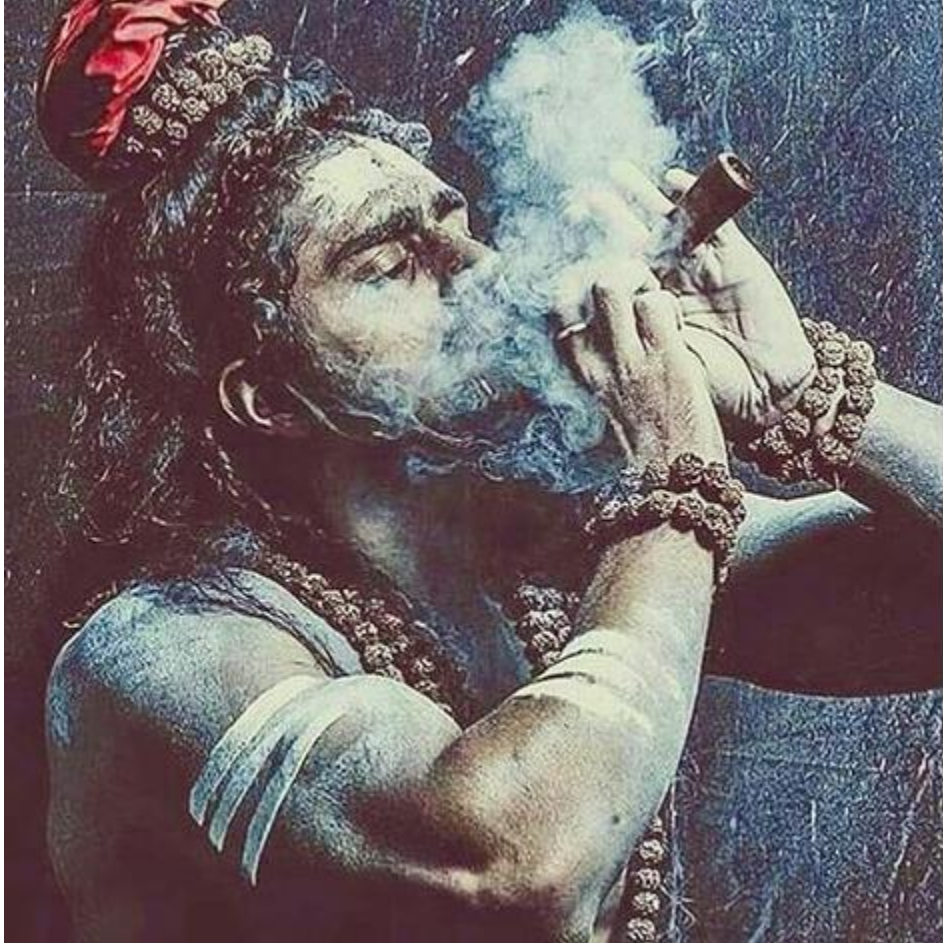


Yoga for Smoking Cessation



Jonathan Pearson

Prairie Yoga 200 Hour Teacher Training 2017

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Introduction

As a current smoker I wanted to look at smoking with specific relation to the concerns of a practicing yogi, and what effect smoking may have when trying to deepen my practice.

It is not an explanation of all the negative things about smoking, if telling people about all the downsides to smoking e.g. health, money, freedom, actually worked there would be no need, as there would be no smokers.

It is also not intended to be a purely philosophical or intellectual exercise, but a look at the yogic principles involved with smoking and applying practical techniques to make my own transition to a non-smoker.

There will be a description of the mechanisms involved with smoking, a proposal of yogic inspired methods that may help stop smoking, an exploration of these in action and then a conclusion.

To start then a brief look at the effects smoking may have on a person from a yogic perspective. The whole point of yogic practices is to lead to the **state** of yoga. The term yoga has become synonymous in the west with the techniques practiced by a yogi, and more specifically asana, however this term is also indicative of a state. This state is clearly defined in the yoga sutras 1.2

'Yogas citta-vrtti-nirodha'

or

Yoga is the **state** in which the mental/emotional fluctuations have become still

The yoga sutras (YS) of Patanjali include much information on yoga, in this system there are eight limbs, or aids, that lead to the **state** of yoga. As this ultimately will be something that can't be forced, but will happen spontaneously when the time is right, they are designed to put the yogi in the best possible position for this realization to occur.

Therefore, anything that would hinder, or act against the effectiveness of these teachings, could be seen as an impairment to yogic progression.

Following are some of the reasons I believe the **state** of yoga would be hard to attain whilst being an active smoking.

Avirati (YS 1.30)

This sutra clearly defines what it sees as the obstacles to yoga, within the explanation are several elements that smoking could fit in to but the main one is 'Avirati' which is translated as lack of abstention, intemperance or addiction. This is considered a distraction of the mind or a greed for a specific experience that occupies the mind. Have you ever seen a smoker who has been deprived of a cigarette for a while, maybe due to air travel or other social restrictions? It is obvious to most that a person in this predicament is very far from a relaxed, tranquil and equanimous state of being that would be conducive to the **state** of yoga.

Ahimsa (YS 2.30)

This is the first of the Yamas or social restraints (things not to do) which is the first of the eight aids to the state of yoga. It is the overriding principle, everything else follows and is affected by this, it means not to harm yourself or any other sentient being. The deeper meaning of ahimsa is to cultivate a feeling of universal benevolence, this means not even speaking harm or thinking harm, obviously there are very few that master this as it would be so difficult.

Smoking obviously harms the physical body of the smoker and also others through second hand smoke, these effects are well documented and there is no need to go in to detail here. Another less thought of consideration is the environment, the tobacco industry damages the environment in many ways, and in ways that go far beyond the effects of the smoke that cigarettes put into the air when they are smoked. The harmful impact of the tobacco industry on deforestation, climate change, litter, and forest fires is enormous and growing. (1)

Saucha (YS 2.32)

This is the first of the niyamas or lifestyle observances (things to do) and as such is the most important of all the observations. Saucha means purity or cleanliness, this refers not only to the external body but also the internal mind and purity of speech.

The first things to do in hatha yoga are the shatkarmas, literally the six actions, these are designed to clean the body and then mind through various processes.

These practices, outlined by Yogi Swatmarama in the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā as kriya, are

- Netī
- Dhautī
- Naulī
- Basti
- Kapālabhātī
- Trāṭaka

It is only when these have been completed that the journey in to asana and the following limbs should be taken. Obviously smoking puts poison in to the body and creates blockages that are physical as well as psychological. This is contrary to Saucha on many levels which is why it is so important to use the shatkarams to clean the body in preparation for the other limbs, but this also this needs to be done continually as needed to clean the body and mind.

