

Personalized stop smoking program with stress therapy

NIC-STOP – YOUR PERSONAL STOP-SMOKING PROGRAM

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by James E. Morris, MEd., CADC

To Carol and J D, the only stimulation I need!

About the author

Jim Morris has been in the counseling field since 1984. He has a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology, specializing in substance abuse therapy. He is an ex-smoker who quit smoking completely utilizing techniques found in this manual.

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Introduction

Welcome and congratulations on your choice to live your life free of tobacco!

You have taken a big step towards living a longer, healthier and a much happier life! The days ahead will not be without difficulty but your perseverance and this manual will take you through the rough times and help you set up a life without a need for tobacco. What you do need most at this time is the desire to succeed. It doesn't matter if this is your first time to quit smoking or your hundredth - if you want it to happen, it will!

There are no magic formulas, however. This is work, easier for some and more difficult for others, but everyone will have to apply his or her self. With that understanding, this manual will take you through a system that starts with the basics and evolves into the more complicated aspects of quitting tobacco – all at your own pace and personalized just for you.

It would be a good idea for you to make an honest and thorough examination of your attitude right now. Some people start the quit smoking process with an indecisive, hesitant approach without a plan of action then suddenly just quit smoking. This simply does not work for the vast majority.

You must have a solid foundation of purpose and the will to back it up before you attempt to stop smoking. This doesn't mean that you already know everything that will happen to you when you quit - this manual will help you with that. It does mean that you will agree to take a systematic and considerate approach to stop smoking as it pertains to your daily life.

In fact, one of the fundamental premises of my counseling philosophy is that many people try to change too abruptly. Suddenly changing years of any habit without preparation is doomed to failure. Therefore, this program (and all of our other programs) is based on preparation and small changes that lead to the final goal. We have found, through years of counseling, that this is the least painful, most successful way to change unwanted behaviors.

In this program, you will prove to yourself that you can quit smoking by controlling other, easier behaviors, first.

In light of this, the program is set up in two sections: Preparation (what you are now reading) and the day-by-day Maintenance section to guide you through the quitting process. For complete success, please read and use the preparation section before going on to your Freedom Day (the day you quit smoking) and the maintenance section. In the preparation section, you will find ways to change any habit, how to understand the various "triggers" that urge you to use tobacco, relaxation techniques that ease stress without chemicals, how to reward yourself without creating more dependencies and other practical ways to prepare for a

smokeless life. The preparation manual should be used for about two weeks (but no more than three). A definite quit day (Freedom Day) should first be chosen and strictly adhered to.

The maintenance manual starts with Freedom Day, the first day of your smokeless life, and continues for the next twenty-eight days. This is the most crucial time for anyone quitting tobacco. When you make it to the end of twenty-eight days, you have the whole process under control. During this time, you will practice what you learned during preparation week and many things that may be happening to you will be explained as well as additional methods of dealing with them.

As you proceed, look at the sections as not only guides to prepare you for stop smoking but also as a companion to be with you as you actually quit smoking. You will want to continue to use them as a reference. In fact, the maintenance section is designed to be used over and over again for as long as you need it.

NIC-STOP has also been called a Free Air Clinic. Why? Simply because I view any nicotine addiction as a form of being incarcerated, a kind of invisible jail that is more controlling and harsh than anything made out of concrete and steel bars. The day you quit smoking for good is truly your Freedom Day!

Refer to this manual often and as much as needed. Not only will its information be ready for you all of the time but you will also have a good place to write down and review the special insights that are pertinent to your situation and only yours.

GOOD LUCK AND GOOD HEALTH!

ATTENTION!

DISCLAIMER

No program of this nature should be started without the advice from a physician. By using this program, you state that you have sought this advice or are waiving it. In any case, you absolve James Morris, Morris Publications and any affiliate or affiliate program of any harm that may be suffered by following the advice given in this program.

Chapter 1

Why Do We Smoke?

In order to control any behavior we must first understand its motivations for us. The following chapter deals with many of the reasons that motivate people to use tobacco.

Beginning to Smoke

Of course, there are several reasons why people continue to smoke, but why do we start? For the overwhelming majority, it is through some initiation as a teenager. In fact, if an individual does not start smoking by the time they are in their early twenties, statistics say that it is unlikely they will ever start.

Teens will have many reasons for taking that first puff. Peer pressure, curiosity, imitating a favorite movie or rock star - there are any number of reasons. When I was a teen, growing up in the fifties and early sixties, movies and TV were just as big an entertainment as now. Back then, however, it was difficult to see a movie or a TV show without most of the actors smoking. Smoking was suave, cosmopolitan and any of a lot of other clichés. This was also a time of a lot of bad (false) tobacco advertising that is just now coming to light. Many people got hooked and, once addicted, it was often difficult to quit since there were few incentives to do so at that time.

