

You Can Do It!

“How To *FINALLY* Stop Smoking...Once and For All”

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INTRODUCTION

Every Dark Cloud Has a Silver Lining

One remarkable thing about this world we are living in is that nothing is perfect. And this element of imperfection has seeped its way into everything and everybody, which is probably why we're always hearing, "no one is perfect."

But in my opinion, there's a lot of hope and encouragement embedded in this statement because it helps us to accept ourselves as human beings - with all our inherent weaknesses and imperfections. Oh yes we all have them. We have our share of bad (you may read that as not-so-good) habits and deep down inside us there is a murky something from which all these base cravings and the tendency to cling on to them take birth.

But even when it comes to bad habits, there is a ray of hope. Just like every dark cloud has a silver lining, deep down inside us there is something that cries out in a very plaintive voice. And it is this something that makes us squirm when we think about the habit as such.

The moment somebody starts talking about our habit, we feel queasy. The fact is, even we know that something has to be done about it and it is this feeling that makes us squirm. This silver lining is what makes us take sneak peeks at manuals like this one, which are like stepping stones towards quitting the habit.

Most people know what is good for them and what is bad. Come on we all live in a very civilized society and all of us are more or less fairly well educated. But then,

why is it that certain people develop certain habits and others do not? The reason is pretty simple. We all are products of the circumstances we grew up in. That is the simple reason why some of us like doing some thing while the others do not.

Before you proceed any further, I would like to tell you that this manual that you are about to read is not a "do this don't do that" kind of manual. In fact, many of the things printed here are just common sense and won't seem completely new or earth-shattering to you.

But I think you'll agree that KNOWING doesn't always equate to DOING. This manual is about getting you to DO.

The essence of this book is to show you how to quit smoking. But this book has been written in such a comprehensive manner that it is targeted at making you a whole new person who is determined to live life to the fullest.

Hats Off

But before we proceed any further, I would like to take a moment to take my hat off to you and congratulate you very warmly for deciding to take a look at this book. Come on, we're all sensible enough to know that you didn't just happen upon this book.

And when you decided to order it, you made the realization (either consciously or subconsciously) that

smoking is a bad habit...and one you need to kick. In my opinion, that took bravery.

I always admire brave people and that is why I said that I want to congratulate you. It requires a lot of courage and will power to accept that you have a habit that has to be changed. You ought to feel very good about yourself. It is no easy task to accept ones weaknesses.

In fact, if everyone in this world started accepting his or her weaknesses, well then heaven would indeed be a place on earth. But let us leave heavenly things aside and come to very worldly things, because this problem is indeed a very worldly one, which does promise certain heavenly results if it is not addressed as soon as possible. Got the idea? No? Well, does the picture of a harp, wings and a halo ring a bell?

Sit Up and Take Notice

Most of us know that smoking is indeed a habit that can have many serious implications on our health but there is a tendency to view the problem lightly. It's important that every smoker be aware of the facts concerning smoking and so I have included certain facts and figures that I hope will serve as eye openers.

I don't know how it is with you, but as far as I am concerned as soon as I have to look at statistics, my eyes get bleary and something just turns off in my head. But for your own good I implore you to take a good look at

the statistics given below, remember, it could save your life.

The World Health Organization has been studying smoking trends and statistical patterns across the globe and has come up with the following statistics:

- A good deal of variation exists from one part of the world to another. Many more women smoke in Eastern Europe than in East Asia and the Pacific Region. Eastern Europe itself has a particularly high rate of smoking, with up to 59 percent of adult males smoking.
- As with other substances of abuse, such as alcohol and cocaine, the global frequency of tobacco use varies by social class, historical era, and culture. Historically, smoking had been a pastime of the rich. This trend has changed dramatically in recent decades. It appears that economically advantaged men in wealthier countries have been smoking less. The more years of education you've had, the less likely you are to be a smoker.
- **Most smokers begin early in life, before they are 25 years old.** According to World Health Organization studies, the majority of smokers in affluent countries begin in their teens. A decline in the age of starting smoking has been observed worldwide.
- As a wannabe quitter, you're in excellent company. People all over the world are trying to quit and stay away from cigarettes. There appears to be a correlation between a country's standard of living,

level of education, and income and the number of people who have quit smoking. The more and better-informed people are, the more likely they are to quit smoking.

Current estimates are that over **1 billion** people in the world smoke. (In other words, approximately one in three adults on the planet smokes.) The majority of these smokers reside in countries on the low end to the middle of the socioeconomic spectrum. Of this majority, about 80 percent live in low- and middle-income countries. The total number of smokers worldwide is expected to keep increasing.

But are things in the USA any better? Not really, as you can see for yourself in the figures of National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics

In the United States, an estimated **25.6 million men (25.2 percent) and 22.6 million women (20.7 percent) are smokers**. These people are at higher risk of heart attack and stroke. The latest estimates for persons age 18 and older show...

- Among whites, **25.1 percent of men and 21.7 percent of women smoke**
- Among black or African Americans, **27.6 percent of men and 18.0 percent of women smoke**
- Among Hispanics/Latinos, **23.2 percent of men and 12.5 percent of women smoke**
- Among Asians (only), **21.3 percent of men and**

6.9 percent of women smoke

- Among American Indians/Alaska Natives (only), **32.0 percent of men and 36.9 percent of women smoke**
- Studies show that smoking prevalence is higher among those with 9-11 years of education (35.4 percent) compared with those with more than 16 years of education (11.6 percent). It's highest among persons living below the poverty level (33.3 percent).

And These Figures Spell Death...

- **One out of every five deaths is caused by tobacco**
- An average of **400,000 Americans** die each year from tobacco
- Tobacco to blame for many serious pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases
- Tobacco and nicotine are some of the most potent carcinogens and are to blame for a majority of all cancers of the lung, trachea, bronchus, larynx, and esophagus
- Tobacco use also produces cancers in the pancreas, kidney, bladder, and cervix
- Impotency is sometimes to blame from addiction to nicotine because of its ability to reduce blood flow

- Smoking is an important risk factor for respiratory illnesses, **causing 85,000 deaths per year from pulmonary diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pneumonia**
- Children and adolescents who are active smokers will have increasingly severe respiratory illness, as they grow older
- Smoking during pregnancy causes about 5-6% of prenatal deaths, 17-26% of low-birth-weight births, and 7-10% of pre-term deliveries, and it increases the risk of miscarriage and fetal growth retardation
- Cigarettes are responsible for about **25% of deaths from residential fires**, causing nearly 1,000 fire-related deaths and 3,300 injuries each year

How Does One Become a Smoker?

Nobody becomes a smoker as a result of will power. In fact it is the other way round. Can you imagine somebody as a child making up his or her mind that when he or she grows up he or she will become a chain smoker determined to smoke at least 30 cigarettes a day? Nobody in his or her normal senses would do that.

Then why do so many people become smokers? Let us sit and think about it for a minute. Of course there are a lot of other reasons like the ones I have listed below but

I would like to pin point to one specific reason, which I have added, at the end of the list.

Many, in fact most people become smokers as a result of an experiment. What often starts as an experiment becomes an experience and before they know it, it becomes a pattern. So let us examine some of the factors that contribute towards making a person a smoker, chain or other wise.

Peer pressure. One bad apple is enough to make a whole barrel of apples bad. And during the age of thoughtless youth (most people develop the habit before the age of 25) every one is ready to take up a dare. So when peers compel others to take a puff, one just has to take a puff or else face the danger of being branded as "chicken" or "goody-two-shoes."

Availability. Cigarettes are available every where and almost any body can get them and that is one major factor that contributes to the development of the habit. Another reason is that cigarettes are so damn cheap!

Aping. Movie stars and other celebrities who smoke look so cool, and this is more than enough reason for youngsters to start smoking just to copy their matinee idol.

The Feel Good Syndrome. Cigarettes are often identified with the "cool factor" and so it is a great way to impress others if you can delicately balance the cigarette between two of your fingers and blow up a puff of smoke while you are in your friends' circle.

Stress busters. Cigarettes are often **wrongly** identified as stress busters and one of the best ways of driving away sleep. So when we see others resorting to the habit, we are tempted and even coaxed into taking a puff. If one parent smokes there is a 25% chance that the child too will grow up into a smoker. If both parents smoke, there is a 75% chance that the child will become a smoker.

Attitude. This is a good one, but strangely enough this cause is seldom identified as one of the reasons for picking up the habit. One thing about most of us is that there is a rebellious strain in all of us. There is something in us that generates an urge to protest against existing rules and norms and during our teenage, what better way to express our defiance than by sporting a lighted cigarette between our fingers or lips.

Wet Paint

It is not just some thing about smoking. It is a general tendency of every human being. The moment some body tells us not to do something a strong feeling develops in us to do the very thing that we were asked not to do. If you want to understand what I mean, just consider how people really want to touch and get the wet paint on their hands in spite of a big sign that says 'wet paint'.

