

BOBCAT PRESS PRESENTS

THE
Joint Rolling
HANDBOOK



tips, tricks and techniques

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THE
Joint Rolling
HANDBOOK

EXPERT
EDITION



6

Rolling 

12



MagicCarpet 

14

Mixes 

23

Roots 

24



Crossroads 

32



Diamond 

35



Tulip 

43



Windmill 

46



Cannabis Cigar 

53

is it safe?

59

is it legal?

8



Knee Trembler

10



Saturday Night Special

17



Secret Agent

20



Joker

27



29



Flaming Backflip

38



40



Nosecone

49



50



62



Contacts



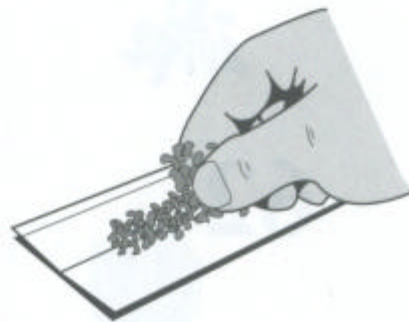
Rolling

MOST PEOPLE READING THIS HANDBOOK WILL BE WELL PRACTISED IN THE ART OF ROLLING A DECENT, SMOKEABLE JOINT. HOWEVER, FOR THOSE WITH MORE THUMBS THAN FINGERS AND A ZERO-RATING ON THE KUDOS SCALE, HERE ARE A FEW BASIC TIPS...



The mix is perhaps the most important part of the joint (see page 14). Make sure the consistency is even and break-up or remove any lumps or 'woody' bits

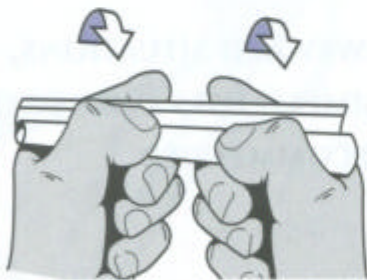
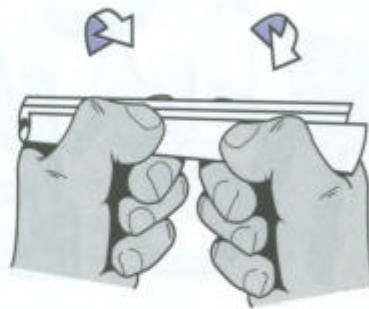
The shape of the finished joint is determined by how you distribute the mix over the papers. Many of the numbers in this book are cone-shaped. Cones tend to smoke more smoothly than straight joints but are slightly harder to roll.





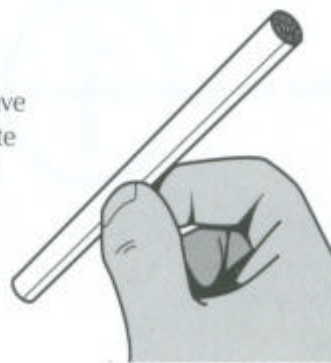
Putting the roach in BEFORE rolling is highly recommended and saves time and hassle (see page 23). You're also more likely to get a perfect fit.

Now for the 'tricky' bit. Pick everything up and start in the middle, rolling outwards. Let your thumbs do most of the work and give support and pressure with your forefingers. You should start to feel the mix firming inside the paper.



When you have an even consistency tuck down the facing paper edge with the tips of your thumbs, wrap the excess paper around the joint, wet the glue and seal that puppy!

The best joints are firm but not so tight you have to bust a lung to draw smoke. Loose joints taste rough, burn too fast and have a nasty habit of setting light to clothing and furniture.

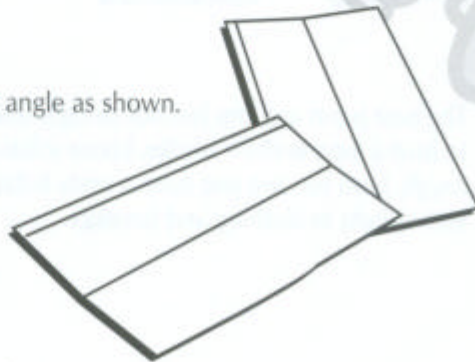


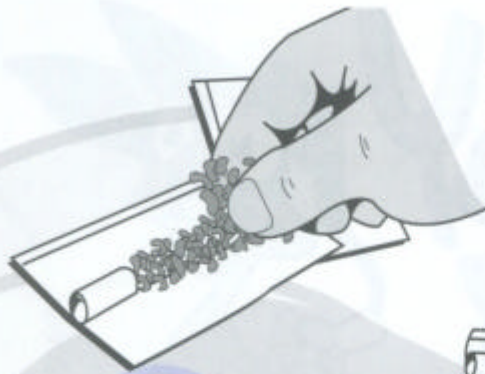


PERFECT FOR ROLLING IN AWKWARD SITUATIONS,
THE TREMBLER IS SPEEDY, SIMPLE, USES ONLY TWO
PAPERS AND COMES HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
A CLASSIC QUICKIE.

Stick two papers together at a 45° angle as shown.

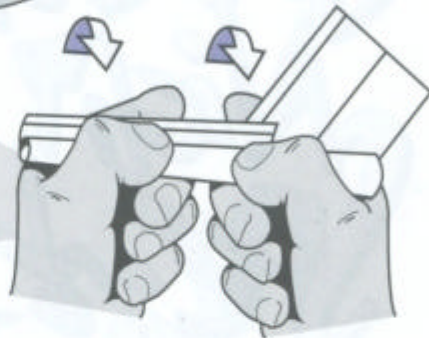
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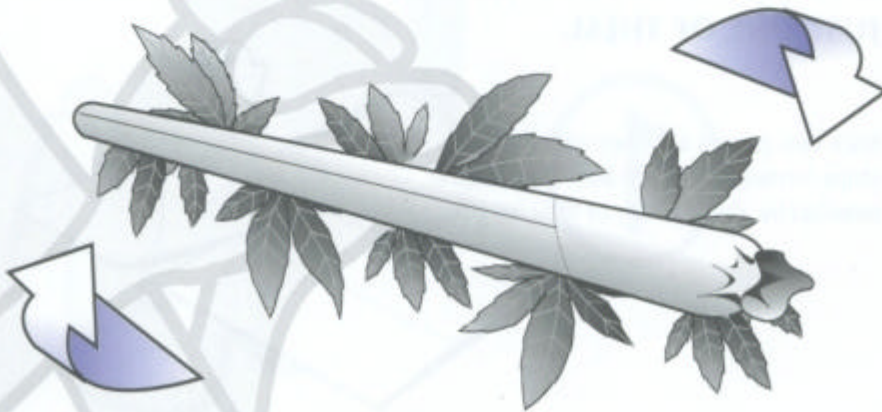


Add the mix and the roach. The layout of the papers makes the Trembler perfect for a cone shaped creation.

