# Crack smoking & self-care

Smoking crack delivers a high dose of cocaine to your brain quickly. The higher you go up the harder you come down resulting in a strong urge to use again.

Managing your dose and frequency of use can be difficult, but is not impossible. Setting boundaries for your session can help you stay in control, improve your experience and help reduce the comedown. Below are some tips.



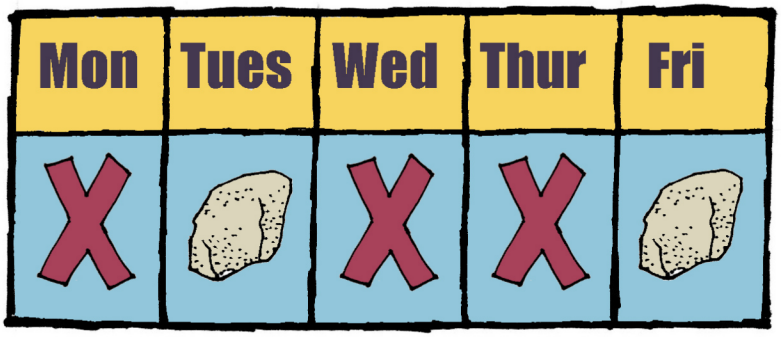

TECHNIQUE

- Break your rock into pieces – this helps the crack last longer and reduces your tolerance over the session.
- Use a small flame – more efficient crack delivery and protects your lungs from heat damage.
- Inhale slowly, then exhale immediately  (holding in won't get you more high and can burn your lungs).

TIMING

- Regular breaks from crack use gives your mind and body a rest and helps keep your tolerance down.
- Perhaps there certain are days in the week it is easier not to use. If you can make this a routine and plan in advance what to do on those days, it is easier to stick to.
- Start using crack later in the day – use going to bed as a break to your session.

- Set limits in advance – this can be difficult, but it is easier if you buy smaller amounts at a time rather than getting enough to last a few days and it all going in a binge




"With support I've now started reducing the days that I'm using and reducing the amount on the days that I do use as well."

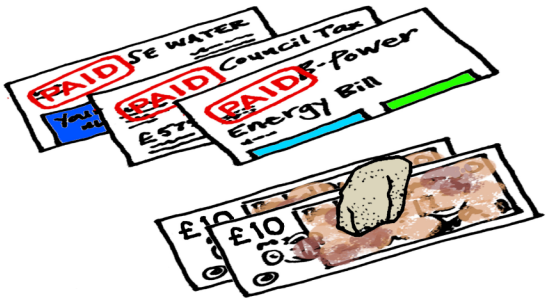
SETTING

- Where you smoke can impact how you experience it. Find somewhere you feel comfortable, with people you trust.
- Pause between doses and use the cocaine energy to chat to friends or do activities.

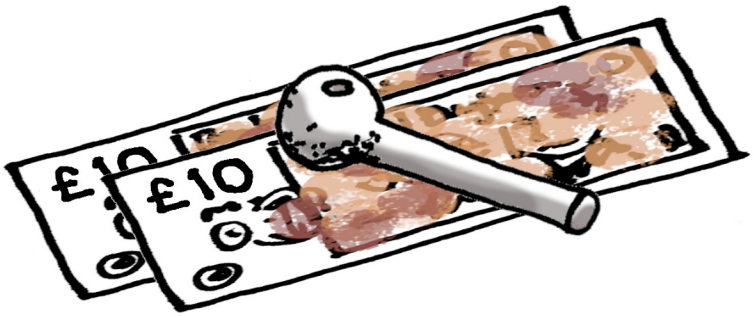
SCORING

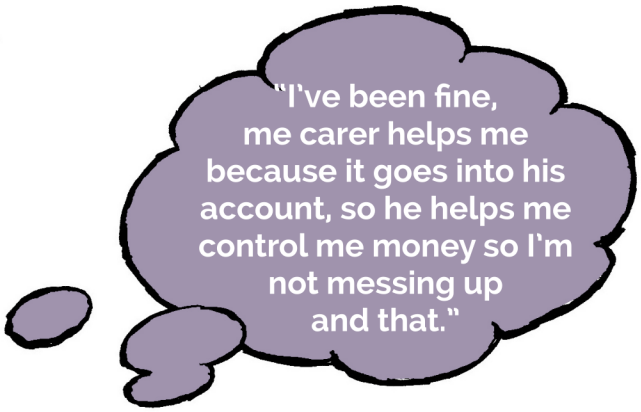
- Wait for 30mins after finishing your rock before deciding if you want to buy more.
- If you need food or supplies, have pets to feed or bills to pay, aim to sort these out before the start of a session.