Kleshas (YS 2.3)

The kleshas are the afflictions that are the root of suffering or dis-satisfaction, they are:-

avidyā = ignorance, wrong understanding (often subconscious)

asmitā = egoism, identification with one's idea-of-self rather than true self

rāga = attachment, craving, greed, desire

dveṣa = aversion, disgust, hatred

abhiniveśa = technical term for 'clinging to life' or 'fear of death'

One of the key concepts of yoga is to recognize habitual patterns, samskaras, and change them to allow greater freedom and clarity, only when they are all dealt with can liberation occur. It is only when impressions of our past experiences, and any new experiences, are no longer tagged with the kleshas that full spiritual progression can be made.

I think that the key kleshas involved here are avidya and raga, they would both need to be cleared in respect to smoking before stopping could be effective.

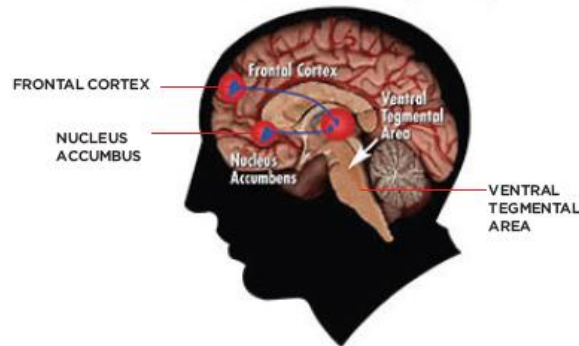
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Chapter 1 – Why do people smoke?

Smoking is not a bad habit, it is a drug addiction, nothing more and nothing less. Once this is accepted by the person affected, it becomes much easier to deal with.

The common link between drugs of addiction is their ability to stimulate and captivate brain dopamine pathways.

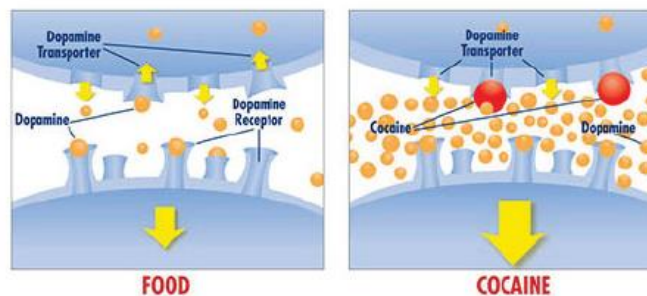
Brain Reward (Dopamine) Pathways



Those brain circuits are important for natural rewards such as food, music, art.

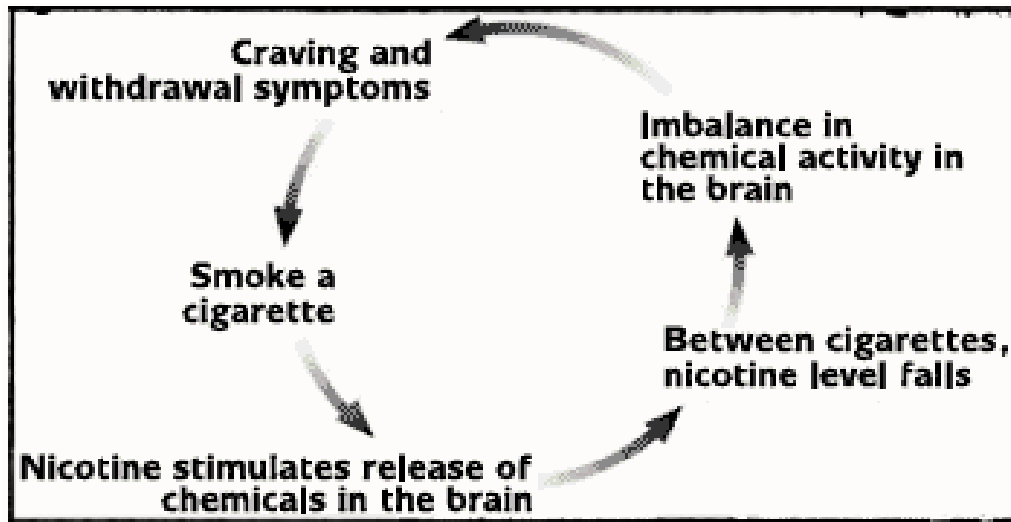
Our dopamine pathways are the source of survival instinct anticipation, motivation and reinforcement. Hard-wired instincts include eating food, drinking liquids, accomplishment, companionship, group acceptance, reproduction and child rearing. Our brain dopamine pathways cause our compliance with wanting to be recorded in high definition memory, in our forehead just above our eyes (our prefrontal cortex). It's what researchers call "salient" or "pay attention" memories. (2) This will be an important point later.

All Drugs of Abuse Increase Dopamine



Typically, dopamine increases in response to natural rewards such as food. With cocaine, dopamine increases are exaggerated, and communication is altered.

Wanting is triggered by our tonic dopamine level declining in response to a need, conditioning or desire. Old wanting satisfaction memories fuel wanting by constantly reminding us of exactly what needs to be done to make it end. Anticipating satisfaction may generate additional anxieties which further inflame wanting. Obedience releases a sudden phasic burst of dopamine. Wanting ends once our need, conditioning or desire is satisfied and our tonic dopamine level returns to normal. The release also creates a vivid new high definition memory of how wanting was satisfied (3)



Basically, what this means is that in reality a person only ever smokes to relieve the craving produced by the last cigarette they had. Unfortunately, this is a cycle that is designed to continue until either the person dies (two thirds of smokers who don't stop die of a smoking related illness (4)) or makes a conscious decision to change.

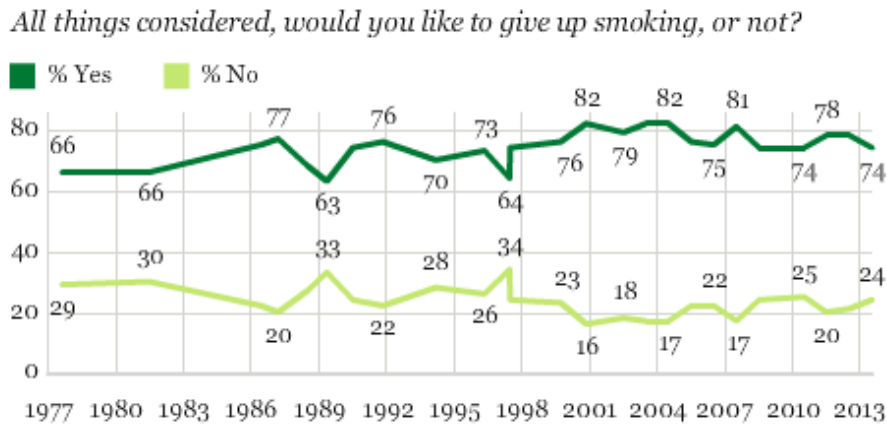
The only way to have the situation above happen is if the person somehow takes nicotine in to their system in the first place, why would anyone do that?

In 2014, cigarette and smokeless tobacco companies spent more than \$9 billion on advertising and promotional expenses in the United States alone. This effort is substantial and skewed so that it is aimed at younger people, women, minorities and mental health patients. (5)

This is coupled with sub conscious messaging in films and media, for example the film 'Independence Day' has a scene at the end where both the characters have a cigar to celebrate saving the world. Another older example of this is the world war two films where the prisoner is about to be executed and his last wish is a cigarette. All this together leaves a powerful impression in people's minds as to how important and useful the cigarette is. Peer pressure and wanting to look 'cool' at school was my personal downfall.