When rolling the joint, stick down the first paper ...



... before wetting the second and then wrapping it around to seal the smoking end of the joint. Voila!





Saturday Night Special



AN UNDISPUTED CLASSIC, WELL KNOWN TO MOST SMOKERS, THE SPECIAL IS EASY TO ROLL AND TOLERATES CLUMSY FINGERS. EVERYONE HAS A FAVOURITE WAY OF ROLLING THE SPECIAL—THIS IS JUST ONE OF THEM.

Stick two papers together with the gum strip forming a straight line. They should overlap by about a fifth of their length.

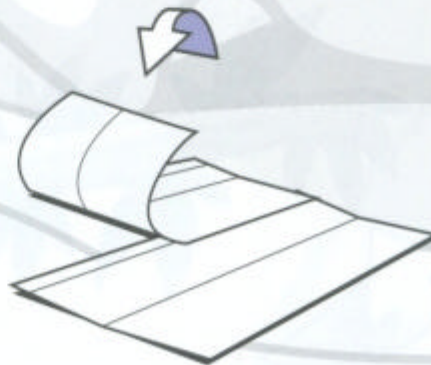


Magic Carpet



fLY INTO FANTASY ON THE AXMINSTER OF YOUR DREAMS! POPULAR IN NORTH AFRICA, WHERE A CIGARETTE SEGMENT IS SUBSTITUTED FOR THE ROACH, THE CARPET IS IDEAL FOR THOSE THAT LIKE 'EM SHORT AND FAT.

Stick two papers together to form a square with a gum strip along one side.

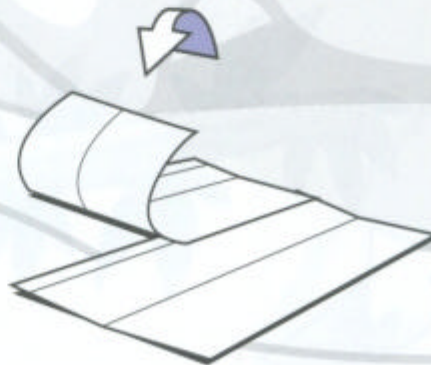


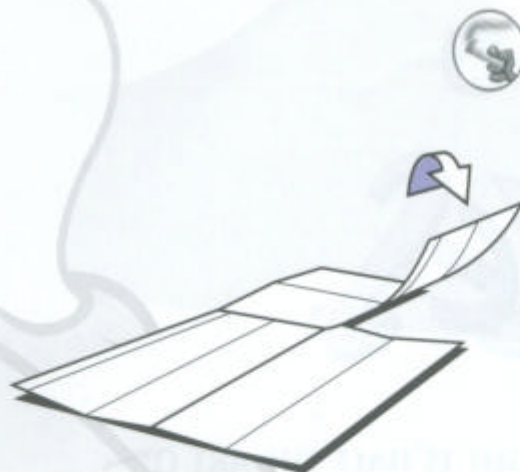
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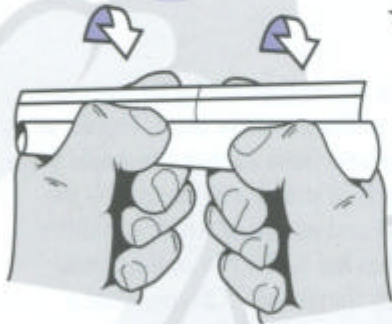
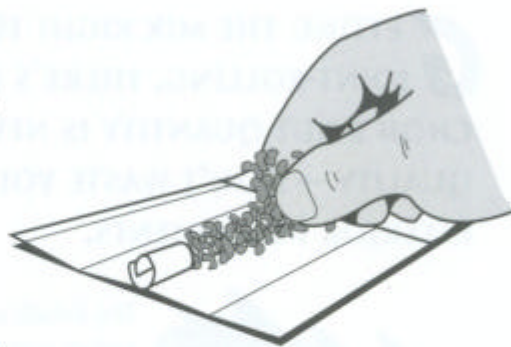




Take a third paper and stick it, face down, to the end of the first two.

2

There is plenty of space for mix so it's best to trim away any excess paper (paper never got anyone stoned).



Roll the joint as normal then twist the end to secure the third paper. Grip that pile and prepare for take-off!

4





Mixes

GETTING THE MIX RIGHT IS HALF THE ART OF JOINT-ROLLING. THERE'S PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR CHOICE BUT QUANTITY IS NEVER A SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY — DON'T WASTE YOUR LUNGS ON INFERIOR INGREDIENTS.



The female's flower-tops are by far the most potent part of the cannabis plant. Thanks to cannabis farmers from all over the world there are thousands of strains and varieties — the quality, strength and nature of which can differ enormously. This has led to the rise of the 'weed *connoisseur*' who will say things like: "Oh my, what a subtle Sativa!" and talk about 'bouquet' and 'body'.

Imported bud is often force-dried and compressed for storage or transit, this can simply be broken up and crumbled into the mix. Better quality bud which has been properly cured and stored should be handled with care to protect the delicate THC glands. Use sharp scissors to break-up the bud and store the remainder in a cool, dark place. Discard any seeds or stems as they contain little THC and are harsh to smoke. Fresh bud may develop mould if stored incorrectly and (painful as it may be) this should be thrown away as it can damage the lungs and cause infection.

Bud is often combined with tobacco, leaf or another herbal smoking mixture to allow it to *breathe* in the joint. The numerous Skunk or Nederweid varieties which are genetically bred for extreme potency should be used sparingly until the user is familiar with, and can predict, their effects.



Cannabis leaf is a common ingredient in commercial weed. If you can stand the slightly acrid taste, some leaf – especially that from the top of a flowering female plant – can be surprisingly potent. Only use well-cured leaves and remove any stems before crumbling them into the mix. The larger ‘sun’ leaves from around the lower part of the plant are too harsh for use in joint-rolling and are best left for the water pipe.

