

Introduction

Have you masturbated recently?

Whether it was today, yesterday, or just moments ago, perhaps you're even engaging in the act as you read these lines.

In the contemporary era, nearly everyone engages in masturbation. There's no judgment in stating this—after all, there must be a reason you're interested in this book.

Masturbation has finally become a normalized activity in the 21st century. For a long time, it was a hidden activity, discussed in whispers if at all. In the early 1990s, openly discussing masturbation or pornography with your friends could quickly lead to social ostracization. Now, in our highly sexualized society, engaging in and discussing such topics is almost mundane.

Our discussions about sexuality are more candid and frequent than they were decades ago, a positive development indeed. However, I am taken aback by how the media often portrays these acts as purely beneficial, neglecting to consider any adverse effects which are conveniently ignored or minimized.

The habits surrounding masturbation have evolved significantly in recent decades. Yet, there appears to be little interest in public discourse to delve into the consequences of the pervasive presence of pornography.

In the past, our forefathers might have used Playboy magazines or relied on their imagination. Contrast that with today's reality, where the internet offers non-stop access to a plethora of stimulating materials—videos, images, and even interactive games are available 24/7.

Today, a typical teenager has been exposed to more explicit content than his ancestors would encounter in a lifetime. Historically, the sight of a naked female form was revered and rare, cherished by previous generations. Now, such images are commonplace and often viewed simply as digital pixels, making real-life encounters seem less common.

Sites like Pornhub attract nearly 100 million visits daily, consuming as much energy as an entire country like Belgium. Environmentalists may argue for banning diesel cars yet overlook the substantial carbon footprint of streaming pornography. The energy used—both electrical and mental—by individuals engaging in daily pornography consumption isn't typically factored into environmental discussions.

The internet offers numerous benefits, such as workplace independence, but it has also led to widespread dopamine dependency.

This book discusses the detrimental effects of pornography and the advantages of abstaining from it, known as NoFap. My motivation for writing isn't prudishness but a firm belief that pornography adversely affects our sexual health in real life.

Sexuality is indeed a powerful force, motivating individuals to achieve remarkable things. Consider how many works of literature, artistic creations, business ventures, or historical achievements have been inspired by the pursuit of romantic interest.

Sexual energy drives humans to achieve great feats. Let's not waste it on digital fantasies. Instead, we should use it to forge genuine relationships with others and enhance our lives.

Masturbation itself is generally harmless when practiced moderately. However, the main issue lies with internet pornography, which has become addictive. Humans are inherently sexual beings, and pornography acts like the perfect drug due to its accessibility and the fact that masturbation is free. What other substance is just a few clicks away at any time?

This unprecedented access to pornography is a unique chapter in human history, one where we're part of a massive social experiment whose outcomes remain unknown. Mass media seldom critiques pornography critically; it's often portrayed as normal or even healthy.

Before you cry conspiracy, consider this: No one is forcing you to view pornography. Ultimately, the choice to watch it is yours alone. Therefore, the upcoming pages are designed to guide you in resisting the lure of online pornography.

I want to make you aware that pornography is not the path to happiness, nor does it lead to sexual fulfillment. It may provide temporary relief or pleasure, but it offers no long-term benefits and actually obstructs real sexual satisfaction.

The main problem is that masturbation provides pleasure without effort. A few years ago, I read Mark Manson's "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck". A favorite section of mine describes the pitfalls of making mere pleasure a life goal.

Pleasure is wonderful, but it's a cruel master if made a life priority. Ask an addict how their pursuit of pleasure has turned out. Ask an adulterer who has lost their family if their pleasure ultimately made them happy. Ask someone who has eaten themselves to death how pleasure has left them problem-free.

Pleasure is a false idol. Studies have shown that individuals who invest their energy solely in superficial pleasures tend to become anxious, emotionally unstable, and depressed. Pleasure is the most superficial form of satisfaction in life and thus the easiest to acquire and the quickest to fade.

Yet, pleasure is constantly sold to us, around the clock, every day of the week. We fixate on it as a means to soothe and distract ourselves. However, pleasure alone—even though necessary in certain amounts—is not sufficient for happiness. Pleasure is not the root of happiness; rather, it is the outcome. If you handle other aspects of your life correctly (the values and standards), then pleasure naturally follows as a byproduct.

How aptly does this text fit the narrative of online porn addiction! Thanks to pornography, you can fulfill all your sexual desires without any self-improvement. Your sexual pleasure isn't the result of hard work, and you can't be proud of your virtual reality escapades, hence you'll never feel truly fulfilled.

Pornography numbs (or dulls) your mind and distracts you from your problems, functioning similarly to alcohol, heroin, or other drugs:

For you, pornography acts like a switch that delivers a dopamine rush daily or even hourly. How wonderful! However, it is not a switch through which you can achieve happiness.

In the early 2010s, more and more men realized this, leading to the creation of the NoFap movement by American Alexander Rhodes, stemming from a Reddit discussion.

The name derives from the English slang term “to fap,” meaning to masturbate.

The goal of the NoFap movement is to voluntarily restrict the consumption of pornography and masturbation. Its members are also known as Fapstronauts.

My objective with this book is to raise awareness about the NoFap movement and to integrate it into mainstream culture. I aim to guide you on how to start with NoFap, how to navigate setbacks, and primarily, the benefits you can realistically expect from it. I must admit, I am not entirely pleased with the name "NoFap." It's generally unhelpful for a name to carry a negative connotation. Thus, I propose "Pornofasting" as a German-language alternative to NoFap.

This book primarily addresses heterosexual men, but it should be noted that women and homosexual men who struggle with pornography addiction could also benefit from Pornofasting. Given the target demographic, I use masculine grammatical forms throughout this book and provide examples that are exclusively heterosexual. However, it's clear that Pornofasting can be applied regardless of one's gender or sexual orientation.

Before we dive deeper into the book, I recommend that you print out this e-book. This will take you away from the screen, which will help you. You can also underline things and make notes. I have given you this book as a gift, full of very useful information from my experiences, so fire up the printer and print it out. I will explain in the following section how I discovered the path to the NoFap world.

NOFAP - HOW DID I ACTUALLY GET INTO IT?

Like many young individuals in 2012, I was intrigued by Tim Ferris and his concept of the 4-Hour Workweek. Contrary to what the title might suggest, this idea isn't about working just four hours a week but about becoming more efficient and increasing output per hour, theoretically freeing up one's week for other pursuits. Regardless of one's views on Tim Ferris and his methodologies (I have my reservations), he is undeniably the productivity guru for many in my generation.

One day, Tim posted on his blog about the concept of NoFap, suggesting it helped him gain more energy, work more efficiently, and think more clearly.

I was initially open to the idea and immediately saw its potential benefits. However, I found no immediate reason to start a NoFap challenge myself. It's like many fascinating concepts that catch our attention during the day only to be lost in the shuffle of daily life.

Yet, the subject persisted and wouldn't leave me alone: Later, I read on a health blog about NoFap again. The article discussed weight loss and healthier living through the story of a guy struggling to lose his last bit of flab. His health coach suggested he try NoFap for 30 days to boost his energy levels and thereby increase his physical activity.

From that point on, I couldn't shake the topic:

“Gain clarity in your mind and lose weight too? Brilliant!”

I impulsively decided to start a 30-day challenge.

Was I able to complete the challenge successfully? Yes, I maintained it for the initial 30 days and ultimately neared 100 days, although I'm unsure exactly when my first setback occurred. Regardless, the experiences I amassed during this short period were profound. Since then, I've become so passionate about NoFap that it has become a significant part of my life. My YouTube channel, Michael Pretzl, now features over 100 videos where I discuss NoFap.

What did I learn from my first 30-day NoFap challenge?

Unable to relieve the pressure, the urge to engage sexually became overwhelming, and I felt incredibly aroused all the time—a completely new sensation, as I had never before thought to limit my sexuality.

I admit that I wasn't heavily addicted to pornography before: I used porn like many men, occasionally visiting well-known streaming sites. I was far from those who indulge multiple times a day. I also suffered from erectile dysfunction, a common issue among many who are addicted to porn.

NoFap revealed to me that I had always been a rather introverted person, a trait I believed to be part of my character. However, NoFap made me realize that this was likely more a mix of shyness and low self-esteem. Today, I'm a transformed individual, and anyone meeting me now would likely see me as more extroverted.

Moreover, I was never a ladies' man, usually stumbling into interactions with women. I was not the type to make the first move or actively pursue women, often deterred by too high a threshold of apprehension. NoFap changed that: Suddenly, I was approaching women on the street with boldness and attempting openly to connect with them.

Additionally, strangers started perceiving me differently: On the tenth day of my first NoFap challenge, as I walked home from work, a blonde woman, about thirty years old, approached me—quite older compared to my twenty-three years. She said, "I don't know what it is, but I had to come over and talk to you." I was stunned, as nothing like this had ever happened to me before. Looking back, this incident was a major catalyst for me to delve deeper into NoFap.

Today, I know many others experience similar and transformative effects through NoFap. For instance, a friend of mine, Philipp, noticed that during his NoFap challenges, he's asked for directions more frequently.

No surprise there: You become the most present and appealing person on the street. Previously overlooked, I now notice that when I'm out, people actively acknowledge and observe me.

It's also happened that women have followed me:

For example, during an extensive trek in Bali, I was almost pursued by a woman. The trek spanned eleven days on the island, and suddenly this backpacker clung to our group, wanting to be around me constantly.

This book is divided into four parts: The first part describes the stages of abstaining from pornography. The second part examines what porn addiction is, its causes, and potential symptoms. The third part illustrates the improvements you can expect by embracing NoFap.

The final section addresses failure: why you might struggle with withdrawal and strategies to achieve success despite it.

NOFAP FOR BEGINNERS: THE GUIDELINES

At first glance, NoFap might seem like the simplest thing in the world:

You don't need to purchase expensive equipment or invest a lot of money. It's completely free and costs nothing. Moreover, the rules you need to follow can be summarized in a few words: abstain from masturbation for a specific period.

However, abstaining from this habit is often harder in reality than it initially appears. We humans generally find it easier to do things than to not do things we are accustomed to. Many people also need a clear concept and straightforward instructions to successfully commit to something.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will suggest some additional strategies to help you achieve your NoFap goals more easily.

1 Avoid Pornography

Definitely steer clear of any form of pornographic content. Many believe that withdrawal is easier if they watch porn without masturbating (Edging). While this might work initially, in my experience, you are likely to falter eventually - whether it's because you've consumed alcohol, felt stressed, or simply tired.

Another issue is that edging does not help you wean off porn. The addiction remains because dopamine is still released during edging. This is why people who practice edging never truly break free from their masturbation habits and pornographic fetishes.

2 Masturbate Without Porn

There are two known NoFap modes: Hardmode and Softmode. In Hardmode, you abstain from all forms of orgasm, while in Softmode, you can achieve orgasm through masturbation or sex without porn.

For most men, it is advisable to opt for Softmode over the long term, especially since Hardmode can be challenging to maintain. Ideally, you should abstain from all orgasms for the first 30 to 90 days (depending on the severity of your addiction) to allow your brain to reset. If that's too difficult, at least avoid any pornographic content.

3 Also Abstain from Sex

Opinions differ on this topic: If you're experiencing erectile dysfunction, it might be beneficial to refrain from sex for several weeks. If you are still a virgin, don't overthink this rule too much: If you have the opportunity to lose your virginity during your NoFap challenge and all other circumstances are suitable, you can take that step with a clear conscience. Consider sex as a reward for your efforts in abstaining from pornography.

You can set the same goal if you have been single for a long time: Commit to remaining celibate until you find a woman who wants to have sex with you. I know several friends who had not

been in a relationship for years but managed to end their single status through NoFap in just a few weeks.

This tip also worked for me: My longest period without orgasm (since puberty) was approximately 100 days. Sustaining it for a longer duration was never possible for me, as opportunities for sex would quickly arise whenever I refrained from masturbation.

We will explore how NoFap can significantly enhance your sexuality and vitality in the upcoming chapters on meeting women and boosting energy.

IS MASTURBATION ACTUALLY HEALTHY?

Before we proceed, let's explore whether masturbation might indeed have beneficial effects on your health. Discussions often mention a study claiming that masturbation can protect against prostate cancer.

