

Smoking – the relaxation/stress paradox

Many people tell me that smoking helps them reduce stress. It does, but smoking creates a double effect - relaxation and stress - and this is how it works.

Firstly, smoking raises the blood sugar levels and promotes the production of adrenaline that stimulates the stress response. Paradoxically, because it is also a narcotic, the nicotine also slows down brain activity creating the impression of relaxation.

You can use cigarettes in two opposite ways. A short puff on a cigarette will supply enough nicotine to the brain to stimulate it, while a longer puff will have the desired narcotic effect. When you are tired, you will take short puffs, and when you are stressed you will take longer drags, and you do all this instinctively without realising you are doing it.

Here are the cruel facts:

- Nicotine is a stimulant – it stimulates the production of adrenaline which automatically puts the body under unnatural stress with every cigarette you smoke.
- The chemicals in tobacco are extremely poisonous and inflict additional stress on the system. Every cigarette that you smoke is a serious toxic attack on your body which takes its toll over the years.
- Because the smoker develops an addictive need for nicotine, whenever he finishes one cigarette his levels of stress increase until they are ‘relieved’ by the next. Your brain interprets this feeling as a good method of stress relief.

Smoking and health – the deadly facts.

There are three kinds of smoking.

- Mainstream smoking - smoke inhaled by the smoker personally.
- Side-stream smoke - smoke inhaled from the burning end of the cigarette.
- Environmental smoking - a combination of mainstream and side-stream smoke which is a major source of indoor air pollution - i.e. passive smoking.

There are a reported 600 chemicals in tobacco smoke which act as irritants when they enter the body. They act almost instantaneously as they enter your blood stream and come into contact with your lungs, heart, brain and other vital organs with long term damaging effects.

Recent research demonstrates a clear connection between smoking and a range of diseases. The US Environmental Protection Agency classifies passive smoking as a ‘Class A Carcinogen’ - that means it is capable of causing cancer. In New Zealand research revealed that exposure to passive smoking increased the risk of strokes in non-smokers by 82%.

How does hypnosis help me to become a non-smoker?

In normal life, when we attempt a task and fail, our negative reaction undermines and suppresses our self-esteem. If we have tried to stop smoking using will power alone or combined it with other methods and have failed, we are more likely to fail again and again and thereby establish an expectation of failure.

During hypnosis, you will feel incredibly relaxed and you may even feel that you can’t move, even though you know you can. Through hypnosis we are able to locate and bring to the forefront of the mind a range of personal resources including positive emotions and self-esteem that have long been suppressed.

Suggestions will be offered to your subconscious mind that will help you to overcome the three elements of smoking addiction. These include the *physical addiction* to nicotine, the *psychological benefits* that smoking brings and the *automatic habit* involved in the actual process of smoking. The three components all have to be dealt with, and this is what we do in my hypnotherapy approach to Smoking Cessation.

With the help of hypnotherapy, many have embarked on smoking cessation in a new and more confident way thus increasing their chances of success.

Will I experience difficulties in stopping?

Most find that becoming a non-smoker with this treatment is incredibly easy, however for the few who experience difficulty it can seem a struggle. 'Strugglers' often feel restless, tense and frustrated, but I would encourage you to persevere because most people will experience those emotions for only two or three days.

Some say they return to smoking in order to relax. It is not tobacco smoke that enables you to relax; rather it is the deep breathing. For this reason, I teach several methods of relaxation in order to help you to ease yourself through those first few days. It may surprise you to know that it is that process of deep breathing that actually relaxes you and which produces that sense of instant relief, not the cigarette itself. That is why I will teach you the art of *controlled breathing* and *progressive relaxation* during my treatment.

By deciding to become a non-smoker ...

... you have embarked upon a vital self-improvement programme and taken your first steps to a healthier, better and longer life ... you will feel more confident and your sense of self esteem will grow daily ... your increased sense of well-being will increase your confidence to deal with stressful life events ... and you will enjoy feeling and looking healthier knowing that there is a freshness about your breath, hair and clothing.