

6 new ways to quit...

From 1 July, smokers will no longer be able to light up in bars, clubs, restaurants, offices or any other enclosed public places in the UK. It's the best-ever incentive to quit, so we asked six volunteers to road-test alternative stop-smoking treatments, from hypnosis to meditation...

WORDS ZOË McDONALD



THE THERAPY Relaxation and meditation

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Emma Perrett, 27. She's smoked for ten years and has three or four cigarettes a day during the week, but up to 20 at weekends. She's tried to give up many times, using willpower alone.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'It's a guided meditation session where you're encouraged to focus on your overall wellbeing through breathing and visualisation techniques. The theory is that through deep relaxation, the smoker lets go of their addiction. "In the first session we talked about when I smoke (morning, lunch and after work) and why (habit and social smoking). The therapist explained that to stop my addiction I'd need to alter unconscious thought processes, and one way to do that is through meditation. We started by deep breathing while looking into a flame. Then the therapist asked me to imagine a wishing well filled with magic water that would enable me to achieve any goal. I then visualised the water flooding my body. I was told to imagine the flame whenever I had a craving. A week later, I had another session.'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'I was sceptical,' says Emma, 'but afterwards I headed straight to the pub and was surprised to find it easy to resist a cigarette. Three weeks on, I still haven't smoked. Something worked!'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Emma visited Rahat Sheikh at 1 Harley Street, London (020 7291 4450) www.positivepeace.com. A consultation costs from £145 and £95 for follow-up sessions. For other meditation therapists, visit www.brahmakumaris.org.uk.

THE THERAPY Stop Smoking Intensive (a combination six-week treatment package)

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Hayley Granston, 41. For the past 20 years she's smoked ten to 20 cigarettes per day. She's never tried to quit before.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'A combination of weekly group therapy sessions led by a trained counsellor, as well as GP consultations, acupuncture, hypnosis, nutritional therapy and personal training. As there were so many treatments to fit into my diary, I never had to wait long if my motivation was waning. We kicked off with a group therapy session. The counsellor who led the discussion dropped in some sobering facts about smoking. One of them really hit home – if you take a random sample of 1,000 20-year-olds in the US now, six will be murdered, 12 will die in car accidents and 500 will die of smoking-related diseases. We discussed our reasons for wanting to stop. Mine was that the gym had started to feel like hard work for the first time.'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'Yes! I've been careful to avoid smoky environments, but I've managed to go without a cigarette for three weeks and counting. I've found the experience incredibly motivating and I'm shocked at how easy it's been. For me, the group therapy session was the most effective aspect – I'm a competitive person and couldn't bear the thought of letting the group down.'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Life Works at London's Third Space Medicine. Stop Smoking Intensive costs £695 and includes 18 hours of counselling, two hypnotherapy sessions, ear acupuncture, a nutrition session, a 30-minute appointment with a GP, use of The Third Space gym for the six-week course and a personal-training session. For info, visit www.stopsmokingintensive.com.

THE THERAPY Anne Penman Laser Therapy

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Françoise Picard, 39. She's been smoking since she was 17 and smokes 20 a day.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'Anne chatted to me for 20 minutes before the treatment. We discussed my attitude to smoking – I view it as a form of weight control as cigarettes distract me when I'm hungry. Then Anne explained the therapy, saying that a small laser is used to target acupuncture points. She said I'd need more than one treatment and could call whenever I felt a craving. I couldn't feel the laser, which Anne zapped all over my body, from my wrist to my ear. I felt relaxed sitting in a comfortable reclining chair, and afterwards I felt oddly elated and giggly. I went for another session two days later, then a follow-up a week after that.'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'At first, I made it to my final session without smoking, but it was tough – I wanted to smoke, I had trouble sleeping and felt emotional. I put on weight, too, gaining 3lb in a week, which panicked me, so I started smoking. I'm smoking half the amount I used to, though, and hope to quit after another session.'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Anne Penman Therapy is available in Glasgow (0141 4239375), Hamilton (01698 422255) and Edinburgh (0131 2210000) only. It costs £150 for four sessions. For info, visit www.apl.co.uk.