Specifically, this study is a cohort study that began in 1992 and observed 31,925 men aged between forty and fifty-five over eighteen years. One finding was that men who ejaculated twenty-one times or more per month reported lower rates of prostate cancer than those who ejaculated four to seven times per month. More precisely, men over fifty were 26% less likely to develop the disease than the average.

Does this suggest that masturbation is an effective prevention against prostate cancer?

It's critical not to accept this claim uncritically since the study only measured ejaculation frequency. Therefore, we don't know whether the subjects frequently masturbated or simply had a lot of sex within their relationships.

We must also understand the difference between correlation and causation: Is it the act of ejaculation that reduces the risk of prostate cancer, or could it be associated factors such as a healthier social life, reduced stress, etc.?

There are also studies suggesting that married men live longer. Since the ejaculation frequency of the subjects isn't clear, one could argue that those studied simply maintained a healthy and sexually active relationship as they aged, which played a significant role. It reveals much about our society that ejaculation is immediately associated with masturbation.

Even if masturbation did have an effect, its impact on prostate cancer mortality would be minimal, as prostate cancer has one of the highest survival rates among all cancers and presents a very low risk to younger men.

Looking at life overall, about 14% of all men are diagnosed with prostate cancer. If masturbation could reduce your disease risk by 25%, your lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer would only decrease by 3.5%. This isn't much, especially considering that other factors, such as avoiding Vitamin D deficiency, can significantly reduce the risk of such diseases.

Generally, leading a healthy lifestyle and managing stress effectively can likely reduce your overall cancer risk. Aim to maintain a healthy sex life, but do not masturbate merely because a study suggests it; in truth, it does not.

THE SIX STAGES OF PORN ABSTINENCE

What stages will you experience when you start NoFap? First, a brief note: Generalizations are dangerous because individuals respond very differently to the same stimulus.

The real impact and intensity of NoFap's effects vary widely and depend on numerous factors, such as your age, current life stage, stress levels, and the severity of your addiction to pornography.

Not everyone will experience these stages in the same intensity or order. However, there is a common pattern observed by many, discussed in forums or seen in the comments on my YouTube videos, where most people report similar experiences when they begin abstaining from masturbation.

Before you turn away in disbelief, thinking, "What does this guy want to tell me? He probably relapses all the time!" Yes, I do experience relapses occasionally, though they are now quite rare. It's completely normal, and you shouldn't despair if it happens to you. You'll learn more about dealing with relapses in a dedicated chapter!

Now, let's explore the phases that you are most likely to go through on your first attempt at NoFap, based on common experiences.

PHASE 1: MOTIVATION

You've been researching porn abstinence for a while and have now decided to truly commit. It feels like you've uncovered the root of all your issues and are convinced that your life will now improve significantly. Secretly, you may also hope to gain superpowers from this endeavor, though it's clear you won't literally become a superhero but simply a better version of yourself.

The habitual engagement in masturbation has likely disrupted your brain's dopamine receptors, making it harder to feel pleasure from ordinary life experiences. This lack of motivation and pervasive procrastination can be a direct result. As you embark on this first attempt at NoFap, you're unlikely to notice any dramatic changes initially, especially if you previously engaged frequently in masturbation and spent considerable time on pornographic sites. It's just another day where you might realize just how much time this habit consumed.

Remember, consuming pornography is a significant time waster and engaging in NoFap could provide you with extra hours, potentially leading to more productive activities.

PHASE 2: SEXUAL ENERGY

The initial noticeable changes usually start within 24 to 48 hours, although some might take up to a week to feel a difference. Suddenly, you'll find yourself more intensely attracted to the opposite sex, perhaps even experiencing erections more easily when encountering attractive individuals. If you're older, this might remind you of your teenage days.

Women in your daily life may seem more appealing, possibly because you haven't been paying much attention to them due to the focus on your addiction, whether at university or work. This time, you'll approach this feeling of rejuvenation differently—instead of succumbing to immediate urges, you'll embrace the vigor and strength you feel each day.

During this phase, you may experience 'blue balls' or discomfort in your testicles if you get aroused without release. We'll address this condition more thoroughly in a section dedicated to

managing physical discomforts. Generally, engaging in physical activities like sports or pelvic exercises can help alleviate these symptoms, and it's important to avoid situations that might lead to intense sexual arousal, which are often the precursors to relapses.

PHASE 3: FLATLINE

The toughest part of abstinence usually kicks in during the second week. The initial euphoria fades, and you might even experience a flatline—a period where your sexual desires significantly diminish. Remember the attractive person you couldn't stop ogling in the first week? Now, they might pass by without eliciting a glance from you.

It's during the flatline that most begin to doubt if their path is correct, pondering, "Am I losing my sexuality?" It's crucial to trust that your sexual health will return, perhaps even more vigorously once you stop obsessing over sex. This could be the first time since your adolescence that you aren't driven by sexual urges, allowing you to focus and excel in your studies or work.

Flatlines occur because your brain is recalibrating. The older you are or the more intense your addiction was, the longer this reconnection phase might last. Stay active and engaged during this time—hit the gym daily, socialize, and even consider traveling to rejuvenate your spirit and body.

PHASE 4: DAILY LIFE

After several weeks of not viewing pornography and surviving your initial flatline, your libido returns and integrates smoothly into your everyday life. You might find yourself having erotic dreams and waking up with morning arousal. The healing phase and flatline may alternate for a while, but each cycle will become shorter and less intense until they barely register in your consciousness.

Many report that their dreams during NoFap become increasingly vivid. Even non-erotic dreams might feel incredibly real, leading to confusion upon waking—was it just a dream or reality? It's amazing how clear and intense these dreams can be so soon after starting NoFap. Documenting your dreams can help you learn much about yourself and facilitate deeper self-awareness.

PHASE 5: REBIRTH

Gradually, you begin incorporating the benefits of NoFap into your daily life. You meet new people, try new things, and find more joy in everyday activities. The grey veil that seemed to cover your life for years is lifted, perhaps prompting the start of new romantic relationships. I assure you, the quality of your sexual experiences now will feel as profound as never before.

PHASE 6: MATURITY

You've been committed to NoFap for at least a year, overcoming urges and nearly eradicating your addiction. Occasionally, you might still face relapses, but they no longer plunge you back into old habits.

You now know how to manage your sexual energy and focus it effectively on various life aspects. Many men find this phase to be profoundly transformative—they complete their education, find fulfillment in their careers, or enter into serious relationships for the first time.

Reaching this stage of maturity isn't easy, but it's definitely achievable. The key is wanting it enough. Are you ready to commit to this new level of personal development?

HOW LONG SHOULD YOU MAINTAIN NOFAP ON YOUR FIRST TRY?

We've explored the general process of weaning off pornography, but is there an ideal minimum duration to maintain on your initial attempt?

Online, it's often suggested that newcomers need to persevere for at least 90 days to effectively break free from pornography, as this period allows the brain to rewire itself.

However, I'd phrase it less drastically: Many individuals notice initial improvements within just a few days. Moreover, the necessary duration for brain restructuring varies widely, depending on numerous factors. Younger people generally find it easier than older ones.

The rule of thumb is: the longer, the better for achieving long-term freedom from pornography, yet even a short period, such as a week without masturbation, can offer significant benefits.

The movie "Don Jon," featuring Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Scarlett Johansson, is one of the few mainstream films that confronts the issue of porn addiction negatively.

In a particular scene, the protagonist Jon explains that the sound of his MacBook starting up triggers an erection.

"Not gonna lie. This sound - gets me hard as a f****in' rock."

This scene underscores a common issue: those addicted to pornography encounter numerous daily triggers that the brain associates with masturbation. Especially for people who frequently use laptops or smartphones, this poses a significant dilemma. Casual scrolling on Instagram, a specific word, or just the sound of your laptop can make your mind think:

"Time for masturbation, let's watch some porn!"

This trigger leads to the execution of a routine action.

It's not just about craving the dopamine rush from an orgasm; your body has ingrained routines and actions that repeatedly drive you to visit porn sites, retrieve your genitals, and ejaculate, even if you intend to avoid these actions.

Smokers are familiar with this challenge: One can withdraw from nicotine within a week, but the issue lies in the habitual actions that consistently lead them back to smoking—such as smoking with colleagues during a break, after a meal, or to relieve stress.

For example, some individuals habitually masturbate before sleeping, right after getting into bed. In this case, the bed likely acts as the trigger: Having masturbated in bed frequently, the brain links it to masturbation. Once you're in bed, your mind switches to autopilot, and before you know it, you've masturbated again.

Such habitual actions are not unusual since most actions we perform are automatic. They are simply pre-existing patterns loaded from our subconscious, allowing us to operate almost in autopilot mode.

This automation is crucial for survival as it helps us navigate our complex world without obsessing over every decision.

Are you aware of how many decisions you would need to make, for instance, to get up from the sofa and walk to the fridge?

For such seemingly simple actions, our brains need to make thousands of decisions and process a massive amount of data: The brain needs to determine if the body is balanced, whether it's pushing off the ground with sufficient force, where its limbs are, and so on.

When children learn to walk, it initially presents a huge challenge. Through constant experimentation, they gradually develop a feel for navigating the world on two legs. Initially, their movements appear quite rigid until walking becomes the most natural activity for them. They are able to walk without thinking about it because the pattern of walking is stored in their subconscious.

Our brains have essentially developed automatic programs for all our activities that kick in when needed. While this is convenient in most cases, it can be harmful when the stored patterns of behavior are detrimental to our physical and emotional well-being.

Therefore, it makes sense to maintain abstinence initially to override existing triggers and routine behaviors.

Building new habits is one of the easiest ways to do this. For example, forming the habit of reading a book before going to bed can be beneficial.

After several months, your brain will no longer associate these triggers with masturbation but with entirely different activities. However, there is no guarantee that these triggers will be eliminated after 90 days. Additionally, once-established triggers and routines can quickly re-emerge once you revert to old addictive behaviors.

As we will explore, it is challenging to immediately break free from pornography. A viable compromise might be to masturbate without the use of pornography and avoid specific triggers. For instance, avoid masturbating in bed or on your couch if those were your preferred locations.

In the section "Actions to Take Immediately After a Relapse," I will introduce rituals that you can perform right after ejaculation to ensure that your brain does not perceive masturbation as a pleasurable activity. Suggested rituals include eating hot chilies or taking cold showers.

Before we delve into how you can most effectively free yourself from pornography, we will examine the symptoms of porn addiction in the next chapter.

UNDERSTANDING PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION: WHAT IS IT?

In this book, I discuss pornography addiction extensively, but does the term "pornography addiction" meet all the criteria for an addiction?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines addiction (a term no longer used in medical vernacular) as a "state of periodic or chronic intoxication, caused by the repeated use of a substance." Key criteria for this definition are crucial:

- An overpowering desire to consume and acquire the substance
- A tendency to increase dosage (tolerance)
- Both psychological and often physical dependence on the effects of the "drug"
- Harmfulness to the individual or society
- Loss of control over one's behavior

Addiction isn't just related to substances (drugs) as certain behaviors can also lead to addictive patterns. A common example of such behavioral addiction is gambling addiction.

Why do we become addicted?

In brief, the addictive substance temporarily relieves the individual from daily problems and provides a short respite from everyday issues and stress. This brief relief is what often leads to the cycle of addiction.

IS PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION MEDICALLY RECOGNIZED?

Unfortunately, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) does not officially recognize "Porn Addiction" as a diagnosable condition. This is problematic because many doctors and psychologists may not view it as a genuine issue.

Some medical professionals argue that it should be considered more as an obsessive-compulsive disorder rather than an addiction. Compulsions are repetitive behaviors that are performed without rational justification, while addictions involve actions that cannot be stopped even when harmful.

No matter what the medical community currently states, I believe it's crucial to focus on whether the term aids those affected in everyday life rather than getting caught up in semantics. Those who struggle to control their consumption of pornography often exhibit:

- An irresistible urge to view pornography
- A tendency to seek out increasingly severe or explicit content
- Psychological dependence on pornography (constantly thinking about it)
- Often suffering from harmful consequences like impotence
- Unable to control their behavior or limit their consumption

Therefore, throughout this book, I will continue to use the term "pornography addiction," regardless of its official medical status, to address the real struggles faced by individuals.

THE SIX STAGES OF PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION

Not every man who watches pornography becomes addicted. Similar to alcohol, some can handle occasional use without issue, while others quickly develop strong dependencies. People differ, so some are more prone to addiction than others. In the following chapter, I'll break down the development of pornography addiction into six stages, similar to how it's done in Alcoholics Anonymous.

