement therapy.

Stop Smoking Aids

Hypnosis

The number of people smoking is currently on the rise once more. And as more people start, even more people are attempting to quit. Even Phillip Morris, largest manufacturer of cigarettes, has television ads about the stop smoking programs that they sponsor.

For a number of years hypnosis has been a way for smokers to kick the habit. Most people are aware of hypnosis as a way to make someone do something in front of an audience. But, although most people find this amusing, it isn't the extent of how hypnosis can help people to stop a bad habit, conquer fear or stress or learn and appreciate good habits.

Hypnotherapists describe hypnotism as concentrated relaxation. They believe that hypnotism allows you to get past the conscious mind which they describe as gate keepers. The conscious mind judges, edits and grades what you think and hear while the subconscious mind is reportedly like a sponge, believing everything it hears as truth.

In other words hypnotists believe that through concentrated relaxation you can get past the gate keepers of the conscious mind and feed your subconscious the imagined reality that you are a non-smoker – thus becoming a non-smoker. Through reprogramming you change your behavior and remove the barrier fo your conscious mind.

Everyone who wants to give up control of their conscious mind is able to be hypnotized. In fact there are tapes and books that teach you self-hypnosis to stop smoking. Or you can also visit a hypnotherapist in order to receive the messages to stop smoking.

Self-hypnosis will take time and practice to master. You will learn techniques to relax and then guide yourself through the images that can make quitting work. Hypnosis to stop smoking can also be accomplished with a certified hypnotherapist who has specific training with either a single or multiple sessions. The therapist will also make suggestions of particular physical tasks that will help to increase the likelihood of success in your quest to stop smoking.

One of the highest concerns and complaints of people who are quitting smoking is their increased stress level. People who are quitting often gain weight because they substitute eating for smoking as an oral behavior. One of the other benefits of hypnosis to stop smoking is that it also addresses stress reduction and techniques to control stress which may also decrease your potential weight gain. Hypnosis will also teach new attitudes and beliefs about smoking which can help eliminate the habit.

Hypnotherapy is compared to a pleasant state of mind that is similar to daydreaming. The ultimate effect is that you are calm and relaxed and able to disregard your normal environment. While you are always in control and able to awaken at any time this state will increase your ability to speak to your subconscious mind and bring your dreams to reality.

Magnets

The number of people who are starting to smoke is rising but so are the number of people who are attempting to kick the habit. Tobacco companies are sponsoring stop smoking programs in an effort to appear responsible as they continue to sell a drug that is killing 500,000 Americans each year.

In an effort to find newer and better programs to help people to stop this addictive behavior to stop craving the addictive drug nicotine included in the tobacco, researchers are turning to support groups, drugs, hypnotism and now magnets to help stop smoking.

Recently release Zerosmoke was launched in the U.S. and Canada as a method to quit smoking that was non-invasive and easy to use. Until this point the manufacturer has reported wide success in helping Europeans to kick the habit. Registered in the U.S. as a Class 1 product – having the least side effect profile – it is a method based on the principles of acupressure.

In a study in 2003 by the European Smoking Prevention Centre 650 people tested the Zerosmoke product and after 4 weeks more than 84% had quit the habit.

The Zerosmoke product are two small magnets that are placed opposite each other over a point on the left ear. This stimulates an acupressure point in the ear that helps the body to defeat cravings and the desire to smoke. The product itself is made of 24 carat gold to decrease the incidence of allergic reactions to the metal.

The treatment uses the magnets for 3-4 hours each day for six days while the smoker continues to smoke as usual. On the seventh day the smoker can reportedly quit smoking without cravings while continuing to wear the magnets for another 20-25 days. The product reportedly will eliminate cravings and desire to smoke without the use of drugs, pills, patches or gum.

The cost of the magnets is a reasonable \$30.00 which includes the instructions on placement and usage. People who wear pacemakers shouldn't use these magnets because they may interfere with the function of the pacemaker.

Zerosmoke has a high success rate with people who are motivated to quit smoking and want to achieve higher health. There are no results currently using patients whose motivation level is low or non-existent.

On the positive side of using magnets to help stop smoking they can be used anywhere, they are unobtrusive, they don't wear out or lose their effectiveness, they are non-allergenic and cost less than one week of smoking.

Giving up a smoking habit is the single best thing that anyone can do to improve their health. Each year over 1/2 million Americans die of tobacco related illnesses and disease. Every cigarette smoked will cut at least five minutes off of the smokers life, on average. 4 out of 5 smokers say they want to quit. More than 4,000 toxic or carcinogenic chemicals are found in tobacco smoke – both from the plant and the herbicides and fungicides used to control pests in the tobacco crop.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine replacement therapy uses gums or patches that will help to reduce the withdrawal symptoms. The theory behind the use of these products is that the nicotine absorption is low enough that it doesn't provide the same pleasure as smoking an actual cigarette but it does help to alleviate the symptoms of withdrawal from the drug.

It's important that the gum or patches aren't used when a person is actually smoking because it can easily lead to an overdose of nicotine. An overdose or toxicity will lead to heart arrhythmias, nausea, headache and dangerous complications that will require immediate medical attention.

