

# Surfing my cravings

## MY ACTION PLAN



Here's a way for you to surf your cravings anywhere and anytime!

Carry this action plan with you so that if cravings strike, you can surf them rather than giving in to them.

Remember: the more you practice this technique, the easier, quicker and more natural it will become.

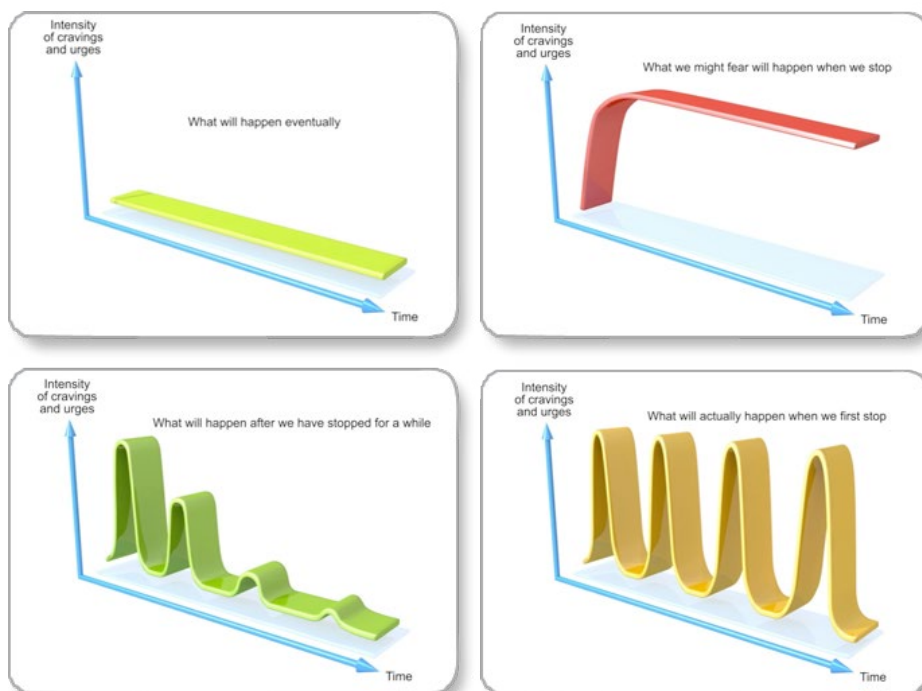
*Stay strong and conquer your cravings!*

### 1. Understanding my cravings and urges

It's very common to experience cravings when we first quit. And this is because cravings can be triggered by particular places, people, music, sights or smells.

Although cravings are just our body's way of telling us we're withdrawing or detoxing, they can be really uncomfortable. And this can lead to powerful urges to lapse to relieve our distress.

What can be frightening is the idea that once we quit, our cravings and urges might go on and on. Or that we may never be able to feel 'right' or 'normal' again. And we may fear that our cravings and urges will stay very intense, like they might be when we first stop.



But none of this is true. In reality, we may get cravings and urges quite often at first. But they'll feel like waves that come and go. And as long as we don't give in to them by lapsing, we'll find that after a while they'll start to become less and less intense, until eventually they fade away completely. And the time that passes between them will get longer and longer, until eventually we realise they're happening only rarely or not at all.

But every time we succumb to our cravings and urges by lapsing, all we're doing is setting up our next craving and the urges that tend to follow. And this is what can keep us locked in the trap of dependence - not to give us pleasure, but just to relieve our distress.

So we need to learn to ride out our cravings and urges by surfing them, especially in the early stages after we first quit. We need to remember that every time we overcome our cravings by riding them out rather than giving into them, they'll become weaker and we'll become stronger.

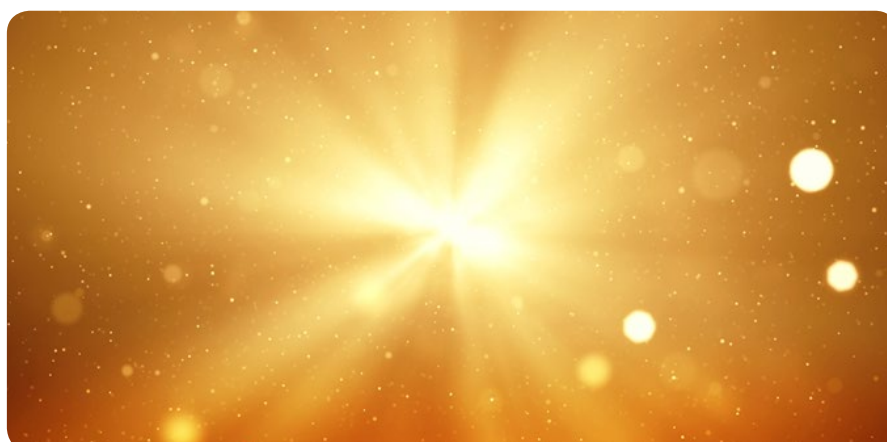
Until eventually they'll lose all their power. And they'll no longer have any impact on us. Because we'll have conquered them and escaped the dependence trap once and for all!

## 2. Scanning my body

Before you surf your craving, scan your body so you can tune in to any physical discomfort you may be feeling.

Follow these steps in turn, taking as long as you need on each one:

- Scan all the different areas of your body until you can pinpoint exactly where the source of the feeling is.
- Focus on whether the feeling is heavy or light, or somewhere in between.
- Focus on whether the feeling is warm or cold, or somewhere in between the two.
- Focus on whether the feeling is sharp, prickly and spiky, or dull, blunt and numb.
- Focus on whether the feeling is steady and constant, or rising and falling.
- Stay focused on the feeling for a little while longer.
- Now ride out your craving by surfing it...



### 3. Surfing my craving

To surf your craving, follow these steps in turn, taking as long as you need on each one:

- Focus your attention on your breathing.
- Concentrate on your in-breath and out-breath, but don't try to change the rhythm of your breathing at all.
- Notice the movements of your body as you breathe in and out.
- Feel the air passing in and out of your body.
- Now focus your attention on your craving.
- Think of the physical feeling you're experiencing as being like a wave.
- And if this wave is getting stronger, don't try to block or fight it - just let it rise as you feel the air passing in and out of your body.
- Now imagine that you're a surfer riding over the top of the wave.
- Remind yourself that this wave cannot overpower you because you're in control.
- Imagine you're riding the wave as it carries you from the deep sea towards the safety of the shoreline.
- Imagine the wave is getting weaker underneath you as the shoreline gets closer.
- Now imagine stepping off your surfboard onto the soft, sandy beach.
- Picture yourself looking back at the waves. They're now lapping gently at the shore, having lost all their power.
- Think about how you've conquered this wave. And how great this makes you feel.
- Remember that every time you surf a wave rather than succumbing to it, your cravings and urges will become weaker ... and you will become stronger!



**I have put this strategy into action and will now continue using it.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Myself)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Supporter)