STAGE 1: CURIOSITY

You're likely a teenager when you first explore masturbation, often driven by curiosity or by accident. The discovery of this new ability and the realization that the internet offers a plethora of stimulating images at the click of a button captivates you soon after.

STAGE 2: HABITUATION

Over time, you become accustomed to masturbating. The intervals between your sessions may shorten as you use masturbation as a tool to relax and distract yourself from negative thoughts. This is akin to how some alcoholics begin drinking—not to feel good, but to avoid feeling bad. You find yourself increasingly miserable, using pornography not for pleasure but to stave off discomfort by providing temporary dopamine boosts.

STAGE 3: DEPENDENCY

Many do not realize they have become dependent because they never consciously acknowledge their condition. They try to extend the time between masturbation sessions, but without success. Although physical problems during sex or discomfort in the genital area are signs of this dependency, they don't admit to it, bolstered by media and social circles that normalize daily masturbation as completely natural.

STAGE 4: DENIAL

If they're lucky, they might stumble upon an article about NoFap online. This phase is still dominated by denial, influenced by the belief that such concerns are exaggerated prudery propagated by conservative factions. Despite potentially reading several articles or watching videos on the topic, they deny that there is a real problem or that their masturbation habits need to change.

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE

Eventually, the issues become too evident to deny, perhaps prompted by a distressing incident such as erectile dysfunction, which convinces them to consider change. They begin to see their situation through new eyes and become open to altering their behavior, though they might still lack the commitment to fully engage in recovery.

STAGE 6: RECOVERY

You decide to end your addiction—congratulations! This marks the beginning of a lengthy journey. Like any recovery process, it's filled with ups and downs. Challenges from your past and your own body might resist the changes. This book aims to guide you through these challenges, providing advice when difficulties arise.

Are you ready?

In the next section, we will discuss how to recognize signs of pornography addiction. Following that, I will introduce a three-step program designed to gradually facilitate your cessation of pornography use.

Symptoms of Porn Addiction

What is the number one reason men engage with NoFap?

They are unable to achieve an erection in bed.

Porn addiction can have many negative consequences; however, impotence is often the most significant issue affecting a man's self-esteem.

Only when sexual dysfunction occurs are most men ready to admit that their consumption of pornography is problematic. Nonetheless, the majority continue to ignore the apparent cause (pornography) and, in the worst cases, attempt to treat performance difficulties with medications.

Impotence

I have a good buddy named Paul, he began watching porn at a young age and frequently visited a urologist for potency issues, who promptly prescribed *Viagra*. Many urologists are unaware of how pornography can affect a man's potency and often prefer to prescribe medication rather than addressing the underlying causes.

I know several men my age who routinely take *Viagra* before engaging sexually with a woman. Erectile dysfunction is usually not a concern for men under 50 leading healthy lifestyles. Yet, according to a 2013 study in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, about 30% of men aged 18 to 40 occasionally suffer from erectile dysfunction. Unfortunately, research in this area is limited, so the impact of pornography remains unclear.

However, my experience with men participating in NoFap suggests that frequent pornography consumption is part of the problem. This is logical because masturbating to a screen is far removed from actual sexual experiences. You only hear and see, not feel or smell your partner, which real sex involves.

The smell and warmth of your partner's body are things your brain doesn't connect with sex when watching porn. Becoming intimate with a partner is a far cry from what porn addiction offers.

It's unsurprising that many men say they need to watch porn before sex with their partners to get aroused.

Important: The impotence of porn addicts isn't physically induced because they can get aroused by images on a screen. The reality is starkly different when a real woman is in bed with them.

Additionally, men addicted to porn often set unachievable standards regarding a woman's appearance: dreaming of a flawless body with no cellulite and scented like rose water.

While desiring an attractive partner is normal, pornography creates an unrealistic image of the opposite sex that rarely exists in reality.

Many reports indicate that these men are often low on energy and desire for real sexual encounters. They prefer to view porn multiple times a day rather than engage in actual sexual activities with women.

Porn makes men lazy; they would rather scroll through galleries online than go out to meet women at bars or other social settings. Additionally, this can lead to a behavior known on the internet as Homosexual Obsessive Compulsion Disorder due to their porn habits.

Porn Addiction and Homosexual Obsessive Compulsion Disorder (HOCD)

Porn addiction can also lead to a behavior known in English-speaking NoFap forums as Homosexual Obsessive Compulsion Disorder (HOCD).

Heterosexual men may suddenly find themselves attracted to gay or transgender pornography. Does this reveal their true suppressed sexuality? No, it's more about stimulation. Traditional sex between a man and a woman might start to feel bland to those accustomed to porn, prompting them to seek more extreme forms of pornography. Often, this includes gay porn or BDSM content where abuse and humiliation are prevalent.

This phenomenon can also occur in reverse: homosexual men might suddenly start viewing heterosexual pornography when their usual content no longer excites them.

Porn addicts are like drug addicts chasing the high from their first exposure to pornography. The euphoria from the first experience is unmatched, and subsequent pornography viewing never quite lives up to that initial thrill. This leads to a continuous search for the perfect video, which they believe will replicate that first high, but such a video is unattainable.

Yet, when porn consumption never crosses into illegal activities, it can be deeply unsettling if it starts questioning your sexual identity.

You may find yourself masturbating only to homosexual pornography and thinking that this might be precisely what you need. During this phase, some men experiment with homosexuality but later realize that their sexual preferences in reality are far different from what they see online.

Marko suggests those affected ask themselves two questions:

1. Beach Test: Who do you find yourself looking at, men or women?
2. Childhood Memories: Did you have homosexual fantasies as a child?

If you answer 'women' and 'no' to these questions, you're definitely heterosexual. Your porn consumption doesn't reflect your true preferences but rather has exaggerated them into extreme areas.

Porn Addiction and Social Anxiety

Shyness is one of the most significant male issues when it comes to approaching women. However, shyness is merely a symptom; the real issue behind it is fear. It's the fear of being rejected or not being accepted.

When you talk to a woman and internally fear rejection, it leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy: you will not be relaxed, your tension will be visible on your face, and you will lack the charm, as we say in Austria, you will miss the "Schmäh."

Because of this fear, you do not freely engage in social interactions. You might hesitate to express your opinions, show emotions, and you may even feel that you have to pretend to be someone else. You believe you need to invent an imaginary character that is more appealing just to be liked.

Social anxiety doesn't only arise when talking to women. Many people also feel anxious about asking for directions or interacting with strangers in general.

You might believe that your social anxiety can only be reduced through extensive measures like psychotherapy or meditation. However, the simplest and quickest improvement I've observed is through watching less pornography and masturbating less.

From personal experience, I can tell you that the less I engage in these activities, the more self-aware and free I feel in social life.

During NoFap phases, I've noticed that:

- I make more eye contact.
- I am more likely to express my opinions.
- I am funnier and more charismatic.
- I stutter less.
- I find the right words and topics in conversations more easily (less brain fog, clearer and quicker thinking).

Don't believe me? Just try it for yourself, and you'll likely see a significant boost in energy and find it easier to meet new people and engage in conversations, whether at the supermarket checkout, on a walk, or in the gym.

By not focusing solely on seeking a sexual partner through NoFap, you also reduce the pressure to perform sexually, which frees up your energy to socialize more and venture outside your comfort zone.

The Opportunity Costs of Pornography

A few years ago, a user in a NoFap forum shared the following calculation. It revolves around the question of how much time people actually spend on pornography and what the real costs of this addiction are.

Do you watch it every day? Maybe even several times a day? Men who are extremely addicted might happily spend an hour daily on porn sites.

Assume a man starts watching pornography at 15 years old (though some start even earlier). By the time he is 30, he would have spent around 5,500 hours watching pornography. That's equivalent to 229 days watching others engage in sexual activities and masturbating.

In economics, opportunity costs refer to the costs incurred when one foregoes alternative options that could have been pursued instead. Essentially, they are the "costs" of what might have been earned if one had chosen a different path. What could have been my earnings if I had chosen alternative B?

Instead of watching pornography, you could have taken up a low-paying student job. Even with a modest wage of €10 per hour, you could have earned an income of €55,000 over those 5,500 hours.

Or you could have invested that time in your education: It requires around 25 hours of work to earn one ECTS point for your studies. A full-time study year worth 60 ECTS points thus

requires 1,500 hours of study. Therefore, a three-year bachelor's degree would only need 4,500 hours of your time.

You could also have used that time to write your thoughts down: If you typed at a speed of 30 words per minute (which isn't very fast), over 5,500 hours you would have produced 9.9 million words. The average book is about 100,000 words long; thus, you could have written a staggering 99 books in that time.

You could also have learned a new musical instrument or a new sport, or any number of other valuable things. The fact is, you can spend your day doing millions of things far more meaningful than watching porn.

This calculation also doesn't include the costs of the hours after ejaculation, where you feel weak, bad, and unproductive. It's possible to assign a monetary value to time, but abstract things like feelings, happiness, or relationships can't be easily quantified. The true opportunity costs of your addiction are therefore much higher than what can be seen here.

The worst part about any addiction is that future happiness and chances for deeper satisfaction are sacrificed for brief and fleeting pleasures. Life is short. Don't waste it on pornography. In the next chapter, we'll look at ways to successfully overcome your porn addiction.

Successfully Overcoming Porn Addiction

There are multiple paths to conquering porn addiction, and the right one for you depends on both your personality and the intensity of your addiction.

Should you consider yourself highly addicted, opting for an immediate cessation, commonly known as 'going cold turkey,' is one approach. This strategy refers to stopping abruptly without the use of any replacement drugs.

For alcoholics, sudden withdrawal can be life-threatening, although it's not as dangerous in the case of porn addiction. Nevertheless, symptoms similar to those experienced by alcohol and drug addicts may still occur.

Psychological disturbances during withdrawal from substances can range from increased irritability and lack of concentration to enhanced suggestibility, mood depressions, and even suicidal thoughts. People with alcohol addiction often find their thoughts revolving around alcohol during withdrawal. A brief review on NoFap online forums suggests many users report similar experiences.

Another risk of sudden withdrawal is the potential for a relapse cycle, where addicts swing back and forth between attempts to quit and succumbing again. Those who try to quit abruptly often find themselves falling back into old habits after a brief period, only to try quitting again months later.

From day 2 to 4, I personally felt terrible, experiencing severe self-doubt and other symptoms, followed by a relapse into old behaviors. Afterwards, I felt increasingly frustrated.

A more feasible approach to overcoming porn addiction is by replacing it with alternative activities. I have developed a three-point plan for this purpose:

MY THREE-STEP PLAN TO CONQUER YOUR ADDICTION TO PORNOGRAPHY

1. The first step is to stop watching videos and instead pick up a magazine (just like the old days when generations of men didn't have broadband internet). Whenever you feel the urge to visit a porn site, reach for a lingerie catalog or similar publications. Remember, our main goal is for you not to consume pornography, every day you live porn-free is a good day.
2. Once you've distanced yourself from the videos, finally forgo magazines and only use the images in your mind for stimulation.

By implementing these two steps, you won't immediately feel all the benefits of abstaining, but you will at least give your brain a chance to slowly rewire and stop associating the internet with dopamine hits.

Additionally, viewing magazines or engaging with memories while fantasizing bombards your brain with far less dopamine, automatically aiding in breaking the addiction.

Your brain needs time to rewire itself to need fewer stimuli. Take this process as a journey that requires its own time.

1. The final step is to completely eliminate masturbation. Consider taking this step only after you have gone several weeks without watching videos. By completing this third and ultimate step, you will eventually feel all the benefits of abstaining.

To summarize: If you have an addiction and believe you need to watch pornography, replace your addiction with other visual stimuli until you are comfortable living without porn videos.

Of course, you could try going cold turkey for 90 days right from the start, but unfortunately, very few men (especially those deeply addicted to porn) manage this.

Imagine it like a rubber band: Each day without a dopamine rush, the tension builds more and more. It might be manageable for a while, but eventually, the tension becomes too much and the rubber band snaps back.

You will experience a relapse and find yourself even deeper in the addiction than before. This behavior is known among alcoholics. I have spoken with several men who have had such setbacks in their fight against pornography: For them, it was as if all the dams had broken, and they found themselves masturbating up to six times the day of their relapse.

To avoid such situations, it's better to follow my three-step plan.