There are many laws which we can't break for fear of ending up in a cell, but there is no such law against smoking and so it's just one big, "it's my life" kind of attitude that makes most youth pick up the habit.

We are all intelligent to know what a message means. When we read the statutory warning that says, "Cigarette smoking is injurious to health" we know what it means. Even a kid knows what it means. It is not like a bolt from the blue. Ignorance is the last thing that we can connect to the habit of cigarette smoking. But then when we see a sign that says 'wet paint' it is very much the same thing. The message is loud and clear that the paint is wet but yet we have to touch and make sure.

Cigarette smoking may be dangerous to health but just how dangerous is something that we have to convince ourselves about. But the sorry fact is that unlike wet paint, we just can't wash of the effects of smoking with water or turpentine. Nor do the effects fade over time, they just worsen. Smoking is not something that we can experiment with. You just can't take a risk like smoke for a couple of years and say, "look guys, I survived." It is a matter of life and death.

Smoke Signals

Then you might ask, if every body knows that it is such a dangerous habit, then why do so many people still become, and continue to remain smokers. Well, the reason is because of a paradox that is involved in the habit of smoking.

If all those who smoked, kicked the bucket at the end of the month, then nobody would even think of smoking. But the paradox is that not everyone who smokes hits the grave that fast. Smoking as a habit is a

slow killer. It does not paint all smokers with the same brush of death. On the other hand it is like a florist who picks a few flowers here and a few flowers there to adorn the house but at the same time leaves some flowers on the plant so that the garden does not remain bare.

The problem is that because cigarette smoke as a killer is so choosy, most smokers just keep on hoping that he or she will remain on the plant in the garden forever. In this modern age when we are all so educated and well informed, isn't it kind of silly to leave ourselves in the hands of fate and just keep hoping that we won't be next. The funny thing is that we **do** have a choice.

But there's more to the story. The matter of choice is something that exists only in the initial stages. At that time it's just a puff here and just a puff there, more to impress others than any thing else. But soon enough things start slipping out of our control and before we know it we just can't do with out our daily dose of nicotine in whatever proportions we demand it.

Nicotine Is Addictive

Here is where the problem lies: addiction. The sad thing is that most people don't realize this.

They puff away on their cigarettes and attach a lot of definitions to it. I have taken care to include some of the most popular excuses that people attach to their habit of smoking.

EXCUSE #1 - It relieves stress

It really doesn't. Your body and mind are capable of handling a lot of stress and you do not need any alkaloid to lend external support. The fact is that once your brain is addicted to nicotine, it kind of weakens and becomes unable to handle problems. The result is that you get stressed up very fast and your brain starts demanding its doze of nicotine. When you puff away, you give it the nicotine and you feel as if your stress is relieved.

EXCUSE #2 - It drives away sleep

Sleep is a natural response of the body. Our body needs rest and it has the right to demand this rest from time to time. When you take a puff, the alkaloids go straight to your brain and interfere with the working thus confusing the brain. You might be able to ward off sleep but you are in fact interfering with the functioning of your brain, which is indeed playing with fire.

EXCUSE #3 - It perks me up

Maybe, but isn't that a kind of external perk? Isn't that another way of saying, I am unable to keep in high spirits by myself so I need to depend on cigarettes? Hey, look at all those little children, they are always in the highest of spirits and they do not need any alkaloids for that. You should lessen the burdens on your shoulders and take life as it comes.

Most people wrongly think that it is only narcotic drugs that are addictive. This is a very wrong notion indeed. Nicotine too is as addictive as any narcotic. Once you get used to it, it is not going to be easy to break away from it.

An Unfair Battle

Let's take a moment to ponder over our bodies. They are such remarkable things. Just think of all those activities that are going on so harmoniously inside our bodies. Most of these activities and functions go on without our own knowledge. It's almost like a well oiled machine.

And think of the count less number of times when you have fallen ill and how this remarkable body has fought back and won the battle. Forget about giving credit to it. None of us do that. But the least we can do is lend it a helping hand.

The world we are living is horribly polluted. And as it is the body has a colossal task of fighting off all those toxins. And here we are pulling in loads and loads of toxic smoke as many times a day as possible. The body will pull on as long as it can, and in the end, one fine day it will put its foot down and say "enough is enough, go ahead cough up and die," and really we cannot blame it at that time.

The battle is already unfair, so the least we can do is help by not consciously contributing our own share of toxins to this body that is already waging a fierce battle in this polluted world.

I guess we have said enough about smoking, now let's talk about what we really intended to talk about and that is how to stop smoking. But before we proceed any further, I want to give you a word of caution. It's not going to be easy. This is an exercise that will put your

nerves, your muscles and every cell in your body to the utmost level of endurance. But in the when you triumph, you will realize that it was worth it.

After all, it is a matter of life and death. And believe me you can do it once you make up your mind. I can tell you that with all the authority in the world because right now you are being addressed by a person who quit being a chain smoker and is now a total non smoker. *That's right, me!*

Step 1: The Decision

The Difference Between Wanting and Deciding

Let's get one thing straight. Wanting is very different from deciding. It may seem like the same thing but really it's not. There is a sea of difference between wanting to quit and actually deciding to quit. You have probably wanted to quit the very day that you started smoking, but as can be clearly seen, it just didn't happen.

On the other hand, deciding is a very serious issue. It is something that can affect our self esteem and our dignity because once we decide then we have to stick to the decision right? And that is not going to be easy.

Any decision that one takes must be based on sound common sense and in the case of smoking too, this holds true. I would support any smokers decision to quit; but my request to every such prospective quitter is that they should get their facts right.

The problem is that if the prospective quitter is not proceeding in the right track, there is a greater tendency to fail. And once a person tries and fails, it is going to be all the more difficult to break the habit.

The Actual Decision

Before we come to the real decision we might have to do some serious thinking. The decision to quit smoking is not something that can hit your mind in the middle of

work. You need to feel composed and have everything well within your control. You need to sit and think about it for at least ten minutes. Oh yes ten minutes is more than enough time.

You have to remember what I told you the odds are all against it. You have to work really hard to think of a reason to go on smoking “the feel good” thing is not good enough an argument. Obviously you are going to end up feeling terrible maybe within the next couple of months if you do not break the habit. So there is absolutely no point in dwelling on temporary pleasures.

What I would suggest would be to browse through this manual, an exercise that would hardly take you ten to fifteen minutes and then sit and think about it for another ten minutes and then hit the right button (which means take the right decision). Hey, come on, we’re just talking about half an hour of your time. Surely any one can spare half an hour of their time for a matter of life and death...their own life and death to be precise.

Right, so now that we’ve done the serious thinking, all we have to do is make up our minds. Please remember that it is not the decision making that is difficult. It is sticking to the decision that is going to be the difficult part. So go ahead and make up your mind.

Let the World Know

Once your mind is made up, you have a very important thing left to do. You have to announce your decision to quit smoking to as many people as possible.

Tell all your friends that you have decided to quit and ask them earnestly to help you as much as they can. Remember, that bit is not going to be an easy task and you are going to need all the help in the world so it is all the more better that a lot of people know about your decision to quit.

There is one good thing about letting others know about decision to quit. It makes you more accountable. It lessens down your chances of taking a sneak puff. Having people who support you all around you, keeps you distracted from that great pull. And believe me it is a lot easier to stick to promises made in public than to keep promises made in private.

In one word, it just makes you all the more accountable. Hey you have a word to live up to, and the fear of being scorned and ridiculed by others for breaking your promise is a strong force that can keep you going. Discuss your decision with your family, tell them about your decision and the difficulties that you are going to face. Tell them that you are going to need their support and help and that it is not going to be easy for you.

An excellent thing you could do is draft out a contract for your self about your decision to stop smoking and sign it. It would be an awfully good decision to hang up this contract for all to see so that the next time you take a puff and somebody sees you with the contract above you ganging on the wall; they would at least raise an eyebrow.

It is best if you can get one or two others to quit smoking with you. Quitting smoking is a lot like losing weight, so it is best if it can be done in small groups. If

your partner also smokes then it's a wonderful thing for both of you to take the decision to together so that you can go on backing and encouraging each other.

A Formidable Foe

The battle is not going to be easy, because you will be pitted against a very formidable foe. Most people tend to under estimate the intensity of the issue. Again I repeat that quitting is not an easy task. I would recommend that you do not measure the size of the enemy by the size of the cigarette. Size does not matter sometimes. After all a stick of dynamite is not very big but just consider the amount of damage that it can bring about.

It is not just one cigarette that you are going to be fighting against. Consider that great chunk of humanity that has been removed from the face of the earth just because of tobacco. You have the statistics given above to prove it. If so many people have succumbed to cigarette smoke, then obviously it's no ordinary killer.

