

# How to Quit Internet Porn and Internet based Sex Addiction/Compulsive Activities

## Porn Addiction and Internet Sex Addiction is Real

Version 1.0.0.2

### **Porn Addiction is Real**

"Some people say, 'Hey, man ... you can't really be addicted to pornography.' But I'm gonna tell you something: If day turns into night and you are still watching, you probably have got a problem. And that was me, it changes the way you think about people. People become objects. People become body parts; they become things to be used rather than people to be loved."

Brooklyn Nine-Nine" actor Terry Crews



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If you're reading this, you or someone you know is trying to quit porn and are looking for some help in doing so. Here's the good news: in the vast majority of cases, you don't need expensive rehabs or retreats to rid your life of porn. As I mentioned yesterday, in reading a boatload of books and countless blog and forum postings on "porn addiction recovery," I discovered that most of the advice given is the exact same advice

therapists and cognitive psychologists offer to someone who's trying to change a bad habit as innocuous as swearing or fingernail biting. Sure, there are a few differences, but overall, quitting porn is just like quitting pretty much any other bad habit.

An important thing to keep in mind with changing any habit — be it smoking, drinking soda, or using porn — is that there's no magic bullet. Habit change takes time, discipline, and dedication, and the process will look a little different for each individual.

Progress isn't linear, either. Some weeks you'll feel like you're well on your way to kicking the bad habit and replacing it with a new one, and others you'll have setbacks that will make you feel like crap. That's normal. The key is to not wallow in your setback, but to dust yourself off, and get back in the saddle.

So if you're looking for that one thing that will solve all your problems, you won't find it here. Most of the tips and suggestions below are likely things you already know. The only "secret" to habit implementation is having the will to follow through with your intentions. Experiment with the different tips below and find out what works for you.

## Reboot and Rewire

Before we get into the specific tips and strategies for quitting porn, it's important to know the two basic parts of the process in your brain: rebooting and rewiring.

### Rebooting

The brain responds to the onslaught of dopamine that comes with constant and escalating porn use by reducing its number of dopamine receptors. This blunting of dopamine sensitivity may lead to problems like erectile dysfunction, delayed ejaculation, depression, and social anxiety.

"Rebooting" refers to taking a break from all artificial sexual stimuli so that the brain can restore and replenish dopamine receptors that were

lost in response to the overconsumption of pornography. As Gary Wilson notes in *Your Brain on Porn*, rebooting is a metaphor taken from the computer world: “By avoiding artificial sexual stimulation you are shutting down and restarting the brain, restoring it to its original factory settings.” The goal of rebooting is to rediscover what your life was like before porn.

According to men who have quit and Wilson’s observations while working with these men, it may take weeks or months before you begin to see an improvement in porn-related problems. Wilson has noted two patterns of rebooting recovery: One group of men will take just 2-3 weeks before they start seeing improvements to porn-induced ED and the like. The other group, which he calls “long-rebooters,” can take 2-6 months to fully recover. The men comprising this group usually started using internet porn at a young age and have been using it for a while. During their brain resets, some long-rebooters report experiencing what they call a “flatline” in which they lose any and all interest in sex for a period of time. However, once the flatline passes, their drive for natural sexual stimulation comes roaring back.

The big rule on rebooting is that you abstain from all artificial sexual stimulation. Pornography is the obvious one to abstain from, but veteran rebooters recommend also nixing things like “erotic literature,” sexy YouTube videos, Victoria’s Secret catalogs, etc. Fantasies about porn should also be avoided (which I imagine is easier said than done).

While artificial sexual stimulation must be avoided during the reboot phase, natural sexual stimulation like actual sex is fine. Some say sexual fantasies (about real life sex) and masturbation are okay too, but of course others will have religious compunctions against these practices. While natural sexual stimulation is a-okay, some reboot veterans recommend taking a break from all sex and masturbation for a bit to help speed along the process. Each man is different in his needs and beliefs, so experimenting is key.

If you’ve experienced some of the problems that are associated with heavy porn use, then the reboot phase is a necessary first step for you, and our tips below will help you in your quest to go porn-free.

If you haven’t had any porn-related problems, then you might not notice drastic changes in yourself except for the fact that you’re no longer using porn.