Alcoholics Anonymous employs a method of not setting huge goals but rather focusing on keeping "clean" just for today. This might also be useful in this situation. Rainer

At the end of the day, you want to establish a healthy relationship with your sexuality.

WHAT IMPROVES THROUGH NOFAP

We've discussed extensively the detrimental effects of pornography addiction. But what does it actually feel like to live without pornography and masturbation? Many men are unfamiliar with this feeling because they've been masturbating almost daily since childhood. In NoFap forums,

there's often talk of superpowers gained through abstinence. However, I find this term to be an exaggeration: NoFap doesn't grant you superpowers nor does it turn you into Superman. Instead, it transforms you into a more charismatic and authentic individual. You become the person you've always been, but who was hidden behind your neuroses and fears in your previous life.

If you maintain NoFap for at least a week (some men feel the positive effects even earlier), you'll notice that you're more confident, you express your thoughts more freely, you have more energy, and you can form clearer thoughts.

These changes are subtle: People around you will notice something is different, but they won't be able to pinpoint what you've changed. You will seem to others as if you're just having an exceptionally good day.

This newfound appeal affects how others perceive you (especially women). Try this simple experiment: Stand on a busy shopping street and count how many people look at you. Conduct this test twice—once before starting NoFap and once after two weeks of abstinence—and then compare the results. You'll be surprised.

MORE TESTOSTERONE THROUGH NOFAP?

The internet is rife with contradictory information about Nofap and testosterone. It is often claimed that Nofap boosts your testosterone levels and is solely responsible for making you feel stronger, more charismatic, and more attractive. However, the reality is naturally more complex. Let's examine the facts one by one:

WHY DO WE NEED TESTOSTERONE?

Testosterone plays a crucial role in ensuring the health of the corpus cavernosum and the blood vessels in the penis. However, the exact level of testosterone required to facilitate a healthy and robust erection is still not precisely known. Animal studies suggest that even 10% of the normal levels might suffice for an erection, but human studies are needed to confirm this claim.

As always, situations where testosterone levels are so low that they cause erectile dysfunction are rare in men under 40. Therefore, it's surprising to see studies indicating that men with and without erectile dysfunctions often have similar high levels of testosterone.

However, there is one thing you should be aware of...

YOU HAVE LESS TESTOSTERONE THAN YOUR GRANDFATHER

It sounds harsh, but your grandfather (and even your father) probably had higher testosterone levels at your age. A 2006 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* dryly summarized the situation: "Male serum testosterone levels appear to vary by generation, even after age is taken into account."

In 1988, men who were 50 years old had higher concentrations of testosterone in their serum compared to similar aged men in 1996, and this decline continues. The reasons for this decline remain unclear, the study suggests that neither age, health factors such as obesity, nor the number of cigarettes smoked in the population fully explain it.

Unfortunately, no study has yet been conducted that deals with the consequences of porn addiction on the hormonal balance. The effects of ejaculation and abstinence have indeed been tested, where ejaculation and porn consumption are not synonymous because porn addiction has much wider-reaching consequences. In the chapter on edging, we will discuss how viewing pornography can affect dopamine levels.

The internet often mentions a Chinese study that deals with the consequences of abstinence on testosterone levels. This study showed that abstinence did not have significant long-term effects, apart from an increased testosterone level on the seventh day. This could explain why Muhammad Ali abstained from sex the week before major boxing matches.

IS TESTOSTERONE REALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR MOJO?

We often associate testosterone with sexual desire, erections, and a hard-to-describe allure, commonly referred to in English as "mojo." Mojo is an African word meaning talisman. According to the Mojo legend, anyone who achieves the Mojo-feeling is as if they have donned a magical amulet. In reality, it appears that not testosterone but dopamine plays a much more significant role in this state.

Of course, testosterone is not entirely unimportant either because it binds to androgen receptors in the brain, thereby boosting dopamine levels, which is beneficial. This doesn't do much, however, if the number of dopamine receptors has decreased. Experiments with male rats have shown that androgen receptors reset to their original levels after each ejaculation, requiring days to recover.

No matter how high your testosterone levels are, regardless of the measures you take to increase them, they will not yield benefits as long as you impair your dopamine receptors through constant ejaculation. In this case, testosterone cannot influence your dopamine and thus your mojo.

Dopamine seems to be the key factor for libido, risk-taking, motivation, focus, and joy in life. Likely, the issue is even more complicated; certainly, other hormones affected by porn consumption are significant since they involve changes in the dopamine levels of your brain affecting your body's entire hormonal system. Even a lack of dopamine is enough to have serious effects.

NOFAP AND ITS EFFECT ON YOUR DOPAMINE LEVELS

A decline in dopamine is associated with the following symptoms:

- Reduced libido
- Softer erections
- Increased anxiety, decreased risk-taking, but more frequent irritability and overreactions
- Concentration difficulties
- Low motivation, procrastination, apathy, and depression

It's unsurprising that these symptoms are also linked to porn addiction. Returning to normal dopamine levels consequently feels like superpowers have been activated or a mojo talisman has been donned. This explains the often unrealistic success stories of Nofap seen by outsiders. For the first time since childhood, reality feels like functioning as a normal human being again.

TOO MUCH MASTURBATION (ACCORDING TO SCIENCE)

As previously mentioned, studies with male rats clearly demonstrate that one can masturbate (and ejaculate) too much. If the number of ejaculations per day exceeds a certain threshold, it puts a brake on the brain's reward system, similar to a hangover from excessive alcohol consumption. Interestingly, during this phase, rats also showed increased sensitivity to drugs, suggesting that porn addiction could also lead to a cycle of addiction.

What's the purpose of this hangover? Likely, our bodies protect themselves from too much sexual activity, as each ejaculation consumes a lot of energy and vital nutrients.

Men who have too much sex become passively disinclined to pursue females so that they can recuperate. The problem is, nature doesn't have Youporn, so porn-addicted men might still desire to chase after mates, but lack the motivation to engage in other pursuits or to get off the couch and stop scrolling through adult content on their smartphones.

In rats, the negative effects seem to subside after a few days (interestingly, many men report that it takes about four days to feel the initial benefits of abstinence). However, the hormonal balance in rats isn't fully restored until several weeks later.

MORE ENERGY & MOTIVATION THROUGH NOFAP (MOJO)

What other receptors play a role? Ejaculating affects not only androgen receptors but also triggers an increase in estrogen receptors and opioid receptors in the brain.

This also results in decreased libido because dopamine production is inhibited.

To sum up, men who stop regularly viewing porn and masturbating usually experience a boost in motivation, self-awareness, and concentration, along with a return of their sexual drive, simply because the neuroreceptors in the brain normalize.

Women and Relationships Through NoFap

I used to often go unnoticed by others. Whether I strutted down the street, attended parties, or learned in school, hardly anyone looked my way. But everything changed after several years of practicing NoFap, with its highs and lows. Nowadays, when I walk on the streets and encounter people, I notice they consciously look at me, and I often receive smiles in return.

The underlying reason seems to be a combination of various factors. Engaging in NoFap has made me more relaxed, less tense, and more prone to smile - this is arguably the most crucial aspect. This results in a significantly stronger presence, making people automatically notice you.

I mentioned in the introduction about my initial NoFap experience, which ultimately convinced me to continue with it. At that time, when I had just been doing NoFap for about 10 days, I was approached by a woman on the street out of the blue.

Of course, I can't guarantee that such a story will happen to you (although I wouldn't exclude it). However, I can assure you that getting to know women will be much easier with NoFap.

On one side, you will become more aware of women. You'll improve at making eye contact and generally noticing people. On the other side, over time, you will find it easier to approach women, starting perhaps with hesitation, but increasingly with more confidence and ease.

"But Michael, I'm too shy to approach women..."

As we've identified earlier, shyness is just one symptom. Beneath it lies fear, the fear of being rejected or not accepted.

This fear varies from person to person, and very few are completely free of it. NoFap can significantly reduce your shyness, but more importantly, it helps transform you into a truly self-aware person who isn't afraid of other people's reactions.

Perhaps in the past, you've encountered many rejections, leading your brain to believe that you are less valuable. Fearing another rejection, you chose to be shy or introverted, avoiding social contact as much as possible. Unfortunately, this can trap you in a negative feedback loop, as the lack of positive social experiences can convince you that there is no reason for your social anxiety.

Therefore, integrate your NoFap phases with various exercises. You could start by asking people on the street for directions or the time as if you've forgotten your phone. This can also be done in a supermarket by asking an attractive woman where a certain product can be found. Initially, these situations might seem daunting, but they will get easier over time.

I speak from my own experiments with ice swimming: the first time you stand before a half-frozen pond and then dive into the ice-cold water, your brain enters panic mode. You might think you can only last a few seconds in the water, but the more often you engage in winter swimming, the calmer your body becomes, so that by the end, it feels much more manageable.

Spending several serene minutes in icy water might seem superhuman to most, yet with practice, it becomes normal. This also applies to social skills. To comfortably interact with others, frequent conversations are essential.

Once you develop confidence and self-awareness, I recommend you specifically target speaking to women you're attracted to. Whether at a bar, party, or on the street, approach her, exchange a few words, and then move on. You'll see that the world doesn't end even if you're rejected. More often than not, you might even get a date out of it.

In recent decades, clubs, bars, and shopping streets have seen a new wave of mostly young men known as Pick-Up Artists. These seduction artists devise canned routines they use to approach women at parties or even on the street, rarely facing rejection.

Although the methods of Pick-Up Artists can be effective, I'm not a huge fan because their focus tends to be on short-term sexual encounters rather than on emotional connections, which are essential for long-lasting relationships. This community generally prioritizes the latter.

Men who can't find a girlfriend often turn to the Pick-Up community. However, spending too much time in this scene can lead to an addiction to new sexual adventures. Sex with new women is one thing, but constantly seeking sexual adventures just to feel good confirms to the ego that one still has value. In these cases, NoFap might be a better solution, as it prevents men from becoming addicted to these continuous new sexual experiences.

NoFap, in contrast, truly makes you feel charismatic and interesting without needing to memorize routines or practice NLP. As your energy levels increase, you'll naturally do more with your life—dance, exercise, try new things, or meet friends. You'll find yourself more talkative and charismatic than before, making new acquaintances more effortlessly, building friendships, and inevitably, finding a partner.

NoFap also leads to self-perception as being more attractive, thus increasing your chances of being attractive to others. Interestingly, your perception of what actually is attractive changes too.

MEETING ATTRACTIVE WOMEN THROUGH NOFAP

By practicing NoFap, you will definitely meet more attractive women, though probably in a way that's different from what you're currently imagining.

First, we need to define what we mean by 'attractive,' which isn't simple because while everyone has unique preferences, there are common beauty standards shared by many. Beauty is just one aspect of attraction. What I find attractive could be completely different from what others find attractive, although certain patterns would likely emerge if enough men were asked.

Through NoFap, your perception will undergo significant changes: On one hand, you will become much more sensitive to women in your daily life and perceive their feminine forms more intensely. On the other hand, you'll find yourself more attracted to them.

You'll not only see women more clearly but also perceive their scent more intensely. It's similar to fasting, where breaking the fast suddenly reveals many more nuances of taste. NoFap is actually a form of fasting that makes you suddenly much more aware of the nuances of the female gender.

Your preferences will also shift somewhat, so that over time, you may find typical "porn stars" less attractive, while feeling a stronger attraction to women who appear more natural (which doesn't mean they have to be hairy or unshaved).

Men who are already in long-term relationships and start NoFap will also see benefits: The well-known partner will suddenly seem much more attractive and exciting than before, which can make your relationship more enjoyable and might even save it in many cases.

GREATER PRESENCE THROUGH NOFAP

Presence means that you are fully engaged with all your senses in the present moment. In this state, there is no past and no future. You perceive everything around you: what you see, smell, feel, taste, and hear. One might say: You feel completely awake and alive.

In our modern world, presence is more the exception than the rule, as social media and other modern distractions constantly drive our attention back and forth. Our thoughts perpetually shift from the present to the past or into the future.

Most people are only truly present during extreme situations. Those who believe they are experiencing their final moments often don't feel the urge to check Instagram or browse porn sites.

Fortunately, life-threatening situations are rare nowadays. Instead, we seek thrills through extreme sports or roller coaster rides, experiencing fear without actual danger.

