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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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# Freedom from Smoking Starts Now

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PLEASE READ THIS FIRST .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. HEALTH RISKS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. WAYS TO QUIT SMOKING .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Cold Turkey.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Acupuncture .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Hypnosis.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>4. QUITTING SMOKING GRADUALLY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Zyban® .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<b>5. GET SOMEONE TO QUIT WITH YOU .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6. NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY.....</b>	<b>21</b>
NICOTINE GUM.....	21
WARNINGS .....	22
<i>Nicotine Patches .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Nicotine Lozenges .....</i>	<i>24</i>
WARNINGS .....	24
<i>Nicotine Nasal Spray .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>The Nicotine Inhaler .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<b>7. SECOND HAND SMOKE.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Effects of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<b>8. YOU ARE QUITTING TWO HABITS... NICOTINE ADDICTION AND HABIT ....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>9. REPLACING BAD HABITS WITH GOOD HABITS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>10. WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Tiredness and lack of concentration .....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Easing Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms .....</i>	<i>36</i>

## Freedom from Smoking Starts Now

<b>11.EASING WORRY ABOUT WEIGHT GAIN.....</b>	<b>38</b>
THE CAUSES OF WEIGHT GAIN.....	38
<i>Tips on preventing weight gain.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<b>12. QUIT SMOKING TIPS .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>13. HERBS THAT CAN HELP SMOKERS .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>14. MEDICAL BENEFITS TO QUITTING SMOKING .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>15. STARTING A DAILY JOURNAL .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<i>Uses of your daily journal: .....</i>	<i>54</i>
<b>16. GETTING SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>17. THE BASIS OF A 12 STEP PROGRAM.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>18. BREATHING EXERCISES .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>19. DEALING WITH STRESS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<i>Breathing and Stress Management .....</i>	<i>66</i>
<b>20. AVOIDING THE TRIGGERS.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>21. YOU CAN DO THIS!.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<i>Opting to Quit .....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>The reason for stopping .....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Understanding what you like about smoking .....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>How should I stop? .....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Reward yourself.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Some more planning .....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>When to quit? .....</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Staying stopped – make rules to help you stay stopped .....</i>	<i>78</i>

## Freedom from Smoking Starts Now

### 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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