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No ifs, no butts

Kicking the habit

Which method is best for giving up smoking?

BY LISA SCOTT

Why do we do it? It costs us a small fortune, it is one of the quickest ways to develop cancer and is a guaranteed way to prematurely age yourself. Every puff is poison and yet 9million Britons still light up every day. Even social smokers – the drunks who steal their friends' ciggies – are in danger of developing smoking-related illnesses – just one cigarette a day triples the risk of heart disease and lung cancer. We test three different ways to give up the ciggies.

Jon Allen, 31, is an account executive and smokes 140 cigarettes per week.

The treatment: A combination of laser acupuncture, hypnosis and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) by Katherine Jackson.

The laser acupuncture increased my endorphins to replace the feeling I get from cigarettes and then I was hypnotised so Jackson could remind me how bad smoking is. The NLP is a long-term treatment which helps the mind associate cigarettes with being bad. It involved using triggers such as a tap on my leg to remind myself of this. It was one of the most relaxing things I've done.

How many cigarettes have you smoked in the ten



days since the treatment? None.

How did you feel when you left the session? I still had a slight craving but I didn't feel compelled to smoke. When I gave up in the past, the first few days were always the hardest and I've often felt irritable and stressed but this time there was no bad mood.

How did you feel when you first had alcohol? After a few drinks, I did feel a slight craving but I didn't feel tempted to light up a cigarette at any point.

www.katherinejackson.co.uk, whole package is £250

Diana Littlejohns, 29, PR account manager, smokes 80 to 90 cigarettes per week.

The treatment: Hypnotism with Marisa Peer, addiction specialist.

Peer established I was a creative person and told me creative people are easier to hypnotise. Her talking turned into a chanting and very soon I couldn't move my body and my eyelids felt very heavy. She kept repeating: 'Health over sickness, life over death, strength over weakness.' I now listen to a CD of the hypnotism every morning.

How you smoked in the ten days since the treatment? I admit I have had the odd drag but each one made me feel sick. I'm slightly annoyed at myself for giving in but it's incredible how little I've smoked, considering I've smoked every day for the last 14 years and have never tried to give up before.

How did you feel when you left the session? I knew cigarettes were bad for me but I couldn't stop thinking about them.

How did you feel when you first had alcohol? I thought it would be worse but it actually helped take the edge off.

www.marisapeer.com, individual session is £325





Picture: Corbis

Vanessa Gregg, 28, media sales rep smokes 140 cigarettes every week.

The treatment: The Allen Carr Easyway method.

We had a five-hour session with a fantastic therapist who was once a heavy smoker herself. The



treatment was factual and logical and helps you look at why you become so reliant on cigarettes and why you don't need them. We had regular smoking breaks in a poky, rancid-smelling room. It reminded me of my smoke breaks at work when I was in my early twenties. At the end of the session, after your last cigarette, you throw away your cigarettes and leave – hopefully – as a non-smoker.

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ten days since the treatment? None.

How did you feel after the session? It seemed logical to stop. It was so eye-opening. Although I did feel like I'd miss them, which was obviously just psychological. I'm not interested or tempted even though I'm still in the stages of getting the nicotine itch. But I have so much energy I don't know what to do with myself.

How did you feel when you first had a drink?

I wanted a cigarette but I didn't smoke. I did lose my temper with my boyfriend over a game of Black Jack but all is now forgiven.

www.allencarrseasyway.com, £150

■ Mention 'Metro' to your local Allen Carr's Easyway To Stop Smoking Clinic and receive a £50 discount for the session (normal cost £220 including money-back guarantee). Check www.allencarr.com or call 0800 389 2115 for your nearest clinic. Offer not valid in conjunction with any other promotion or offer.



Picture: Corbis

How smoking just isn't fashionable any more

Smoking used to be associated with glamour and success. Tobacco companies even paid millions of dollars to 1930s and 1940s Hollywood A-listers such as Clark Gable and John Wayne (pictured) to endorse particular brands of cigarettes. Today, it's a very different story.



depicting smoking-related illnesses (the most repulsive being an image of a man with cancer growing outside his throat) will adorn every cigarette pack by October. Campaigners should be hopeful about them – Canada launched the photo warnings in 2001 and 31

Smoking is seen as antisocial and the nicotine-addicted are relegated to dirty pavements outside clubs, pubs and even their homes. Brian Jones, a Quit counsellor, says many of the calls the charity takes are from people who are feeling the force of the country's

current attitude towards ciggies: 'They say they feel like social pariahs and this was even before the smoking ban came in. Smoking hasn't been socially acceptable for a long time in this country.' The latest government initiative to drive the 'smoking kills' message home is the most hard-hitting yet.



Gruesome pictures

per cent of ex-smokers said it helped them quit. 'People do need to want to give up,' warns Jones. 'The picture alone won't do it unless they have personal motivation to stop. We hope the combination will work.'

In a bid to save future generations from cigarettes, awareness campaigns are also being presented in schools. But will they really be enough to stop a teenager from taking their first drag? 'Most people take up smoking when they are teenagers and purely from peer pressure which is a tough force to beat,' says Jones. 'We show teenagers the poison in cigarettes in the form of liquids – the cocktail looks pretty horrid. Most adult smokers I speak to always say the same thing: "If only I had known back then how dangerous that first cigarette was." Hopefully, we're doing that.'