That is why it is highly recommended that you approach the issue only after thorough preparation. I suggest that you compare yourself to a commando who's preparing to venture into a thick forest shrouded with danger to rescue a hapless child from the clutches of some hardened criminals. Such a commando would be armed to the teeth. He would have been taught all the survival skills and would be a force to reckon with.

The commando would be constantly on his guard and even while resting his eyes and ears would be alert. Success for him is not a matter of luck but comes as a natural consequence of his training, his skills and his alertness. He's brave, he's sharp, he has nerves of steel and that is just what you must try to be. This battle should be fought to be won, because just like for the commando, for you too this is a matter of life and death.

A Myth to Break

First, let us break a myth. **Most smokers honestly believe that they can quit at any time they want.** This is far from reality. The fact is that most smokers can't just do that. The decision to quit is not something that is wholly controlled by the brain.

This exercise of control by the brain happens only in the first few days. After that, the brain or mind takes the back seat. It will seem as if the whole body is screaming out for more and more, and the brain has no choice but to comply. As we can see, every part of our body is connected and the brain too prefers to toe the line.

So when a smoker believes that he or she can quit at any time that he or she wants, then the person is actually fooling himself or herself. I don't want to underestimate any body. I agree that some people do have more will power than others. But what I would like to point out is that we are talking about a force that is more than just a physical or mental control. We are talking about withdrawal symptoms.

Withdrawal Symptoms, What's That?

This is the stumbling block over which many a would-be quitter trips. The problem with many smokers is that they fail to recognize these symptoms as symptoms. A withdrawal symptom is something that a person experiences once he or she stops using a substance that gives them a kick. Opps, is that too hard to digest? Well, let's try to make it simpler.

There are many things that are identified with substance abuse. Alcohol is one of them, narcotic drugs are another and tobacco is in no way to be left behind. The problem, or let us say that the similarity among all these substances, is that once one gets used to them, breaking away is not easy.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not the fear of deprivation of the pleasantly high feeling that drives the person to use the substance again and again so that it is used, misused and eventually abused. The person returns for his or her daily shot because of certain altered conditions in the body. These substances are indeed very potent and they affect certain specific spots or centers of the brain.

The brain quickly gets used to these alterations and then before we know it, these centers of the brain cannot do without the daily doze of the substance. The brain did not ask for the substance in the first place but we gave them to it. When we experience that pleasantly high feeling we do not bother about the changes that are taking place within.

It is common knowledge that the entire processes carried about in the brain are maintained by a delicate balance of the various chemical salts there. Once we start using substances like the above mentioned tobacco, narcotics and alcohol, the balance of these chemical salts gets altered. The body as I mentioned earlier is a self adjusting machine and so this new chemical balance is established and it takes no time for the brain cells to get adjusted to the new balance.

Then when the brain cells do not get what is required to maintain the new balance (read that as the daily puffs) things go hay wire. The old balance was disturbed and altered and a new balance was set up. But this new balance is not the real natural thing. It is something that has to be artificially supported and when that daily, or timely dose of nicotine does not get to the brain, the new balance gets upset.

That is when a person gets those peculiar feelings, which can be broadly called the withdrawal symptoms. You know what I am talking about don't you? Haven't you felt uneasy and jittery when you were unable to get that puff? It's a strange kind of feeling isn't it?

It's a feeling that can only be soothed when you take that long refreshing pull of highly toxic smoke. Some people break into a sweat, some get the tremors, some feel queasy, some get constipated...

All these are withdrawal symptoms, so unless you prepare yourself to face the pressure of withdrawal, you're going to face a losing battle.

Psst...let's not leave out an important detail...

The new balance in the brain that was established with the help of the used substance can indeed be broken. I'm not saying that it is easy but once you start conditioning your brain, that it just not going to get what it wants, that is the external substance, the brain will be left with no alternative than to go back and restore the old balance.

Of course the brain is not going to give up without a fight and that is what we are going to experience as the withdrawal symptom. Initially the brain had been doing all too well without the help of any external substance; and then we made the brain become dependent on something. So when we stop using that something, it is only a matter of time before the brain goes back to its original state of functioning. All we have to do is to muster up the will power to over come the withdrawal symptoms that might set in.

But again I do admit that it is easier said than done. In the end, however, knowing that withdrawals will come (and recognizing them as such), is a vital part of the quitting process.

Step 2: Prepare Yourself

Again and again I want to stress on the fact that this is a task that can be achieved only if you are well and truly prepared. There is an old saying that says "well begun is half done," and the same thing rings true in the matter of quitting as well.

So let us hit the different buttons that are part of the preparation. As I mentioned earlier, it is not just enough that you know that you are trying to quit smoking. All those who move around closely with you must be let into the affair. This includes your family, your friends, your colleagues and -brace yourself for this- your boss as well. Now, that might sound a bit strange, what the hell has your boss got to do with your attempt to quit smoking?

The answer is simple, if you tell your boss that you are trying to quit smoking it gives you one more reason to go for it with a resolute mind because no body would want to stand sheepishly in front of a boss and say something like, "well I kind of gave up I guess."

Do NOT Take It Lightly...

Smoking is not a joke and quitting is even a more serious affair so it is best that you approach the problem with all the seriousness of the affair. It would be best if you prepared yourself mentally, emotionally and physically for the change. And it doesn't stop with that. You should also prepare your surroundings. Get rid of any

thing and every thing that reminds you of smoking. This includes things like ash trays, packets of cigarettes.

It would also be a good idea to put up signs and reminders that smoking is injurious to health and that you are trying to quit smoking so that you really get the hang of it. Try to come up with original stuff if you want. If you can make them funny then it is going to be all the better but these signs should also be morale boosters, they should make you feel good about what you are trying to do and should make you feel that it is worth the effort.

You could try messages like:

- **"Only the BRAVE HEARTS can quit smoking!"**
- **"I said YES to life today when I said NO to Nicotine"**
- **"SMOKE has 5 letters...so does DEATH"**

Or my personal favorite...

**I said NO to my daily SMOKE
'Cos this life of mine is not a joke
I want to live on like an oak
Smokers' lives end early in coughs and chokes**

This last bit is something I penned when I was trying to quit smoking. I'll be the first to admit that it's corny, but it proved to be very useful for me. I hope it will have the same effect on you. Now we have another important task to do and that is preparing our selves emotionally for the change that might take place.

The main thing is to get your mind off smoking and for that you have to find a substitute for it. There are many other things that you could practice when you get the urge to smoke. I will list out the things that you could do here. Then you could choose the ideal thing to do according to your life style.

Music

Music is a wonderful way of getting your mind off that urge to smoke. If you have fixed times for getting a smoke like after meals or during the coffee break you could try playing something very soothing using a walk man and head phones so that you do not disturb others though you might attract attention. Another thing you could do is that you could play music on your computer if you have a work station all to your self.

Music is a wonderful stress reliever. I do not want to emphasize on any particular type of music because tastes differ.

Meditation

Meditation is also an excellent way of helping you to get better control over your mind. It is not a very great thing too. Any body can learn the art with a little bit of practice. Now I hope you will pardon me if I digress a bit from our topic and give you a few essential points on how to meditate because this as I see it is the best method of helping you to gain better control over you mind and there by get over that urge to take in that puff of smoke.

The simplest method of mediation that you could practice by yourself would be to sit in a very comfortable position with your eyes closed. In the initial stages you may find your mind drifting but gradually you will learn to focus more and more. The idea behind meditation is not to cut out all the forces around you but to become one with them. I have seen people plug their ears with cotton to shut out sounds. But that is not the purpose that we wish to achieve. On the contrary we should focus on the sounds around us.

Be aware of them, listen to them. First listen to the bigger sounds around you like the traffic or machines or even loud music from your neighbor's apartment. Then listen to the softer sounds like the drone of the refrigerator, or the A/C. And then bring your attention to the sound of your own breathing. If you can actually hear yourself breathing then you have arrived and this is what you have to keep doing.

It would be useful if you could try to focus on some inner picture that you could conjure up in your mind. By inner picture I mean an image that you can concentrate on for example the flame of a lighted candle or a single flower on a plant. Try and see how long you can keep your mind focused on such an image. If the image blurs immediately and is replaced by something else, then you need to work on it. Gradually you will see that you can keep your mind focused on the same thing for more than ten minutes.

That means that you have arrived. Once you have reached this stage and have begun to practice it without fail, you will see that it can give you immense mental

strength. Then the next time you get an urge to smoke, all you have to do is sit put where ever you are, close your eyes and meditate. The urge will have vanished by the time you open your eyes. Meditation not only drives away the urge but gives you control over your mind.

Breathing Exercises

Breathing exercises too can prove to be useful in controlling the urge to smoke. It is common knowledge that the human body takes in a lot of toxic substances, both through the air and through food and drink. Apart from this, various toxins are also released in the body as a result of the various processes that are going on. These toxins have to be released on a continuous basis or else they will accumulate in the body with serious results.