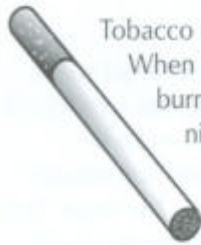


Hashish comes in many different forms from hard and rocky Lebanese to soft and oily Nepalese. As with all cannabis there is a huge variation in quality. The very best hashish is made by rubbing the sticky resin from flowering-tops. Most however, contains processed plant material and binding agents and the worst is adulterated with chemicals. Hash is normally heated with a flame, crumbled into a powder and then mixed with tobacco or herbal smoking material. Good hashish should catch light and crumble with ease. Alternatively, very soft hash can be broken up with fingernails or rolled into thin ‘sausages’ and placed along the length of the joint.

NEVER over-fill joints with hash, or use large chunks – it will burn badly and much will be wasted. A *brief* spell in the microwave will give you a perfect hashish and tobacco blend.



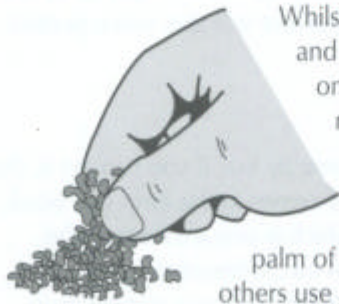
Genuine resin oil is very hard to come by but, if you can get it, the real McCoy is incredibly potent. It comes in the form of a black, brown or transparent oily fluid which is smeared across the rolling papers or blended into the mix. Consumers in the Netherlands should be aware that the country’s relaxed drug policy does not extend to this substance.



Tobacco is the main ingredient in virtually all joints rolled in Europe. When used with hashish or strong bud it allows the cannabis to burn properly and improves the taste of the smoke. The nicotine rush also adds a certain quality to the smoke and speeds the onset of effects. The well-known problems of addiction, respiratory disease, horrible death and ashtray breath (see *HEALTH* page 27) have led many to reject the 'evil weed' entirely. Non-smokers who find it difficult to stop smoking joints may have unknowingly picked up a hard-to-drop nicotine habit. Time to strap on the patches or succumb to the loving arms of the great god Marlboro...



Commercially available legal highs have come a long way in the last few years. Most are derived from psychoactive plants which have been used for centuries. Although claims of effects comparable to the 'real thing' are usually false there are many genuinely psychoactive and therapeutic herbs which can be used as ingredients in a smoking mix. Legal smoking mixtures can make a good alternative to tobacco and are an option for smokers seeking a buzz under cannabis prohibition. There is some evidence that certain herbs can amplify the effects of more psycho-active substances. Always follow the instructions supplied and remember that 'herbal' and 'legal' do not necessarily mean safe.



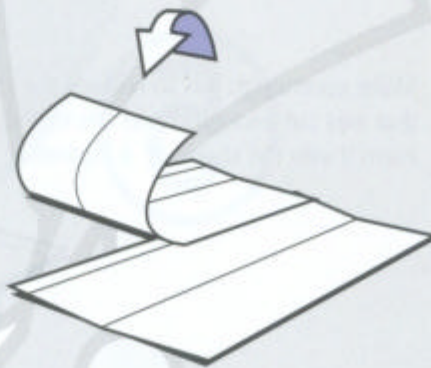
Whilst the ingredients are a matter of choice, taste and availability, a good mix is always a consistent one. Uneven mixes burn erratically, often resulting in ruined teeshirts, collapsing joints and wasted smoke. Making your mix before adding it to the joint is a good plan. Some experienced smokers make the mix in the palm of their hand and then flip this onto the papers, others use a mixing bowl.

SECRET AGENT



JOINT SMOKING OFTEN DEMANDS A LITTLE DISCRETION. IF YOU'RE IN THE NEED FOR A CLANDESTINE TOKE, ROLL YOURSELF A SECRET AGENT AND REMEMBER TO STAY DOWNWIND.

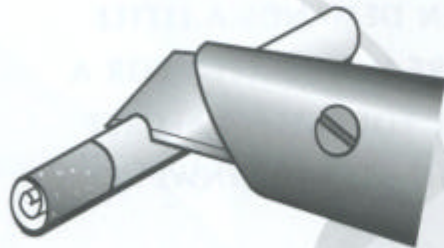
Stick two papers together to make a square with a gum strip along one side.





Take a cigarette and remove the filter by squeezing at its base and rotating between finger and thumb. Eventually enough of the filter will show for you to pull it out.

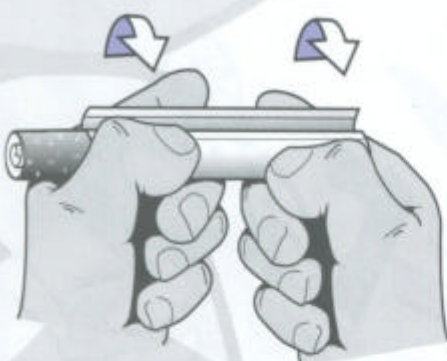
Replace the filter with a roach of the same size and shape.



Cut the cigarette in two, as cleanly as possible about 1cm from the roach.

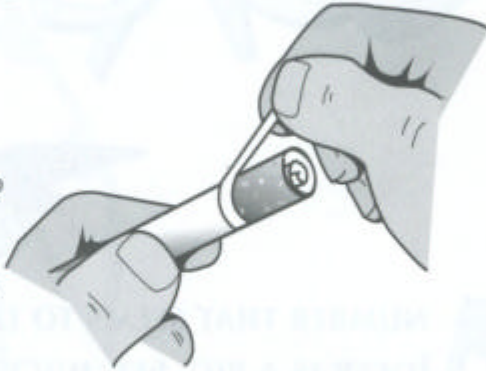
Make up enough mix to replace the tobacco that was cut away and add this to the papers. Form it into the shape of a cigarette.