"Surround yourself with decent people. Don't do it in public, blatant in the city centre ... go somewhere out of the way just to do it quietly on your own where you're not gonna get bothered by people. Just little things like that, that will keep you safe and keep you out of handcuffs."



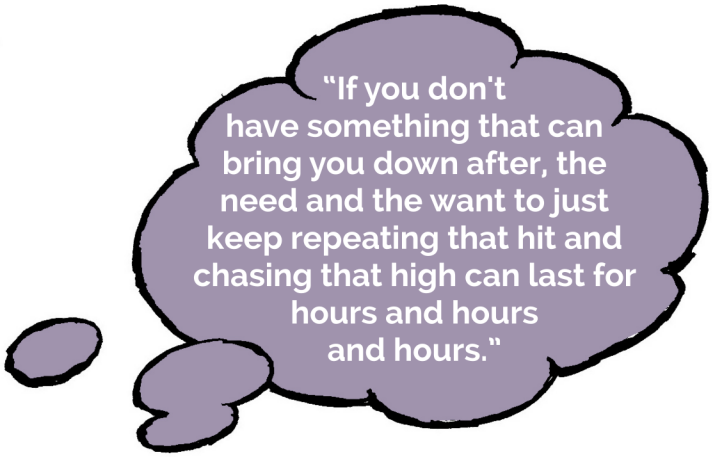
- If you have more money than you want to spend on a session – consider how best to protect it (ie, giving to someone you trust, leaving bank card at home).