Finally, if you don’t see any improvements after a prolonged reboot, you need to be open to the possibility that there’s some underlying problem with your sexual, erectile health that’s not related to porn, and you may need additional help treating it.

## Rewiring

If you feel like you can’t stop looking at porn, that’s because you’ve likely created a very strong habit in the reward circuitry of your brain. Your

internet porn use has rewired your neurons so that whenever you encounter an external or internal cue associated with porn, you go into auto-pilot mode and begin the routine of searching for it. For example, sitting down at your computer when no one else is around can serve as a cue that leads you almost automatically to clicking on your porn files.

The goal of the rewiring phase is to replace the routine of looking at porn when you encounter a cue for it, with something that's not looking at internet porn. For example, you have a journal that sits next to your computer, and whenever you sit down, the first thing you do is write a few sentences in it. We're replacing a bad habit with a good habit.

One thing to keep in mind with habit change and "rewiring": neuroscientists have learned that once our brain encodes a habit, it never really disappears. It's always there looking for that certain cue to initiate the habit sequence.

The permanence of bad habits shouldn't discourage you; change is still possible according to the latest habit research. While you can't completely get rid of a bad habit, it is possible to create more powerful good habits that simply override the bad ones. That's what rewiring is all about.

The tips below will help you stay away from porn, even when the itch remains strong during the reboot phase, as well as help you rewire your brain so your no-porn habit sticks.

## **Tips on How to Successfully Reboot, Rewire, and Quit Porn for Good**

Alright, let's get into the nitty gritty of how to actually quit using porn for good. The tips and suggestions below are based on my research into cognitive psychology over the years as well as from reported experiences of men who have quit using porn. Again, there's no silver bullet. What works for one man, may not work for you. You need to be ready to experiment and try different things.

The advice below can be broken into two parts: mindset and action.

# Mindset



## **1. Don't Give Porn More Power Than It Should Have**

"When you characterize porn as an addiction it tells you that it is hard to break free, that it is a struggle, that relapse is inevitable — all things that have nothing to do with porn. But when you characterize online porn as junk food, the solution is obvious: don't eat it."

— The Last Psychiatrist

the Last Psychiatrist -

The Effects Of Too Much Porn: "He's Just Not That Into Anyone"

Among men who are trying to quit, it's popular to conjure up images of porn being an unbeatable dark monster/plague/pandemic/war that must be fought tooth and nail and if you succumb to it, you're destined to becoming a goat rapist, or something. But I don't think that mindset is very helpful. In fact, firebrand rhetoric like that can actually backfire. Research suggests that this sort of simplistic, over-the-top rhetoric was the big reason the D.A.R.E. Program failed to reduce drug use amongst American teenagers back in the 80s and 90s. One study even showed that compared to middle schoolers who didn't take part in the program, D.A.R.E. students showed an increase in the use of drugs! D.A.R.E. inadvertently made drugs alluring by giving them the aura of "forbidden fruit," tempting kids who otherwise wouldn't have given drugs much thought.

I think we'd do well to take a lesson from how Superman defeated the KKK in how we should approach porn. Yes, Superman. After WWII, the Ku Klux Klan experienced a resurgence in membership in some parts of the U.S. A Florida activist and folklorist named Stetson Kennedy decided to take on the Klan and began infiltrating meetings in hopes of exposing the Klan's secrets. After Kennedy learned how Klansmen identified each other, he went to the local police with the info in the hopes they could use it to start arresting members of the organization. But the police sat on their hands because they were too afraid of the Klan's power.

So Stetson went to the producers of the mega-popular Superman radio program and asked if they'd be interested in creating a "Superman vs. the Klan" plotline for the show. The producers were game and so began a 16-episode series in which Superman took on the Klan. During the episodes, Klan secrets like handshakes, rituals, and passwords were divulged. Almost overnight, KKK recruitment dried up and local authorities started cracking down on Klansmen who were flagrantly and openly violating the law.

Why the change? Part of the power of the KKK was their "air of menace" that came with clouding themselves in a shroud of secrecy. Once Superman revealed their secrets, the group didn't seem all that scary or

## Note

There's wisdom in following the advice of the 17th century Jesuit priest Baltasar Gracian: \*Undertake what's easy as if it were hard, and what's hard as if it were easy.