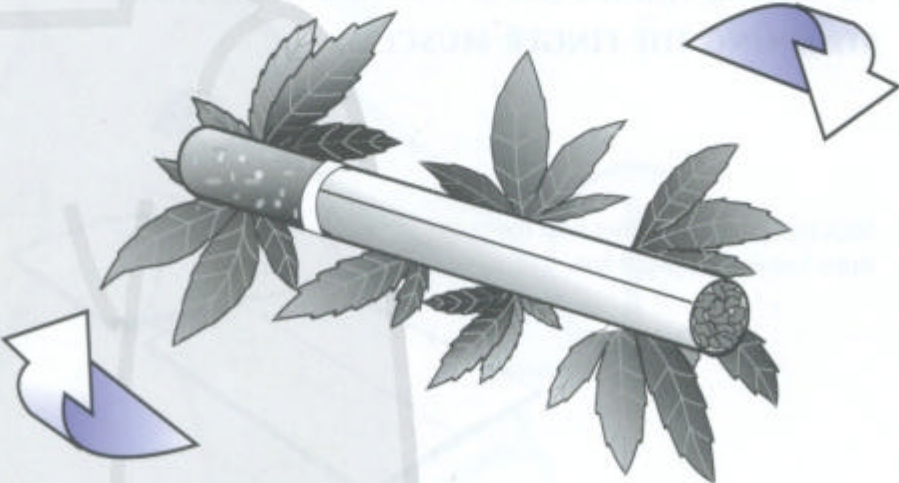


Roll the joint with the "filter" protruding from the end.

You may need to secure the bogus filter with a gummed strip torn from another paper.



Remember, the walls have ears. No really, they actually do....

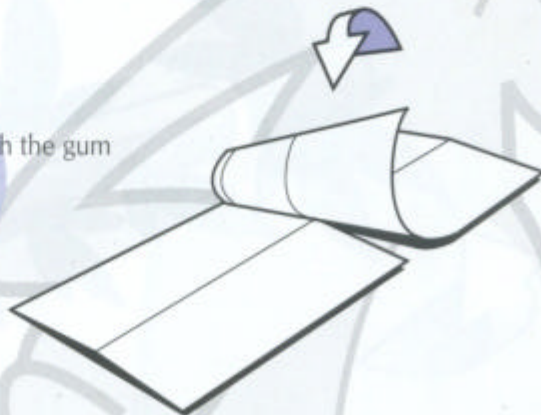


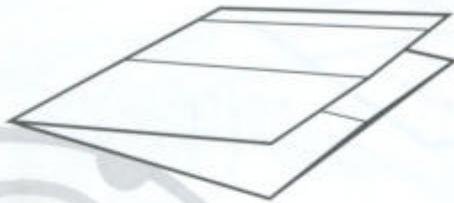
JOKER



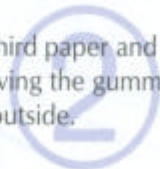
A NUMBER THAT SEEMS TO LAST FOREVER, THE JOKER IS A BIG, FAT, JUICY CONE GUARANTEED TO SPREAD A GRIN FROM EAR-TO-EAR WITHOUT STRAINING THE FINGER MUSCLES.

Stick two papers together with the gum strips forming a straight line.

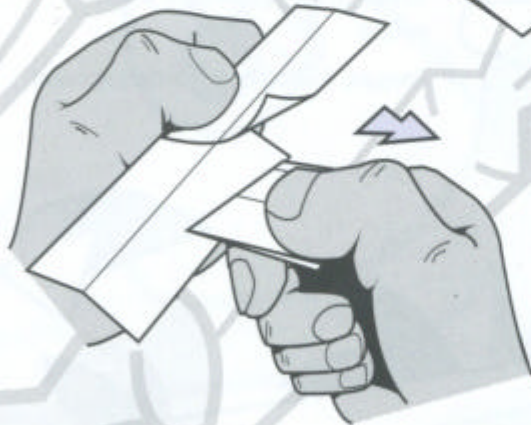
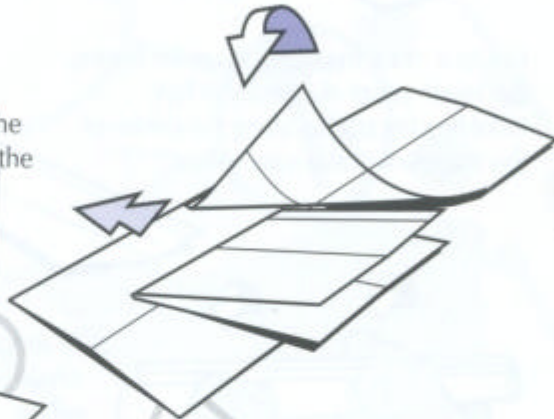




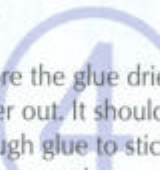
Take a third paper and fold it in two, leaving the gummed strip on the outside.



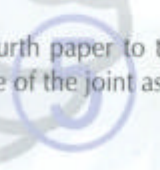
Wet the glue and sandwich the folded paper firmly between the other two as shown.

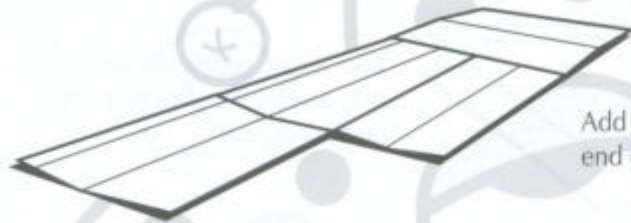


Before the glue dries pull the paper out. It should have left enough glue to stick the others together.



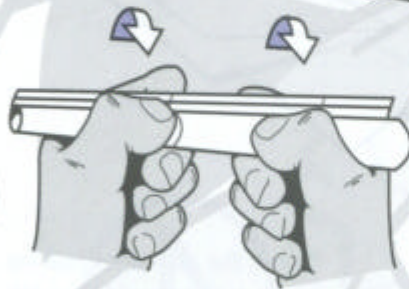
Stick a fourth paper to the lower, right-hand edge of the joint as shown.





Add a fifth paper to the end of the joint as shown.

Create a more triangular shape by tearing the fourth paper diagonally in half. Refolding the papers along the centre of this triangle will also ease rolling.



To support the extra length use the whole of the forefingers when rolling.

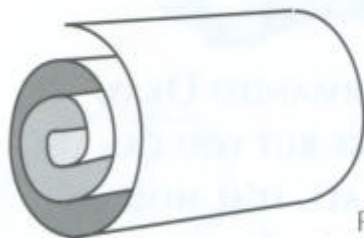
Prepare for top-notch entertainment!





Roaches

ROACHES DON'T FILTER THE SMOKE BUT THEY DO ALLOW IT TO FLOW. A GOOD ROACH STOPS THE JOINT FROM DISSOLVING IN YOUR MOUTH OR BURNING YOUR LIPS WHEN YOU CHASE THAT LAST ELUSIVE TOKE. HERE'S HOW TO MAKE A GOOD ONE.



The shape and size of roach is down to personal taste. Wide roaches can make the smoke rough where as tight ones tend to clog, so somewhere in the middle is probably best.