There are other nicotine delivery systems that include inhalers or nasal sprays that more closely mimic the delivery and impact of nicotine that's obtained by smoking.

Researchers have found that although nicotine isn't the chemical in the cigarettes responsible for the increased risk of development of cancer prolonged use of nasal sprays or inhalers can damage the cells lining the lungs and blood vessels and cause irreparable damage.

Delivery of the nicotine in patch form is called transdermal delivery. The advantages of using this method to help stop smoking is that it satisfies the physiological cravings for nicotine while the soon to be ex-smoker can deal with the emotional cravings associated with smoking that happen in social situations or the oral fixations that happen with long-term smoking.

These oral needs are the driving force behind an increasing waistline in ex-smokers as they try to meet their oral needs that cigarettes once met with food and sweets. Some ex-smokers find that the nicotine gums work best for them because they are able to get the nicotine drug delivery and meet their oral needs without gaining weight.

Because they may need more chewing action that should be delivered with just nicotine gum the ex-smoker may need to use over the counter gum without the drug to continue to chew during the day.

Coaching and Support

Research has shown that those who receive support to achieve their goals have a better chance to succeed. Most industries have learned and embraced this – AA, fitness trainers, diet support – anything that takes a change in a person's behavior or habits will often require support.

Smoking isn't any different.

Coaches help the soon to be ex-smoker stay focused, motivated and learn new ways of helping themselves to succeed.

There are several ways of finding good coaches that are either free or through paid services. By calling 1-800-Quit-Now you can find free coaches that are available in each state through state public health funding.

These coaches will assist you over the phone to make a plan, encourage you to visit your doctor, and work the plan through to your success. They will be there to help you when you are stressing for a cigarette and will help you develop new behaviors that will discourage smoking.

To stop smoking a smoker must be motivated and understand the risks and benefit ratios to quitting or continuing this disgusting habit. A coach will help you to further define your reasons and verbalize them so they are concrete when you come up against a challenge in your day.

These public health coaches may also have a limited supply of nicotine patches if you find the cost of these to be out of your reach. However, realize that without the cost of cigarettes in your daily budget you should have more than enough to pay for the nicotine patches, gum or lozenges to help you through the initial stages of drug withdrawal.

By decreasing this cost in your life you will also have more money to pay off your bills, take the family out to dinner and buy that new outfit you've had your eye on.

Researchers have found that those who use a coach are 50% more likely to succeed and quit smoking than those who don't. And combined with the 2x more likely statistic when using a nicotine replacement this number jumps again.

Addressing Weight Gain

Most people believe that when you quit smoking you will gain weight. It's inevitable. But in reality it isn't.

There are those who have quit smoking while simultaneously losing weight.

Then there are those who quit smoking and put on 5 or 10 pounds.

But the question is really – would you rather have an addition 5 or 10 pounds for six months until you can regulate your eating habits while living longer or would you rather have 10 less pounds and two lungs full of hydrocarbons, body full of nicotine and breath that smells like an ash tray?

If you've gotten this far then the answer is simple – a couple of extra pounds may put you into the next size jeans but it won't put you into an early grave.

There are several things that you can do to help address the amount of weight that you may or may not gain as you are moving towards quitting smoking.

1. Understand that you just might gain some weight. Plan for this eventuality and don't be surprised if it does happen. Be pleasantly surprised if it doesn't. Don't see this as a reason to go back to smoking. There isn't a size of clothing in the world that is worth an early death.
2. Look carefully at the types of foods that you are eating and from which you are gaining pleasure. Because cigarettes are a bit of an appetite suppressant the foods you ate while smoking could be more calorie dense without having an effect on your waistline because you weren't eating as much as you probably should. But now, with your healthier lifestyle you'll have a slightly larger appetite that must be fed.
 - a. You can eat as much and as many raw fruits and vegetables as you want without worrying about your weight. Carry a bag of baby carrots or broccoli florets, celery, apples, pineapple, bananas or any other fruit or vegetable which you enjoy.
 - i. Don't enjoy fruits and vegetables? LEARN! The increased amount of nutrients, live enzymes and vitamins will help your body to detoxify from the nicotine and chemicals which assaulted it for years.
3. Don't stress over a few slip ups. Just like anything else you must plan to slip. And when you do it isn't the end of the world. Everyone slips – and the body is able to find an equilibrium. In fact new diet research shows that by alternating the amount of calories it receives each day the body is better able to either maintain a healthy weight or lose weight.
4. As long as using gum or hard candy doesn't increase the desire for cigarettes use them to satisfy your oral needs and trick your stomach into thinking something is coming its way. However, using too many peppermint type candies will cause an increase in gastric acid that will increase the amount of heart burn you experience.
5. Exercise! You may not have included exercise in your daily routine before but now you should. Exercise will do many things –
 - a. Decrease your risk for heart related disease and stroke
 - b. Decrease your risk for MANY illnesses and diseases
 - c. Increase your metabolic rate
 - d. Help decrease the cravings and urgings you will feel for cigarettes