If smoking is as important and useful as the tobacco companies want us to believe, what do the people who use nicotine think about it.

It is clear in the graph below that over a nearly 40-year period the majority, on average 75%, would like to stop smoking.



GALLUP®

(6)

Another interesting finding by Gallup is that most users who quit successfully are 'cold turkey' quitters that don't use any form of NRT. This runs contrary to most medical advice given today that see drugs such as Champix, or the various forms of NRT as being crucial to helping the smoker stop.

Trying to be as specific as possible, what strategies or methods for quitting smoking were the most effective for you? [OPEN-ENDED]

	Former smokers
Just quit/Decided it was time/Quit cold turkey	48%
Willpower/Commitment/Mind over matter	8%
Support from family, friends/prayer	6%
Used nicotine patch	5%
Was experiencing health issues related to smoking	5%
Stopped being around people who smoke	4%
Used chewing gum/candy/seeds/lozenges to help	3%
Used electronic cigarette	3%
Cut down, then quit	2%
Used prescription drugs	2%
Became pregnant	1%
Used hypnosis	1%
Used nicotine gum	1%
Other	12%
Nothing	2%
No opinion	3%

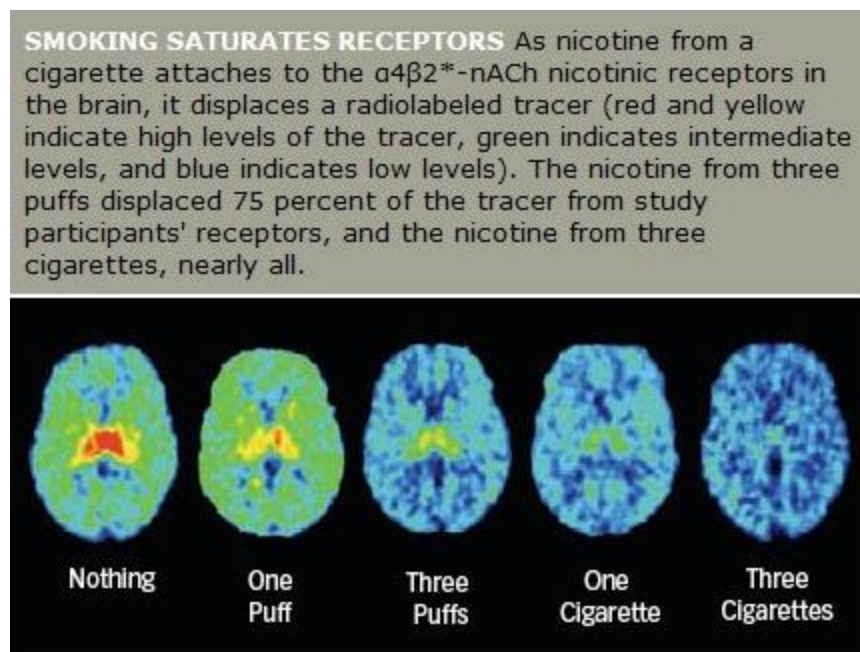
July 10-14, 2013

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Another example of industry brain washing through sub conscious techniques is the term 'giving up', this may seem a fairly innocuous term however it psychologically sets the addict up for failure. There literally is nothing to 'give up', a better term would be to become free, or just stop, 'giving up' implies losing something which eventually leads to feeling deprived which then leads to relapse.

It only takes 48 to 72 hours for the body to remove all the nicotine from the system after stopping smoking, there are many timelines available that show the length of time and stages of recovery after that.

Within three weeks the brain will restore the number of receptor to levels seen in non-smokers. Although feeling physically normal again, nicotine's tolerance wiring paths have been permanently burned and etched into our brains. Although we can arrest our chemical dependency we cannot cure, eliminate or destroy it. We each remain wired for relapse for life. (7) This means that any relapse, however small, could be fatal to the stop attempt and the addict over time.



This is where the law of addiction comes from,

"Administration of a drug to an addict will cause re-establishment of chemical dependence upon the addictive substance."

The latest figures reveal that the accepted number of quit attempts, 5-7, before being successful maybe woefully inadequate. The real average number of quit attempts before succeeding may be closer to 30 (8) Also see the Appendix for my quit attempt history over the years to see how hard this can be.

The next chapter we will look at how yoga can help with the process of stopping smoking, make the transition to freedom more comfortable and ensure that relapse is avoided for the nicotine addict.

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Chapter 2 – Yogic Techniques to aid smoking cessation

As hard as it may be to believe to an active smoker like me, I have read that “the good news is that once the addiction is seen clearly for what it is, only a decision to change is required to break free.” This remains to be seen and quite frankly I’m skeptical.

A good analogy I did read somewhere however is **“To cool a pan of boiling water, add ice for instant satisfaction however the water would soon boil again, or simply turn off the heat and wait.”**

Just because the solution is simple however does not mean it will not require effort, I would like to explore some ideas that I hope will make the process easier.

This is where avidya or ‘right view’ comes in to play, it is essential to be able to get past the many excuses of what smoking gives the user, some example of which are: -

- Relieves Stress
- Relieves Boredom
- Helps concentration
- Helps relaxation

As previously mentioned smoking is **just** an addiction, the only reason to have a cigarette is to relieve the craving produced by the previous one, this continues in a vicious circle. It does absolutely nothing for the user other than remove this craving.

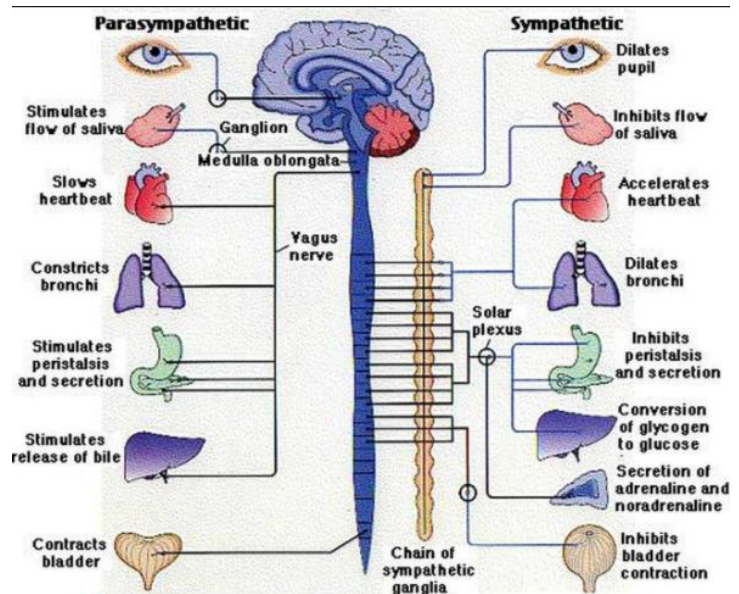
Further to help remove the ‘Avidya’, or false understanding, that is necessary to a stop smoking attempt are the trigger events for a cigarette. These will be either a physical need, a conditioned response (cue craving) or a desire. The difference between the three is very important and they will mainly occur at different times however in the beginning they may occur all at once. I will explore each of the phases, but first an outline of the preparations that will make the stop easier will be described.