Plain, unprinted card is healthier as some printing inks emit poisonous fumes when burnt. An excellent variation on the simple tube roach can be made from a 2cm by 7cm strip of thin card. Tightly roll the card at a slight angle so that the end of the roach is conical. Roll your joint with the roach already inside (conical end facing outward) and let the card spring out a little to give the smoke room to flow. A cone roach stops any meteor-like tarballs from singeing your gullet.

Some smokers prefer to insert the roach after making the joint. Others find that putting the roach in before rolling is less fiddly and makes for a neater fit and a speedier roll. Go with what suits you (but the last way's best).

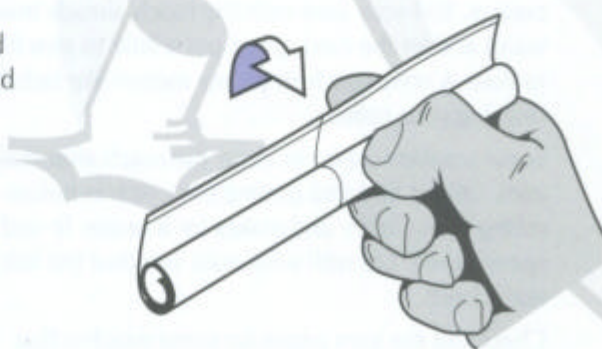
Check out the joint pages for some roaches that do more than just act as mouthpieces.





↑ THREE-WAY HEAVEN FOR GOURMANDS! OKAY, OKAY, SO IT'S FIDDLY TO MAKE BUT YOU CAN USE IT AGAIN AND AGAIN. BEST OF ALL, IT'LL HOLD THREE OF YOUR FAVOURITE NUMBERS.

Make a roach the length and diameter of a thick pencil and seal it with papers or tape.





Cut two large, circular holes either side of the first roach, about 3cm from its end.

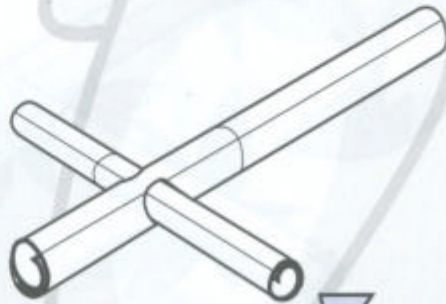
Make a second roach, half the length and slightly narrower than the first.



Cut the biggest possible hole you can make through the centre of the second roach.

Join the two roaches by inserting the second tube through the hole you made in the first. Rotate the smaller tube until the central smoke hole is in line with the larger tube.

If you can see daylight through all of the tubes then you've cracked it.





Health

CANNABIS IS A NON-ADDICTIVE AND (BY MOST ACCOUNTS) PRETTY HARMLESS SUBSTANCE. STILL, IF YOU'RE INHALING SMOKE OF ANY KIND YOUR LUNGS WON'T LIKE IT. THERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MINIMISE THE RISK.



The dangers of tobacco are familiar to virtually everyone. Nicotine is a **HIGHLY** addictive substance. Avoid tobacco entirely if you are not already hooked. If you do use cigarettes, choose a low-tar brand and 'cook-out' some of the tar and nicotine by toasting them over a flame (see page 29). If you can cope with the taste, use cannabis leaf or a herbal smoking mix instead. Some people like to roll with raspberry leaves.



Cannabis contains more tar than tobacco and hits the throat and lungs at a higher temperature. However, there is little evidence that any significant damage is caused with the small amounts normally smoked.

Good quality, pure herbal cannabis is generally easiest on the lungs. Potency also plays a part, the stronger the weed the less you need to smoke, in theory at any rate. Avoid smoking seeds and low-grade hashish which may contain dangerous additives.



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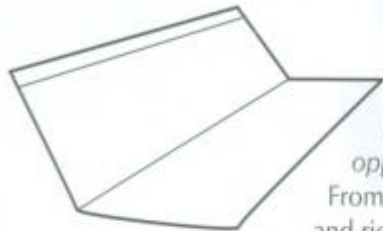


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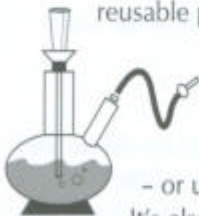
Paper produces tar when burnt, and it doesn't get you high. Basically, the less you use the better. The very light-weight varieties are ideal. Always tear off any excess and try rolling in reverse (see *opposite page*) to use the absolute minimum. From the multitude of skins available, wheat straw and rice papers are deemed the healthiest – although we're not exactly sure why.

If you are going to smoke but want to protect your health, then smoke as little as possible. In real life that might mean smoking one strong joint rather than three mediocre ones. Use as little paper and tobacco as possible and don't waste your lungs on poor-quality ingredients.

To further minimise the risks keep the following advice in mind: don't inhale too deeply; don't hold smoke for too long; make sure the room is properly ventilated; avoid 'novelty' smoking (shotguns, blow-backs etc.); leave a tobacco 'buffer' at the end of your joint and don't smoke down to the roach. The last quarter of a cigarette or tobacco-based joint contains more nasties than the first three quarters.

Standard cigarette filters don't work too well in joints but the reusable plastic tar traps are worth a try as they can considerably reduce your tar intake. Smoking cannabis through a water pipe or *bong* removes a lot of the carcinogens present in cannabis smoke. A good, multi-chambered bong will also cool the smoke making it easier on your throat. A downside – or upside for some – is that you'll end up inhaling more smoke.

It's also been suggested that as the pipe also absorbs some of the psychoactive elements in cannabis smoke, you might perversely inhale more carcinogens to get the same high. Perhaps the most effective way of reducing the health risk from smoking cannabis is to use a *vapouriser*. Vapourisers work by *heating* rather than burning cannabis to release a THC vapour. This method produces minimal smoke and gives a reputedly 'purer' high.

