

Urge surfing

One way to cope with cravings is by fully feeling and acknowledging the feeling. This technique is called 'urge surfing'.

Like ocean waves, urges are usually small when they start, grow in size and then break up and fade away. You can imagine yourself as a surfer who will ride the wave, staying on top of it until it crests, breaks, and turns into less powerful, foamy surf.



There are 3 steps:

1

Learn what a craving feels like for you

Do this by sitting in a comfortable chair with your feet flat on the floor and your hands in a comfortable position. Take a few deep breaths and focus your attention inward focusing on your breathing.

Allow your attention to wander through your body. Notice where in your body you experience the craving and what the sensations are like. Notice each area where you experience the urge and tell yourself what you are experiencing.

2

Focus on one area where you are experiencing the urge

Notice the exact sensations in that area. For example, do you feel hot, cold, tingly or numb? Are your muscles tense or relaxed? How large an area is involved? Notice the changes that occur in the sensation.

"Well, my mouth feels dry and parched. There is tension in my lips and tongue. I keep swallowing. As I exhale, I can imagine the smell and buzz of speed."

Does the sensation have a colour, a shape, a texture?

Now focus your attention back on your breathing.

3

Move on to another part of your body that is experiencing the craving

Pay attention to and describe to yourself the changes that occur in the sensations. Notice how the urge comes and goes. Repeat this process as you move from one part of the body to another. Continue to come back to focusing your attention on your breathing.

Many people, when they urge surf, notice that after a few minutes the craving shrinks and disappears. The purpose of this exercise, however, is not to make the craving go away but to experience the craving in a new way.

If you practise urge surfing, you will become familiar with your cravings and learn how to ride them out until they go away.