When you race through a roller coaster loop, you have no time to dwell on past problems or future plans. You feel the adrenaline coursing through your body. Time seems to slow down. You are fully immersed in the here and now, feeling every moment.

Engaging in NoFap can bring you to a state of heightened awareness beyond thrill-seeking activities like roller coasters and bungee jumping. You become much more perceptive and experience everything more intensely, even if others around you remain unengaged. They will notice that you stand out from the crowd. That you are different. More attentive.

People might think you are more charismatic, but in essence, charismatic people are those who are present.

You may have personally experienced walking into a room unnoticed. And conversely, situations where another person enters a room and immediately captures everyone's attention, making everyone turn their heads to see who it is.

A truly present person commands the room. Such an individual not only notices everyone in the room but makes others feel noticed, thereby filling the space with their energy.

By seriously committing to NoFap, you'll eventually project such presence that you cannot be ignored anymore.

Presence also means you are free from worries about the future and fears, a state often seen in children who live fully in the moment without concerns extending beyond.

Showing presence also shows respect to the people you interact with. How disrespectful is it to be elsewhere in your thoughts, or even worse, messaging others on your phone during a conversation?

SEXUAL THOUGHTS AND PRESENCE

When you talk to an attractive woman, it may happen that your thoughts, despite practicing NoFap, drift towards the future. You dream about eventually having wild sex with your conversation partner. This, however, causes you to lose presence and paradoxically diminishes your chances of making that dream a reality. In this case, your thoughts are merely illusions, never becoming reality because you ignore the present and prefer fantasy instead.

If you find yourself in such a situation and realize your thoughts are wandering, try to relax by deeply breathing into your testicles. This might sound absurd to someone not familiar with practices like yoga or tantra, but I recommend you try this simple exercise just once and judge it later.

Breathe in and press down towards your testicles as you direct your attention towards pressing them. If you do this consciously, you will feel that it helps you return to the present and be more present again. Besides NoFap, I recommend starting your day with breathing exercises and a short meditation to start.

I start my day with this small exercise:

1. I sit in a meditative posture, ensuring my back is straight.
2. I ball my right hand into a fist and then stretch out the thumb and little finger. (The following movements are performed exclusively with the right hand.)
3. With my thumb, I close my right nostril and count to five while breathing deeply through my left nostril. It's important to breathe deeply into the stomach (targeting the testicles).
4. Now count to five again while holding your breath.
5. Then, with my little finger, I close the left nostril, open the right one, and breathe out while counting to five.
6. Next, I breathe in counting to five through the right nostril.
7. Then I close the right nostril with my thumb, open the left nostril and breathe out while counting to five.
8. I repeat this cycle from the beginning to the end, typically five to ten times.
9. If you're more advanced, you can count to ten while breathing in and out.

Presence is the greatest gift you receive through NoFap. I love being present because everything becomes so much easier. When I am present, I don't need to spend mental energy thinking about how to converse or which routines and manipulations to use to impress my conversation partners.

I am simply in the moment, and every word I say fits the situation perfectly and flows from me naturally. The conversation goes on "autopilot" and feels almost pre-orchestrated. This state of presence can best be described as a trance—a wonderful state that many people in the modern world do not know because they suffer from brain fog.

CLEAR THOUGHTS THROUGH NOFAP (BRAIN FOG)

Brain fog is a mental blockage. It feels like waking up after a binge night or as if you're severely dehydrated (which is likely after a long night out).

When you're dehydrated, your body desperately craves water and blocks any brain functions that could divert you from that goal because dehydration is life-threatening.

Similarly, brain fog blocks your mind continually, but sadly, just drinking more water isn't enough to recharge your brain and fill it with life energy.

In this state, you lack the zest for life and the motivation for new adventures and projects. You no longer know what it feels like to wake up in the morning excited to start studying or work.

You can't form complex thoughts anymore; making plans or solving problems seems impossible. All you can do in this miserable state is lounge on the couch, binge-watch Netflix series, and mindlessly scroll through hours of pornography.

Due to this brain fog, the path of least resistance becomes the instant gratification of browsing pornography, a routine that the brain gets used to. Gradually, more and more bad habits creep into your life, ultimately leading to real problems like obesity, health issues, poor grades in school or university, or lackluster performance at work, making it hard even to apply for a job.

The causes of brain fog are diverse and complex. Studies have shown that a lack of dopamine could be one of the potential reasons. As we've learned, excessive pornography consumption can trigger this.

Pulling through life with a brain fogged by thoughts makes the idea of succumbing to a pornographic scene highly appealing. It seems the easiest way to feel slightly better for a few moments.

However, excessive consumption of porn leads to more fogging, pulling you deeper into an endless cycle. You're trapped in a real devil's circle.

Abstaining from pornography will help you think clearly again. However, replacing porn with just Netflix and YouTube is risky, as you might not notice much difference. You've merely swapped one addiction for a slightly less harmful substitute.

Classic internet addiction can also cause dopamine deficiency, leading to more brain fog. By numbing yourself with the internet and distracting from daily life by spending too much time with Netflix, video games, or other activities, you mess up your body's dopamine levels. Brain fog can be triggered by all sorts of digital entertainment.

Try to consciously take breaks from screens (advice I also give as a YouTuber). Meditate, write your thoughts down on paper, read challenging books, meet with people face-to-face, or engage in outdoor activities. There are thousands of things that can fulfill you without needing a computer.

Occasionally take a few days each month free from screens. Tip: If you need to be constantly reachable, consider buying an old mobile phone without internet capabilities to have on such days.

Live your life and don't let it pass you by while staring at a screen. Fortunately, NoFap will provide the necessary discipline to lead a fulfilled life.

DISCIPLINE THROUGH NOFAP

"I value the person who conquers their desires more than the one who conquers their enemies, for the hardest victory is the victory over oneself." - Aristotle

Do you ever find yourself procrastinating instead of getting things done right away? Cleaning the apartment, paying bills, or exercising—do you know what I mean?

A long time ago, I learned to play a musical instrument—a French horn. If this name doesn't ring any bells: think of Jack Sparrow from "Pirates of the Caribbean" to get a sense of the epic mood this instrument can set.

I still love this musical instrument (and I still get goosebumps hearing the sound of this brass instrument today). But when it came to practicing, I often did less than I had originally planned. As a result, I felt guilty every time I went to a music lesson because I knew I wasn't prepared enough. Even though playing the instrument was a lot of fun and made me a pretty good musician, I lacked the discipline to become excellent.

This story is probably familiar in one form or another: you set out to exercise, learn a language, meditate, etc., and initially, you are motivated and follow through with your plans. But after a while, you lose momentum and end up practicing less and less, even though these activities require relatively little effort compared to the initial commitment.

The problem is that we often rely on motivation to start things. At the beginning, motivation is abundant because it's also the main reason why we start something. Unfortunately, motivation is not a constant factor and varies daily.

To sustain demanding tasks like learning a musical instrument, a language, or any skill, we need something more: self-discipline.

Self-discipline is the ability to say "No" when your brain tries to convince you to stay in your comfort zone. It means recognizing when your brain is trying to trick you into giving up.

Why does it work against you? Well, learning new things is strenuous; your brain wants to conserve energy and not waste it on difficult tasks that provide little immediate return.

The problem is that in our modern world, we are exposed to stimuli of a nature and intensity that do not occur naturally. For the brain, it seems logical to prefer watching porn to exercising or reading a challenging book. After all, sex is the greatest motivator we have, as reproduction ensures our survival as a species. Our brain simply doesn't understand that virtual sex doesn't help spread our genes. Thus, it tries to convince you to watch porn instead of doing things that truly help with survival.

For this reason, your brain can be your worst enemy when it comes to building a disciplined lifestyle. While abstaining from porn, it constantly tells you: "You've earned a little porn today" or "You can't do it, see how good it feels to rub one out."

By undertaking a Nofap challenge, you inherently build self-discipline because you're constantly resisting the urge for immediate gratification and learning to say no.

Fortunately, our brain can be our ally in achieving our goals, acting as our partner rather than our enemy. This requires time and patience but pays off in the long run.

Self-discipline is like a muscle that can be trained. If you step into a gym for the first time and see how muscular and trained everyone else is, you'll be motivated to reach their level. It's no wonder that building muscle mass is a challenge that takes years. But consider the giant who lifts huge weights in the gym—started with "spaghetti arms" and was only able to stick with it because of his grit and determination.

This giant likely had to struggle with his self-discipline regularly to motivate himself to hit the gym multiple times a week. As his mental discipline grew, so too did the muscles of his body.

You can become muscular too if it's part of your life goals. Essentially, you can excel in any area as long as you manage to say no when your inner slacker tries to coax you into taking the easy route.

Every time you say no, you're training your discipline, making you stronger as a person. Whether it's sticking to your practice schedule for a musical instrument, hitting the gym, at work, or during your studies, the mental strength you develop can later be applied to other areas of life.

If you build up your willpower in one domain, you can harness this strength in various other situations. This is why Arnold Schwarzenegger was successful in multiple fields; he used the

mental toughness developed from bodybuilding to earn money as an entrepreneur, kickstart a film career, and even enter politics.

If you start engaging in activities that initially challenge your self-discipline, you'll soon notice how easily you handle them if you practice them daily. This is what's known as "The Power of Habit."

For example, a few years ago, I undertook a push-up challenge. Although I had the physical strength, I wanted to stop after 10 repetitions initially because my mind gave up too soon. However, over time, as I continued pushing past my mental limits, doing more than 20 repetitions became less daunting.

After several days, doing 20 repetitions was no longer challenging, and I soon doubled my performance in a short period. However, the most significant gains were mental rather than physical. As I got used to doing my daily push-up routine, my brain stopped sabotaging me, allowing me to train to the point of muscle failure rather than giving up mentally.

In the previous chapter, I explained how the lack of dopamine from quitting pornography can severely disrupt our ability to persevere. Abstaining from pornography forces us to tackle more demanding challenges, which is often enough to maintain discipline in other aspects of life.

Besides NoFap, I recommend engaging in activities that challenge your resolve:

- **Engage in sports:** Whether you're lifting weights, swimming (my personal favorite), cycling, jogging, or jumping rope, intense physical activity is excellent for boosting self-discipline and regulating your dopamine levels.
- **Take cold showers:** Brrr! Cold showers and cold baths have multiple health benefits and are great for training your willpower. If you're not used to cold water, start by only exposing your limbs to cold water and gradually work up to full-body exposure. Many find it easier if they start with a warm shower and then switch to cold water. You can also try alternating between 10 seconds of warm water and 10 seconds of cold water several times. This method is known to enhance mental resilience.
- **Stay Busy, Don't Stay Idle at Home:** Being active means having less time to fall into unproductive behaviors. People who are occupied have less time to indulge in watching pornography, a habit that often starts when we are unmotivated and idle at home. If you find yourself feeling bored at home, don't succumb to this. Instead, opt to study or work in places like university libraries, coffee shops, or co-working spaces which can boost your productivity and keep you engaged.
- **The Effects of a Passive Lifestyle:** Leading a passive lifestyle can increase your likelihood of consuming more pornography, which saps your energy, trapping you in a debilitating cycle of decreased productivity and energy.
- **The Benefits of an Active Lifestyle:** Conversely, an active lifestyle contributes to both mental and physical strength, which in turn reduces your inclination towards pornography. This helps you conserve more energy, allowing you to further enhance your life's activities and become even more active.

Wealth Through NoFap

Almost all lottery millionaires are broke just a few years after their big win, and often they end up with even less money than before. Many even find themselves in debt and completely ruined.

This happens because they lack the necessary mindset to maintain or even grow their wealth. Becoming rich is often a matter of luck. You can inherit, win money, or get lucky with a business idea. However, holding onto wealth or increasing your fortune in the long term is much more difficult because it's a matter of mentality.

There are no guarantees for wealth in life, but with the right mindset, you can significantly increase the probability of becoming wealthy.

What does this have to do with abstaining from masturbation? NoFap is a great way to learn to avoid unnecessary spending in the present. Imagine you go into a store and see a great pair of Dolce & Gabbana pants for €350 instead of €500. You probably think to yourself:

“Yes, I saved enough money last month; I can afford this.”

In this case, consumption is a quick fix: if you buy those pants, you fail to delay your gratification. To become wealthy, you need to learn to invest in the present moment for the future and use that to build capital for your future.

You might think:

“What's the point of life if I always live for the future and never reward myself in the present?”