Preparation

Our body's response to sensing danger or sudden stress is activation of the "fight or flight" pathways of the sympathetic nervous system. Nicotine also activates these pathways. (9)

Just contemplating stopping smoking for most nicotine addicts elicits fear, this then stresses the body making the user want to smoke more than before as the nicotine leaves the body quicker. As smoking triggers the fight or flight pathways as described above, it is important to both remove this unjust fear and also prepare the body and mind for the parasympathetic nervous system.

A dysregulated ANS (Autonomic nervous system) is rather like driving a car with the throttle and brakes fully down, this is what it can be like to be addicted to a substance. What is required is to place the body in to the parasympathetic side whilst reducing the sympathetic side.



To help with this it is important not to attempt to 'fight' the addiction, that will stimulate the ANS side, but rather almost surrender to what is. This can be a tough one to grasp but the principle is in the yoga sutras (1.23, 2.1, 2.45) and is best explained as giving up the fruits of your actions to Isvara (god) whatever that means to you. This will cultivate the mental attitude of compassion for yourself, acceptance, patience and surrender, this in the long run will be far more beneficial to the stop.

Each person attempting to stop the addiction that is affecting them will have to find a way of doing this however, yoga nidra with the correct embedded sankalpa will give the best chance if done correctly.

A sankalpa is defined as an intention or solemn vow, this is explored in further detail by yoga international in the notes. (10) The Bihar school of yoga says that if a sankalpa is said during yoga nidra with sincerity and meaning it will always come true.

Also it is Important not to activate devsha (aversion or repulsion), this is the opposite of raga (attachment) and just as much an obstacle to the **state** of yoga as raga is. This can be seen in certain people who have stopped an addiction only to go out of their way to hate the thing that once addicted them, it is better to let it go and that can only truly be done by removing all kleshas from the situation.

To avoid any additional mental stresses, try to follow the yamas/niyamas as best as possible, increased agitation near the beginning could lead to relapse. It is noted that the main point of the yamas and niyamas is not to become some kind of saint but to ensure, as best as possible, that you don't get any hassle and therefore have a quieter state of mind that makes meditation more possible to happen.

Diet

Both type of food and when it is eaten are very important when stopping smoking. Nicotine profoundly effects blood sugar levels by dumping glucose in to the blood stream (11), this has many effects, but it is not uncommon for me to miss breakfast and lunch if I can smoke freely. Exacerbating this is the fact that the start of a craving is very similar to feeling hungry and the two are often indistinguishable so what is a normal hunger pang can be misinterpreted as a nicotine craving and vica versa. This, if not monitored, can lead to weight gain or even worse a failed stop attempt, it is best in the short term (at least the first month) for the diet to be followed at specific times and intervals throughout the day to ensure that any feelings are not that of hunger and therefore can be addressed for what they are.

On top of this to speed up the process of removing the nicotine from the system it is suggested that drinking cranberry juice (or another acidic fruit juice) be done for the first 3 days. Acidifying the body leads to the loss of nicotine quicker, this may only amount to a few hours quicker, but it will help shorten the physical withdrawal phase. Caffeine has been shown to be twice as powerful during the initial stages of quitting in studies, this may be a problem as insomnia may be greater than anticipated however this shouldn't affect the stop. (12)

Smoking dehydrates the body and the skin which is one of the reasons why smokers age more quickly than nonsmokers, as a consideration during the transition period it is important to keep hydrated and drink as much water as possible, 8 glasses during the first few weeks a day would be good.

Finally, alcohol must be a consideration when stopping smoking, anecdotally many people have lost a stop due to lower inhibitions whilst drinking alcohol. It is advisable just for the short term until the physical aspects of the quit have finished not to drink alcohol at all, remember this will probably be no longer than a week.

Housekeeping

Some obvious extra rules are remove smoking materials completely, this includes ash trays, lighters, and all smoking materials. Nobody is stronger than the addiction, but we are smarter and that is why stopping smoking is totally achievable to everyone.

To make things easier, as well as removing the material to smoke, clean your clothes, car, apartment to remove the smell. Very soon the smell of smoke will become apparent again both on other people and your own belongings, so it is best to remove this.

The average person stopping smoking will forget how bad the addiction was quickly, they will only remember the 'good' cigarettes like the first on in the morning e.t.c. and not all the other ones that they had to have during the day if they wanted it or not. Therefore, it is important to write a list of reasons to stop which can be used as both a reminder but also as positive encouragement to what they have gained by stopping.

Physical withdrawal

This phase will generally last for 2 days to a week, most people peak at 3 days before the symptoms reduce. It is important to note that some people don't get any physical withdrawals and the ones they do will not be that bad at all. Everyone is different but some of the symptoms could be depressed mood, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, craving, bradycardia, insomnia, gastrointestinal discomfort, and weight gain (13)

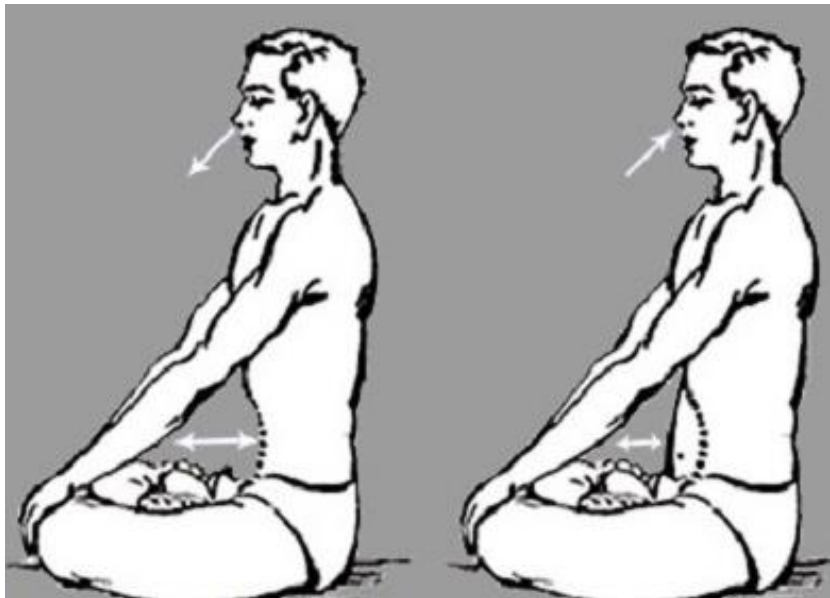
Most smokers don't realise it but every night during sleep the body starts to clean the system of nicotine and therefore puts them in to a state of withdrawal, however they don't wake up in pain or shaking every morning. In fact the physical aspects of withdrawal are not that bad at all and more likened to a common cold, it is when the feeling of deprivation enters the mind that the symptoms become worse. It could easily be said that it is the mental state that controls the ease or difficulty of the physical withdrawal phase.