### A Note on Shame and the Ineffective Way in Which Porn Is Typically Taught at Church

The folks who are most concerned about porn tend to be religious, and they see porn as a spiritual cancer.

And yet the way that porn is more often than not discussed at church tends to be incredibly counterproductive, driving men deeper into porn use instead of away from it.

If you're a regular reader of AoM, you'll know I've talked about the fact that shame can be an unmatched motivator for seeking positive improvement. But that's only if it's simultaneously accompanied by both the will to do better and the confidence that you can improve. If shame is just a trigger for self-pity and endless rumination about how you're a terrible person, the effect is exactly the opposite. Excess shame becomes debilitating.

That's why, and this relates to the points made above, I think it's actually highly ineffective to go overboard on demonizing porn use. Yes, for Christian guys, it's a sin, and I've got nothing against calling a sin, a sin. But porn frequently gets weighted with more baggage than its fellow transgressions; Jesus said simply looking at a woman with lust was adultery, and yet if we catch a young man ogling a woman's cleavage we tend to just smack him in the head and tell him to cut it out. Yet if he looks at a pair of breasts online – whoa-ho-ho! — he is sick! Filthy! Depraved! On the pathway to addiction and Hell! All this overweening smack down accomplishes is leading the porn user to withdraw, to hide his dirty secret at all costs from his friends and family, to suffer crushing guilt and anxiety, and to feel hopelessly defective, which all leads back to...more porn to soothe his feelings of stress and isolation! I truly believe that excess shame is frequently what turns casual porn use into a compulsion.

Demonizing porn also has the unfortunate side effect of seeping over into demonizing sexuality itself, which can give some men a complex about their own natural and healthy sexuality, which can in turn frustrate future sexual relationships (again, leading the man back to porn) and his relationships with women in general. Some men go so overboard with their antipathy towards porn that they can't look at a 1950s pin-up poster without being scandalized, or a scantily-clad woman at church without chastising her for being "living porn" and sabotaging his efforts to keep his mind clean.

If a loved one or someone at your church is having a problem with porn, it's okay to express disappointment, and it's okay for the man to feel some healthy shame for the way in which he's fallen short of your shared ideals. But don't heap on the scorn. Teach young men that sexuality is a healthy, wonderful thing. Teach them that their attraction to porn is a very normal consequence of their biology and brains, that they should try not to slip up, but if they do, to just get right back in the saddle and keep on trucking.

powerful anymore.

I think we can and should do something similar with porn. One of the most powerful things that can help you quit using porn is simply understanding how it affects your brain and why it's so alluring. (Parts 2 & 3 of this series go a long way in imparting this understanding.) Instead of seeming like some mysterious, menacing, unstoppable force, your attraction for porn is revealed as a perfectly natural drive that's been hijacked by a supernatural reproductive and evolutionary reinforcer.

Once you understand the science behind porn use, you can see it for what it really is: sexual junk food. You don't give your bag of potato chips a menacing aura of power. They're just potato chips. If you want to quit eating potato chips, you learn about the different ways carbs vs. protein and veggies affects your body, you throw away your potato chips, you quit going down the potato chip aisle in the grocery store, and you choose the celery stick at the party. Try doing the same thing with internet pornography.

I know some might think that's a flippant comparison, particularly if they've seen porn destroy marriages and relationships, but I think understanding the problem and making it approachable is truly the key to success here. It puts you in a proactive place where you can confidently start taking steps to kick the habit.

## ***2. Accept the Fact That You're the Kind of Guy Who Looks at Porn***

(And Understand That the Goal is to Become the Kind of Guy Who Doesn't Look at Porn)

Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do." And it's true. Cognitive psychology has shown again and again that our behavior shapes how we think and feel. Action shapes who we are.

If you look at porn on a regular basis, you need to accept the fact that you're the kind of guy who looks at porn.

That might be a hard pill to swallow, especially if porn viewing goes against your religious beliefs. But pathologizing away the fact by calling your porn viewing an addiction just makes the problem harder to overcome because you're giving yourself an external locus of control.

Acceptance doesn't mean resignation. You're not doomed to being "that guy who looks at porn" for the rest of your life. It just means you see the situation for what it is so you can start making proactive changes.