One of the best ways of releasing these toxins is by means of exhaling while breathing. One funny fact is that most of do not breathe properly. Just take a look at the picture like this. With each breath that we take, we take in oxygen. This oxygen is carried by the blood to every cell of the body and every cell must indeed get enough oxygen not just to survive but to remain healthy as well.

So it is imperative that we make an honest attempt to breathe properly. But first of course we have to make sure that we are breathing in unpolluted air. The time best for breathing exercises is early in the morning when the air is comparatively unpolluted. Now what you have to do is this. Again, sit comfortably so that there is no strain to any part of your body. It is not imperative that

you close your eyes, but I have always noticed that the exercise works better when the eyes are closed.

When you are ready, what you have to do is to breathe in deeply and slowly, and feel the fresh air filling up your lungs until it just can't take any more. Conjure up images of the air encircling throughout your body and reaching every cell, literally bathing it with oxygen. Of course it doesn't happen that way but the image helps a lot. Then hold your breath for a few seconds and then very slowly exhale letting out all that foul air.

Again conjure up an image of all the toxins being released from your body. Every cell has become free of the burden it was carrying. Now pause for a second or two and again breathe in deeply, slowly letting your lungs fill up with all that good, clean, rejuvenating air. Repeat this exercise at least ten times and take your time for it taking care not to rush through.

When you have done that part of the exercise it is time for the second part. Again sit with your eyes closed, but this time, keep one nostril closed with the help of your index finger. It is best to close the right nostril first and that too with your right index finger. Now breathe in deeply and slowly through your left nostril keeping the right nostril closed. When you have held air for a second or two, release your right nostril and breathe out through it.

While you are breathing out conjure up an image of all the toxins being released from your head and the brain especially. And as you breathe in conjure up images of the clean air circulating through your brain freeing it of all the worries and trouble and lightening it.

Repeat this exercise with the other nostril closed and in this way alternate between the nostrils at least ten times. The entire breathing exercise need not take more than ten minutes. But you will be surprised at how light hearted and free you will feel after the exercise. Once you have practiced it for three or four mornings, you will be in a position to do the exercise each time you get the urge to smoke. The breathing exercise can easily become a substitute for the urge to take in that hourly doze of nicotine.

An Experiment

Now, I want you to try something. It's a little gory, I admit, so I'll apologize for that right up front. Here's what I want you to do next...

While you are doing this breathing exercise and feeling all those cells perk up, just think for a minute about what happens when you're inhaling the hot, fuming, toxic, carcinogenic smoke from a cigarette. Visualize the smoke circulating through your body and slowly killing all the cells that it comes in contact with. Watch as it slowly but surely pollutes your entire body, and then see yourself finally succumbing to it one day.

I know this experiment is tough to deal with, but it's important that you understand the hideous crime that you commit against your body each time you smoke a cigarette, compared to the good you do your body by inhaling clean, natural oxygen.

Try Something Else

When you get the urge to smoke try using something else like a chewing-gum or a toffee. Try things that have strong flavors like menthol, mint or spiced with something like cardamom. It is even better if you can get your hands on spices like cloves or cardamoms; they really help a lot though you could burn your mouth if you take in more than a teeny weenie bit. You should not swallow these things immediately, but should bite into them and then let the taste linger in your mouth for a couple of minutes. You might experience numbness in your mouth but it helps take away the urge to smoke.

But please note that these things can be addictive too, so try alternating among chewing gum, candy, chocolate, spices and maybe even coffee.

Make a list of all the smokers around you who you know closely. And then what you have to do is **STAY AWAY FROM THEM**. Unless they too are trying to quit, keep a very safe distance from them. If you had a habit of smoking with them at fixed times, take special care to steer very clear of them at those fixed times.

Don't Put It Off

Most people - in fact, I should say all of us - have a habit of putting off things for another day. This habit is called procrastination and it's the guardian angel of smoking. As long as we have this habit of procrastination, we are never going to stop.

The funny thing about procrastination is that we only tend to postpone unpleasant tasks. The good things in life we try to do as early as possible and the things that involve hard work, giving up comforts, or a little bit of pain, we try to put off till the last possible date.

The dangerous thing over here is that in the case of most smokers there is no real last possible date. Many people become serious about quitting after a first heart attack or a stroke. Don't tell me that you too are waiting for a real warning like that. If we are waiting for a doctor's warning, then we can't be too far from falling terminally ill. There is absolutely no sense in putting it off.

There is a law in Physics that was put forward by Sir Isaac Newton. It states that a body continues to be in a state of rest or of uniform motion until an external force is applied. This same rule is true in the case of smoking as well. Smoking is not a habit that can die a natural death all of a sudden. It is something that has to be worked on. It is something that involves a lot of restraint and control. The only cases in which I have seen a smoker stop at one go is when the doctor shook his head and said "I'm sorry but you have only a few months left to live."

Come on get a grip on your self. You are much stronger than you think. So why do you have to postpone it any further. There is no better day than today. It is not something that you have to wait till New Year to do as a part of your New Year resolutions. Do it today itself and you can increase your chances of succeeding and ...gulp...surviving.

Just think about it for a minute. Did you really want to become a smoker? Was that really your ambition as a child, to grow up into a smoker? Chances are that you became a smoker as a result of habit. Look at yourself. You have a respectable job and you have people who you care about and who care about you.

If one of your friends were to approach you with a problem and ask you to think of the most sensible decision wouldn't you do it for them? Now if you would do that for a friend, shouldn't you be able to do it for you as well? If you are capable of taking sensible decisions for others don't you owe it to yourself to take sensible decisions as far as your health is concerned? Of course you do, but then what is stopping you?

The Voice Within

Well, I have news for you. You might not believe this but the fact is that you always wanted to stop smoking. Oh yes you did. You do not need any body to tell you what is good for you and what is not. Deep down inside, a plaintive voice has been calling out to you to quit and you have been heeding it but you just haven't done anything about it now.

You want to know why that happens. It is because you have convinced your self that you will stop smoking at a later date. This promise false though it might be was enough to subdue that inner voice. The voice cried out and the response it got was...

“Well I didn’t say that I was not going to stop smoking did I? Just give me the time and I will do it. I know what is good for me so don’t nag.”

And that silences the inner voice. But that later date never comes. Come on who are we trying to fool. It’s just a way of convincing yourself that you can stop if you want but certain external factors are hindering your efforts.

You can start the quitting process by doing some paper work again. You have to have a very clear idea about why you want to quit and the best way to find out why is to sit down with a piece of paper and write down why you exactly want to quit.

Your list should include things like:

- To save your self from the hazards of smoking
- To gain better control over your life
- To increase your self esteem
- To set a good example to others, especially children, because if you smoke there is a very good chance that they too will become a smoker

But the most important point that you should put down is that you should try and quit in order to make it healthier and safer for those who live around you especially your friends and family. Hey come on, you really owe it to them. I would like to take another moment off to digress and talk about second hand smoking.

Second Hand Smoking

The funny thing about second hand smoking is that most smokers don't even know that something like second hand smoking exists. It is also referred to as passive smoking.

Second hand smoking is the process by which another person smokes but the toxic smoke is also inhaled and affects those who move along with the active smoker. The sad thing about this is that second hand smoking is just as harmful as active smoking. So the next time you smoke in the company of other people you have to be well aware of the fact that you are not just putting your self in danger but the same amount of danger is being passed on to your loved ones as well; a very strange gift indeed to pass on to your loved ones.

So if not for your self, at least for your loved ones you ought to try and give up the habit.

So, though I included the reason of passive smoking at the end of the list, it should be the most important reason for you to stop smoking. Isn't it a very selfish way of existing without bothering about the safety and well being of others just because you want to indulge in a pleasure of yours?

More Paperwork

The next thing you have to do is that you have to fix the day when you want to start quitting and write it down as well. But as I mentioned earlier, it should not be

very far away. The very next day is as good a bet as any other day. And may I ask you, why not today itself?

There is still a little more paper work to be done. It would be a good idea to write down any other occasions when you had tried to quit smoking earlier but did not succeed. Try and find out the reasons while you failed and write them down as well. These reasons are what we call pitfalls and it would be best to be extremely wary of these pitfalls and steer clear of them.

That's enough paper work for the day. But do not throw away this bit of paper but try and keep it where you can see it always. You could try pinning it in your work station or even on your bathroom wall.

Admit That You Are Addicted

Go on, face it like a man, (or a woman) say it and realize how much it hurts. If you can do that much then the battle is half won. Most smokers make a fatal mistake here. They keep on telling themselves that can break off as easily as snapping their fingers when they really can't. They try to fool themselves and you know why?

It is because they feel sort of weak and submissive when they admit that they cannot do with out that hourly puff. So they do not admit it. They just say something like,

- "I need something to soothe my nerves," or
- "It helps me think better," or

- "I need to unwind."