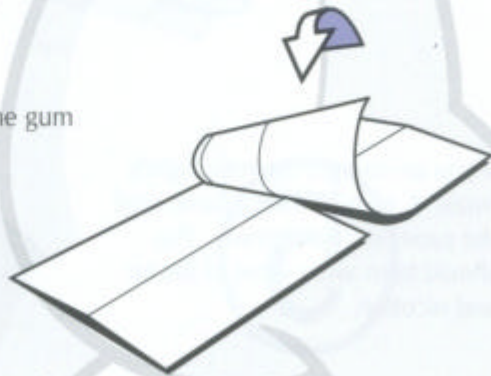


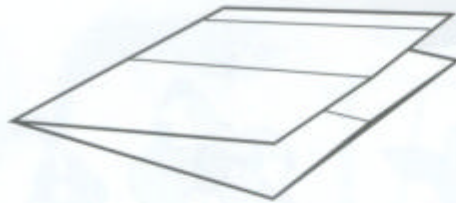
Flaming Backflip



GUARANTEED TO IMPRESS WITH IT'S PYROTECHNICS, THE BACKFLIP MAKES USE OF THE MINIMUM OF PAPER AND IS EASY-GOING ON THE LUNGS. PREPARE FOR INSTANT KUDOS OR TOTAL EMBARRASSMENT. THIS IS A TRICKY ONE.

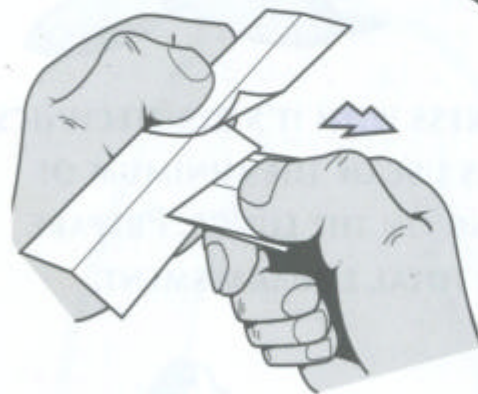
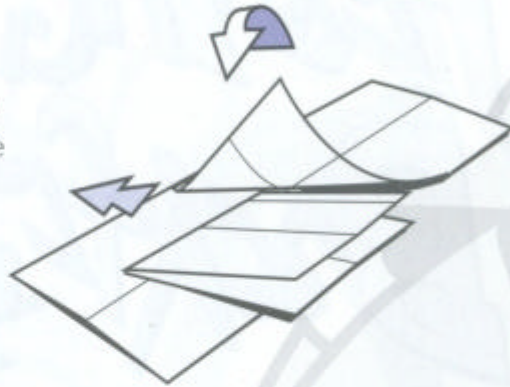
1
Stick two papers together with the gum strips forming a straight line.





Take a third paper and fold it in half, leaving the gummed strip on the outside.

Wet the gum and sandwich the folded paper firmly between the other two skins, as shown.



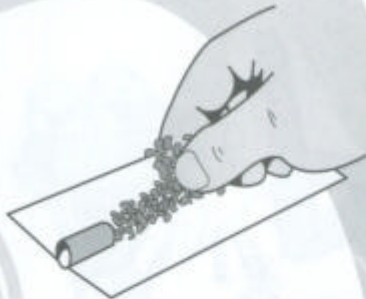
Before the gum dries, carefully pull out the third paper. It should leave enough gum behind to stick the other two papers together.

If you are using a cigarette, lightly 'roast' it over a moving flame until the paper starts to brown. This should burn away some of the tar and nicotine.

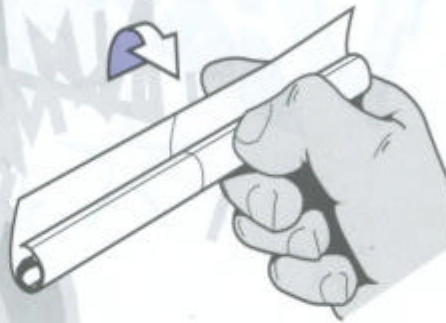




Add the mix to the REVERSE of the papers, keeping the gummed strip facing DOWN and AWAY from you.



Roll the joint in reverse with the glue on the OUTSIDE. Seal the joint, leaving the excess paper on the outside. This may take some practise.



Now for the finale. As soon as you have sealed the joint, light the excess paper from the roach end. Hold the joint upright and let the flame burn away the unwanted paper as it travels up the joint. If you are now yoda-like in your rolling skills the joint should self-ignite.

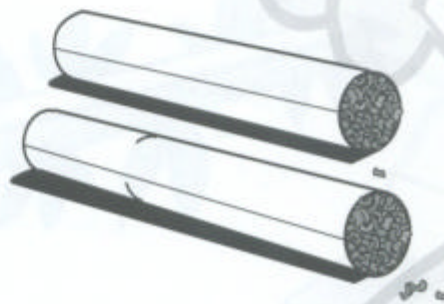
Bud-a-bing! Kudos is yours!

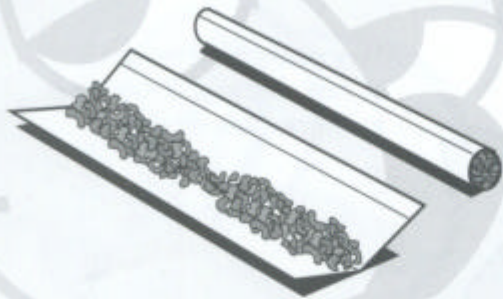




ONCE MASTERED, THE JOINING TECHNIQUE OPENS UP A REALM OF POSSIBILITIES FOR WEIRD AND FANTASTIC CREATIONS. THE DIAMOND IS A GOOD PLACE TO START AND WHEN MADE WITH CARE SMOKES SURPRISINGLY WELL.

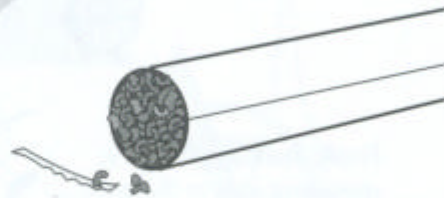
Roll a straight, fat joint with a sturdy roach and carefully cut it in two using a pair of scissors or a sharp knife.





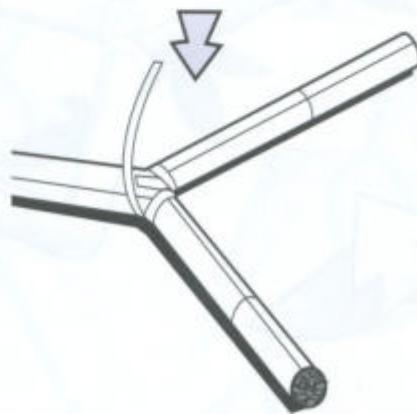
Roll two identical joints, without roaches and slightly thinner than the first. Put slightly less mix in their centres so that you can bend them later on. Consistency is important here, the joints must burn at exactly the same rate.

Carefully trim away any excess paper from all four joints, leaving the mix flush with the paper.



