

## Day 1:

*The device is more obvious than I would have thought...will people think I've escaped from an institute when they see the electrodes behind my ears? I mentally prepare myself for three days of being house bound (which is a good idea anyway, apparently, as it's easier to avoid smokers and situations where you would normally smoke for now). I get out the scarves and polo necks in case I need to make a dash for the shops. Happily, it's not painful at all and you're mostly unaware of the device – except when you get tangled in the cords.*

- 3pm:** I smoked my last cigarette (ever, hopefully) around 1pm. That's what you do when you quit, isn't it? One hour down, two hours, three hours, three hours and fifteen minutes, three hours twenty minutes and four seconds... until you eventually give up – partly due to cravings and partly due to going slightly off your rocker as you watch the seconds tick by. Oh crap, here we go. Still feeling okay since I cut back this week to prepare for the big day. But as soon as you decide to quit, of course all you want to do is smoke. The need isn't as bad as with other attempts though. Strong, but under control. Hope this keeps up...
- 4pm:** I'm incredibly tired and feel a little down in the dumps. Feel so sorry for myself that I decide to take a nap. I wonder if smoking has become such a big part of my life that it's actually become a part of who I am. It almost feels like I've lost a friend.
- 5pm:** Still no nervous twitches or aching shoulders... Another bonus is that I haven't shoved the contents of the fridge down my throat in record time as with other quitting attempts – usually I'd do anything to occupy my hands and mouth. Don't plan on counting calories over the next few days though. Tonight: McDonald's! I'd like a smoke, but I know I have enough willpower to last the first 24 hours at least. Things are supposed to get better from there on. The question is whether the device will break the habit as well.
- 6pm:** Right now, I only want three things: a cigarette, a cup of coffee and chocolate – in that order. And I'm supposed to avoid all three on the programme. I'm miserable and irritated, which only makes the cravings worse.
- 8pm:** Missing my usual after-supper cigarette. I wonder if I'd like to smoke because I think I'd like to, or if I really want to. The craving honestly isn't as bad as usual. But I'm still feeling borderline depressed and just started crying when there were no new mails in my inbox. The same inbox I checked half an hour ago. Time for bed.

## Day 2:

- 8am:** After a very restless night, I realize the device's battery has died. I have no idea how long ago. On the verge of tears, I run to the shops for a replacement. Will this ruin my chances of success?
- 9am:** Started feeling better the second I put the new battery in. I turn the dial a bit higher – the slight sting it produces is becoming enjoyable. Is that weird? Apparently not – if you have an addictive personality, as all smokers do, you'll enjoy the stimulation.
- 10am:** Still feel like crying for no reason. This time because I want to go for a run, but don't want passing cars to see the electrodes. (The fact that I want to go jogging says something of my desperation to feel better – not my favourite activity). This is NOT me! I'm usually a happy person. However, sad as I might be, I'm not desperate for a smoke...
- 11am:** I have the worst possible headache ever and my brain feels loose inside my skull. And I'm sad. And angry. And I've polished the fridge. And I'm crying again. But, strangely, I prefer this over that crazed and desperate feeling when you try quitting on your own. Plan to get a sad movie and a large bag of cheese curls tonight...
- 1pm:** Started doing some work in the mean time and was actually able to concentrate – something I could never do when trying to quit smoking. And the eating has stopped. And the sadness isn't as overwhelming anymore. Is it possible that this has really only taken 24 hours? I couldn't see a light at the end of the tunnel only two hours ago.
- 6pm:** I almost feel like myself again! I still want to smoke every now and then, but I don't think about it as often now and the craving passes quickly enough when I do. Hope this keeps up and gets better, I'm not nearly in the clear yet.
- 10pm:** I'm still more tired than usual. Off to bed. Odd that I can't remember how incredibly down in the dumps I was and how badly I wanted to smoke yesterday unless I read it here. I'm still irritated though and craving that after dinner cigarette since supper time.

### **Day 3:**

**11am:** I'm really myself again! I've probably wanted a smoke once or twice this morning, but when the craving comes I know it'll pass soon so it doesn't bother me. The headache has also lifted. Today I feel like you do for that first half hour after deciding to quit and before the cravings start – I'm excited about this!

**2pm:** Battling to concentrate on work because it feels like I keep forgetting to do something else first. Missing that pre-work cigarette, of course. Funnily enough, the cigarette doesn't bother me – only my messed-up routine. The habit obviously hasn't been broken. Will it feel this way forever? The cravings are much better.

**11pm:** Saw my neighbour smoking tonight and, for a fleeting second, actually thought it was gross. But I quickly walked away – I don't quite trust myself around smokers yet. But I was okay. I honestly didn't want to strangle him and steal his last few puffs.

### **Day 4:**

**12pm:** Only one hour left of my 72 hours on the device. I feel fantastic! I haven't craved a cigarette even once today and the thought only crossed my mind two or three times. Also not eating as much anymore. I do feel a bit light headed though – another withdrawal symptom.

Finally feel confident enough to really think about this: do I want to smoke? I do, but I'm indifferent. If I had to describe the feeling, I'd say it's like wanting a cup of rooibos and realizing there's none left in the cupboard and then having black tea in stead. (Coming from someone who isn't too crazy about tea). You're not completely satisfied, but it's also not really an issue and you soon forget about it.

### **Day 5:**

*I kept the device on for a few extra hours as I'm not sure how long that battery was flat. I was out last night and someone smoked at the table – it was honestly an ugly thing to see. I wanted to smoke out of habit when I got home, but made some tea and soon forgot about it. I truly don't want to smoke anymore. Yes, the thought crosses my mind, but I now know that it's only out of habit, that I don't really want to smoke and that the feeling will go away after a few moments. Soon, I'm sure the habit will go away too.*

### **A Week Later:**

*I almost can't remember why I ever smoked. I'm slightly disgusted when I see someone inhaling smoke – what a horrible thing to do! Already, exercise has become much easier and I can jog an extra kilometer. Had a cup of coffee for the first time again yesterday (day 6) and I didn't feel like smoking with it. Also had a party where I drank alcohol and it felt good not to smoke. I still think about it every now and then – especially right before the end of supper when I get slightly panicked that I'll want to smoke afterwards. But that need never comes. It's just the old habit that needs to be forgotten – and it's already started to disappear. I do feel a bit angelic though... will have to work on a new vice!*

-- J

### **Tips:**

- Just do it. For three days, you're going to look silly, you'll have to avoid social situations and you'll have to juggle your routine a bit. And you're going to lose a little patch of hair behind your ears – but it's absolutely, 100% worth the small sacrifice. Choose three days when you'll be able to fit this in.
- Be prepared. Take leave on that first day if you can and pamper yourself – you're not going to feel fantastic. Plan a yummy dinner, get a DVD that'll distract you and buy a few small snacks to curb the worst cravings. It's a lot easier than going it alone, but you'll still want to smoke. Do three days' shopping ahead of time – you won't want to go to the shops.
- Just stick to it for 24 hours. It might not feel that way at first, but you WILL feel better after day 1.
- Don't stress about it. If you start worrying that you'll want to smoke, or that the device won't work, or that you won't break the habit, or that you'll gain weight, or whatever, you'll only think about smoking more and make it harder on yourself – especially on the first day. Just believe this – it really WILL work!
- Don't be unreasonable. The device won't make you want to quit, because nothing can force you to do something you don't want to. However, it's not a case of "you won't quit if you don't really, really, really want to" like everyone says after failed attempts. But you still have to have your reasons. Take it from someone who seriously tried quitting a month before the device: I was obviously not in the right "head space" to quit on my own, but I did at least want to.