Instead of trying to "beat" the "addiction," a more helpful goal is to simply become the kind of guy who doesn't look at porn. I know. Easier said than done. But think about it this way: if you see yourself as a guy who has to try really, really hard not to look at porn, instead of as a guy who just doesn't look at porn because he's got other interests, you're in for a real slog through life.

The way you get to be the "guy who doesn't look at porn" is to start

acting like a guy who doesn't look at porn. Act as if; fake it until you make it. I'm not saying this approach will make things easy, particularly in the beginning of trying to quit, but it can help make quitting porn feel like less of a battle and more of an effort to change for the better.

### **3. Address Underlying Issues**

Sometimes guys get depressed because they use porn, and sometimes they use porn because they're depressed. If it's the latter case for you, simply quitting porn is not going to solve all your problems. So an important first step in quitting porn is to address any underlying issues you have going on. Are you simply bored? Get involved in more hobbies, social activities, and working out. You'll be amazed at how simply having a fun, full, busy life will take away your need for porn and masturbation. Has your sex life died down with your significant other? Talk to her about your needs.

It can be tempting to think that the changing of life's circumstances will be the thing that finally helps you quit. "Once I graduate and I'm a real man, then I'll be done with porn." "Once I have a regular sex life, then I'll be done with porn." "Once I get married and start a family, then I'll be done with porn." While it can be true for some guys that all they need is a single life trigger like this, expecting it to happen that way will only delay your addressing these underlying issues. If you find yourself coming up with these types of excuses, know that there's likely something else that needs to be changed in your life that you are in control of, even if it just comes down to boredom.

### **4. Believe You Can Change**

Yes, you can change. Research shows that even the most ingrained habits or traits can be modified and improved upon. But you have to believe you can change.

Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit*, points out that research suggests that the people who have the most success in changing bad habits simply believe that change is possible. The importance of belief in changing habits may explain the correlation between religious belief and how long a person stays sober when trying to quit alcohol. A study found that alcoholics who had a belief in a higher power were more likely to stay on the wagon even during stressful moments than alcoholics who didn't have that belief.

So if you're a religious guy, embrace your faith. Say your prayers, fast, read your scriptures. Along with some of the techniques provided below, they can help turn not watching porn into a permanent behavior change.

But what if you're not religious? Well, here's the thing: these same researchers found that believing in a higher power, like God, wasn't necessary. You just had to have the capacity to believe that things can get better. Being part of a group of other people who have changed a bad habit can help spur belief. You can look around the room or forum and think, "If



it worked for that guy, maybe it can work for me.”

Change is possible. You're not stuck with your bad habits, but you have to believe it in order for it to fully work.

### ***5. Don't Beat Yourself Up If and When You Backslide***

As we mentioned in previous posts, your emotions can serve as a cue to start looking at porn. Many guys will pull up a browser when they're depressed or feel down as a way to self-soothe. But the problem that many men who are trying to quit porn run into is that their setbacks make them feel down or depressed, which in turn triggers the itch to look at porn again. It's a vicious cycle.

What's more, as we noted previously, intense emotions like shame and guilt can also cause spikes in dopamine. So if you experience a lot of guilt and shame after a setback, you may be making the porn habit worse.

Just accept the fact that you may have setbacks. Maybe you won't, but most men who are trying to quit do. When those setbacks happen, don't beat yourself up or wallow in self-pity. Just recognize the setback and then get back at it again. You may even consider “parenting” yourself like a video game by setting up some sort of swift, dispassionate “punishment” for your slip-ups, like donating a few bucks to a charity you dislike, or to the political party opposite of yours. The key is to be consistent and dispassionate with your negative feedback.

### ***6. Find Ways to Conserve and Strengthen Willpower***

A big part of kicking the porn habit is resisting those impulses to watch porn when you encounter one of your behavioral cues. That takes willpower. Read our series on how to conserve and strengthen your willpower so you can say no to the itch to itch your wiener.

The cool thing is that by quitting porn, you'll strengthen your overall willpower supply, so you'll have more of this potent power to use on all the other goals in your life.

### ***7. Strengthen Your Resilience***

One thing that can help you handle setbacks and shift from an external to an internal locus of control is working on building your resilience. We did a whole series on it a few years ago that you can access for free on the site. If you'd like all the content in one place, check out our ebook version.