Well, it sounds very cool but what such people do not understand is that what they are really saying is that they cannot function well by themselves. They are actually admitting that their brains are incapable of carrying out those routine activities any more without the help of an external agency. It's all the same thing isn't it. And personally I think it is much better to admit that they are simply addicted to smoking.

There is nothing to be embarrassed about. There is no need to feel inferior. Again take a look at the statistics and see all those people who have become addicted to smoking. But unlike those people you are going to do something about it. Tobacco is like a colossal octopus. Once it gets its grip around you, then you are done for. It swiftly tightens its tentacles around you and before you know it, you are fully and completely in its grip and you cannot even breathe without its permission. You and only you can save your self.

That is why I said that the first thing you have to do is you have to take a look at your self in the mirror. Look at your self for a minute and face the truth. Let is sink in slowly and maybe painfully. Notice the tentacles of the octopus around you. Then you can admit to yourself that you have indeed become a slave to the master that is tobacco.

Now that is not a nice thought at all is it? You with all your remarkable faculties, abilities and potential have actually become a slave to something so gross! You who have never bowed your head before any one have

actually been taken by this gruesome monster. Grr...the thought is going to be infuriating. But you have to face it, you have to accept it only then can you muster up enough strength to fight back.

And please take heed; we are not talking about any ordinary battle over here. We are talking about fighting to win and win is what we are going to do that this manual is all you are going to need for that ultimate victory.

All Kinds of Cigarettes Are Bad

Some people think that the number of cigarettes one smokes decides on the harm that is caused but that is not true. Smoking any number of cigarettes is harmful. Of course the harm is increased when the number of cigarettes is increased but that does not mean that a person who smokes only one or two cigarettes a day is free from danger.

Similarly, let us get this straight once and for all, all kinds of cigarettes are harmful to health whether filtered or not, whether it contains menthol or not, all of them are terrible harmful to your lungs and every other part of your body that the toxic smoke touches.

So do not go about believing that just because you have a different smoking pattern from most smokers you are going to get away Scot free.

Step 3: The Quitting Process

Now when we come to the actual quitting process, I would like to remind you once again that it is not going to be easy. Please do not consider yourself to be superhuman so be ready to get external help if you need it. As I told you earlier, there might be physical, mental and emotional changes when you stop smoking. But you do not have to worry. There is plenty of help available nowadays.

Medical Help

Do not feel bad about getting support. On the contrary, your chances of succeeding will increase many fold if you get professional help. Remember, nicotine is a very powerful substance and getting over it is no easy task. The more help you get, the better.

If you can get professional medical help, then it's even better. Getting professional medical help does not mean that you have to under go prolonged medical treatment. Your doctor or even your dentist will be able to guide you and provide you with all the solutions to your queries. They will able to suggest methods of handling the withdrawal symptoms and even prescribe medicines that can help you.

One of the most common problems that quitters face is frequent mood changes in the initial stages. You might even end up feeling sort of depressed and it is here that a medical practitioner can help you with anti depressants or mood boosters. It is well and good if you

can quit by yourself and over come the powerful urges to relapse, but if you feel that you might need help there's nothing to feel bad about.

If you need the help of medicines do not consider your self to be weak or look upon your self as a patient. All you have to do is understand how badly the nicotine had affected you and you can start counting your lucky stars that you decided to quit before something really bad happened.

Medicines

Most of us feel queasy about taking medicines, and I don't blame you if you feel the same. But try and look at it like this. Right now you do not have any serious affliction apart from the fact that you are smoking. In order to quit smoking you might have to take medicines for may be a month or two. This is a lot like getting a vaccination as a preventive measure to ward off a disease. But on the other hand if you continue smoking, you might end up with major illnesses which will require that you not only continue taking medicines for life but also that your time on earth will be considerably reduced. It's a matter of being proactive than reactive.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved five medications to help you quit smoking:

- 1. Bupropion SR — Available by prescription**
- 2. Nicotine gum — Available over-the-counter**
- 3. Nicotine inhaler — Available by prescription**

- 4. Nicotine nasal spray — Available by prescription**
- 5. Nicotine patch — Available by prescription and over-the-counter**

Taking these medicines will not just double your chances of succeeding but will actually increase your chances by a whopping 80%. But of course it is highly recommended that you start using these medicines after consulting a medical practitioner.

Counseling

Counseling is one way in, which you can strengthen your effort to quit. It is not really required that you consult a professional counselor. If you have a doctor or a dentist who you trust, that person is more than enough. In the initial stages, ask the person to detail you on all the harmful effects of smoking. Then the person can monitor your efforts and your progress and can give you helpful hints as well.

You might also consider possibilities like group counseling or telephone counseling. Group counseling has a wonderful effect, because there is nothing that feels as good as having others who face the same problems that you are encountering. When you hear the fears of others, and how difficult it is for them to pull no, you will feel surprisingly encouraged. Group counseling will provide you a wonderful arena to compare notes with other fellow quitters and you can watch and monitor your progress.

Try reassuring others, it has a wonderful effect on you. When you talk convincingly to others without knowing it you are really convincing yourself as well. This will go a long way towards building up your own confidence that you will succeed.

Telephone counseling is also a possibility that many people tend to ignore. The best thing about telephone counseling is that it can be done at any time without too much of a strain. Just consider the possibility, it is not always easy to dash off to your counselor when you feel the urge to smoke, know you are not supposed to and end up feeling depressed about it. On the other hand if, at such a moment you can just pick up your telephone and dial your counselor's number, you can get what you want and with the minimum loss of time and effort.

A Financial Reward

Sure cigarettes are expensive, but because people buy them in small quantities, the expense doesn't seem much. So what you can do is start saving the money that you do not spend buying packets and packets of cigarettes. Save the money for something special and if you can, try to make it special for your family as well.

Promise the kids something like a trip to Disneyland or a vacation at the sea side. The advantage of making such public declarations is that you have all the more reason to refrain from buying cigarettes. Your kids too will be very enthusiastic about reminding you not to splurge on cigarettes and there is something to look forward to for all the family.

What if you do not have a family to save for? Well, go ahead and save for yourself. There's always something that you would want but you have refrained from buying because it might have been slightly over your budget. So now you can add the money that you are not spending on cigarettes to get yourself that little something.

The point that I am trying to drive home is that you should be rewarded for your efforts. Your attempt to start smoking should not become a sort of punishment towards yourself but must promise better things for you later.

Bringing Down the Number

This again is another pitfall. There is often a misconception about quitting. Many people believe that instead of stopping at just one go; they should try to bring down the number of cigarettes that they smoke. Wrong! That is not the way that it should be done. If you try and bring down the number of cigarettes that you smoke, you will still be smoking and that just doesn't help.

It is a very tricky thing indeed to fix on the number that is safe for you. If you are still carrying cigarettes with you then you are in fact tempting yourself. You might have brought down the number but since you still have a packet with you, you are in fact waiting for the slightest provocation and that number will shoot up again.

What is it that makes you smoke? Tension, excitement, anxiety, problems, the need to unwind,

stress? Can we ever free ourselves from any of these? So the next time you hit one of these then that becomes your green signal for you will just whip out that packet, light one of them and start puffing away to glory. The excuse that will be reverberating in your mind is that "it's just this once, just to get over this small problem." And then before you know it, you will be back to smoking the same number of cigarettes.

So let me emphasize that point again, you have to quit once and for all if you are really serious about quitting. It just does not work if you try to bring down the number. The number just never becomes zero. I have met many people who say, "I used to smoke 6 packets a day but now I'm down to just 2 packets a day." I look at them out of the corner of my eye and I do not say anything to them though the message on my face is, "but you are still puffing away like a steam engine aren't you?"

Water Flows Down

It's strange isn't it how every thing in this world always keeps coming down. Sir Isaac Newton explained this phenomenon using the laws of gravity. But I must admit that I am still amazed how everything in this world tries to reach the lowest possible point.

If you have ever watched water flow you will understand what I am talking about. A water fall, never thunders upwards, a stream always flows down wards (remember the nursery rhyme, "Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream") even a tiny pool of water spilt on the table tries to find the easiest way downwards.

So what about it? You must be wondering what the connection is between quitting smoking and flowing water. There is a very deep connection as you will see for yourself. There is an unwritten rule in this world that everything must try and find the easiest route downwards. When you take something to a higher state, it becomes unstable and tries to find the easiest route downwards.

Over here we are trying to precisely the same thing. We are trying to take you from a lower state (the state of being a smoker) to a higher state, (the state of being a non-smoker). So you must bear in mind that it is the easiest thing in the world for you to relapse and again pick up that packet of cigarettes. It is going to take a lot of effort and will power on your part to refrain from smoking. That's why I keep saying that you will need all the support and encouragement while you are still working at it.