Cravings activate areas of the front of the brain as described by the dopamine pathways earlier, studies of cravings using neuro imaging of smokers lacking nicotine clearly show the areas of the brain that 'light up' or are affected. (14)

It occurred to me that one of the shatkarmas called kapalbhati is also known as the 'skull shining' breath and is described in the book 'Prana & Pranayama' from the Bihar school. It says that kapalbhati calms the mind and decreases chatter through reduction of samana but also energizes through increase in udana

Some yoga teachers incorrectly explain that this breath increases oxygen in the body, in fact the opposite is true, and the effect is to blow off CO₂ NOT increase oxygen. As a scuba diver this is a well-known effect to me as hyperventilation, from rapid breathing, leads to blackouts which result in death underwater and therefore should be avoided by divers. Slow breathing increases oxygen in the brain by increasing CO₂ level, fast breathing reduces oxygen in brain (15)

Studies have shown a double effect of fast pranayama which is a differentiated pattern of vegetative activation and inhibition (16) which could be explained by the two vayus involved.



I therefore propose that this breath should be used during the initial period to help with physical withdrawal cravings.

The neurotransmitter GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), plays an important role in nicotine addiction along with Dopamine and others (17). GABA increase slows neuron firing and therefore has a relaxing/calming effect which will reduce the craving symptoms like anxiety, stress and depression.

Yoga and exercise have beneficial effects on mood and anxiety. γ -Aminobutyric acid (GABA)-ergic activity is reduced in mood and anxiety disorders. The practice of yoga postures is associated with increased brain GABA levels. A study addresses the question of whether changes in mood, anxiety, and GABA levels are specific to yoga or related to physical activity and clearly shows that yoga (asana) is the cause of the increase in GABA levels. (18)

As compounds that increase GABA have already been shown to decrease nicotine addiction through the mechanisms described in (17) it could also be said that yoga asana practice will do the same. In fact, GABA-based treatment strategies that enhance GABA transmission may prevent relapse to tobacco smoking.

“The development of an inexpensive, widely available intervention such as yoga that has no side effects but is effective in alleviating the symptoms of disorders associated with low GABA levels has clear public health advantage,”

Senior author Perry Renshaw, MD, PhD, director of the Brain Imaging Center at Harvard-affiliated McLean Hospital.

There is no mention of the type of asana that was used for the study but as part of the stopping process I will propose a daily asana program of at least an hour for the first week to completely cover the withdrawal period.

On a physical level the body will need to be cleaned inside and out, for this I will propose some of the shatkarmas. The main one to be done every day will be neti, or a salt water nasal flush, this will have the advantage of clearing the nasal and sinus passages and make the nose more sensitive which will hopefully put off any idea to introduce smoke. On top of this tongue scraping and a nasya preparation will be used to further clear and lubricate the mouth/nasal area.

To help alleviate digestive issues and correct expulsion of waste, I will propose that laghoo shankhprakhshalana (short salt water full body wash) and Kunjal (salt water stomach wash) are done after the first week. Each day before lunch it will be necessary to perform the kriya Agni Sara to further help the digestive process.

The final shatkarma to use will be trataka in the morning or evening to help with focus.

To help further to calm the body and mind during the physical withdrawal period I propose using a slow pranayama. It is shown in studies that the slow pranyamas produces a relaxed state and in this state, parasympathetic activity overrides sympathetic activity which is exactly the effect we are looking for. (19)

The breath I choose will be Nadi Shodana as this also has the effect of helping cleanse the nadis, or energy channels, of the body which may have become blocked due to the effects of smoking. I propose using this as needed during the first week but at least once in the morning and once in the evening for 5 minutes.

Conditioned Response

Although most conditioned responses can be removed in the first few weeks, the ones that affect the user everyday like the morning coffee or commute to work, there are some they may not appear for months or even years afterwards. To remove all conditioned responses is easy, you just have to move through them and realise that you can do whatever you did before whilst smoking, without a cigarette. It is the cues that don't appear at first that can be dangerous as your guard is lowered the longer in to a stop attempt the user proceeds, a good example of this would be having a cigar every New Years Eve, if you stop on the 1st of January then this cue will not appear for 12 months.

A yogi may see similarities between the state of addiction and the samsara cycle, the conditioned responses can be seen as the breaking of habits or samskaras.

Physical cravings are different to cue responses (samskaras) and therefore need to be dealt with in a different way.

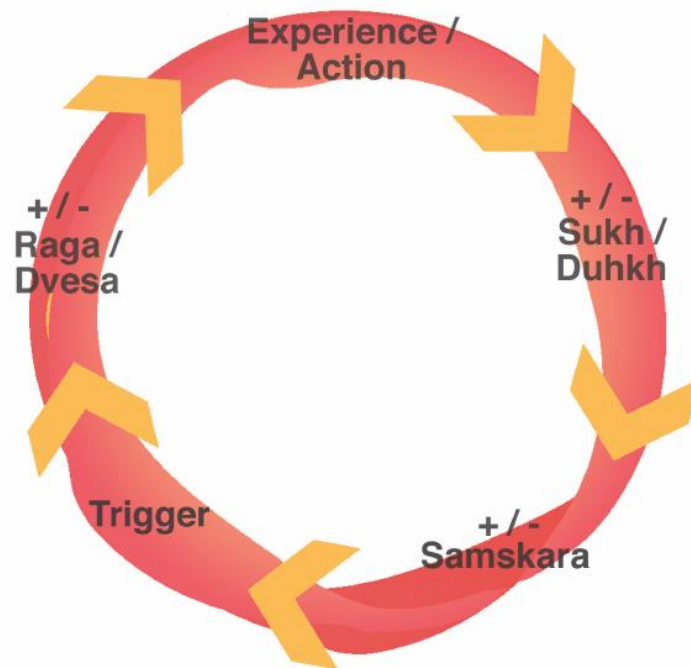


Diagram of a Samsara cycle – Christopher Wallis

The easiest way to think of conditioned responses is when you buy a new car, in your old car the indicators are on one side of the steering wheel, but they are on the opposite side in the new. For the first week or so every time you try to change lane and signal you may activate the washers or wipers, but eventually you will get used to it after going

through the process enough times and it will no longer be a problem. This is the process that can be helped with yoga.

To ensure awareness that the trigger process is happening, it is necessary to be mindful in that moment, every time a cue-based response is activated ensure that you know what it is and why it is there. The easiest way to do this is by starting a meditation routine, there are many forms and types of meditation to use but for this I would suggest a vipassana style, there is one called Antar Mouna (Inner Silence) (20) that is used by the Bihar school that would be the most appropriate.