## **Actions**

### ***8. Get Rid of All Your Porn***

Start off with a clean slate by going through your house and computer and clearing out any porn you have. Clear out your computer's and smartphone's web history, cache, and bookmarks. If you have magazines and DVDs, throw those out too.

## **9. Hack the Habit Loop**

This is probably the most important tip, so pay special attention. The rewiring process is essentially the same as hacking the habit loop, which we wrote about a few years ago. Your goal is to identify the cues that trigger your porn surfing routine and then to substitute that routine with something else while keeping the reward the same (or similar). Each time you do that you're creating a new reward connection that can eventually become stronger than your porn routine connection.

With porn use, the reward your brain is craving is **dopamine**, so the most effective way to hack your habit loop is to replace it with something that gives you that hit. Here are some activities that produce dopamine:

- \* Eat a carby snack
- \* Exercise
- \* Play video games
- \* Take a nap
- \* Work on a goal
- \* Call a friend who can make you laugh

Obviously, some of these rewards aren't strictly healthy either, but they may constitute the lesser of two evils in your life.

### *Hacking the Habit example*

Here's an example of how hacking the habit loop works. If one of your internal cues to look at porn is feeling bored, decide that whenever a bout of boredom hits, instead of getting on the computer, where your search for porn will assuredly begin, you practice your guitar.

For more tips on how to hack the habit loop, and advice on identifying cues and substituting routines, read the article or watch the video below:

Youtube - The Power of Habit - Braking Habits

<https://youtu.be/7vubNNfhSvc>

You can also listen to in-depth podcast with Charles Duhigg about habits:

The Art of Manliness - Episode #61: The Power Of Habit With Charles Duhigg

<https://soundcloud.com/artofmanliness/episode-61-the-power-of-habit>

## **10. Have Implementation Intentions at the Ready**

An important part of hacking the habit loop is establishing implementation intentions. In a nutshell, an implementation intention is an "if-then" phrase that links a situational cue to a specific action. It's a plan of what you're going to do differently whenever you encounter one of your porn cues.

So if one of your cues is feeling depressed, an implementation intention would look something like: When I feel depressed, I will go outside and take a walk.

You may need multiple implementation intentions if you have multiple cues. It's also a good idea to have a plan for what you're going to do when you randomly stumble upon porn or a provocative image that sets off a trigger. It could be something as drastic as shutting down the computer or something as simple as immediately closing your browser. Or if you come across something on TV, you get up and leave.

Jumping up from your chair at the sight of porn may make you feel rather silly, and contradict your image of yourself as cool and rational, but it's just a way of dislodging your brain from following the well-worn groove that porn has carved out in your neurons. You've got to shake those neurons up. Don't let feeling cool and calm get in the way of improving your life.

For more on implementation intentions, check out this detailed post.

<https://www.artofmanliness.com/articles/a-formula-for-success-the-power-of-implementation-intentions/>

### ***11. Install Blocking Software on All Your Digital Devices***

Many men find putting blocking software on their devices helpful, especially in the early stages of rebooting when willpower to check porn is weakest and the habit to do it is strongest. However, it should be noted that blocking software isn't fail-proof and is easy to get around. Its main benefit is to put up a barrier or speed bump between the cue to look at porn and you actually scratching that itch. Hopefully as you start going through settings and entering in passwords to remove the block, you'll catch yourself and begin using one of your implementation intentions.

*Here are a few suggestions on how to block porn sites that you visit frequently:*

#### **a. Use Your Computer's Parental Controls**

Create a separate account on your computer for your work and then use the admin account to set up parental controls that block certain sites on the web. That speed bump might be enough for you to stop looking at porn when you get the urge. However, if you feel like you need to, have a friend create a new password for your admin account and not tell you what it is.

#### **b. Change Your Host Files**

Updating your host files on your computer simply means telling your device that your favorite porn sites live on your computer's hard drive. Because these websites don't really live on your hard drive, you'll get a "server not found" message when you try to surf to those addresses. Doesn't matter what browser you're on. I've had great success with this method to help me stop visiting time-wasting websites like HuffPo. I've had them blocked in my host files for years. In the beginning, I kept checking back to those sites out of habit, but eventually I stopped, and now I don't even have the itch to visit them any more.