Cut the gummed strips from ten spare papers (the wide strips from large papers are best) and put to one side.

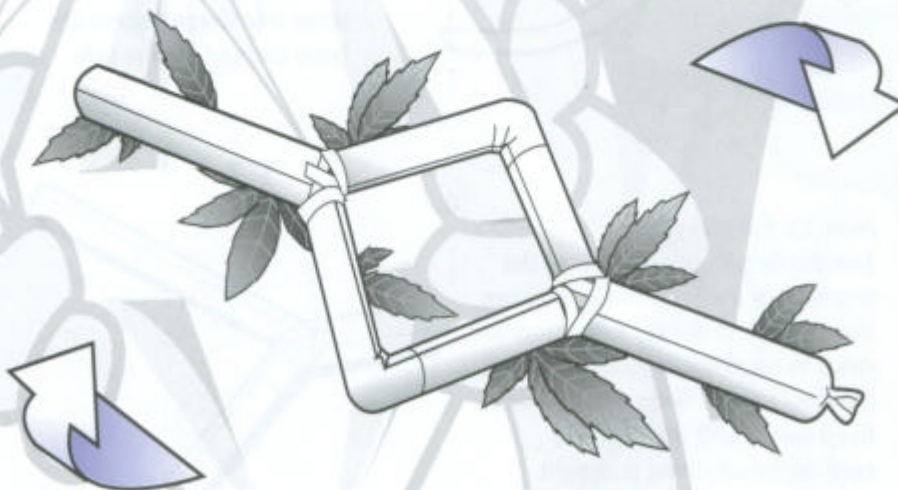
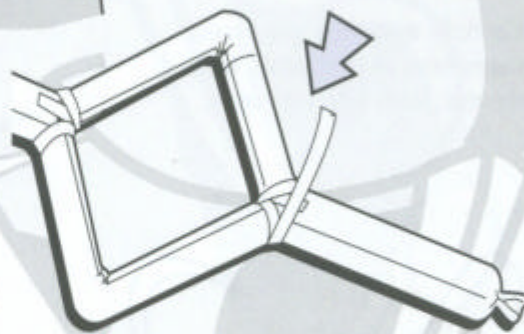
Now for the tricky bit... Join the two identical joints to the segment of the first joint containing the roach. Use some of the gummed strips to bandage the join as shown. It is best to do this on a flat surface. Keep bandaging until you are confident everything is airtight and secure.





Very gently, bend the two joints at their centres until they meet to form a diamond shape.

Finally, bandage the remaining joint to the end of the diamond, using the gummed strips as before. Pat yourself on the back, you are the diamond geezer!

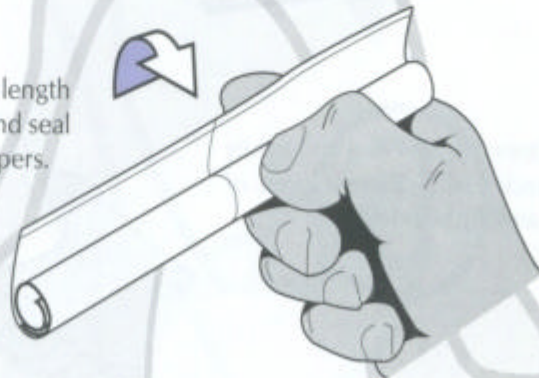


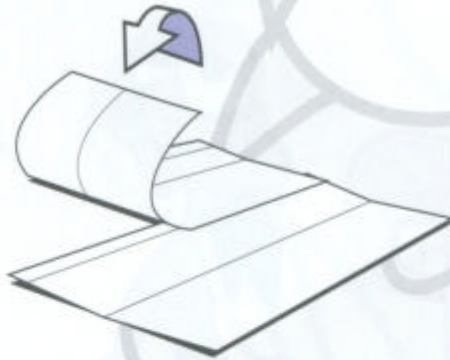
Tulip



AN AMSTERDAM SPECIALITY, THE TULIP IS OFTEN FOUND (USUALLY HALF-SMOKED) IN THE HANDS OF UNCONSCIOUS TOURISTS. A GOOD TULIP IS DECEPTIVELY SMOOTH TO SMOKE AND EASIER TO ROLL THAN IT LOOKS.

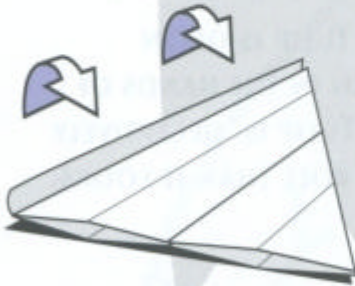
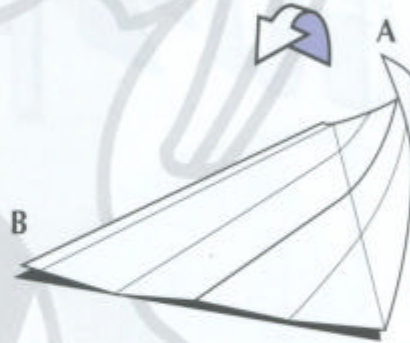
Make a roach (about the length and diameter of a pencil) and seal it with a couple of large papers.





Take two more large papers and stick them together to form a square with a gummed strip running along one side.

Fold corner **A** over to corner **B** to form a triangle, leaving the gummed strip uncovered.



Wet the strip and fold it over to seal the triangle. You should now have something resembling a flattened paper cone.

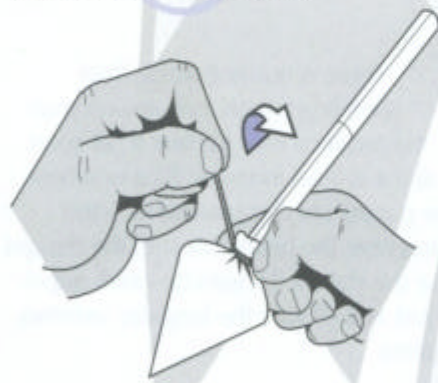
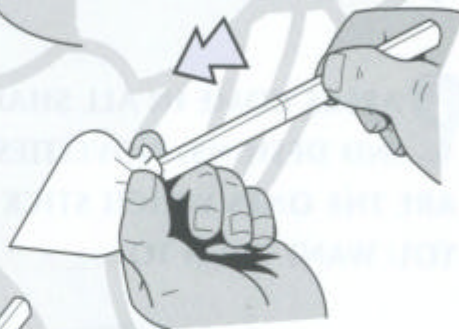
Open up the cone and tightly pack it with different layers of carefully blended mix.