In a 2004 brain MRI Imaging studies it is shown that

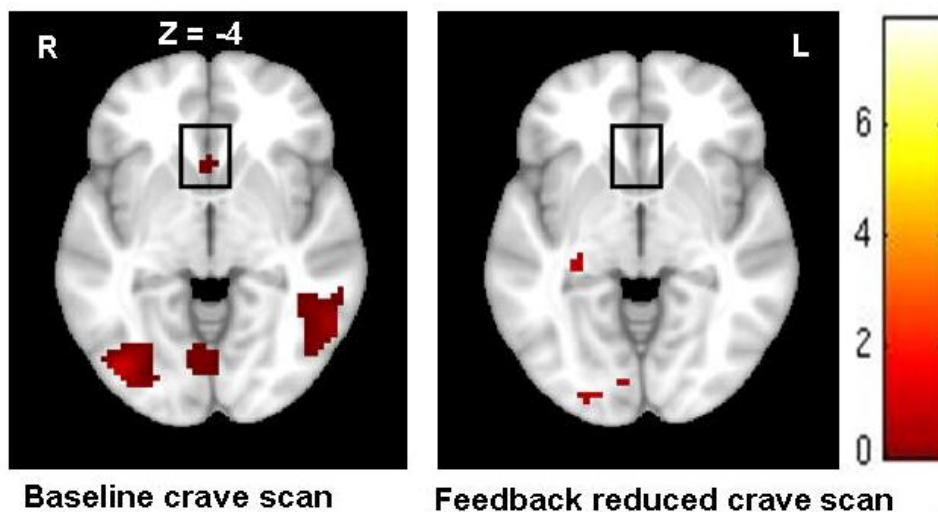
"smokers had smaller gray matter volumes and lower gray matter densities than nonsmokers?" (21)

It is also recorded that meditators build up extra grey matter in the brain, so meditation will have a double effect of countering the loss of brain matter as well as allowing mindfulness to take place more easily when cues happen.

It has been shown in studies that accepting, and then just thinking the craving to decrease in intensity works, whilst trying to fight or resist the cue craving doesn't help at all.

'Volitional reduction of anterior cingulate cortex activity produces decreased cue craving in smoking cessation: a preliminary real-time fMRI study.' (22)

Below is a scan showing the effect of accepting the situation and just willing the crave to reduce. What is important to be able to do this is the awareness of what is going on at that moment in time.



blood oxygen level-dependent (BOLD) functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) of the frontal cortex relevant to cravings (rACC)

I believe that it is important that every desire, where ever it comes from, needs to be brought out in to the light of your consciousness and not repressed or pushed away as this would then bury the emotion/thought in to the sub-conscious whereby it is likely to pop up and appear later. Therefore, for this process I would say always bring to the front of the mind and examine any perceived need to smoke during the post physical withdrawal period to check what is actually going on.

I would also advise that asana, yoga nidra and nadi shodana continue during this phase, the majority of this (99%) will be over in 3 weeks.

Desire

A desire is neither a physical crave or a cue-based craving, it may be something as simple as a thought that arises like 'Wouldn't it be nice to have a cigarette right now' for example. The thing to note with this is that it is only a thought, we do not have to follow all our thoughts, which is a very good thing for most people.

Once again it is important not to ignore or suppress these thoughts, but to acknowledge them and bring them to the fore front of the mind. In the example given change the argument from "no I don't want one' to **'yes, I want one now, but do I really want all the others that go with it and do I want the problems that go with that?'** Be honest and look at the thought and your situation, you only have one decision to make which is to accept the thought and decide not to smoke or to start smoking again, there are no other options.

A good mantra I found to do this is: -

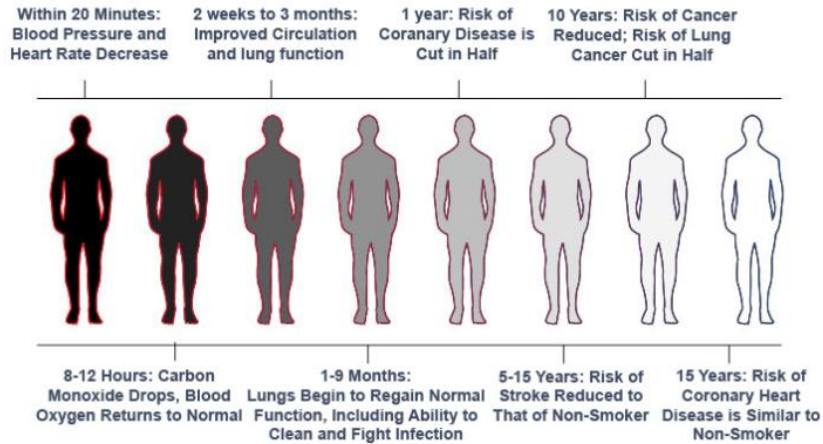
"I'm having a desire to smoke, I have freedom to smoke, one cigarette and I will be smoking again, for now I accept the desire to smoke, because of this I will have (reasons written down at the beginning)"

Mindfulness and meditation will help with this desire process of random thoughts, to help with the process of meditation I bought a Muse device (23), this records the brain wave patterns in real time, through a head band, whilst following specific guided meditations as well as a free mode. After connecting the pads to the skin of the head and calibrating, the Muse will track the brainwaves and give audio feedback when the user is either in a calm, neutral or agitated state. The audio feedback consists of weather noise getting louder the more agitated the brain waves become, this is worked out by their proprietary algorithm. I studied physics at university so I have to admit I am a bit of a techy at heart so I wanted this device anyway.

An extra meditation that I believe would be good at this stage is the Lotus flower which is mentioned in the notes to the YS (1.35), this should help with the accepting phase. Also, the specific kriya of visualizing the movement of light down the brahma nadi, between the eye brow center and the third eye chakra, this coupled with trataka should give greater clarity and awareness.

It is also important to look at the situation one day at a time, the only rule is don't take any nicotine in any form and you will be successful 100% of the time.

The physical detox process takes a while for the body after stopping smoking, this is shown in the next diagram.



Although initially the main reasons for Asana are the GABA and parasympathetic rewards, it becomes important at this stage for the detoxifying effects. The various surya routines are useful for CV conditioning and helping improve lung function, I would advise that an asana routine be kept up for at least the first year after stopping smoking for these reasons. This isn't a problem for me as I have a regular asana routine anyway, but I hope if other people read this that they may start for the reason to stop smoking but then carry on because of all the other benefits.

Intentionally Blank

Chapter 3 – Proposed Plan

Day 1 to 3 – Peak Withdrawal Phase

morning

Neti/ Nasya

Tongue scraping

Khapalabati 26 * 4

6 classical SN

Twist asana routine for detox

Backbends

Antar Mouna Stage 1-3

During day

Khapalabhati as needed for cravings

Vipassana mindfulness, embrace cravings and negative thoughts, bring to light, to watch thoughts as needed

Agniya Sara kriya - pre-lunch

NS as needed to calm, both full of visualized

Evening

NS 10 ratio 1:2

10 mins with Muse meditation

Yoga nidra with Sankalpa

Day 4 to 6 – Consolidation Phase

Morning

Neti/ Nasya

Tongue scraping

6 classical SN

Langhana routine to activate PNS

Nadi Shodan 1:1:2

Antar Mouna Stage 1-3

During day

Khapalabhati as needed for cravings (much less frequency)

Vipassana to watch thoughts as needed

Agniya Sara pre lunch

NS as needed

Evening

NS 10 ratio 1:1:2:1

Trataka 15 mins

10 mins meditation with muse

Yoga nidra with Sankalpa

Day 7 – Relax the worst is over

Morning

Kunjla and neti

Lagoo shanka

Yoga nidra – chakra visualization

NS as needed through day and vipassana meditation, no asana is required today.