While this method is reversible, it's kind of a pain in the butt to change. Any time you want to visit your blocked sites, you'll have to go through the rigmarole below and "comment out" your added lines (add a # to the beginning of the lines) in your host file.

Here's how it works, using Facebook.com as an example:

#### Mac

Open up Terminal (find it using the Spotlight tool) Type `sudo nano /etc/hosts` Enter your computer's password To block your time-wasting sites, type in the following: `127.0.0.1 facebook.com` Repeat step 4 until you've entered all your time-wasting sites Save the host file by hitting `ctrl+o` and then the return key Flush your computer's cache by entering the following line: `sudo dscacheutil -flushcache`

#### Windows (Windows 8/7/Vista/XP)

Open Notepad and click File → Open Open up the following file: `C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\DRIVERS\ETC\HOSTS` To block your time-wasting sites, type in the following: `127.0.0.1 facebook.com www.facebook.com` Repeat step 3 until you've entered all your time-wasting sites Save the file and close

#### Linux

If you're using Linux, you're probably a geek and don't need some guy who blogs about manliness to tell you how to edit your host file.

#### c. Web Filters

Web filters can be installed on your computer or even wireless router so that porn sites are blocked when you try to visit them. There are several free options that work well.

#### OpenDNS.

It's free. Just install it on your wireless router and select the level of filtering you want. Anytime you try to visit a site that's been categorized as "pornographic," you'll get a message that says, "This domain is blocked." Setting up can be tricky. For some reason, OpenDNS only works intermittently on my Chrome browser. Just tried visiting `playboy.com` and was able to get through on Chrome, but it's blocked in Safari.

#### K9 Protection.

Another popular free filter. Though many guys report that it's not all that helpful unless you give the password to somebody else so you're not tempted to turn it off. Another trick could be coming up with such a long and random string of characters (we're talking 50+ here) that the hassle of entering in the password keeps you from turning it off.

#### Net Nanny.

Net Nanny is a paid web filtering service that's pretty robust. It can block access to pornographic sites not just on your computer, but also your wirelessly connected devices.

#### Self Control for Mac

It's a free open-source Mac app that allows you to block sites for a pre-determined amount of time (or indefinitely). Until the timer expires, you'll be unable to access those sites — even if you restart your computer or delete the app.

#### Cold Turkey.

A similar app for Windows. It's pretty robust and could even be used to block time-wasting sites.

#### d. Blocking Sites On Mobile Devices

##### Parental Controls

Just use your smartphone's or mobile device's parental controls to block the sites that give you trouble. If you need to, have a friend change your password so you can't change it for a while.

##### How to Block Sites on Your Apple Devices

<https://www.imore.com/how-block-specific-websites-being-accessed-safari-iphone-and-ipad>

##### How to Block Sites on Your Android Devices

There are number of parental control apps in the Google Play Store that will allow you to block certain sites.

### **12. Don't Go It Alone: Get an Accountability Partner**

A common tactic to beating any habit is getting an accountability partner — someone you report to when you have a slip-up. Accountability partners add a small sting of healthy social shame so that you're persuaded not to look at porn because you don't want to fess up to it. They're also there to offer support and encouragement so that you get back into the saddle.

Pick someone you trust and have a strong relationship with. Could be a brother or a friend. Each day, or each week, just let him know how you did. It can be an embarrassing topic to bring up in the first place, so you'll have to courage-up and know that thousands of other men are dealing with the same struggle.

#### **Accountability Software**

If you can't trust yourself to self-disclose, consider installing accountability software on your computer that sends an email to a close friend or confidant whenever you visit a questionable site. The specter of being watched can keep you from visiting your favorite porn sites.

##### X3 Watch.

There are both free and premium versions. Works across devices and operating systems. With the free version, you can pick up to two accountability partners. Each week they'll get an email report of the questionable sites you've visited. If you upgrade to the premium version, they'll get instant notifications. Just FYI: this software is associated with xxxchurch.com, a Christian ministry that's dedicated to fighting porn.

##### CovenantEyes.

Similar service to X3 Watch, except it's \$9.99 a month. Again, for those who are care, CovenantEyes has a Christian angle to it.

