



THE COACH
APPROACH

STOP SMOKING - SELF HELP GUIDE

There is more than enough evidence that smoking is bad for you, but it is highly addictive and can be very hard to give up. While some people can just decide overnight that they have quit and never have another cigarette, not everyone finds it that easy.

The good news is that the minute you stop, your body begins to recover and your health starts to improve.

Whether you've tried to quit before and failed or this is your first (and hopefully, last!) attempt at giving up, read this short guide to find out what effect smoking can have, how your doctor can help you, and what you can do to help yourself.

How can smoking affect you?

Smoking can affect just about every organ, from your skin to your heart. While you probably know that smoking is bad for you, here's a look at just some of the things it can do to your body:

1. Your skin

If you smoke, you'll get less oxygen to your skin which will make it look dull, grey and tired. Smoking can also cause premature aging by between 10 and 20 years, and the toxins cause cellulite.

2. Your lungs

Smoking can cause inflammation to your lungs, and long term, scarring can form, which is irreversible. You might have shortness of breath, more colds and coughs, you may develop asthma, pneumonia, lung cancer, emphysema or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

3. Your heart

Smoking doubles the chance of you having a heart attack, damages your heart and blood circulation, and can cause a range of unwanted conditions, from stroke to cerebrovascular disease.

4. Your brain

Smoking increases the risk of having a brain aneurysm, leading to stroke, and a smoker is more likely to die of a stroke than a non-smoker.

5. Your bones

Smoking is particularly bad for women as it can cause brittle bones, making female smokers more likely to develop osteoporosis.

6. Reproduction

Smoking can reduce fertility in women and cause male impotence, and can also cause cervical and testicular cancer.

Unfortunately, with the risks from secondhand smoke, you aren't only affecting yourself when you have a cigarette. Most of the smoke from tobacco doesn't go into your lungs; it is expelled into the air and everyone around you will breathe it in. If you quit, you're not only benefitting yourself, but your friends and family, too.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. Your body is an amazing thing, and as soon as you quit, it will start repairing the damage from smoking and you will feel healthier. The sooner you start (or, rather, stop!), the sooner your health will improve.

The benefits of quitting

While it is difficult to quit, it only takes around a month for the nicotine receptors in your brain to return to normal. After that, it's not addiction, it's just habit so it should become easier to stick with it.

You might find you have better sight and hearing because smoking can damage your eyes and cause hearing loss. You should also find you have an explosion of taste and smell as your mouth and nose recover and you can now appreciate all those subtle flavours and scents you couldn't recognise before.

You'll have clearer skin, a cleaner mouth which is less prone to cavities and your hair and clothes won't smell like a stale ashtray, either.

While the cosmetic benefits are obvious, the main benefit is clearly your health.

While scarring in your lungs can't be reversed, within a couple of weeks of quitting smoking, you should find that you can breathe more easily, and walk up the stairs without getting out of breath. The cilia which keep your lungs clear will start to recover and you'll find you get less colds and chest infections.

You'll have lower cholesterol and a reduced risk of cancer and heart disease. In fact, your risk of having a heart attack diminishes within 24 hours of stopping smoking!

You'll also have a stronger immune system and get sick less often, and blood flow will improve, allowing oxygen and vital nutrients and minerals to heal any wounds properly and more quickly.

Your family and friends will thank you, not only for all that clean air they'll be able to breathe in, but because you're likely to be around for an awful lot longer.

Treatment methods

If you want to quit smoking it is possible to do it on your own but talking to your doctor can give you much needed support, and you may be able to get nicotine patches free from the NHS or for the price of a prescription.

If smoking helps you cope with anxiety, your doctor will be able to support you with that and give you alternative ways to cope. They may be able to refer you for counselling if you need it, or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Your doctor could also refer you to a clinical hypnotherapist, and that really is one of the best things you can do to make sure you stop smoking once and for all.

Hypnotherapy can help you deal with your cravings by making suggestions that you don't need a cigarette and even make you not want one at all by suggesting that you don't like the taste and the smell. Not only that, but hypnosis will help you relax completely which can make all the difference when you don't feel stressed and anxious about the whole thing.

Self help

Giving up smoking can seem really intimidating. You may have tried to do it before and found it didn't work, and wonder whether you can really do it this time. But with help from your doctor, your friends and your family, you can get there.

First of all, sign up to the NHS smoke free website for practical help in whatever format you like, whether you want SMS contact, a Quit Kit, or even face to face support: <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>.

Next, make a plan and pick the day you're going to quit. Tell the supportive members of your family and friends; the ones who will cheer you on and pick you up when you are struggling. Maybe you can join up with other family members and friends and quit together.

Write yourself a list of reasons why you want to quit so you can look at it when you feel a craving hit. What is your reason for wanting to stop? Carry that list with you everywhere, especially when you are in a place where you'd normally have a cigarette.

Following on from that, what are your triggers? Do you normally smoke first thing in a morning with a cup of coffee, or with a glass of wine after dinner? Does it usually happen with a particular group of friends? Whatever it is, be aware of it and have a plan to deal with it. Can you, perhaps, have a beer or a cocktail instead of a glass of wine? What if you hold your drink in the hand you'd normally hold a cigarette? What can you change so you don't automatically associate what you are doing with smoking? Even something as simple as changing your drink can have enough of an effect to get you past that craving.

Exercise can also be a great help. The endorphins released will help you over your cravings, and you'll get fitter, too.

Conclusion

While quitting might be difficult, it's far from impossible and, with support in place, you can do this.

If you'd like to find out more about solution focused clinical hypnotherapy and how it can help with stopping smoking, please do give me a call or use the booking button on my website. Nothing will happen in our sessions that you aren't comfortable with, and hypnotherapy cannot force you to do things against your will. Just come along to my facility in the beautiful town of Falmouth in Cornwall, and you'll soon find yourself relaxing.

Disclaimer

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