

## **Quitting smoking – Are you really ready?**

The decision to stop smoking is not taken lightly. The fact that you are reading this indicates that you are looking for a solution. It is important that it is your decision and you make it willingly and are completely committed to doing what needs to be done to get a positive outcome. This is not about preaching to you or telling you things I know you already know but it is more about presenting some useful tips and ideas to help you in a practical way to meet your goal – the goal to become a non smoker.

## **Do you enjoy smoking?**

The obvious and immediate answer to this question is going to be a resounding "yes!" - otherwise why would you be doing it? But let's pause for a minute and think about this in a bit more detail. What exactly is it that you are enjoying? Can you put your finger on it?

Is it the taste that you enjoy? If so, then why do you inhale when you smoke? There should be no need to because, as I'm sure you're aware, all of your taste buds are in your mouth plus guess what? They're all clogged up with tar anyway. When you become a non-smoker everything will actually taste better. You need to ask yourself searching questions to clarify exactly what it is you really believe you enjoy about smoking.

You really should think long and hard about this. If smoking is enjoyable, do you believe that you could explain this to someone else who hasn't experienced it before? You need to be able to persuade a teenager who has never smoked before just what it is that he or she is going to enjoy so much.

And then when they start to cough and splutter you need to be able to explain why they're not doing it properly. It sounds ridiculous doesn't it? But then, if smoking is enjoyable, shouldn't it be enjoyable to someone who hasn't done it before? Enjoy quitting smoking! It makes more sense, doesn't it?

## **The truth about smoking**

Here's the real truth about smoking. If you haven't done it you can't enjoy it. The enjoyment is not pleasure in the sense of a sensation that can easily be described to someone who has never experienced it. It is simply the feeling of topping up the nicotine that is already in your body. Be honest - the first time you smoked it smelt, tasted and felt awful. It actually still does! Your mind is just disguising the fact from you.

If you don't believe this, test it out. Stop for a few days and then light a cigarette; you'll soon notice the illusion disappear. But by then, of course, it's too late as you have put the nicotine back into your system again, and your body will start to ask for more. It's a vicious circle. Cigarette companies are very aware of this, but there are some scientific and physical facts they are clearly not keen to publicise.

## **Is smoking addictive?**

Nicotine is generally thought of as an addictive substance. But think about drugs that we know to be highly addictive. If the addict can't get hold of them, they experience all kinds of serious, physical withdrawal symptoms which may require medical intervention. Ask yourself the following question; if you were living on a remote mountaintop for a few days and couldn't get hold of any cigarettes, would you suffer from such severe withdrawal symptoms such as vomiting and seizures? No, probably not.

You will hear continued arguing that smoking is not about addiction, it's about habit. Nicotine leaves your system after a few days of stopping smoking, and once it's gone what you are left with is a strong habit which you probably associate with other experiences - socialising, drinking coffee, driving etc. Habits can be very strong, but they don't take long to form, and we believe that you can develop new and healthy habits very quickly too.

## **What are the effects of quitting smoking?**

Make no mistake, nicotine is a very powerful substance and the first few days can be uncomfortable because your body is losing the nicotine. It is important to understand this, and be prepared for it, and perhaps pamper yourself a little to begin with. But always look for the positive angle with smoking cessation. See the slight discomfort of the first few days not as your body withdrawing, but as your body shedding the harmful toxins and poisons and starting to repair itself. Once those first two or three days are over you are dealing with a habit, albeit a strong one, but something that you can easily handle.

Find someone who has successfully become a non-smoker and ask them how the first few days were. They'll probably tell you they were fine. It is all part of the very positive process of becoming a non-smoker.

## **Smoking facts and fiction**

The facts are that anybody can find it easy to give up smoking if they find the right motivation and the approach that works best for them. The idea that quitting smoking has to be hard is a fiction. There is no doubt that an increasing number of people are finding it easy to stop smoking, although they may have tried one or twice in the past and found it difficult. There is an easy way for everybody, but these are all different.

There are many fictitious claims made about stopping smoking, for example that it takes 5 or 10 years to stop properly, but there is no scientific evidence for any of these claims. However, these sorts of claims create a problem, because even if they have no foundation, they set the potential non-smoker up with negative expectations at the outset, which is disastrous. You need to discard everything you've ever heard about stopping smoking being difficult. What have you got to lose?

## **Why is willpower such a hard way to stop smoking?**

Using willpower to quit involves giving up smoking even though deep down you don't really want to. Think about that. We have an inbuilt resistance to being told to do things that we don't want to do, or don't think we should do - it's a basic survival instinct. The majority of people who try to stop smoking, particularly on their first

attempt, are pulled into the myth that it will be unpleasant and difficult, and it will be if you use willpower. You are fighting your own instincts and creating an internal battle with yourself as the (formidable) opponent. So forget willpower and start thinking about what you really want.

Choice means giving up smoking because you want to give up. And when you reach the point when you stop because you want to, you'll find that there's no resistance left - nothing to fight against. This is the critical point when it becomes easy. Stop making yourself do it and start wanting to do it.

## **Other health benefits of stopping smoking**

The even better news is that you don't have to wait years to see all the good effects of stopping smoking. Your health will start to improve within minutes of stopping smoking as your body rids itself of harmful toxins. Again according to Medical Experts, within 20 minutes of stopping smoking, your blood pressure and pulse rate return to normal. After eight hours, nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by half, and your oxygen levels return to normal. Over the next few hours and days, you will see other beneficial changes, such as your lungs clearing themselves out and becoming strong again, your sense of smell and taste improving, and your breathing becoming clearer.