##### Join a Forum.

Other men who have successfully kicked the porn habit have credited the myriad of forums on the web that are dedicated to helping men

stop using porn. They swap stories on the problems porn have caused, what they did to kick the habit, and the positives that have come from quitting porn. They also find support for those times they backslide.

#### r/NoFap.

It's a Reddit subreddit and is the largest quitting porn forum on the web. These 123K "fapstronauts" ("fap" is slang for masturbating) track their progress with not masturbating to porn (or without it) and offer support for others who want to do the same.

#### r/pornfree.

Similar to NoFap but with a focus on breaking the porn habit.

#### Reboot Nation.

Started and operated by a guy named Gabe who suffered from porn-induced ED and cured it after he eliminated porn from his life. Men who want to stop porn can start journals in the forum to track their progress and get advice and support from other members. Gabe also has lots of resources on the forum about the effects of porn.

#### Your Brain Rebalanced.

Another place where people trying to quit porn can start a journal to track their progress and get support from other members. They break down journals by age groups so you can see what porn-induced problems men your age might face and what they did to overcome them.

At a certain point in your progress, it may be useful to stop visiting these forums because they simply serve as a reminder of pornography. ( Don't think of a pink elephant! ) Remember, the ultimate goal is to become the kind of person who simply doesn't look at porn. Visiting these sites may reinforce your self-identity as a guy who has to try really, really hard not to look at porn.

### **13. Track Progress (Or Not)**

Much like alcoholics do, many self-described porn addicts track the number of days since they last used porn. Being able to see how far you've progressed can certainly act as motivation to keep chugging on. Apps like \ Chain Calendar , or Joe's Goals are great ways to track your progress of being porn free.

But like visiting quitting porn forums, there may come a moment in your progress when you'll want to quit tracking because it's no longer useful and continues to reinforce the idea that you're a guy who looks at porn, but has to try really hard not to.

### **14. Fast and Exercise**

If you're experiencing problems linked to dulled dopamine sensitivity due to overconsumption of porn, research suggests that fasting and exercise can help replenish them. In a study on obese rats, researchers found that dopamine receptors increased when the rats intermittently fasted or went without food for a period of time. It might not hurt to give intermittent fasting a try to help your reboot along. On top of possibly replenishing

damaged dopamine receptors, fasting is an exercise in willpower, which can help strengthen your willpower to say no to porn. A simple way to implement intermittent fasting is to begin your fast at 7 or 8 PM and then skip breakfast and don't eat until lunch. From 12PM until 7PM you can eat.

Strenuous anaerobic exercise has also been shown to have a strengthening effect on dopamine receptors. Strenuous anaerobic exercise would be things like lifting heavy weights or doing HIIT or CrossFit. If you're not already, start adding exercise into your routine to help with your effort to reboot. Exercise is also a fantastic release of boredom, tension, and stress – if you sweat out these emotions at the gym, you'll likely feel less need to do so through porn and masturbation.

## Conclusion

I hope you found this series on the science of pornography useful or at least interesting. For those of you who have been wanting to kick the porn habit but have had trouble, I hope we provided some new insights on why it's been a struggle; understanding why porn is so alluring and why you have the habit in the first place can go a long way in removing some of the psychological power that porn has over you. If you're looking for more information on porn's effect on the brain, I highly recommend going over to Gary Wilson's site, [YourBrainOnPorn.com](http://YourBrainOnPorn.com) or picking up his ebook on Amazon. It's only \$5. Wilson's is by far the best book on porn I read during the course of the research; there's no religious slant or over-the-top rhetoric. Just helpful information.

If you don't think porn is wrong, and don't personally have a problem with it, I hope you still found this information interesting. Our culture's view of porn tends to be one-dimensional and it's always a good exercise to look at the other side of things. Just as we try to educate folks about the possible drawbacks of other vices like alcohol or tobacco so that they can make better, more informed choices about their use of those products, we should start doing so with pornography. Even if you don't have a problem with porn, you might know someone who does, and it's good for parents to openly talk to their kids about it so it's not something they mindlessly fall into.

At the end of the day, that should really be the goal for all of us: to approach the use of porn in our lives as mindfully as possible.

## References

Men and Porn: An Introduction

Men and Porn part2 Why is the pull of porn so Strong