Times certainly do change. Nowadays, after much research and medical fact, smoking is being known for what it really is - a pariah and blight on society. You could add all of the deaths caused by alcohol, illicit drugs, fires, car accidents, homicides, suicides and AIDS and they would still be only half of the fatalities from cigarettes every year. Cancer, liver disease, emphysema and other lung diseases, heart disease and strokes - they are all just part of a long list of health problems caused or contributed to by smoking.

But this really isn't new news, anymore. Why, then, do so many people continue to become addicted to a drug that is more harmful than alcohol, more addictive than heroin and has about as quick an effect as cocaine? Part of the answer is availability. Tobacco is legal, relatively cheap (for now) and easily accessible. After someone becomes aware of its effects, they know they can get tobacco almost anywhere.

Another part of the answer is the delivery system. Because of the way our lungs are set up, anything that is smoked gets to the brain as quickly as if it had been injected into a vein. (There are mechanisms in the lungs, called alveoli, that transfer oxygen from the air directly into the bloodstream. Anything carried in a semi-gaseous state, such as nicotine in tobacco smoke, goes right along with it.)

The effects of nicotine then do the rest. Most people do not realize just how powerful nicotine is and usually adopt the attitude that they will take it or leave it as the mood hits them. The problem is, as a mood regulator, nicotine has little equal. This very effective drug is known to stimulate such brain chemicals as acetylcholine and norepinephrine, which regulate mood, attention and memory. It also stimulates dopamine, the "feel-good" brain chemical that is likewise activated by opiates, cocaine and alcohol. These effects are so powerful and desirable, that it takes very little time for most people to become addicted to nicotine.

Can you quit smoking?

The answer is a resounding yes! Despite nicotine's powerful effects, there are more than 45 million ex-smokers in this country. For the first time in decades, there are now more ex-smokers than smokers. In fact, there has been a 40% decline in smoking since 1964.

To deal with any habit or addiction efficiently, however, we must first know about our motivations - the reasons we continue the behavior even when we know that it is harmful. Part of the answer, of course, lies with the various real and powerful chemical changes that happen in our brain, some of the physical side of addiction. These chemical changes can be definitely controlled if we learn to manage the triggers and psychosocial habits that we develop around smoking.

Much of this manual is devoted to understanding and dealing with these triggers, habits, cravings and other motivations that promote smoking. But first we have to convince ourselves that they exist and that they are harmful to our everyday lives. This is not always easy since smoking becomes very integrated into our lifestyles and often seems to be a natural way of behaving!

So let's start peeling away the mystery of smoking addiction and therefore begin the process of controlling it. We are going to start by learning what kind of smoker you are. Yes, there is more than one way to be hooked on tobacco and the best way to start quitting is to learn exactly how you use it.

Before proceeding any further in this chapter, please turn to the worksheet titled "Why Do You Smoke" located in Appendix A. This is part of a U S Dept. of Human Services brochure that will help you determine what kind of smoker you are at this time.

Take some time, answer the questions and total your scores.

Interpreting Your Scores

(Note: Scores can vary from 3 to 15 for each category. Any score 11 and above is high; any score 7 and below is low.)

This test is designed to provide you with a score on each of six factors that describe many people's smoking behavior, that is, the way they experience smoking. You may fall under only one category or several may pertain to you. Whatever your main influences, they will become more apparent once you have totaled your scores.

The first three (though definitely not all six categories!) represent positive feelings people get from smoking: stimulation or increased energy; handling or manipulation; and the increase in relaxation or feelings of pleasure. The fourth state is a decrease in negative feelings (by reducing tension), the fifth represents cravings or the psychological addiction to smoking, and the sixth is the automatic response or the habit of using tobacco.

The following are interpretations of high scores (11 and above) for each category. *A suggestion of alternative behavior for each type of smoker follows the definition. These suggestions are elaborated in greater detail in the program.*

Stimulation

Smoking energizes you, wakes you up and invigorates you to accomplish daily tasks. It seems to continue to give you energy throughout the day. This is understandable since nicotine is one of the most powerful stimulants that are known. Like many addictions, this is a self-fulfilling process because the perceived need for this stimulation was first created by initial use of the chemical. Use creates more perceived need and so on.

Though there are many other, healthier, ways of increasing energy, lighting a cigarette is one of the easiest. (Easy and fast are two of the basic premises for all drug use.)

Since we often need stimulation and therefore a cigarette when we are bored or tired, get in the habit of going for a walk or do some other moderate exercise or progressive relaxation (see Chapter 4) when a stimulant is needed.

Handling

Just holding something, "playing" with it, so to speak, can be satisfying. Often, we develop habits out of boredom. Standing in line, driving, waiting for someone - waiting for anything - can cause us to fidget. This creates a desire to

do something in an otherwise dull situation. Lighting up a cigarette fulfills that need and some others as well.

Keep a lucky stone or special coin in your pocket. Play with this when you have the urge to hold something. A piece of jewelry would be another alternative. Try to avoid pulling on your hair or biting fingernails.