The answer is simple: more wealth in the future and the possibility to break out of the rat race in the future. Unlike what some economists might teach you at university, abstaining from consumption is the foundation for wealth because only then can you accumulate the capital needed to build your future.

If you constantly live like most of society, at the financial limit, your opportunities to invest wisely when chances arise are zero. In the end, you need to learn to save money continuously for later (or for the right moment). For example, I set aside 20% of my income every month.

Of course, I occasionally buy more expensive clothes, but I always focus on the quality and durability of the items, not just the brand. When I buy something, I always ask myself:

“How many years will I be able to use this product?”

I used to buy too many branded clothes as well. Now, I understand how essential it is in life to set money aside for investments. NoFap has helped me a lot here because I learned that by sacrificing in the short term, I can profit much more in the long term.

Addiction to shopping is very similar to addiction to pornography, and one could probably write entire books about abstaining from consumption. We buy things we don't need to feel better in the short term (dopamine kick), but in doing so, we jeopardize our financial freedom in the long term.

Why Do I Fail at NoFap?

The bitter truth is that most fapstronauts will eventually relapse. In the following sections, we will explore why so many people keep falling back into their addictive behaviors.

Many feel worse after a relapse, but I want to tell you explicitly, every porn-free day is a good day. However, a relapse is not a setback and not a tragedy. Be aware that you used to masturbate to porn several times a day, while now you might only watch porn and ejaculate every few days or weeks. That's already significant progress!

One of the biggest dangers in the NoFap community is that people focus too much on failure. It starts with counting the porn-free days. They say: "I lasted a week" or "I made it 30 days" or "I'm doing a 90-day challenge."

This is dangerous because it makes them focus on abstinence. They constantly think, "I must not masturbate." The problem is, the brain (at least the subconscious part) doesn't understand the word "not." For the brain, the thoughts during porn fasting always revolve around porn, constantly reminding it that the forbidden fruit called pornography exists.

This is why I never counted my porn-free days and can only estimate today how long my longest streak without orgasm lasted (about 100 days). You might be a curious person and still want to know how long you can last. In that case, mark the first porn-free day on your calendar and try not to think too much about your NoFap challenge in the following days. If you relapse at some point, you can check the calendar to see how long you lasted. During your porn-free phase, you should think as little as possible about porn and NoFap.

Instead of abstaining, it's better to replace. Instead of watching porn, plan to engage in physical activities that exhaust you. Do push-ups or run around the block when you feel the urge to visit a porn site. This way, you learn to use your sexual energy more wisely. I'll say more about this sexual transmutation later.

No matter what addiction we're talking about, whether it's alcohol, nicotine, gambling, or porn: quitting cold turkey is always tough. If you start your porn fasting in hard mode (completely without orgasm), you will have built up enormous sexual tension after just a few days.

At the beginning of this book, I mentioned the rubber band analogy:

With each day without porn, this rubber band stretches more and more. It goes well for a while, but eventually, the tension becomes too great, and the point is reached where the rubber band snaps back with full force. Such a strong relapse is often dramatic and can plunge you even deeper into the depths of your addiction.

Several commenters on my videos told me that the day of their relapse was one of their darkest days because they completely succumbed to porn addiction and masturbated all day long. Their inner voice justified it by saying, "Now that I've masturbated to porn once, today doesn't count anymore, so I can continue to masturbate."

This shows how silly it is to focus too much on the number of days but also highlights the importance of creating a replacement habit that allows you to shift your thoughts away from porn addiction so that you can quickly regain control over your urges after a relapse.

In Tantra, this is called the "transmutation of sexual energy."

Imagine it like a pressure cooker that gets hotter and hotter until it eventually boils over. Your sexual energy is like the hot water in the pot and starts to bubble more intensely if you don't release it through orgasm. Instead of wasting it through masturbation, it's better to channel this

energy into other activities. This will give you a lot of strength for these activities (like sports) and also relieve a lot of mental pressure during your porn fast. Famous athletes like Muhammad Ali knew about this energy, which is why Ali didn't masturbate in the days and weeks leading up to his fights.

BLUE BALLS

Contrary to what many men believe, blue balls are not caused by a buildup of semen. It's simply a muscle cramp, which is why the term "testicular cramp" is actually quite fitting.

What many people don't know is that during an erection, not only does the penis swell due to increased blood flow, but the size of the testicles can also double. During a prolonged erection, the muscles of the vas deferens can cramp, causing blood to pool in the testicles, which can result in a bluish discoloration.

Blue balls often manifest as an uncomfortable feeling of tension but can sometimes present as intense pain throughout the testicular area. They typically occur after a strong erection that does not end in orgasm, making them a logical result of edging.

Often, it's recommended to relieve the pain by ejaculating when the discomfort becomes unbearable. However, ejaculation is not the only way to alleviate the pain; the cramps in the testicles usually go away with rest and relaxation, just like any other muscle cramp.

An orgasm helps us relax, which is why it can relieve the pain in the testicles. Ultimately, it would be sufficient to relax and try not to think about sex.

If you need quick relief, you can treat the cramp with cold or engage in physical activity. Apply an ice pack to your testicles or splash them with cold water in the shower to dissipate the cramp and alleviate the pain.

When exercising, ensure that you engage the thigh and pelvic muscles. Squats, pelvic floor exercises, and jogging bring the quickest relief.

You can hardly avoid blue balls if you get intimate with a potential sexual partner but don't relieve yourself through sex. However, you can avoid blue balls caused by edging.

Those who edge almost inevitably suffer from these symptoms sooner or later, which is another reason to avoid edging. Luckily, during porn withdrawal, there are also phases where you don't think about sex. In the next section, we'll look at how you can navigate the flatline period.

FLATLINE

Countless people intuitively believe that one becomes perpetually aroused by abstaining from pornography. This is just one side of the coin: during the initial phase of withdrawal, the challenge definitively lies in resisting the urge for quick satisfaction, but there is also another phase of withdrawal during which you suddenly experience the libido of an old man...

I am referring to the flatline.

It's a strange feeling, moving from a state of constant desire to this flatline.

Like every man, I too experienced this withdrawal phase when I first became sexually inactive in my adult life: suddenly, I had no desire for sex at all. I was completely indifferent to women and felt no urge to engage in any sexual adventures.

This flatline is even one of the main reasons why many fail at pornography fasting. The younger, the harder it is because young men are not accustomed to coping with a lack of libido.

This is why the typical thought during a flatline revolves around whether this phase will continue indefinitely. This consideration leads to edging because one wants to test whether everything still functions below. As we've already learned, edging sabotages withdrawal and most often leads to a relapse.

Therefore, I want to reassure you here and now: the flatline is part of withdrawal, appearing mostly in the second week and will disappear sooner or later. However, I must warn you that it will likely recur.

You must envision the withdrawal phases like a wave you will ride between complete healing and total impotence. This is completely normal and simply a sign that your brain is rewiring.

Be grateful for the flatline; it actually means you have no real reason to resort to pornography sites. Try to distract yourself from this phase and expose your brain to new stimuli. This will ease the withdrawal process and accelerate it. Boredom is your biggest enemy during this time.

Healing happens every day in your mind, but it requires time. The longer and more intensely you've watched pornography, the more profoundly you will experience the flatline. In very severe cases, the flatline collapses along with other intense withdrawal symptoms overwhelming you. In this instance, we are dealing with a severe flatline.

SYMPTOMS OF A SEVERE FLATLINE

Nearly all those who abstain from pornography experience their first intense withdrawal symptoms in the second week. Following a period of remarkable sexual energy, they suddenly feel as if they've aged dramatically. Other symptoms frequently emerge: insomnia, fatigue, brain fog, cravings for sweets or junk food, depression, anxiety, flu-like symptoms, and more.

This stage is the toughest phase of the entire withdrawal process. If you lack a strong social network to fall back on, try to stay active regardless, and perhaps plan a short vacation. As we will see later in this book, starting your porn fasting with a vacation can be very beneficial.

I view the flatline as your body's outcry for the familiar dopamine rush it's missing, essentially a consequence of dopamine deficiency. Your brain, accustomed to receiving high dopamine levels and masking problems by masturbating rather than addressing them, now struggles to release dopamine through ordinary daily activities. Consequently, everything seems dull and gray.

This is why your brain tries to tempt you into letting dopamine flow by relapsing—suggesting that feeling worse temporarily is a small price to pay for happiness in the foreseeable future. Do not trust these persuasions; a short-term high is not worth sacrificing the chance to become a genuinely happier individual soon.

WET DREAMS

Wet dreams are commonly discussed as spontaneous ejaculations that occur during sleep without any conscious effort.

For much of my life, I didn't really understand what wet dreams were. I always thought they were just erotic dreams people talked about; I didn't realize they actually involved ejaculation. Throughout my life, I had many erotic dreams, but it wasn't until I abstained from pornography that I experienced my first wet dream. Erotic dreams are frequent, but they seldom lead to wet dreams.

Wet dreams are peculiar: you find yourself in this incredibly vivid and realistic dream, and suddenly, you meet this absolute dream woman. The best part? This woman wants to have sex with you! The entire scenario is more exhilarating than anything you've experienced in reality. You're aroused and engage with this bombshell. Eventually, you might reach orgasm, but then you notice something odd. The dream dissolves, you wake up to reality, and realize you're lying in your own semen, without a woman by your side.

If we read through NoFap forums, it becomes clear that every abstainer will likely experience a wet dream at some point.

Often, a nocturnal ejaculation happens especially after one has been highly sexually aroused the day before, which leads many to resort to edging. As a result, they wake up in wet sheets feeling as though they have regressed, lamenting, "I made it 30 days, and now I've had a wet dream and must start over."

Nonsense! A wet dream simply means that your body is expelling excess sperm. It should serve as a reminder to step away from pornographic content. Abstaining from porn is about normalizing your heavily internet and porn-influenced sexual function.

As long as you're addicted to porn, you won't have wet dreams because your body doesn't need to expel excess sperm. A wet dream might even indicate that you're doing something right.

Don't believe those who claim that you'll lose all your mojo by ejaculating. Wet dreams are harmless unless they are a result of edging. If they happen, just change your sheets and go back to sleep.

ALCOHOL

For a long time, drinking alcohol was a norm across the globe for me. Nowadays, I view this topic with much more skepticism than before: whenever I consider our society, I increasingly realize how deeply entrenched alcohol addiction really is. There seems to be no real occasion deemed inappropriate for drinking. Moreover, it's often considered normal to be drunk or hungover; some even view you oddly if you don't drink regularly.

Alcohol is like taking out a loan from the bank, not for investment but for consumption: you might feel richer in the short term, but in the long term, you're just paying back more with interest, ending up with less wealth than before.

While alcohol can provide a few hours of enjoyment, the physical aftermath often includes a hefty price:

- Migraine-like headaches

- Feelings of physical weakness
- Pervasive negative thoughts

And those who drink excessively jeopardize their long-term health.

I recommend that alongside giving up pornography, you also try a no-alcohol challenge. By doing so, in addition to the benefits you gain from refraining from pornography, you'll experience even more profound changes thanks to avoiding alcohol, such as increased clarity, freshness, strength, truthfulness, as well as a sense of lightness and purity. I believe these are all positive outcomes of abstaining.

Another advantage is that abstaining from alcohol will likely make your journey away from pornography easier as long as you stay sober. Drunkenness weakens your willpower, leading us to make regrettable decisions in that state.

Moreover, the morning after a night of heavy drinking, or coping with a hangover, often highlights why we fall back into old habits. If you're sober, your chances of successfully moving away from pornography are higher. Give it a try!

You shouldn't view alcohol entirely negatively like I do. However, it wouldn't hurt to imagine what a life without alcohol could look like. But if the idea of a month without alcohol already feels like a big challenge, isn't it worth considering whether you're too dependent on this substance?

Premature Ejaculation

Men often worry they will climax too quickly, especially after a long period of abstinence, when they get back into sexual activity. The technical term for this is premature ejaculation, defined as ejaculation occurring within the first minute of penetration.

I find this definition somewhat vague. I always ask myself: Can I last long enough to ensure my partner is satisfied?

In the initial weeks of your porn abstinence journey, you might find yourself being triggered into near orgasmic states by minimal stimuli. The internet is rife with tales of men who, after weeks of no sexual release, found themselves at a supermarket or a bus stop next to an attractive woman and were suddenly so aroused that they ejaculated.