Week 2 – Transition Phase

Meditation is very important during the transition phase, the ability to get in-between the split second of a thought and an action is crucial to allow the stop to be successful. Most people think of meditation as sitting down, being still and calm and doing various mental exercises. Although for some forms of meditation this is true, it is designed to allow better clarity of thought all the time. Mindfulness can be done at anytime and all the

time, when someone asks how often you do yoga, the response should be “I’m doing it now”.

The fast pranayama requirement should be fading in this week but that means that more of the slow pranayama could be done instead. I would also keep up the Ayurvedic tongue scraping and nasya along with neti.

Asana is still important here but probably a less energizing form to help activate the PNS and calm the body/mind to be more receptive to the meditation.

Week 3 and beyond – Reintegration phase

It is important to keep to a routine of regular asana practice and NS pranayama, the rest of the techniques discussed should be used as required. Most people will have now moved out of the physical withdrawal phase, but the transition will be continuing. Clarity and awareness are key here and that is helped by establishing a regular meditation practice, I would also advise keeping up Yoga Nidra at least 3 times a week.

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Chapter 4 – What actually happened

I smoked on average 20 cigarettes a day, the stop date I selected was the 1st of January 2018. I used Muse to track calm states every day.

New Years Eve - Day before (although this wasn't in the plan I thought it was a good idea to take advantage of special end of year yoga sessions)

- Long heart opening asana practice – energizing in morning
- Evening slow mindful langahna asana session, sankalpa to “let go of what no longer serves you.” Themed studio class which was an excellent choice for me.
- Gong bath 30 mins

Day 1 – Monday 1st of January

- used NRT 21mg patch as a buffer (not in plan but I wanted to take the edge off)
- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- Long heart opening asana practice – “new beginnings” themed studio class
- Meditation on letting go and fostering acceptance of self, self love
- Created Sankalpa – “I accept myself completely and release with love things that no longer serve me”
- NS basic to remain calm
- No need for khabalbhati
- Lots of water/no caffeine
- Regular eating throughout day
- Lots of vipassana style mindfulness during day to release any negative emotions (worked very well)
- Muse check at 20% calm

Day 2

- used NRT 21mg as a buffer
- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- No time to practice in morning due to change in eating patterns to keep up blood sugar, breakfast as back at work.
- NS Basic at desk
- Lots of water no caffeine
- Meditation in evening
- Bath with yoga Nidra
- Lots of vipassana style mindfulness during day to release any negative emotions (worked very well and remained calm)

- No need for Khapalabati
- Muse calm state check 30% calm
- Felt so good didn't replace NRT patch after Yoga Nidra in bath last night

Day 3

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- No time for Asana in morning due to change in eating patterns to keep up blood sugar, breakfast
- Painful headaches (temples and side of head) and very short temper – NS helped with this.
- NS Basic, visualized, at desk helped with headaches
- Lots of water no caffeine
- Khapalabhati required multiple times today to deal with cravings, head felt clearer and calmer afterwards
- NS to calm
- Meditation on breath again in evening
- Lots of cranberry juice to help clear remaining nicotine
- Lots of vipassana style mindfulness during day to release any negative emotions (this was needed constantly today and sometimes wasn't enough)
- Evening bath + YN again– first 24 hours nicotine free
- Confused, difficult to concentrate, floating feeling
- 2nd Neti before bed
- Muse calm state check 7%

Day 4

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- No time again in morning due to change in eating patterns to keep up blood sugar, breakfast (if somebody had tried to make me do asana today I would probably be in prison by now due to my reaction)
- NS Basic at desk helped with headaches
- Lots of water no caffeine
- Khapalabhati required several times today to deal with cravings, head felt clearer afterwards
- NS to calm still short temper
- Evening vinyasa flow session , this felt good and hopefully released the GABA
- Meditation on breath again in evening
- New time dilation issues, I found it difficult to track time periods, an example was in the shower, I actually forgot how long I was in there. Very weird experience.

- Driving difficult as hard to concentrate for long periods (over 5 seconds)
- Tired during day, strange dreams and sleep patterns last night with some insomnia.
- Muse 5%

Day 5 (Friday I took the day off work so I did Shatkarmas early)

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- Kunjal
- Lagoo shanka
- Yoga nidra – Beach visualization
- NS 1:1:2
- Vipassana mindfulness constantly, realized there is no advantage to self - righteous indignation it just causes problems after a car pulled out in front of me.
- Sankalpa still let go with love and embrace any craving feelings, this coupled with deep breathing seems to work well.
- Sleep patterns affected racing mind that wouldn't calm so didn't sleep until 3 am
- Muse 10 min meditation 2% calm

Day 6 (I feel the physical symptoms appear to have gone)

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- No time in morning for any yoga due to all day event, at local ashram studying yoga philosophy
- Could only do deep breathing and watching breath as all day event surrounded by people
- No Kb and No NS
- Felt a lot calmer today and anger subsiding
- Vipassana Mindfulness needed to cope with cravings, they are now coming less frequently – Use mantra created for smoking
- Accept the craving for what it is, most cravings from now on are not physical but trigger related and need to be dealt with one at a time.
- Muse 10 min med, whopping 66% calm!! This is why im not 100% sure of the effectiveness of the muse, it needs more investigation.

Day 7

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- AM Physical Yoga session with slow KB to start. 1.5 hr
- Meditation on specific Sahashra chakra using mala for connection 1 hr

- NS during day
- Mindful Walk in the woods taking in fresh air, it felt good
- Vipassana mindfulness, watching the impatience get less and less
- No longer physical craving all mental , different cues and desires
- Muse 10 min in evening 12% calm
- Could only do deep breathing and watching breath as all day event surrounded by people

Day 8

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- NS during day
- Vipassana mindfulness, watching the impatience get less and less
- Strong studio vinyasa flow
- KB as part of practice but not needed as a counter to cravings
- Muse 10 min in evening 39% calm

Day 9

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- Early morning session, Classical SS – heart opening warming session
- Om mani padmi om – Mala japa meditation
- NS during day – visualize without hand manipulation if at desk
- Vipassana mindfulness, watching the mind
- Forgot to eat properly today and had no breakfast, this manifested as a desire to smoke but through mindful introspection it became clear it was just a BS drop that could be dealt with.
- No longer need KB
- Muse 10 min in evening 13% calm

Day 10

- Neti/tongue scrape/Nasya
- NS during day
- Vipassana mindfulness, watching the situational triggering much less
- Virtually no physical craving today
- Simple asana in morning
- Muse 10 min 25% calm

Chapter 5 – Conclusions

After 10 days I felt that I had successfully let go and no longer needed to record the specific yoga I used whilst stopping smoking. It is hard to describe but I just felt that I had moved on, there was no elation or animosity I had just moved on. This didn't mean that all the techniques were stopped, some were used when needed but this was mainly the mind techniques about mindful awareness.