THE THERAPY Acupuncture

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Christina Jackson, 25. She started smoking at 15 and now has a 20-a-day habit. She's tried to give up in the past by going cold turkey, but couldn't stick it out.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'I stopped smoking a few days before the acupuncture session, and was feeling irritable when I turned up for the appointment. I'm quite cynical about alternative medicine, but was hoping it might ease my withdrawal symptoms. The therapist sat me down and told me a bit about how acupuncture works – he said it helps overcome addiction by increasing your body's natural opiates and feel-good hormones (endorphins), which reduce cravings. Then he asked me to take off my shoes and recline on a couch. He inserted a number of needles into my feet, hands and ears. I had five in each of my ears, one between my eyebrows, one between my thumb and first finger, and a few in my feet. I could barely feel most of them, although one in my left foot was painful. The therapist twisted and adjusted the needles, then sat down to talk to me, explaining that I should feel a sense of heaviness where the needles were, which I did. After half an hour or so, he removed the needles. Finally, he told me to pinch a particular part of my ear whenever I felt the urge to smoke – this would help to stop the cravings.'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'I felt no different when I left the appointment, but, almost a month on, I still haven't smoked and I've felt less irritable. I've also found it easier to resist cigarettes than when I've gone cold turkey before.'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Christina visited Martin Silliton, who practises at Urban Bliss, London. An initial consultation and treatment costs £150; call 020 8969 3331. To find an acupuncturist near you, visit www.medical-acupuncture.co.uk.

“IF I GET A CRAVING, I SEE THE IMAGE OF A SAD, OLD SMOKER”



THE THERAPY Hypnotherapy

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Tabitha McDonald, 29. She's been smoking for 15 years and gets through ten to 20 cigarettes a day.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'The session started with a 45-minute chat about what to expect and why I wanted to stop smoking. I explained that I wanted to quit for health reasons and that my main trigger is boredom – cigarette breaks punctuate my day and I consider my mid-morning and mid-afternoon cigarettes rewards for hard work. I also socialise with smokers a lot, which doesn't help. The hypnotherapist, Lisa Jackson, explained that hypnosis works by implanting suggestions into your unconscious mind that you no longer want to smoke. The session started as I expected, with Lisa telling me I was feeling deeply relaxed. I went into a trance and the next thing I recall is being counted out of my hypnotised state – quite spooky!'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'Much to my surprise, it really did! Despite going on a group holiday with six smokers, I've managed not to smoke for a month. I did feel a little grouchy for the first few days, and I'm fidgeting a lot, but find that every time I think of having a cigarette, an image of a sad, old, wrinkly smoker pops into my mind – which must be down to the hypnosis!'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Tabitha visited Lisa Jackson of Quiet Medicine Clinical Hypnotherapy in Croydon, south London. A 90-minute Stop Smoking Today session costs £150. For more information, call 020 8655 2161 or visit www.quiet-medicine.co.uk. To find a hypnotherapist near you, visit www.bs.ch.org.uk.

THE THERAPY Bio-resonance Therapy

→ **THE GUINEA PIG** Catherine Sharp, 31. She's smoked on and off since her teens, but is mostly a social smoker who gets through three cigarettes a day.

→ **WHAT DID IT INVOLVE?** 'The therapist said that, like all objects and organisms, cigarettes emit an electrical impulse and that Bio-resonance Therapy works by disrupting the impulses. To do this, a gentle electric current is passed through your body which neutralises the "charge" of the nicotine, reducing cravings. It sounded suspect to me, but I was willing to give it a go. I was asked to sit in a large massage chair and small sensors were placed on my hands. I couldn't feel anything during the treatment but afterwards felt incredibly thirsty (the therapist had warned me I would), so the treatment must have done something!'

→ **DID IT WORK?** 'I felt no physical need to smoke afterwards, and managed to go a week without a cigarette, but I started up again when my flatmate and I had friends round for dinner. For me, smoking is definitely a social thing, and I didn't feel the therapy helped stop the psychological triggers.'

→ **WHERE TO GO** Bio-resonance Therapy at the New Ways Clinic, 1-7 Harley Street, London, costs £295. For info, call 0845 4661400 or visit www.newwaysclinic.com. To find a therapist near you, call the British Complementary Medicine Association on 0845 3455977 or visit www.bcma.co.uk.