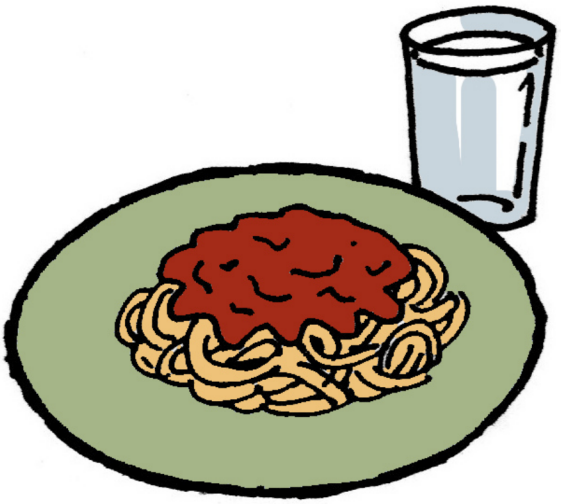


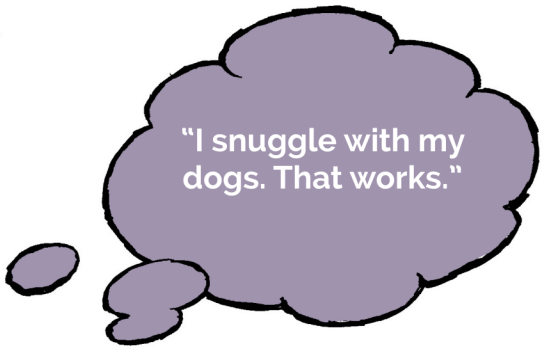

SELF CARE

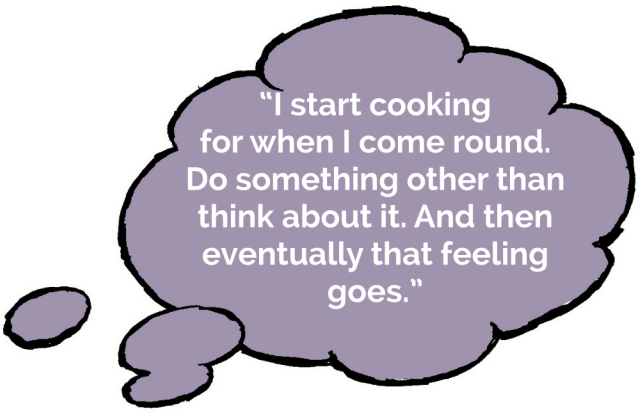
- Stay hydrated – crack use raises the body temperature. Drinking water reduces the risk of your body overheating and your lips cracking.
- EAT before using. Food with protein can reduce the post-crack crash.
- Sleep is crucial self-care. Make sure you have on hand what you need to help you sleep before starting a session.
- Something to occupy your hands – like a stress ball – can help avoid compulsive skin picking.
- Chewing gum can help prevent chewing the insides of the mouth or grinding teeth.



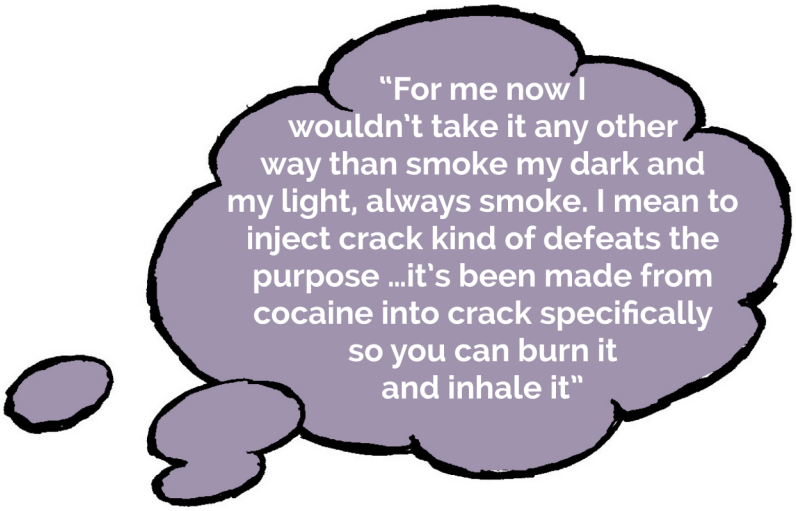



- Don't be alarmed if you feel depressed after a session as this can be normal. Sleep and food can help.



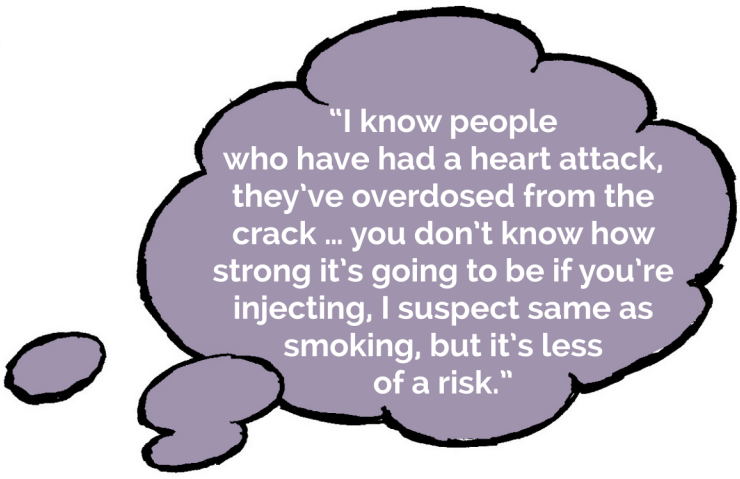

- If you are injecting, consider switching to smoking instead. This will protect your veins and reduce the risk of HIV and hepatitis C transmission.
- Watch out for crack overdose. Signs – hot and sweaty skin, irregular heartbeat, chest pain, severe headaches. Stop using crack, and seek urgent medical advice (A&E) if this continues.




**999**

IMMEDIATELY IF ANYONE HAS

- Rigid, jerking limbs
- Severe chest pain
- Seizures
- Unconscious or in-and-out of consciousness
- No pulse or not breathing




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SIPP
SAFE INHALATION PIPE PROVISION

This leaflet is informed by people who use crack. Quotes are from participants of the SIPP (Safe inhalation pipe provision study). To find out more see: https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/sipp