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Introduction

Your about to save your own life, this may sound like an exaggerated claim but it's the plain truth. If you learn from and follow even a few of the techniques in this e-book you will be well on your way to being smoke free and avoiding the grim reaper for as long as possible!

Stopping smoking makes you feel great and empowers you to reach higher and grip tighter, mostly when people think, talk or write about stopping they focus on the hardships of the process, withdrawal symptoms, tension and disturbed sleep patterns. No one seems to mention feeling stronger day by day, getting a huge boost of extra energy or being able to run six miles (fast) before you get out of breath, instead of the old smokey two miles, or no miles.

Yes it's true that the cravings can be tough to overcome but they're nothing compared to what you get back, your old self.

Feel free to read further and you will discover that quitting for ever isn't half as difficult or unenjoyable as you've heard.

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Part 1. You Never Saw It Coming

How did this destructive little shit get into our life's in the first place? The answer to this question is a little more complex than it would first appear, certainly advertising cigarettes in the media and in movies stretches back over the last seventy years, probably even longer.

So before you or I were even born the idea that smoking was something that only the coolest and cleverest engaged in, that it was a nice little treat for yourself, and that it made a woman more feminine and a man more masculine (how exactly?) had already been drip fed into the public psyche for years, consciously and probably subliminally to.

So with that kind of sneaky mass marketing campaign it isn't all that surprising that many of us started smoking without really stopping to ask "Why am I doing this to myself?"

Also if you add to this the fact that most of us started smoking when we were between twelve and eighteen (the age when we think we know everything but we actually don't know that much) it's no great shock that it flew into our life well under the sensible radar.

In 2010 doctors criticised Ferrari for using subliminal advertising or creeping branding, the red and white bar code which is clearly visible on Ferrari's F1 racing cars and on it's drivers overalls bear's an uncanny resemblance to the bottom half of a packet of Marlboro cigarettes, it was claimed.

John Britton, director of the tobacco advisory group for the Royal College of Physicians commented "The barcode looks like the bottom half of a packet of marlboro cigarettes, I was stunned when I saw it, this is pushing at the limits. If you look at how the barcode has evolved over the last four years, it looks like creeping branding."

Benson & Hedges has also been accused of similar tricks by changing the lettering on their sponsorship F1 racing cars from -Benson & Hedges- to -Bitten & Hisses- or -BE ON EDGE- and while this is more obvious because everyone knows what -Bitten & Hisses- really stands for it just goes to show that large cigarette company's advertising ploys haven't left us alone just yet, rather they have evolved in order to squeeze through the loopholes and still get their message out. Anyone who is looking to stop smoking should be aware of this, if you know how a trick works it can't trick you anymore.

Part 2. How Difficult Is Quitting Going To Be?

This is the question that everyone who wants to stop smoking asks themselves at least three times a day, and the most honest answer I can give you is yes, it get's very difficult for the first four to seven days of quitting then it get's noticeably easier day by day. So if you can be strong for yourself and put up with a few days of annoying withdrawal symptoms you will very quickly start to reap the rewards and feel like your old self again. Also there are a number of proven methods which lift the strain of dealing with cravings, we will look into these methods a bit later in the book.

The reason we have to experience any withdrawals at all is our old friend (or enemy) nicotine.

Nicotine is the tobacco plants natural defence against being eaten by insects, in liquid form it is more lethal than Diamond-Back rattle snake venom and three times deadlier than arsenic, but for some weird reason it's chemical signature is so similar to the neurotransmitter acetylcholine that once inside our brain it fits a number of chemical locks permitting it control over the flow of two hundred or so neuro-chemicals. One of these chemicals is Dopamine, the brains own reward chemical.

Our brains dopamine pathways act as a guide to what we should be doing, they use a wanting or yearning feeling to lead us towards the activity that will keep us alive or reproducing. Water, food and sex being the obvious examples.

