

Phoebe's Story – Cold Turkey

"Yikes!" said a Suppers friend when I told her I was stopping caffeine cold turkey. Having done it herself, she knew what was in store for me. My motivation came from hearing that if I got off caffeine, it might help my depression, and the only way to find out if coffee was part of the problem was to get off it. I was going to have to really psyche myself up to pull this off.

I am one of those people who does something first and reads the directions later. I still haven't learned that lesson. Since I had been thinking about giving up coffee for a few years anyway, I felt well prepared. I gave myself the pep talk, read a little bit about nutritional support, armed myself with a bottle of vitamins, and quit.

If only I could describe the mushroom cloud inside my head where my brain was supposed to be. When the cloud settled, I was overwhelmed with the most debilitating fatigue. On day three, my kids even brought me my meals in bed.

On the fourth day I talked to a nutritionist. When I told him what was going on, he gently informed me that most people "gradually taper off", they don't go cold turkey off caffeine. "You're very brave," he said. I replied, "I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict. 'Gradually taper' isn't in my vocabulary."

I have been given the lesson before that psyching myself up may not be the best way to prepare for a major change. The leader of my meeting, also gentle, said "psyching yourself up only works if you've got a good plan. If you psych yourself up and follow a bad plan, you're headed for trouble."

The nutritionist told me roughly what to expect: "Nine days", he said. "You can expect about nine days of misery if you go cold turkey off caffeine."

I was almost half way there and didn't want to cave in. So I asked him to give me the general guidelines for caffeine withdrawal. Of course, everybody's body is different, so he couldn't tell me precisely. But he wrote out the basic recommendations.

This is not my first lesson on the importance of reading the directions before I take an action. And it may not be my last. But next time I get the urge to really psyche myself up before leaping into action, I'll be more likely to check that I at least have a plan.

Dr. George's Alternative to Headache, Fatigue, and Caffeine Withdrawal Discomfort

Diet

- Increase the consumption of fiber-rich plant foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and raw nuts and seeds).
- Consume a small amount of protein every three hours during the day.
- Avoid the intake of nicotine, other stimulants and alcohol.
- Avoid foods that give you cravings.
- Increase consumption of pure water to half your weight in ounces.

Nutritional Supplements

- High potency multiple vitamin and mineral
- Vitamin C: 1000 to 3000 mgs 3 times daily
- Vitamin E: 200 – 400 iu daily

Phoebe's Story – Cold Turkey

- EPA-DHA: 2 capsules 3 times daily
- 5 HTP: 100 – 200 mgs 3 times daily
- Folic Acid and B12: 800mcgs of each per day