A good friend shared his story from last summer when he took on a NoFap challenge. After weeks without porn or orgasm, he ended up flirting with a woman at a bar one evening. He became so aroused so quickly that he had to physically turn away to avoid ejaculating.

It seems that short-term NoFap might prompt premature orgasms, but in the long term, the situation appears different.

Weeks later, the same friend met another woman, and after two months without orgasms, they had sex again.

Before NoFap, the problem was always that I felt less during sex than during masturbation. I have a circumcised penis, and frequent masturbation significantly reduced my sensitivity.

This aligns with the theory that premature ejaculation could be a symptom of erectile dysfunction. When the body struggles to maintain an erection, it signals the brain that it needs to climax quickly while penetration is still possible.

Some men on forums report that due to porn-induced erectile problems, they resorted to medications like Viagra. Surprisingly, they experienced strong erections during sex and did not have premature ejaculations.

Another factor to consider is that when you abstain from masturbation, you learn to manage your sexual thoughts better. The longer you abstain, the better you can control your sexual energy.

Many who repeatedly relapse or struggle with controlling their arousal have perhaps not learned to manage their sexual thoughts effectively, leaving them feeling powerless.

If you see a young, attractive woman at the beach, don't get lost in sexual fantasies. Learn to distract yourself and bring your body back to a calmer state.

When highly aroused, whether during sex, at the beach, or while flirting, try to control your breathing. Focus your mind inward and breathe deeply. This simple trick can make you more present and calm. Try this small exercise next time you're having sex, and you might be surprised at how much better the experience goes.

Insomnia

Many individuals practicing abstinence from pornography, commonly referred to as "Fapstronauts," report suffering from sleep issues which they believe have arisen since they curtailed masturbation. This is often a part of the reboot process and typically indicates a "flatline" phase. Most men experience these symptoms about a week into the process. Some find it hard to fall asleep, while others wake up during the night and struggle to fall back asleep. Regardless of how insomnia manifests in you, it can significantly disrupt daily life, especially if you frequently consume excessive alcohol.

Insomnia is frequently a manifestation of anxieties and unresolved emotions that you don't address during the day, which then surge at night when distractions are fewer. With the cessation of pornography, a major part of your strategy to suppress fear and anxiety disappears, possibly leading to more frequent masturbation to cope with these discomforting feelings and situations.

However, it's crucial to avoid certain behaviors that can exacerbate sleeplessness. Avoid drinking coffee or caffeinated beverages after 2 PM, and do not use alcohol as a sleep aid since it can disrupt your sleep cycle, making it even harder to fall asleep. Also, avoid eating right before bedtime and ensure you're physically active during the day but not right before going to sleep.

Moreover, it's essential to steer clear of medication or sleep aids before trying more natural solutions. Cutting out all forms of caffeine throughout the day can help you naturally feel tired in the evening, facilitating easier and deeper sleep, even if your emotions are still unsettled.

I can personally vouch for this; after experiencing sleep disturbances on the seventh day, I increased my physical activity significantly. Incorporating daily sprints—about 10 rounds plus

15-30 minutes of jump rope—helped regulate my sleep patterns, albeit temporarily. Remember, it's temporary and will pass. Take it easy; these are just signs of the rebooting and healing process.

Strategies to Prevent Relapse

I feel like I can't hold on much longer. Since yesterday, my cravings have grown increasingly wilder and stronger. I even found myself on a porn site, but in the last moment, I managed to exercise discipline, shut down my computer, and went for a run... It's really tough to stay on the edge like this... John

No matter how motivated you feel at the start, or how strongly you vow to persist, it almost invariably leads to a relapse at some point. This isn't the end of the world. Recognize that even if you only masturbate less often than before, it represents significant progress compared to when you were ejaculating more frequently. Just by reducing the time spent on pornography, your dopamine receptors have time to recover.

Therefore, a single relapse shouldn't be seen as destroying your progress. If you relapse after a 30-day streak, you are still far ahead compared to where you were 30 days ago.

This issue is a major challenge in the NoFap community, where many men tackle the issue with too much intensity. Often after a relapse, they think, "I've ruined everything. I might as well continue." They spend the rest of the day trying to catch up on what they missed out on during previous weeks of abstinence.

I understand these men are frustrated. After all, they've realized how much time and vitality their addiction has sapped from them. However, obsessiveness is usually not the path to success. Those who overcome their addiction to pornography also need to learn to be patient with themselves.

Do Not Count Your Days

If you're serious about overcoming your addiction to pornography, don't count the days you've abstained because every streak will eventually end. A better strategy is to keep a log noting how often you engage in masturbation each month and whether you viewed pornography. This essentially acts as a masturbation journal. It's crucial to note behaviors like edging since these can also lead to a relapse.

At the end of each month, this record will clearly show how deep your addiction runs. The goal then becomes to masturbate less frequently, watch less pornography, and engage in less edging from month to month. This approach helps reduce the feeling of failure if you do masturbate because you're looking at overall progress, not just individual setbacks.

Uninstall Social Media and Dating Apps

"Sex sells..." Women wearing revealing outfits or showing significant skin often garner more attention or sell themselves better on social media. Likes are the currency of platforms like Instagram, and more exposure often translates to more success.

That's why you will find yourself overwhelmed with sexual images on these platforms. As long as you regularly view pornography, you might not even realize how stimulating many of these images are because they serve as a substitute for satisfaction.

During my first attempt at porn abstinence, I suddenly found myself spending a lot of time on Instagram. It took months before I realized that I was engaging heavily in edging the whole time.

Therefore, spend as little time as possible on social media. If necessary, uninstall apps like Instagram, Facebook, and all dating apps on your phone. If you must use social media, access it only through a desktop.

Similar principles apply to online dating: here too, you will repeatedly face sexual imagery, which explains why platforms like Tinder can be so addictive.

Dating apps are a significant trigger for many people attempting NoFap; every swipe might lead to sexual thoughts and you're undoubtedly engaging in edging. My advice? Instead of trying to meet women through dating apps, try meeting them in everyday life.

Delete Images and Videos on Your Computer

Have you bookmarked your favorite porn sites? Or saved provocative images and videos on your computer or hard drive? Start your porn fasting by deleting all such files and bookmarks. This cleanses your digital space and prevents accidental relapses from stumbling upon these files.

Avoid Places Where You Can Masturbate Undisturbed

Where do you usually masturbate? Most likely, it's somewhere private like your home or your room. This is partly because these locations are full of triggers, since you've masturbated there often.

To avoid relapses, spend as little time at home as possible. If you're studying, learn not at home but in a library. If you work, after work, don't go straight home. Stay active: engage in sports, go for walks, or read a book in a café—you know what I'm aiming at.

I endured my worst phase of porn addiction when I started my business and couldn't afford an office, so I worked from home. What a terrible decision... The isolation and the extensive time spent alone in my apartment made me masturbate constantly... Anonymous

Eventually, you have to go home. If you feel the urge to view pornography, distract yourself: do some push-ups, pull-ups, or take a cold shower.

If that doesn't help, leave your home and go somewhere where relapsing isn't an option. I often go for walks until I calm down or simply feel too tired.

NoFap on Vacation

When I'm on vacation, I hardly ever feel the need to view pornography. This was the case even before I deeply engaged with the NoFap topic, and I've heard similar stories from others.

I used to be quite shy and suffered from significant social anxiety. In my early twenties, I spent several weeks in Asia for a university project. Being exposed daily to new experiences and sharing a room with a colleague meant I was never alone. It was the first time in ten years that I didn't masturbate for weeks. My social anxieties seemed to vanish, and I became a different person. Sadly, once I was back home, I slipped back into old habits... Patrick

When traveling, you're active and constantly encountering new situations, which takes you away from your daily triggers and provides less privacy, making it almost impossible to revert to watching pornography.

If you often struggle to start a porn fast but have a few days off, consider taking a short trip. Travel is a great way to break free from pornography because it keeps the momentum going when you return home. The challenge is to maintain this new routine once you're back in the familiarity of your daily life.

LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS

Controlling your thoughts may seem easy until you try it yourself. Buddhism refers to this as the "Monkey Mind." This makes it difficult to concentrate on a single thing. Unfortunately, this carousel of thoughts often veers towards negative or stimulating topics like sex.

You particularly notice this when you feel the urge to masturbate. You may intend to think about something else, but your mind repeatedly returns to erotic thoughts. At that moment, everything else you could consider is irrelevant.

So, how do we control sexual thoughts?

It's impossible to prevent yourself from thinking about sex, but you can train your ability to dismiss these unwanted thoughts. The best practice for this is meditation:

You might have heard a lot about it, perhaps with misconceptions about what meditation entails. Essentially, it involves dedicating a few minutes each day to this practice.

The process is simple: Sit up straight but comfortably, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. Breathe slowly and deeply, aiming to breathe in and out with increasing deliberateness. Count your breaths up and down, aiming for a set number before resetting to zero.

During this practice, it's natural for thoughts to intrude, tempting you to stray from counting. That's a normal part of the exercise—don't stress over it. Just consciously notice these thoughts and let them go.

You'll find this challenging and perhaps frustrating at times. Each time you manage to push away these intrusive thoughts, you're training your mind just as you would train a muscle in the gym—through consistent effort.

If you're practicing NoFap, complement it with meditation to build mental strength against sexual thoughts.

However, the thought carousel will occasionally spin towards themes of sex and pornography. When this happens, try to dismiss these thoughts, though they may return with even greater

intensity. Remember, you're not the Dalai Lama; escaping these thought cycles without aid is challenging.

Buddhist monks manage their sexual thoughts by reciting long passages from their teachings, which helps refocus their minds. Their sexual desires are often less intense after these meditation sessions.

Similarly, you could read a motivational text aloud whenever sexual thoughts overpower your control. If you're religious, turn to your faith's scriptures like the Bible or the Quran. Otherwise, I suggest starting with this motivational speech:

MY MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH AGAINST RELAPSE

Be prepared to chase your dreams with all your might. You are stronger than you think, and in the end, your efforts will be worth it. It is often said that most people die at 25 but are buried at 85. Don't just exist—live vibrantly and fully.

Follow your inner voice, not the chatter in your head but the voice of your heart. It will lead you to where you belong.

To live a fulfilling life, you need three key ingredients:

- A vision. Know where you want to go.
- A willingness to learn, making you a better person.
- A determination to work hard, allowing you to achieve your goals.

Embrace the idea of becoming a new person. Small changes night after night, like water dripping on stone, have significant effects over time.

Focus on what you want. Don't be a slave to others' desires. Keep away from those who hold you back, not because they lack the strength to improve, but because they fail to acknowledge their own failures.

Don't let fear govern your life. Accept your fears, but don't allow them to confine you. Many live in the shadow of their fears, not pursuing their dreams.

Taking responsibility for yourself improves your ability to achieve things. Think like a winner, believe in yourself, and every improvement begins with your thoughts. Shape your life according to your principles.

And most importantly, never give up!

HARD MODE OR SOFT MODE?

In the softer approach to abstaining from pornography, you refrain from masturbation but continue to have sexual relations. Hard mode, as the name suggests, involves abstaining from both.

Which do I recommend?

If you are not currently in a relationship, don't worry about these categories. You might eventually have sex during your journey—sooner rather than later in my experience—but consider it more as a reward. Women are likely to be attracted to you because they perceive you as suddenly more appealing. Reward yourself for your progress by building a healthy sex life and engaging with real people rather than living through fantasies.

It is extremely challenging to give up masturbation alone, and it becomes even more strenuous when you also restrict sex after opportunities arise. This could unnecessarily stress you out.

In the beginning of this book, I used the analogy of a rubber band to describe the process of abstaining from pornography. If you practice NoFap, your body becomes increasingly tense the longer you refrain from ejaculating. The danger lies in this tension snapping back violently, possibly plunging you deeper into your addiction.

Your heightened energy might initially make you more susceptible to becoming dependent on pornography. Few men have shared with me that during NoFap, they had to continuously battle severe crises: relapses and reboots occurred regularly until they finally managed to overcome the addiction.

There's a saying: Quitting smoking is very easy, I've done it a thousand times. The same can be applied to pornography: in the early stages of addiction recovery, relapses are common. It's important not to pressure yourself but to take it slow.

Therefore, it's best to approach it gradually. If you're heavily addicted to pornography, I even recommend starting your abstinence by initially only quitting pornography while continuing to masturbate. Do this for a few months until you no longer feel the urge for pornography and then try to fully stop masturbating.