But then you might wonder if you have to keep up that will power and constantly have to keep battling against the urge to smoke for the rest of your life. The answer is no. Once you have given up the habit once and for all, once you have over come all these withdrawal symptoms, then you have arrived. You will automatically pick up a new life style and there will be no room for cigarettes in that new life.

You will start to realize how much better your life has become with out cigarettes. You will feel the power in your hands, you will be in absolute control of your life and at that stage there is absolutely n coming back. Once you have tasted the sweetness of success, there is no coming

back. Than you are safe and there is no fear of relapsing after that.

The whole thing is like a threshold. When you are controlling yourself for the first time, you are at the very middle of the threshold. You can fall upwards or downwards and it is much easier to fall downwards. This is where you need the support, help and encouragement of others. But gradually as you over come the urge, you advance further and further upward and once you are beyond a certain point, then you have reached the point of no return and then there is no coming back.

Low Tar and Low Nicotine Cigarettes

Many people switch to low tar and low nicotine cigarettes thinking that there will be lesser harm done. This is again a myth. The point that such people are missing out is that they continue to smoke because the body or the brain has started demanding its daily doze of nicotine. Nicotine is what the body wants and nicotine is what harms the body most.

So no matter what you smoke you will try to give you body the nicotine that it has become used to. You cannot reason with the body. You accustomed it to a particular dosage of nicotine and when it doesn't get that, its starts to complain. At such a tie even if you switch to a low nicotine cigarette it is not going to be of much use.

The end result will be that you will start taking stronger pulls on these cigarettes, may increase the number of cigarettes that you smoke, or you might take

more puffs per cigarette. Nicotine is a venomously addictive substance and once you get used to it, there is no bringing it down, there is only stopping it once and for all.

The message here is loud and clear. Smoking any kind of cigarette is bad so don't even consider other possibilities.

Stage 4: The Agony and Ecstasy **Change Your Lifestyle**

Nothing is permanent in this world except change. So when you plan to stop smoking, bring about other changes in your life style as well. Take a look at all those things that have become a kind of routine and break that routine. Try to do things differently and will make a lot of difference.

What we are trying to do as part of this exercise is that we are trying to create a new environment for you. It is not possible for you to shift to a new apartment so bring about a few changes in the way things are as part of your exercise to quit smoking. Let every thing have a new feel about it. If there was a favorite chair in which you used to sit when you smoked, change the upholstery of the chair or maybe you could stash away the chair into a corner.

Try to set a new routine. Try working out or going to the gym. If that is not possible, try waking up a little earlier and go for a short morning walk. If you can make that a run or a jog, it is going to be very stimulating and is going to be the best way to start your day.

Exercise does not necessarily mean pumping metal. If you do have the time to go to a gymnasium everyday, then that is well and good. But I suppose most of us do not have the time for a regular work out in a gym. So what is the other alternative? Do it at home of course.

But whether it is at home or at a multi-gym, there is something that I want to tell you. Regularity is the rule of the day. It is not getting started that is the difficult part, it is sticking to a regular exercise routine that is difficult and this is what proves to be the stumbling block for most people.

Most people have a wonderful start. In fact it is truly spectacular. They buy track suits and gym-wear, running shoes and a whole lot of other gear. Their first day at the gym is almost a celebration. Then as the days go on, they find it increasingly difficult to meet the domestic and professional demands and so their routine slows down and finally comes to a complete workout burn out.

One mistake that many people make is that they choose the evenings or a work out. If that can suit your lifestyle, then that's fine. But for most of us, by the time the evening lifts up its curtains we are completely pooped. We find ourselves physically and mentally drained. And at that time our bodies will be just too tired for a work out. So it is best to set aside some time for exercise in the morning itself.

There are two advantages of setting apart time in the morning. The first advantage is that in the morning our bodies are fresh and full of energy. Now over here I want to make one point clear.

Many people believe that exercise depletes the body of energy but the case is just the opposite. Exercise pumps up more blood through the different parts of the body and warms up the body, so in fact, after exercise we

feel more charged and ready to face the challenges of the day.

The second advantage is that in the morning we can plan for the whole day without letting the exercise routine affect the rest of our activities.

What about those of us who have never worked out before? In such cases you might need to start off under the personal supervision of an instructor and that may require that you go to a gym. But what I would suggest is that there are two simple things that any one can do for which you do not need the help of any instructor.

You know what these are? They are walking and swimming. Any body can walk and those of you who know how to swim can swim. For these two activities you do not need much gear and experts say that these two exercises have no side effects and are excellent stress busters.

So in the morning wake up just half an hour earlier, put on your walking shoes and hit the roads. Most roads will be less crowded at this hour and less polluted too. It is a wonderful way to start a day.

Take a break from coffee and try tea instead. If you are moving around the house, try playing music. Redecorate your room by adding a few pictures here and there preferably of scenery. And while you are redecorating, do what I mentioned earlier that is get rid of every thing that even remotely reminds you of smoking.

Plan your day in such a way that you have

something enjoyable to do at the end of the day. It does not have to be something that involves money. We do not want you end up bankrupt. It can be something as simple as spending some time with the family playing a board game or something. Or it can be going out for a walk together.

But I would like to add that watching television just does not fit into this list. The reason is because T.V is not something that demands too much of our attention. We can easily do something else while we are watching TV and what can be easier than taking a smoke while our eyes are glued to the T.V. While you are working on breaking the habit of smoking, you need to move about with people. You need the company of people who can take your mind off that craving and TV doesn't help you do that.

Make a list of those things that build up your stress. Try to steer clear of them. If that is not possible try to find out some stress busters and use them. Do not use stress as an excuse to start smoking. There are a hundred other methods of beating stress. As mentioned earlier, you could try breathing exercises, meditation or even music. There is another excellent way of beating stress and that is using the distressing ball. If you do not have one of those, try wriggling your fingers and toes. That too is a natural method of beating stress.

The point that we are trying to drive home over here is that you need a break from whatever you have been doing for this exercise of quitting to work. Since it is impossible to change your job or your home, you have to bring about as many changes as possible to get that whole new feeling.

Develop New Interests

Try developing new interests or hobbies like gardening or painting. Such things would keep your mind off that urge to smoke. All of us have a certain measure of creativity that often remains untapped. It would be a wonderful thing if you could try working on that creativity. Join a dance class or a drama class. Or you could try learning a new skill like pottery or clay modeling. Try to involve yourself with other people. Do some social work, or try helping out at the local volunteer organizations.

Do not feel shy to tell these new acquaintances that you are trying to quit smoking. You will be surprised at how understanding people will be. The advantage of doing such things is that it not only takes away all your brooding (read that as spare time that you otherwise smoke away to glory) time but it also makes your life a whole lot richer. In other words it lends a lot of meaning to your life so that you will become accountable to more and more people.

Such activities make us appreciate the meaning of life in a better way and we will stop to think twice before we waste away this life at the end of a cigarette.

Eat Right

Once you stop smoking you might notice significant changes in your food habits. Most smokers experience weight gain as soon as they stop smoking. There are people who have gained nearly 15 pounds once they

stopped smoking. But there is no reason to worry. This is just a very temporary phase and you will soon get over it. It is however important that you develop a proper diet routine and watch what you eat. That is why I have included this supplement on proper eating habits.

Work on your diet as well. If you have erratic eating habits, it is going to affect every thing you do and that indirectly affects your smoking habits as well. There are many of us out there who skip breakfast. Now, this is the best way to start your day badly. Just check the very meaning of the word. It is break-fast. So what does it mean? It means that this meal is meant to break the fast that we were undergoing.

The effects of skipping breakfast may not be felt immediately but sometime during the day this is sure to tell. Our body needs the energy from the food we have at breakfast. And we can either start our day with good breakfast or smoke a couple of cigarettes and gulp down a cup of coffee and work away towards a highly stressful day.

So what does a proper breakfast mean? In this context, I would like to point out that a cup of coffee is not breakfast. Many people believe that a big cup of coffee is breakfast. Sure coffee perks you up but it also takes away your hunger and as the caffeine and other alkaloids present in the coffee hit the different parts of your body, it completely takes away your appetite. Couple that with the nicotine of cigarettes and you are done for. You will have succeeded in fooling your brain that it is fully equipped to meet the challenges of the day.

So it is advisable to go easy on coffee especially in the morning. Drink tea instead. Tea is supposed to be good for your heart and can prove to be just as stimulating once you get used to it. But those of you die hard coffee fans, what you could do is take a lesser quantity of coffee if you must, in the morning. A breakfast drink is fine, but there is nothing that beats a tall glass of fresh fruit juice in the morning along with two pieces of toast, an egg or a cereal. Then you are all set for a wonderful day.

The same thing that I said about having breakfast applies to the other meals as well. Our body needs nourishment at fixed time intervals and at those times you had better grab something to eat. The human stomach is a remarkable thing and can even digest small bones and small stones. So if you do not give it something to digest from time to time, it will very well start attacking its own walls. That is when people end up with conditions like acidity, ulcers and digestive disorders. If you have never experienced such disorders before in spite of your erratic eating habits, don't wait for it, believe me a digestive disorder is not something to play with.