Now I'm sure you can imagine what happens when a chemical (nicotine in this case) is introduced to our brains and has enough similarity to acetylcholine to activate our brains dopamine reward system, with repetition our internal dopamine guide is going to believe that smoking and topping up the nicotine levels in the blood is just as important as eating, and it will tell you to do it over and over again, and if you don't obey. . . WO mamma! You're going to get some nasty cravings.

This is the reason that quitting is going to be tough, especially in the short term, but once your limbic or survival mind realises that getting no nicotine isn't going to harm you it will stop bombarding you with cravings and you can relax a little and start to feel healthier again.

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Part 3. Identify What Type Of Smoker You Are

Figuring out what kind of smoker you are can help you figure out the best way to go about stopping. For a part time/social smoker stopping cold turkey could be the best option however for a heavy, everyday smoker hypnosis or nicotine replacement will greatly improve their chances of stopping and staying stopped, let's have a look at the different types.

The Skinny Smoker.

This is the person who believes that if they quit smoking they will gain unacceptable amounts of weight, so they keep smoking, sometimes even when they don't want to.

Nicotine acts as an appetite suppressor by giving receptors in our brains signals which are almost identical to the signals we get after eating a meal, we relax after a cigarette and feel satisfied or appeased. So it stands to reason that once the skinny smoker quits their appetite will get stronger and they could put on weight.

A good way to prevent this weight gain is to adopt a regular exercise routine once you stop, this will burn off the extra calories you are taking on and will also keep your mood level and make good use of the extra energy you get when you quit, anything that makes you sweaty and out of breath for forty five minutes every second day is good. We will look into quitting without gaining weight in more depth a bit later, for now the next type is . . .

The Stressed Smoker

This is a very common one as a lot of smokers spark up to relieve stress, you can see the same behaviour with snacks or cups of coffee, the person in question needs a little boost along or a little break from the stressful task at hand. Fortunately this one isn't too hard to break, because the smoking is a learned response to a trigger, the trigger being the increase in stress.

You can learn new responses to old triggers, NLP or neuro linguistic programming is a good method for changing behaviour patterns and teaching yourself new responses. It can be as simple as getting up and going for a walk outside for five minutes to escape the stress for a bit (instead of escaping via smoke bomb) but there are a few mental exercises which help you to instantly think of your new response, instead of thinking stress-smoke-no can't smoke-walk you will just think stress-walk-back to it. We will look into some NLP techniques in more detail later on.

The Smoker Who's Always Quitting

This type of smoker constantly assures themselves that it's ok because they are going to quit very very soon and telling themselves this becomes an alibi to keep smoking as opposed to what is going to happen. What is definitely going to happen is that they are going to continue smoking far longer than they think with the odd four day quit session thrown in to appease the more sensible side of their nature.

If you find yourself reading this while you are actually in this state I would like to tell you this. You might as well just stop, for ever this time, because you are going to anyway further down the line so is there any real point in see sawing between the two for another three or four years?

The Social Smoker

People who fall into this category never experience the same annoying cravings as a daily smoker, they smoke when they want to not when the nicotine tells them to. However more people would like to be in this category than actually are, people who truly are social smokers never smoke alone, they only smoke when they are doing something they deem to be social, recreational and relaxing. They never smoke sitting by themselves on a boring drive home like a regular (mortal) smoker would.

If you truly fall into this category you can stop cold turkey whenever you like, with little or no fuss. If however you now realize you can't stop quite as easily as this then over time you have crossed a line somewhere and become addicted, and therein lies the problem with social smoking.

The Emotional Smoker

For those of us that have more extreme shifts in mood (for whatever reason) dealing with nicotine withdrawal can be all the more difficult because what for someone else is a slight downer can seem to you like a plummeting spiral! The flip side of this is that once you do get free of the withdrawal stages you'll feel much better about your accomplishment, and if you know your going to be having strong mood shifts its better to behave in a way that creates good moods as opposed to bad ones. If you are this type of smoker you probably smoke to avoid negative feelings, situations and arguments. For you smoking has become something to turn to when things are happening that you either don't like or have no control over, the challenge for you is to become comfortable with yourself when your not smoking, and also you have to ask yourself "if being around something or someone is so annoying to me that it forces me to smoke, is it really worth being around that?"