THE DANGERS OF THE CHASER EFFECT

Allowing sex during your period of abstaining from pornography can create tension, but it also raises the stakes. This is known as the Chaser Effect: your desire for masturbation tends to spike in the days following sexual activity.

This likely stems from your body being signaled that it's ready for sexual activity once again. Unfortunately, your brain struggles to differentiate between real sex and pornography, which is why your craving for porn may suddenly increase. There's little you can do against this craving except be aware of the Chaser Effect and try to satisfy your sexual needs with real-life partners instead of porn. If you maintain this approach over a longer period, your reliance on pornography should diminish.

However, if you experience repeated relapses after having sex, it might be wise to consider a complete reboot, entering what's called "hard mode"—a period of abstaining from all sexual activity. Many report that the Chaser Effect is much weaker after about 30 days without ejaculation compared to the initial weeks.

For men in relationships where sex becomes infrequent because their partner no longer finds them as attractive, initiating a complete reboot can be very beneficial. It's not unusual for men to find their objectively attractive partners less appealing over time; this often stems from a habituation to the partner, which diminishes the initial excitement of newness.

On the other hand, if you're with an objectively attractive partner and feel no sexual desire, this may be an indicator that you've been desensitized by excessive porn consumption. In such cases, it might be healing to live like a monk for several weeks and switch to hard mode.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER A RELAPSE?

Relapse on Day 15. Energy level has drastically dropped, motivation is gone, and even looking in the mirror hurts. Man, I didn't expect to bounce back this quickly! Just shake it off and keep going - Max.

Relapses happen. For some, more frequently than others, but no one is completely immune. Don't let them ruin your day or your life. The most common reason for a relapse is boredom, which is why they often occur when we are alone at home or at night when we can't sleep.

The biggest issue with a relapse is not the ejaculation itself but the feeling of failure. Moments before, you were a charismatic and happy individual, but now you're back to your old rut because of the relapse.

However, a relapse doesn't have to cause extensive damage if handled correctly. Allowing it to lead you into depression could deepen your addiction. Many men spend the day of their relapse indulging repeatedly in masturbation. It is vital that you use the time after a relapse wisely.

I recommend performing a small ritual to learn something from your setback and emerge stronger. This ritual also prevents you from spiraling further down. Keep going and don't give up.

THINGS YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY AFTER A RELAPSE

Create a list where you note down when, where, and why you relapsed. It might look something like this:

October 28, 2019, 4 PM. Home. Edging with porn followed by masturbation without porn. Trigger: Account xxx on Instagram.

This little journal of your habits allows you to identify patterns and learn from them for the future. By understanding your most frequent triggers and situations, you can increase your chances of avoiding them in the future. This list also helps me see how much I actually masturbate. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by desperation, where anything goes, I stay motivated to reduce my overall masturbation and the number of ejaculations each month.

As a second step of this ritual, I suggest engaging in a conscious activity. Go for a run, do some push-ups, or eat spicy food. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as the activity challenges your inner resilience.

After an ejaculation, I personally prefer to take a very cold shower. The shock from the icy water clears any mental fog, making me more alert and active. If you can't stand cold water, you might want to look up the Wim Hof Method on Google. Wim Hof, a Dutchman known as "The Iceman," has developed special breathing techniques that help you tap into your inner fire and become more resistant to cold.

Learn to Know Your Triggers

Our everyday life is saturated with sexuality: from billboards featuring underwear models to half-naked testimonials for shampoo or influencers on Instagram with pronounced nipples. It's clear that sex sells in advertising.

Recently, I was searching an online dictionary for an English word and stumbled across a Calvin Klein underwear ad, which nostalgically reminded me of soft porn, unaffected by the impressionable men featured in it.

Triggers can be more subtle, however: smells that remind you of an ex-girlfriend, the sound of your laptop's fan, among others.

It's often not immediately apparent what has triggered you. Therefore, always reflect on why you landed on a certain page. For instance, if you often find yourself triggered by scantily clad amateur models on Instagram, it's better to delete the app. If after going out you relapse because scantily clad girls in bars and clubs impress you, try spending less time going out or drinking less alcohol.

Here are some triggers I've identified myself or that have been shared with me by my YouTube followers:

Physical Triggers

- Too little or irregular sleep. Solution: Try to sleep more regularly.

Behavioral Triggers

- Using your phone or computer in bed. Solution: Use these devices outside of your bedroom.
- Being alone at home for extended periods. Solution: Make an effort to leave your house more often and not just for sleep.
- Using the computer when alone. Solution: Use your computer only when others are around, such as at work, in a library, or in cafes.
- Long periods of work that make you tired. Solution: Take regular breaks and get some physical activity.
- Smoking cannabis. Solution: Quit smoking cannabis.
- Drinking alcohol. Solution: Drink less or no alcohol.
- Taking hot baths. Solution: Avoid the bathtub and switch to showers only.
- Touching yourself while showering. Solution: Set a time limit for your showers or switch to cold showers.

Internet Triggers

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Reddit
- Anime
- Tumblr
- Tinder
- Cupid Solution: Avoid these websites.

Mental or Emotional Triggers:

- Thinking "I'm aroused and will just masturbate briefly but then stop." Solution: Write it down when you have these thoughts.
- Thinking about an ex-girlfriend or a girl from your everyday life. Solution: Try to control your thoughts and think about something else. Avoid sexual fantasies in the early months.
- Thinking about upcoming parties and the many girls you'll meet. Solution: Actively think about something else as suggested above.
- Feeling sad, angry, bored, etc. Solution: Accept that emotions are temporary and try to shift your emotional state. Sometimes, simply changing your environment can help you get through the day.
- Thinking about NoFap. Solution: Train your brain to say no or not. Telling yourself all day that you shouldn't masturbate actually reinforces the thought that you should.

Social Triggers:

- After a successful day at work, school, or in a social situation, you think, "I've earned the right to masturbate." Solution: Be aware that your brain is trying to distract you.
- Stress. Solution: Find different ways to cope with stress, like exercising, meditating, or working less intensely.
- Being hungover. Solution: Drink less to avoid hangovers.
- Waking up with morning arousal. Solution: Do not keep your phone near your bed, get up immediately, take a shower, and get dressed.

Everyone has different triggers, making it impossible to provide bespoke recommendations for every conceivable scenario. However, I hope that this list will help you find your personal strategies to avoid triggers that might lead you to consume pornography.

Ejaculation by Cycle

I am often asked if there is an ideal ejaculation cycle—a set rhythm that dictates when and how often one can masturbate without negative consequences.

There are various theories on this subject, and ultimately, you must find what works best for you. Masturbation, when done in moderation and without the aid of pornography, is generally acceptable. This is because the act of ejaculation isn't the problem; rather, it's the dopamine release triggered by pornography that causes issues in your brain.

Many "pickup artists" follow a weekly cycle, believing that abstaining the day before their peak testosterone day will maximize their levels.

Taoism presents a more complex view, where the frequency of ejaculation is adjusted according to age. Until one's thirties, it's permissible to ejaculate every fourth day; in one's forties, every seventeenth day; in the fifties, every twenty-first day; and after sixty, once a month.

It should be noted that Taoism also has various schools of thought regarding this practice. Some suggest refraining from masturbation during certain seasons, like winter or spring, while others believe that the amount of energy a person has can influence their masturbation frequency—for instance, someone with ADHD may need to masturbate less frequently.

Be practical: If you don't have a partner and you have excessive sexual energy, try to masturbate without using pornography. However, try to keep to a certain cycle to prevent slipping into addictive behaviors.

Dopamine Fasting

Modern humans are not just prone to pornography; they are dependent on dopamine. Whenever they feel bored, they reach for their smartphones to mindlessly scroll through apps or grab sugar-laden snacks during work, turning on Netflix as soon as they're home. Our brains require dopamine and constantly drive us toward behaviors that release it. In natural environments, this wasn't problematic because rewards weren't instantaneous—each required significant effort.

Now, the next dopamine hit is just a few clicks away. No longer does it require much effort to get rewarded, which unfortunately conditions us to shy away from pursuits that offer long-term satisfaction and happiness because they do not provide immediate dopamine spikes.

This is where dopamine fasting comes into play, a concept I first encountered in a video by Richard, who runs the Improvement Pill YouTube channel. Richard has been practicing this ritual since college, celebrating it several times annually, steering clear of drugs and alcohol during these periods.

Richard suggests conducting a 24-hour dopamine fast to truly feel its benefits. He starts this fast upon waking and continues until he goes to sleep. Ideally, you would plan this fast on a free day, like Sunday, to fully commit to the ritual.

During this dopamine fast, Richard recommends treating the day as your personal holiday but with minimal pleasure. This involves stimulating your dopamine receptors as little as possible. Therefore, Richard advises:

- Drink only water, eat nothing.
- Turn off your phone.
- Avoid the internet.
- Stay off social media.
- Do not watch TV or engage in other forms of digital entertainment including movies, video games, or listening to music.
- Refrain from consuming stimulating substances like caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, THC, or CBD.
- Avoid listening to music.
- Don't socialize unless necessary.
- Avoid any form of sexual activity including masturbation.
- Do not even read books.

If you can think of any other activity that is enjoyable and isn't listed here, it's likely not allowed during the fast. This may seem extreme, but remember, it's only for 24 hours and you'll spend about a third of that sleeping.

What can you do during this day? According to Richard:

- Drink water.
- Go for walks (but avoid strenuous exercise).
- Meditate.

- Write on paper.

These activities aim to help you reset your dopamine sensitivity and gain control over your dependency, not just to abstain for a day.

Why Should Anyone Undertake Such a Drastic Challenge?

We engage in activities as long as we see a reward following them. One problem in our society is that we are constantly rewarded without actually doing anything in return. This conditions our brain to see no point in making long-term efforts, as the reward is already present.

Why go the long way to happiness when I can have the same dopamine rush right away?

This has led to the exhaustion of our dopamine receptors. We no longer feel the small joys because we are accustomed to the big kicks. Through fasting, we make these receptors more sensitive, enabling us to tackle activities that we would normally consider too daunting.

Another benefit is that during the fast, we confront our pains not with dopamine but by pressing on our dopamine-reward button, ensuring we don't mask our psychic pains. However, pain is necessary to recognize problems and make behavioral changes.

Those who feel sad, alone, or depressed must face these pains to forge a new path in life. Only by knowing something in life is amiss can we change this state.

Changing oneself is hard, and humans tend to run from our problems rather than solving them. We lose ourselves in pleasure, instead of addressing our real problems.

When you dopamine fast, you are left with no choice but to face your problems—you cannot run away, and you must confront your thoughts. Here you should turn to pen and paper since writing is the only creative activity allowed during the fast. Try to execute the following writing tasks during the twenty-four hours:

- Do I feel uncomfortable?
- Where in my body do I feel this discomfort?

If an emotion or pain arises, try to describe it. Is it depression, anxiety, or sadness? Why do I feel this way? What have I done to feel this way? What one to three things can I do tomorrow to address the cause of this discomfort? What would happen in the next five years if I don't address these one to three things (worst-case scenario)? What would happen in the next five years if I do address these one to three things long-term (best-case scenario)?

Richard recommends writing as much as possible during the fasting day, but also taking time to think deeply. This should be easy since a day without distractions can be very long.

There are various ways to structure a fasting day. Some people even allow reading books. Our generation often finds it hard to engage with complex or technical subjects or even to read a full book because our attention span is so short.

During a dopamine fast, you become your own most intriguing book—whether Nietzsche, Kant, or handbooks—can be exciting. You can use the fast to educate yourself further on a complicated topic.

THE END

Is it over already?

Congratulations if you've read this far! You appear to take this subject very seriously! I hope this book becomes a valuable companion in your life. However, it will all be for naught if you simply put this virtual book aside and nothing in your life changes.

It's time for you to make a change. Therefore, I warmly invite you to join our community. The discussion doesn't end with No Fap; it extends into many more areas: health, sports, motivation, success, and much more, all about living the best life possible!

I also want to express my gratitude for taking the time to delve into this somewhat unusual topic.

Do you know what I'm most excited about? Your experiences!

It won't always be easy, but it will definitely be worth it. Over the years, I have heard so many incredible experiences from men that I am eager to see what you do with this information! Feel free to send me an email and let's keep in touch at hello@no-nut-november.com