It was my experience that in order to silence those maddening pangs of hunger that hit us during work, there was nothing like a couple of cigarettes. I used to do just that and in a couple of years I ended up with a severe acidity condition.

Noon time is meant for lunch so have it then itself. There are many people who find it difficult to have lunch between 12 and 2, which is the right time for lunch. For such unfortunate souls, the best thing you could do is

gulp down yet another glass of fruit juice or probably nibble on a cookie. But again coffee is not a substitute for lunch. And nor are cigarettes.

Again in the evening it is best to eat something that is not too filling like a light sandwich or a couple of cookies. A glass of milk along with that, and you will have had the perfect tea. But of course tea time is not an absolute no-no to coffee or tea whatever be your choice. But any how I suppose all of us do our share of downing cup after cup of coffee during the day time.

It is those coffee breaks that you have to extremely wary off. Those are the times when you will have to exercise the maximum mind control and there is nothing better than that meditation or breathing exercises that I described.

I suppose supper is not such a big ordeal because by evening most of us are relatively free. But there we have another foe to battle with. Most of us are so pooped in the night that we cannot be bothered with supper. Even putting something to warm in the microwave can be a chore so most of us settle for something fried which is usually munched while sitting glued to the television.

I would like to say it now once and for all fried foods are bad for you and the more you cut out on fried foods the healthier you will become. Most people go for a smoke after meals and this is something that must be tackled carefully. You are going to find it increasingly difficult if the people you have just dined with make a beeline for the balcony to smoke.

It would be best if you could stop dining with such

people, but if you do, muster up all your will power and do not accompany them to the balcony. It is ideal if you pop in one of those gums or spices after meals to control the urge.

While you are trying to quit smoking, try to double your intake of fluids. Drink as much water as you can at least 12 to 15 glasses a day. If you can have fresh fruit juice, then it is even better. But I don't think it is possible for a person to have 12 glasses of fresh juice every day.

A few more pointers on what to eat...

- Choose a variety of foods from all food groups every day. This is a fine way of keeping deficiency diseases at bay.
- Steer clear of food supplements or nutraceuticals as they are sometimes called. If you are eating properly, you do not need any supplements.
- It is best to go for natural foods instead of processed or packed foods.
- Eat fresh fruit instead of drinking fresh juices whenever you can. Fresh fruit has a lot more fiber, which your body needs.
- Go crazy on vegetables and salads; they can never do much harm.
- If you can say no to alcoholic beverages please do.

- The next time you are thirsty, try drinking water instead of soda. Your body prefers water in its purest form.
- Increase your intake of fluids. Try and drink at least 12 glasses of water every day; it helps to flush out all those toxins.
- Wash your vegetables and fruits well before consumption and search for packets that say 'free from pesticides.'

Practice these eating habits and before you know it, you will have a whole new body, which you certainly won't want to pollute with cigarette smoke.

Smoking and Sleep

Some people make it a habit of taking a puff or two before going to bed. And this is precisely something that should not be. A smoke or two before going to bed is the worst thing you can do when your brain is just preparing for the much needed rest. The nicotine that you inhaled goes straight to the sleep centers of your brain and then everything goes hay wire. The result is that you have a bad night's rest.

In the morning you wake up feeling any thing but refreshed and the only way to take away that feeling is by having that smoke again. Below I am going to discuss sleep in general and when you alter your life style and habits it would be good if you could include these pointers

in your sleep routine as well. You see, everything is connected; your eating patterns, your sleep patterns and every thing. So if you are not doing any of these things right, you might just bounce back into becoming a smoker.

The National Sleep Foundation reports (2002) that America is on the verge of a poor sleep epidemic, characterized by the following eye-opening statistics:

- 64% of American adults get less than the eight hours of sleep that experts recommend is required to maintain optimal physical, mental, and emotional health.
- One-third of the US population says they get less sleep now than they did five years ago
- One-half of Americans have experienced insomnia (sleeplessness)
- Drowsiness due to a lack of a proper night of sleep interferes with the daily activities of 37 percent of all adults.

Amazed? Well, you should be. Sleep has become a critical issue as far as most adults are concerned.

The following is an excerpt from "Sleep: Essential for Optimal Health" by Drs. Robert Goldman and Ronald Klatz.

"Don't slight sleep. It's when you're tired that you tend to overwork. When you're

rested you can finish the work without strain and still have energy and time left over for the rest of your life. Research shows that workers who get less than six hours of sleep a night are prone to costly accidents, poor concentration and poor performance. Without sleep depression, anxiety and anger increase. The quality of sleep is just as important as number of hours. If you have trouble sleeping, try going to bed earlier, before 10:00. This usually creates a deeper sleep. Prepare for deep sleep by avoiding TV and computers in the evening."

You know what is funny about sleep? Most people believe that sleep is something that the body will take care of by itself. They feel that their bodies will give them signals when it wants sleep. That maybe true, but the question here is, do these people know how to read or sense these signals that the body is trying to give them.

If such people think that the tendency to nod off to sleep while working or driving is the signal that their bodies are going to give them, then they are mistaken. The body starts by giving subtle signals like dark circles around the eyes, listless eyes, a general lethargy, a lack of interest in everything, unwarranted yawns, poor performance and so on. But of course, most of these 'symptoms' can be washed away with a cup of coffee or a puff of nicotine.

Again let us go back to the lower animals. Look around you and you will find that most of the animals sensible enough to get the sleep that they want. Whether

it is horses, or cows or dogs or cats (cats the most) they sleep when they want to, and that is probably why they are more wiry and energetic than humans.

You won't find a dog sitting up half the night to watch a ball game, nor would you find a cat browsing the net all night long. An important point that most people do not know is that our bodies are influenced or governed by what experts call circadian cycles. These are cycles of sleep, rest and activity that are in fact governed by sunlight and darkness.

You might have seen certain plants that let their leaves droop their leaves in the night to revive them when it is day. Just like this, our bodies too are influenced by light and darkness. For every stimulus there should be a response. Here the stimulus is darkness so the response must be to sleep. Thankfully however, our bodies do not really need 12 hours of sleep.

Experts tell us that adults need 8 hours of good sleep to become fully functional. If you cannot manage eight hours, try to make it at least seven. Anything below that is not good for your body, and is going to take its toll at some time or that other.

Similarly think about all those activities that are constantly going on in our bodies. Think of your heart that never stops pumping blood not even for a couple of seconds. Think of those lungs that help you breathe in and breathe out and the various other parts like you digestive system, your organs and you sense organs. Don't these wonderful systems deserve some rest? They certainly do. And I have news for you.

Experts have found out that when the human body is in a state of sleep, all these functions slow down (they can't stop of course) and get carried out at a much relaxed pace. This is the only rest that these parts of our bodies get. So don't you think that it is highly unfair to deprive them of the rest that they really deserve? Often we use the brain or the muscles as a measuring stick. When these parts are tired we decide that we need to rest.

And so we relax with a book, or plant ourselves in front of the idiot box, or listen to some music. Ah, but that is just rest, it is not sleep and when the body needs sleep, you should give it sleep itself. When a cat is hungry you cannot give it dry oats or raw carrots.

Of course there is another extreme where some people need more than eight hours of sleep. Such people sleep too much. But that is altogether a different issue, which I cannot address here. In such cases all I can say is that such people might have a physiological condition for which they might require medical assistance.

Other people can never sleep properly and I was one of them. I used to go to bed in the night and wake up in the morning feeling no way better for my "sleep." Phrases like sleep like a baby or sleep like a log were completely alien for me. But now I have over come this completely and on most days I do sleep like a baby.

Below, I have included some pointers that really worked for me. Try them out I'm sure that they will work for you as well.

If you have problems falling asleep:

- **Fix a bed time routine and stick to it religiously**

When I say religiously I mean it. It does not mean from Monday to Friday, and then wild nights on Saturday and Sunday. Maybe once in a month you can have a wild night but if you want to break this routine every week it is not going to help.

- **Go to bed early.**

Now, that is a tough one. I'm sure that most of my readers are very late sleepers. And when I say go to bed early they will probably think that I sound like a fussy old parent. Well, I think it is good if I do sound like a fussy old parent because our parents knew what was good for us. Now coming to the reason why I suggested that you go to bed early.

Most of us are working people right? So our work demands that we get to our offices at fixed times. That of course deprives us of those couple of extra winks that we hope to get in the mornings. So it becomes going to bed late and getting up early. When we should wake up is decided by our work.

So the only thing that we have the freedom to decide is the time we crawl into bed. So the ideal condition would be to go to bed by 10 or 11. If your wake up time is 8 in the morning, this can be extended up to 12 or even 1 in the morning.

In any case, let your wake up time decide your bedtime, work backwards so that in any case you give yourself those blessed 8 hours of sleep.