You will start to notice even more positive changes within next few weeks and months after stopping. Imagine how you will feel after a year of being a non-smoker! Eventually you can be as healthy as if you never smoked, as your body heals itself. This is amazing - but true.

## **You will look and feel healthier**

Imagine how clean your skin will feel. Your skin, your hair and your clothes will all smell fresher as will your house and your car. A lot of people can't imagine what it would be like to be a non-smoker. Well, unless you started on the day you were born, you've already got plenty of experience of what it was like to look and feel like a non smoker, probably twelve or eighteen years or so, maybe even more, depending on when you started.

Even if your non-smoking days seem like a dim and distant memory to you now, your body will remember the feeling well. Willpower can destroy that positive feeling, and people using willpower to stop smoking often feel worse, as their bodies are being sent mixed messages and think they are being deprived. Stop smoking the positive way and your body will thank you.

## **The cost of smoking**

Many smokers claim that money isn't a reason to stop. They have a resistance to engaging with the issue of how much money they spend on cigarettes. Of course, compared to your health, money absolutely is not an important issue, but perhaps you might like to spend a few minutes considering exactly how much money you spend on smoking, and what you could do with it if you stopped.

You have to be very honest with yourself when completing this next exercise. Work out how much on average you personally spend on smoking. Then multiply this amount by 260, to get the amount you will spend over 5 years. Add about 10% to account for inflation, customs increases etc. Then think about what you would like to spend this money on, if you could. A new car, paying off a chunk of the mortgage, a holiday - whatever you want. Just recently the Australian Government has added another \$2 per packet so you have really got to ask yourself is it really worth it.

## **When is the best time to quit smoking?**

The best time to stop smoking is when it feels right for you. Don't let anyone tell you it can't be done, including yourself. The problem with setting a date for the future is that it stops you from dealing with it now. It also doesn't allow for the possibility that maybe you won't want to stop that day. Forget significant dates like birthdays, New Year's Eve, Christmas etc and stop when it's right for you. That's not to say that those dates aren't OK to stop on, they may be right for you. Ideally make that today, you're obviously already thinking about it.

Every year, thousands of people stop smoking on a certain, pre-planned day and only manage to stay stopped for a few days. But don't worry if this happens to you. Don't beat yourself up or see it as a failure. You may have to try two or three times before you stop smoking permanently. View it as a platform for future success.

## **Turning failure into success**

There is no such thing as failure when it comes to stopping smoking. There really isn't. If you want to stop, rest assured you will. You may just need to find the right time and the right way for you. Very few people who have achieved something in life manage it the first time - often it takes a few attempts. Ask someone who has stopped successfully and easily and they may well tell you that they had to try more than once.

It's not a case of failing; just try something different and keep doing that until you stop easily and permanently. The secret is to never stop trying. Tell yourself that you will be a non-smoker. You are 100% confident of this, the only thing you don't know is when this will happen. But once you decide that it will happen, the pressure is off.

## **Natural ways to quit smoking**

There are many natural ways to quit smoking which don't involve drugs or nicotine replacement therapies. Hypnotherapy is one such natural method of stopping smoking that we would recommend. Hypnotherapy has helped a great many people stop smoking and its major benefits are that it's natural, relatively cheap and doesn't involve pumping nicotine into your body.

You'll read or hear in some places that there is no clinical evidence for hypnotherapy's effectiveness. Don't believe a word of it. The problem is that the kind of research methods used to investigate pills and patches is not appropriate for assessing hypnosis.

## **You don't need a substitute for smoking**

Look at what you lose when you become a non-smoker; the coughing and wheezing, constantly smelling of cigarette smoke, the feeling of being out of control, not being able to run half a mile, the cost etc. Compare this to what you gain; your sense of taste, your health, fitness, self-respect, and other financial and social rewards.

Why on earth would you want an alternative? You are not losing anything positive when you stop smoking, and everything you gain is good.

## **Using your imagination to help you quit smoking**

We have five senses which we use to make sense of the world. We can also use these five senses in our imagination. And remember, the reason we have imagination is to facilitate change. Now try this short exercise. You might want to practice it often with your eyes closed until it becomes very natural. Imagine that you've quit smoking for a year. What will you look like? Imagine your skin looking clear and glowing with health. How will it feel to have successfully given up smoking? Imagine the sense of achievement and freedom you will have. Think about how fresh and clean your home, clothes and hair will smell. Think about how great food will taste. Use all of your senses to create your own incredible future.

It is an interesting point that if you ask someone who is not ready to stop to complete this exercise, they are not prepared to imagine themselves one to two years ahead - it is as if they have a mental block. Someone who is using willpower to quit, and who is struggling, will also probably be reluctant to do this exercise. One thing that we have noticed repeatedly is that people who are prepared to use their imagination to create a positive non-smoking future enjoy huge success.

Remember that using your imagination and making a 100% commitment to quitting are absolutely crucial. These are the two key points to come back to if you are having trouble.

## **Will I ever be truly free from smoking?**

For nearly everyone who stops smoking, there is the worry that they will never be free of smoking. Will they go through life always wanting to have a cigarette and not being able to? This fear stops many people from quitting.

The answer to this question is that you can be completely free of cigarettes, and within a few days too. You'll soon notice (or not) that you can go for hours or days at a time without thinking about smoking. Many people who use this natural way to give up find they are free from thinking about it from day one. In fact, of all the positive benefits reported by ex-smokers, this feeling of freedom tends to be at the top of the list. Freedom from worry, guilt and spending money.

What do you think it would feel like to be completely and utterly free from all these thoughts and feelings? We know you can get there, because so many other people have.