Kapalabhati breathing proved to be very good for the first few days to help remove the most immediate of physical cravings, this probably needs more study by professionals as if it does affect the crave area of the brain it could have widespread usage. Nadi Shodana was equally good at calming during the day, it was interesting that the visualize version seemed to help too whereby the hands aren't used but the breath is imagined entering in to each nostril.

Neti made the nose sensitive and made under the eyes quite painful, with dark patches, for a few days but this reduced as the week went on and then ended at 8 or 9 days. Tongue scrape and nasya helped clear and lubricate, I still use this 4 months later and my tongue is much clearer now.

Kunjla and Lagoo Shanka were a bit extreme however it did reset the bowel movements after a few days. This may be a coincidence, but after this there were no more physical aspects of withdrawal. I have done these techniques before and I think they are generally beneficial anyway.

Yoga Nidra helped relax but really allowed the embedding of sankalpa deeper to allow the plan to come to fruition.

A bonus, that wasn't in the plan, were the two set up sessions on New Years Eve, the first in the morning with intention of letting go and then the relaxing session with gong bath in the evening. This really set the scene and allowed my body/mind to relax and accept what was about to happen. I think that it allowed me to realise that I was in a state of imbalance and that something was needed to set this straight.

“It is a cosmic principle that we either suffer in imbalance or act to create balance. Though we may be habituated to the discomforts of imbalance, and even perceive it as balance , we cannot grow in such a state. Growth is progress, and progress is the soul's purpose.” Fire of love pg. 187

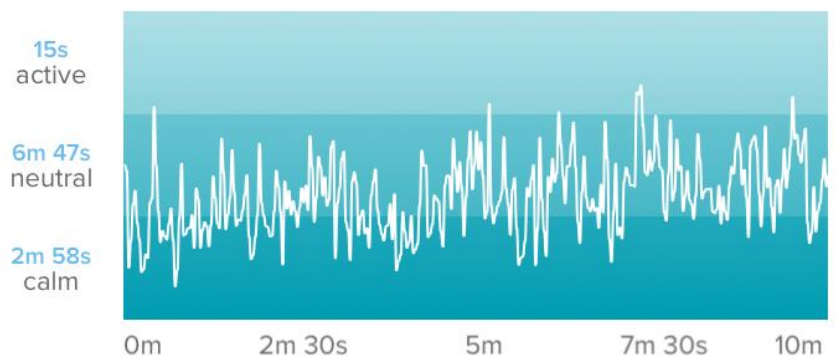
This set up what I believe was absolutely key to this process, the ability to step back and view thoughts/emotions without getting caught up with them. This detachment allowed things to be seen as they really were.

Detachment is mentioned in the YS (1.12) Vairagya – supreme detachment. It is one of the two elements required to be successful in yoga.

I didn't repress but brought out fully and felt the sensation fully with a curious witness type form of detachment. Feel your feelings appears to be the way forward, this doesn't mean that we withdraw from the world, quite the contrary it allows for more and deeper participation.

“To be detached is to stand in the middle of the marketplace, with all its confusion and noise, and to remain present to yourself and all that is.” Living your yoga pg. 28

The ability to distinguish a physical crave from hunger, a situational trigger (samskaras), a rising emotion or a desire, as nothing more than a reaction to stopping smoking rather than the current situation was important. The Muse helped with this I believe, I'm not one hundred percent sure that it works fully



but it did encourage a routine that involved meditation. As shown in the graph it was clear that some days were better than others, but it is the trend that is important and the continued progress to be more relaxed.

Finally, as a practicing yogi who smokes, it is something that can be shameful and I felt that I needed to hide this. I felt terrible that I left yoga studios and then lit up a cigarette in the car on the way home. This caused me to become fearful of being caught, triggered the ANS and made me not even try to stop, I felt like a fraud.

I can now say this is far from the truth, please don't be ashamed if you find yourself in this situation, we all have our crosses to bear and I think Gandhi said it best.

**My imperfections and my failures
are as much a blessing from God
as my successes and my talents
and I lay them both at God's feet.**

— Mahatma Gandhi

As a post note I am still not smoking after 4 months and am gratefully on the path to recovery.

Notes

- (1) <http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/topic/environmental-harm/>
- (2) http://whyquit.com/FFN/chapters/FFN_01_Nicotine_P.pdf (Chp 1 Pg 3)
- (3) http://whyquit.com/FFN/chapters/FFN_01_Nicotine_P.pdf (Chp 1 Pg 4)
- (4) washingtonpost.com Search 'the-terrifying-rate-at-which-smokers-die-from-smoking'
- (5) Centers for disease control and prevention – Smoking and tobacco use fast facts – Tobacco industry marketing
- (6) Gallop polls - <http://news.gallup.com/poll/163763/smokers-quit-tried-multiple-times.aspx>
- (7) www.nerdfitness.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-quitting-smoking-permanently
- (8) reuters.com/article/us-health-smoking-quit-attempts/smokers-may-try-to-quit-30-times-before-it-sticks-idUSKCN0Z72PL
- (9) Haass M, et al, Nicotine and sympathetic neurotransmission, Cardiovascular Drugs and Therapy, January 1997, Volume 10(6), Pages 657-665
- (10) www.yogainternational.com/article/view/how-to-create-a-sankalpa
- (11) www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7455580
- (12) <http://whyquit.com/pr/041407.html>
- (13) Shiffman and Jarvik, 1976; Hughes et al., 1991
- (14) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4410051/#!po=42.9688>
- (15) pg 86-89 the book 'science of yoga'
- (16) ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1818666
- (17) ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3188825/
- (18) ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3111147/
- (19) ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5382821/
- (20) <http://www.yogamaq.net/archives/2002/cmayer02/amtarm.shtml>
- (21) Brody, AL et al, Differences between smokers and nonsmokers in regional gray matter volumes and densities, Biological Psychiatry, January 1, 2004, Volume 55(1), Pages 77-84.
- (22) ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22458676/
- (23) www.choosemuse.com/

Appendix - My smoking history

Started smoking at 16/17 years old, average 20 a day, previous stop attempts below

Age	Length of Time Stopped and Method used
18	1 month cold turkey
20	1 month cold turkey
25	6 months using NHS stop smoking group guidance
27	3 months using patch
29	5 months cold turkey
35	6 months (patches for 2 months then nothing)
38	18 months cold turkey (a specific incident caused relapse)
41	3 weeks hypnosis
42	2 months cold turkey
44	3 weeks patch

Roughly 42 months stopped in total over a period of 28 years.

45	Yogic stop smoking described in this document.
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