- **Don't eat two hours before bed time**

It is difficult to get a decent sleep with your tummy full. So try to have supper at least two hours before your bed time. And keep supper as light as possible. If you have a heavy meal there is a greater chance for you to have disturbing dreams and even nightmares...oooooh!

- **Have a glass of warm milk at least 30 minutes before going to bed**

Milk is the best sedative that nature has to offer so go for it by all means. In order to really make your eyelids droop, just before boiling add a pinch of ground ginger, pinch of cinnamon and 1 clove. But remember; drink it warm, not hot. A date along with the glass of milk is the classic sedative that has stood the test of time.

- **Wash your feet and calves up to the knees** in warm water.

And also wash your hands and forearms. It really works!

- **Gently massage feet and calves, hands and forearms** for few minutes preferably with some moisturizer or baby oil

- **Diffuse some lavender essential oil in the room** 30 minutes before bed time. This will help tremendously.
- **No reading in bed and absolutely NO T.V.**
- **If you are a light sleeper shut off all disturbances** like a loud clock, a dripping faucet, a telephone that might ring or even a creaky bed.

If you wake up and can't go back to sleep:

- Have a jar filled with dry rose petals by your bed. When you wake up, inhale the rose scent for minute or two. You'll be back to sleep in no-time at all!
- But my strongest advice is to steer clear of sleeping pills of any kind. Let nature and your natural body cycles do the job for you. If you need external intervention, then realize that everything has been thrown hay wire and you are not on a safe track.

The Agony

When you start your first day of quitting, in the morning you will feel very glad about it. You might experience an uneasy feeling once or twice but it does not affect you very much and you start wondering about the great fuss that is made about quitting.

But as the day progresses, the feeling gets worse and it's almost like a monster raising its fearful head every now and then. If you are chain smoker this feeling becomes terrible as the clock ticks away and by noon - time, it becomes almost unbearable.

You start feeling terrible and it is almost as if something has taken possession of your body and mind. You end up feeling so depressed that you begin to think, "What the hell? Who cares a damn about quitting?"

But this is not the worst. The worst is still to come. It is almost as if you are at one end of a tunnel and have started advancing. As you keep moving forward, the darkness of the tunnel engulfs you. You inch forward slowly at first and then at a faster pace. But the tunnel seems endless. There is no end to the darkness. It is so black inside that you can almost walk on the darkness.

There doesn't seem to even a glimmer of light. To make things worse you lose your sense of direction and do not know whether you are advancing or retreating. Along with that the air starts to get stuffy. You find it increasingly difficult to breathe and before you know it you are gasping for breath.

Every part of your body seems to be tearing itself apart and the feeling is just too much to bear. You cannot identify what exactly the feeling is. It is not pain but yet you feel tormented and tortured. It is sheer agony for you.

It is almost as if someone has got a grip on your throat and is slowly squeezing the very life out of you. To

make things worse you start stumbling and have to reach out to steady yourself from falling. You reach out and you feel a hand. It is not a strong supporting hand but a wet, slimy and cold hand that makes you shudder. But you hold on to it to steady yourself.

Then before you know what happened, the hand gives you a tug and sends you whirling around. You try to stop yourself from going round and round but you cannot. The hand keeps on exerting force that you can hardly resist. You feel dizzy and realize that you will hit the floor at any moment. The experience is sheer agony.

You do not want to fall down because you realize to your horror that the tunnel has started filling with water. But then you stop caring. Your agony is so great that you just want to fall down and die. At this moment when you feel that all is lost and you are about to lose your senses, you see a sudden ray of light; the exit of the tunnel.

If only you could get there. If only you could steady yourself. You make one last effort to stop swirling around and to your surprise you stop. But your head is swimming so much that the exit of the tunnel keeps passing in front of your eyes. You topple over and you are on your hands and feet. The water is dangerously close to your head. You literally crawl towards the opening but you just can't seem to reach there. At last, after what seems like eternity, you reach the opening of the tunnel.

But you are so exhausted with your efforts that you just want to lie where you are with your eyes shut and so that is what you do. You lie there for what seems to be a very long time but in effect is only a couple of hours. And then the feeling seems to disappear almost as fast as it

appeared. Your mind starts getting clearer and clearer and you find it much easy to breathe.

There is no longer the sound of swirling waters around you. Your hands and feet seem to have lost the numbness that had hit them. Your breathing becomes more regular and you calm down a lot. But still you do not want to open your eyes, but there is bright light that is beating down on your eyelids which is trying to force them open. Unwillingly you pry your eye lids open a little bit and lie there squinting.

The Ecstasy

You cannot believe what you see, you stare upwards into the bluest sky that you have ever seen and after your dark experience in the tunnel you had almost stopped believing that there could be anything bright in this world. But here it is the bluest sky ever.

You sit up and though your hands and feet feel a bit sore, there is a perfect freshness about every thing. The grass seems greener, the air seems cleaner and all around you there are smiling faces. For a minute you wonder whether you are in heaven but it takes you only a moment to realize that you are still on earth. But it seems to be a very different earth indeed. You get up to walk and you feel fresher than you ever felt in a very long time.

A Second Chance

You have done it, you have managed to quit smoking and what you have now is a whole new life. It is almost as if you have been given a second chance. This life of yours is like a new gift. You know better than any one else what you have been through and how difficult it was to get through that horrid tunnel. But yet you survived like many others. You shudder at the very thought of going back there.

As you walk on you can see the other end of the tunnel as well and standing in front of it is an endless queue of people. They all seem to be waiting to enter the tunnel and they all have lighted cigarettes in their hands. Just beside this long queue there is another small line of people who are walking away from the tunnel.

They are obviously the people who failed to make it through the tunnel. They walk away with their heads hanging low. If you care to take a closer look at them, you can see that their eyes are listless, their faces are glum, their teeth are stained with nicotine and as they breathe they let of a wheezing sound. Every now and then they let out a rasping cough that seems to hit at the very vitals of their bodies.

They are the ones who failed to quit smoking. You feel sorry about them but there is very little that you can do for them. They too know that their days are counted and they smile glumly at you flashing once again their nicotine stained teeth.

You realize with a shiver how close to death you were and you thank your lucky stars and the forces that formed you for giving you the will power to get over the addiction. You are now free to start your life all again. And this time there will be no mistakes. Life is too precious a gift to waste it at the end of a cigarette.

Do not underestimate your self. You are perfectly capable of having a good time, or maybe I should say a wonderful time even without the help of any external stimulant. You can work as hard as you want and you can go through stressful situations; believe me your body can take it.

Understand that you do have a choice so choose wisely and live life to the fullest. Once you get over the habit you will realize how different conditions are than when you used to smoke. You will realize how it feels to no longer be dependent on tobacco.

A Word About Relapses

I certainly would not tell you to expect a relapse, but the fact is that one out of three people who are trying to quit experience relapses. This is something that happens within the first three months when one is trying to quit.

Now if at all you experience a relapse understand that there is nothing to feel bad about. It is quite a natural phenomenon. But just because it happened, do not let it get the better of you. All you have to do is start the quitting process all over again and believe me you will

be stronger this time because you know what to look out for.

Some Final Facts About Tobacco Before You Go:

- Tobacco is the single largest cause of oral and lung cancer.
- Use of tobacco leads to conditions like erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation in men
- Pregnant women/new mothers. If you continue to smoke you are increasing the chances of giving birth to a baby who has congenital disabilities and diseases. By quitting, you protect your baby's health and your own.
- Hospitalized patients. By quitting, you reduce health problems and help healing.
- Heart attack patients. If you continue to smoke you are increasing your chances of a second heart attack.
- Lung, head, and neck cancer patients. If you continue to smoke you increase your chances of a second cancer.
- Parents of children and adolescents. By smoking, you expose your children and adolescents to illnesses caused by second-hand smoke.

Well, so what are you waiting for? The choice is yours. There are so many things that you can do with this life of

yours. And isn't it a pity to waste it at the end of a cigarette. It is no wonder that George Bernard Shaw once said that a cigarette is a roll of paper that has fire at one end and a fool at the other.

I hope this guide will help you in your quest to STOP being the fool.

As our sole aim is to "Enhance the Lives of Others" and to promote Health and Vitality, I can't close this report without making a few recommendations that will undoubtedly improve your health and in turn, your general well-being and lifestyle.....

To Enjoy and Maintain The Best of Health and to Build a Solid Residual Income to Secure Your Future – GO TO:

<http://www.health-vitality.com/coral>

Having a Weight Problem – Help is at hand...
"101 EVERYDAY TIPS For LOSING 10 Pounds"

<http://www.easyweightlosstip.com>

For all your Life Enhancing Products and Courses...
Go to : <http://www.health-vitality.com>

Please tell your friends about Health & Vitality Ltd.
We'd just love to be able to Enhance their lives too!

THANK YOU