Relaxation

The desire to obtain pleasure is universal and tobacco supplies this fulfillment very quickly. Nicotine is an incredibly powerful drug that has shown evidence of releasing many of the same brain chemicals as do cocaine, heroin and alcohol. Using chemicals for this kind of enjoyment provides a powerful and very rapid reinforcement. Stopping the use of any drug, especially a potent and effective one like nicotine, creates a vacuum that needs to be filled as soon as possible.

Since a quick way of feeling pleasure is to give in to the addiction, we create fast acting alternatives in this program. One example is the emphasis placed on relaxation techniques.

Learn and use one or more of the relaxation techniques. Practice something that will eventually allow you to get into a spontaneous relaxed state.

Reduction of Negative Feelings

The flip side to obtaining pleasure is reducing negative feelings. Just as cigarettes are used extensively to relieve boredom, they are probably used even more to control sadness and depression, anxiety and many other moods. Here, again, nicotine produces a "high" that reduces the sense of negativity and promotes coping. This is an aspect of nicotine addiction that is very difficult to resist.

Your relaxation techniques will also help here. Use them to aid you in understanding the true source of your tension or anxiety so that you can deal with it effectively.

Craving or psychological addiction

This is one of the most difficult characteristics of smoking tobacco. As soon as one cigarette is finished, the craving for the next one begins to build. This process happens more quickly the more and longer one smokes. This means that more and more cigarettes will be smoked as time goes by.

Simply put, a high score on this section means a lot of preparation and then the removal of the chemical from your system. While bordering on traumatic for many smokers, the chemical will actually be removed within three to seven

days.

Habit

Habit smoking is generally typified by the frequent use of tobacco without much conscious awareness of its use. Cigarette after cigarette is lit (but not always smoked), often with little satisfaction.

This automatic behavior is often situational and may actually be the easiest to stop. The next chapter discusses how to stop or change undesirable habits.

Sticking with good behaviors through understanding

In truth, quitting smoking does not always work on the first try. But most successful ex-smokers began by learning all they could about their habit and how it affected their lives. They did not become discouraged if things didn't work out the first time or even after several times. They all had a strong commitment to quit and developed strategies and personal resources that eventually carried them through the quitting process. These resources continue to be a source of strength throughout their lives.

Quitting becomes easier when a smoker finally accepts the harm he or she is doing to themselves and others around them. One of the classic and most difficult problems in dealing with any addiction is for the addicted individual to admit that the drug making them feel so good is actually causing most of the pain in their life. Smoking, with its attendant poisons, is one of the best examples. As mentioned above, it is a drug for all moods and, at the same time, one of the most devastating killers.

(An interesting note: Nicotine is a very powerful poison. There is enough nicotine in an average pack of cigarettes to kill the average individual if it were ingested all at once. Nicotine "darts" are used to bring down large animals.)

If you have the commitment, and I am assuming you do since you are reading this manual, then your next step is to begin preparing yourself mentally and physically for acquiring your new freedom. Like a POW who has been incarcerated by a particularly nasty enemy, you have the resolve to stay emotionally and bodily strong to overcome this adversary. This manual will be your ready resource to help carry you through.

Some things to do as soon as possible

Your personal statement

One important first step that you can do right now is creating a personal statement about why quitting smoking is important to you. It should only be a few lines, but you should write it down and keep the paper with you at all times. The statement should be the most important thing you can think of that reflects your determination to quit smoking. Be sure to write it down and carry the paper with you. Writing it down helps to make it your "own" and you can also access it anytime you are under stress. You should read or recite your statement every morning.

Find a buddy

That is, talk to a friend you can depend upon to be there and help you through the rough spots. This person is preferably someone who is also quitting at this time and seems to be as committed as you are. As a good alternative, they could be a non-smoker or a successful ex-smoker. (It is not a good idea to seek help from someone who is still smoking.) Explain to them exactly what you will be doing and find out what the best times to contact them would be, if necessary.

Exercise

If you are not already doing so, come up with some sort of exercise. It doesn't have to be anything too strenuous as long as you can do it easily and everyday. Exercise will speed your recovery, occupy your time at crucial periods and help with stress. It is also one more achievement amongst many that you will have by the time you are through with this program.

*(Do **not** undertake a strenuous exercise program without a doctor's advice. Smoking causes several kinds of physical damage that may accelerate with substantial exercise.)*

Water

Start getting into the habit of drinking more water. This will have several beneficial achievements. It will lessen the effects and take your mind off of cravings. It will give you a "full" feeling; especially helpful if you feel like eating

more after you quit smoking. Sipping water all day will also keep your hands and your mouth occupied after they lose the feel of cigarettes.

Now go on to the next chapter. Remember that the Preparation section is designed to help you develop resources for quitting in about two to three weeks. Read through the entire manual and begin work on its suggestions now. On your Freedom Day (quit day), you should be prepared to stop all smoking.

And, again, Good Luck!

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