Part 4. The Upside Of Quitting

Whenever the subject of stopping smoking comes up the mind always goes to the harsher aspects of the subject, how difficult it's going to be and how long your cravings are going to last and what not, but the flip side to this smokey coin that a lot of people forget about is how amazing they're going to feel after the first week or so of annoying cravings have past.

Your whole body and also your mind has been weighed down, in most cases for a few years at least, by this fog of chemicals and when this fog starts to lift you really do feel stronger, healthier and younger. Most people who manage to stick to stopping find themselves going back to an old sport or finding a new one, I got back into running and boxing when I stopped and I can honestly say it was easy and enjoyable to reach a good level of fitness, because I was no longer struggling against my own body, and once I had achieved this state the thought of going back to smoking was laughable!

Just below I have laid out the timeline and the good changes your body will go through the longer you have stopped for and the more distance you put between yourself and cigarettes.

1. Just twenty minutes after stopping your blood pressure and pulse rate will return to normal.
2. Just eight hours after stopping the remaining nicotine in your system will have fallen to about seven percent of normal daily levels, thats a drop of around ninety three percent!
3. Twelve hours after stopping the oxygen levels in your blood will have shot back up to normal so you won't get so out of breath doing medium difficulty physical activity.
4. Forty eight hours after stopping damaged nerve endings are beginning to regrow and your sense of smell and taste will be returning to normal.
5. Seventy two hours after stopping and your body will be completely nicotine free and your lung bronchial tubes are beginning to relax, breathing is becoming easier and your lungs capacity is beginning to increase, basically

you are getting stronger.

6. Ten days after stopping you should only be getting two or three times a day when you think about smoking, and the cravings will be far less insistent, also your lung strength and stamina will be continuing to rise.

7. Two weeks to two months after stopping your risk of heart attack has dropped greatly (bonus) and your circulation keeps improving.

8. And lastly two months to eight months after stopping your cilia have regrown in your lungs which increases their ability to clean themselves and reduce infections, and your body's energy has greatly increased.

Once you make it through the annoyance of the cravings stopping smoking becomes an enjoyable, refreshing process, but you never usually hear about this side of it because the people who try to quit will tell you how impossible it is to make themselves feel better about failing.

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Part 5. The Best Methods For Quitting

In this section we're going to have a look at the best methods for stopping smoking, which have been tried and tested. If you see one you like the sound of you can skip straight to that chapter later in the book, or you can have a read through all of them if you want.

Some of the methods that appear to be a little unbelievable are actually some of the best ones, like stopping with hypnosis for example, when I personally first heard about this method I thought “Isn't hypnosis something that stage magicians use at weddings and parties to give people a laugh?” But once I had looked into it I discovered that it's one of the best techniques for easily overcoming your cravings. So it might be a good call for you to give all the methods a look, even if they sound slightly out of the box at first, because the one you overlook might be the one that would of worked for you.

Quitting With NLP

The main focus of NLP is replicating the most effective behaviour patterns in any field, for example Tiger Woods in golf or Richard Branson in business, and teaching you how to replace a part of your behaviour, which is bad or detrimental with behaviour from the best role model in the field.

By learning a few simple techniques you can greatly change the quality of your life, or get rid of an unwanted behaviour pattern, smoking in this case. NLP has a few good techniques for beating addictions, to learn more about them just head for the NLP chapter.

Quitting With Nicotine Replacement

Nicotine replacement reduces your withdrawal symptoms which helps you to stop smoking, I won't linger on this one because nearly everyone who smokes has heard of nicotine patches and gum, if you feel like this method could work for you head to the nicotine replacement chapter and we will have an in depth look at the pro's and con's.

Quitting With Hypnosis

If you decide to use either [self-hypnosis](#) or a session with a hypnotherapist to quit (or both) your chances of success are going to greatly increase. In most cases it only takes one session with a hypnotherapist to quit, because they access your subconscious and suggest that you don't want to smoke anymore,

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