- e. Decrease blood pressure, and bad cholesterol
 - f. Decrease risk for diabetes, arthritis and immune mediated illnesses
6. Exercise doesn't need to be, nor should it be, Herculean efforts. You aren't training for the Olympics – you are just getting the heart moving. Before starting a program check with your doctor to confirm you're healthy enough to exercise. These are some the exercises that will accomplish all your goals:
- a. Medicine ball
 - b. Aerobics at home
 - c. Walking program
 - d. Yoga
 - e. Pilates
 - f. Swimming
 - g. Rowing
 - h. Weight lifting – using bands at home
7. The biggest stumbling block for people is ACTION. Take action – doesn't matter what you pick from this list – start with one and get moving. Don't be overwhelmed with the number of options – pick one and do it!



Quit Smoking For Good!

There is no doubt about it: Smoking kills. One of the best ways to live a longer, healthier life is to stop smoking. This however, has proven to be one of the hardest things for smokers to do. It is hard for smokers to quit because they are addicted to nicotine. Nicotine is a **powerful, highly addictive drug found in tobacco** that is considered to be as addictive as heroine and cocaine.

But, nicotine is not the only harmful drug found in tobacco. There are over 4000 toxic chemicals and gases that are toxic and addictive, including arsenic, methane, ammonia, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde. The smoker **becomes physically and psychologically dependent** on the nicotine and other chemicals and this is what sets up the ever increasing addiction. When smoke is inhaled, these chemicals enter the bloodstream via your lungs and move throughout the body.

Nicotine also acts as a stimulant, increasing your heart rate and producing pleasant, satisfying feelings making you want to smoke more. The **health and wellbeing of others are also affected** when you smoke around them. Second-hand smoke is just as dangerous as active smoking, and that is why smoking in public has been prohibited.

Smoking is responsible for serious medical conditions such as lung cancer, bladder cancer, heart disease, **systemic organ damage**, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis to mention just a few. It also causes premature wrinkles, bad breath stained teeth, fertility problems, low energy levels, and places you at a greater risk of illnesses like colds and flu.

Women who smoke during pregnancy stand a greater chance of having a miscarriage or a low birth-weight baby. There are also implications if you **smoke while breastfeeding, as nicotine is passed through the breast milk to the baby**. If you are over the age of 35, smoke and use birth control pills, you have a much higher risk of having a stroke or a heart attack.

Kicking the habit and **stopping smoking is extremely difficult** and requires willpower, determination and support. Once you have made the decision that you want to stop smoking,

there are various treatment options available to assist you including nicotine replacement therapy, hypnosis, counseling and prescription medications.

Natural and holistic treatments can **also lessen the urge to smoke and help you to restore balance** in your body. Treatments like herbal and homeopathic remedies are safe and effective to use. They contain a combination of ingredients such as Avena sativa, Garcinia cambogia and Gotu Cola (Centella asiatica) to reduce nicotine cravings and balance the mood. Consult a reputable homeopath, herbalist or naturopath for guidance on a management plan tailored to suit your needs.

The StopSmoking UltraPack helps support balanced mood, soothe nerves and enhances emotional well being with homeopathic remedies for relief from restlessness and agitation while quitting cigarettes. The complete solution – StopSmoking UltraPack – includes one of each:

RXHale – A natural, safe, and effective herbal stop smoking medication that treats symptoms of nicotine withdrawal naturally – before they start! Rx-Hale Tablets contain a unique combination of herbal and mineral ingredients to assist with the management of depression and mood swings. Taken during the month before you stop smoking and continued for a few months until the worst is over, Rx-Hale Tablets ensure that your efforts to stop smoking are not foiled by depression, mood swings and sugar cravings. Taking the tablets every day during the 30 days before you stop also prepares you psychologically for nicotine withdrawal and ensures that you begin the process feeling strong and ready to face the challenges ahead of you!

Crave-RX – a natural, safe, and effective herbal stop smoking medication that controls nicotine craving, severe nicotine withdrawal symptoms, and nicotine withdrawal duration without using harmful and expensive nicotine products! Crave-Rx Drops contain a unique combination of selected herbal ingredients which have been clinically proven to reduce the craving for nicotine due to their balancing effect on the brain chemicals known to be associated with addiction. Crave-Rx Drops also contain herbs which will help to prevent the sugar cravings and compensatory overeating which often cause people to go back to cigarettes due to unwanted weight gain. Now you can safely stop smoking without gaining weight!

NicoTonic – a proven, safe and effective natural remedy that is an excellent and very effective aid in reducing emotional ability and restlessness associated with withdrawal from nicotine or other addictive drugs. Tissue salts are easy to take, pleasant tasting and even children love to take them! Safe during pregnancy, nursing and free of side effects. Regular use ensures systemic balance of biochemic tissue salts in the body, optimizes health at the cellular level, relieves symptoms of disease, restores health and vitality, optimizes the therapeutic effects of other remedies by improving systemic functioning and metabolism.

Formulated by a clinical psychologist, these remedies within the StopSmoking UltraPack are

pharmaceutically manufactured to the highest standards.