



Handling Stress...without smoking

ARIZONA SMOKERS' HELPLINE 1-800-556-6222 - WWW.ASHLINE.ORG

What to Expect

▼ Expect to become more aware of stress during your withdrawal. Nonsmokers have found many ways to break the stress cycle without lighting a cigarette.

Frequency

▼ Almost 63% of smokers report smoking to handle stress.

▼ You may become more aware of stress during withdrawal. This may be largely because using cigarettes actually relieved some of this normal stress by releasing powerful chemicals in your brain.

Self Management

▼ Know the cause of stress in your life (e.g. your job, your children, money).

▼ Identify the stress signals (e.g. headaches, nervousness, insomnia or trouble sleeping).

▼ Create peaceful times in your everyday schedule. (e.g. Set aside an hour where you can get away from other people and your usual environment.)

▼ Try new relaxation methods and stick with the best one for you.

▼ Rehearse and visualize your relaxation plan. Put your plan into action. Change your plan as needed.

▼ Seek and learn relaxation techniques such as progressive relaxation.

Nicotine and Your Body and Mind

▼ Mental or physical tensions, strains, or distress caused by worries, responsibilities, and hassles, which you encounter in normal everyday life, can all be a part of stress.

▼ Once nicotine enters your brain, it appears to stimulate production of a number of the brain's most powerful chemical messengers.

▼ These chemicals (epinephrine, norepinephrine, dopamine, arginine, vasopressin, beta-endorphin, and acetylcholine) are involved in alertness, pain reduction, learning, memory, pleasure, and the reduction of both anxiety and pain.

▼ When you smoke, the general effect is a temporary improvement in brain chemistry that you experience as enhanced pleasure, decreased anxiety, and a state of alert relaxation.

Related Notes

▼ It may be useful to read "How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life" by Alan Lakein.

References available upon request.