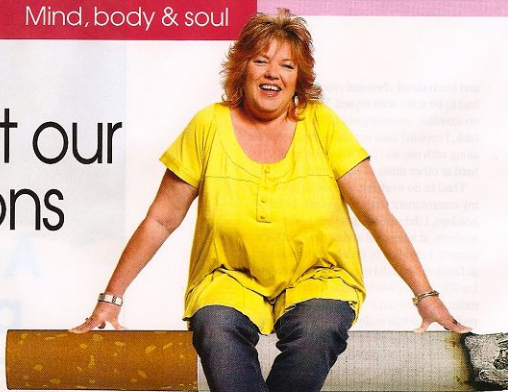


# We beat our addictions

Has your penchant for coffee, chocolate or cigarettes spiralled out of control? Here, four readers share how they kicked their unhealthy habits



## *'I was a 40-a-day smoker'*

**Jane Allen, 50, from Harrogate, North Yorkshire, had been smoking for 35 years before giving up last September**

'I started smoking when I was 15. By 20, I had a 40-a-day habit – I smoked for a total of three hours a day, every day for the next 30 years. Even though I hated what they were doing to my health and my wallet, I couldn't give up. Last year, I was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, caused by smoking – but I still convinced myself I needed my cigarettes. Then the ban on smoking in pubs came into force and I saw it as a personal insult. Soon after, my colleague said her fiancé had been persuaded to give up because of the ban. I didn't think he could do it – but when he did, I decided to sign up for the same programme that helped him, Allen Carr's Easyway To Stop Smoking, which uses a combination of hypnotherapy and psychotherapy. It cost me £220,

which was a big investment – but I would have spent the same amount on cigarettes in three weeks! There was also a money-back guarantee if, within three months, I started smoking again. All I had to do was attend one seminar, with three other smokers, in which we discussed tobacco and addiction in depth. By the end, I couldn't imagine why I ever wanted to smoke. And, even though I've had cravings and stress to cope with since, so far nothing has convinced me I want a cigarette. I don't feel like I'm denying myself anything and therefore I'm not missing out. If I'd known giving up could be this easy, I'd have done it years ago.'

**Prima readers can get £50\* off an Easyway session by calling 0800 389 2115. Visit [www.allencarr.com](http://www.allencarr.com) for clinic locations.**

## Are you an addict?

**If you think you can give up your habit at any time, test yourself, suggests Dr William Shanahan, consultant psychiatrist at the Catio Nightingale Hospital in London. 'Can you really go longer than a week without physical (eg, shakiness) or psychological (sense of deprivation) side-effects?' he asks. 'If not, you're dependent.'**

## If at first you don't succeed...

**The average smoker takes seven attempts before finally giving up, according to research.**

## *'I was hooked on chips'*

**A confidence trick cured Sunny Moran, 30, from Bournemouth, Dorset, of her food addiction**

'One of my resolutions last January was to lose weight. I was eating three bowls of chips a night, but I was in total denial about it until I booked in with a hypnotherapist, Monica Black from Hampstead Hypnotherapy in London, who forced me to confront the truth. She made me keep a food diary, explaining it wasn't unusual for someone with an addiction to block it from their mind. The chips were my way of comforting myself after a hard day at work in a busy

marketing company. Monica treated me the same way she would an alcoholic or smoker – I had to avoid all potatoes in case they triggered a chip binge. She taught me a simple mind trick: I had to rub the web between my thumb and first finger while remembering three occasions in my life when I felt at my happiest and most confident. In future, every time I sensed myself being tempted by chips, I would rub my hand again to get those feelings flooding back. By summer, I'd lost 2st and was back to my normal weight – just under 10st. I've given up the stressful job that triggered my cravings and I'm so buoyed up by my success that I've started a support network to help others.'