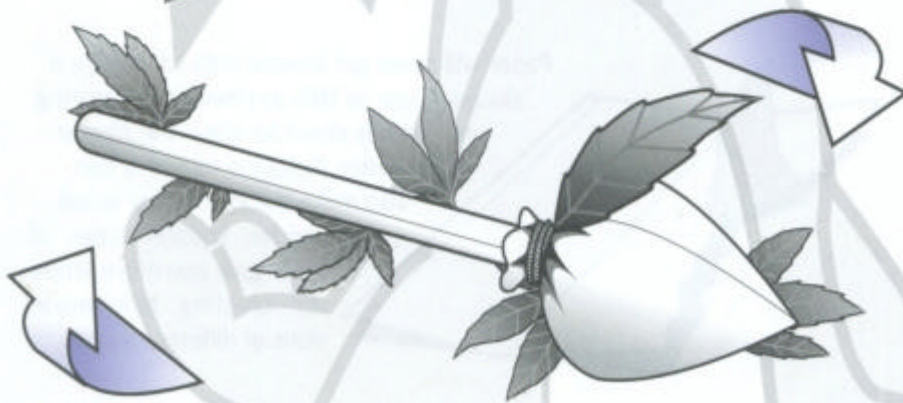


Gently crimp together the excess paper at the open end of the cone.

Place the roach in the centre of the cone, using the crimped paper to hold it in position.



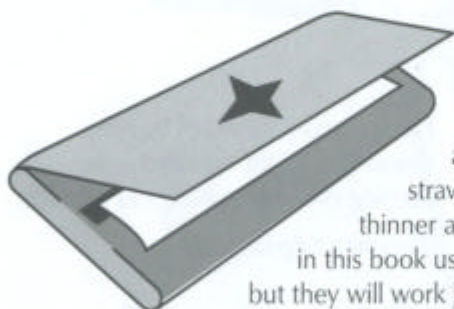
Finally, secure the roach by tying thread around the crimped paper, keeping everything as tight as possible. Blooming tulip-tastic!





PAPERS

PAPERS COME IN ALL SHAPES, SIZES, COLOURS AND DESIGNS. NOVELTIES ASIDE, THE BEST SKINS ARE THE ONES WHICH STICK WHERE AND WHEN YOU WANT THEM TO.

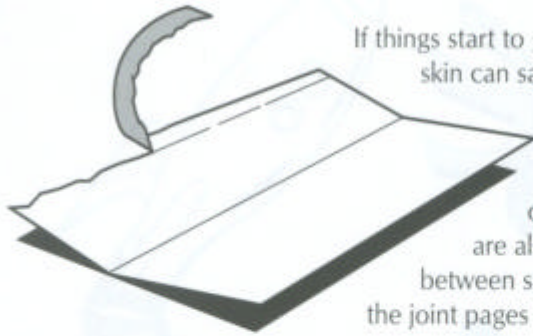


There is nothing worse than spending twenty minutes on your masterpiece only to have it fall apart at the crucial moment. Rice or wheat straw papers are recommended – the thinner and finer the better. Most of the designs in this book use the standard ‘cigarette-sized’ paper but they will work just as well with the king-size varieties – you’ll just get bigger joints.



Paper will never get anyone high so the aim is always to use as little as possible. Try tearing your papers down to size – the smaller the better. Judicious trimming can also make the joint easier to roll.

The wider, squarer types of paper give you more scope for creating tailor-made skins of different shapes.



If things start to go pear-shaped the humble skin can save the day. Gummed strips torn from spare papers make excellent bandages for tears, leaks, gaps and other emergencies. The strips are also ideal for creating joints between spliffs or roaches – check out the joint pages for some ideas.

Sometimes you may find yourself stranded without a 24hr in sight.

In parts of India you have about as much chance of finding a packet of Rizlas as you have of getting *freshwipes* in the local latrine. Salvation comes in the form of the 'Bidi'. These suspiciously cheap, hand-made cigarettes consist of questionable herbs and a few crumbs of tobacco rolled inside some kind of leaf and then tied-up with thread. Simply unravel your bidi, empty its dodgy contents, refill with the good stuff and wrap it back up. With a bit of practise the whole procedure can be done in a matter of seconds.



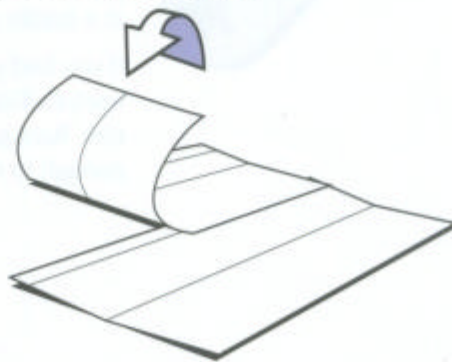
If you find yourself even further removed from civilisation then seek out a bannana tree. Bannana leaves (not skins) stay pliable enough to roll with when dried.

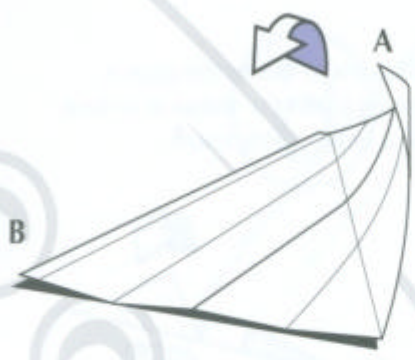
Nose Cone



THE BIGGER, BADDER, BASTARD BROTHER OF THE TULIP (TRY SAYING THAT AFTER YOU'VE SMOKED ONE). IT TAKES SOME EFFORT TO ROLL, BUT A GOOD NOSE CONE IS A KING-SIZE CHUNK OF TRULY COSMIC PROPORTIONS. EARTH-BOUND LIGHTWEIGHTS NEED NOT APPLY.

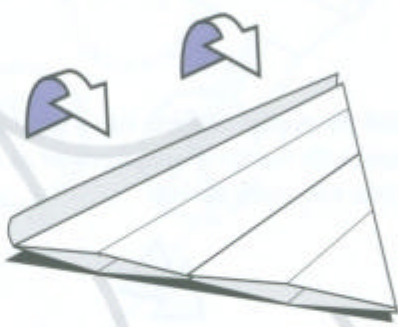
Stick two kingsize papers together to form a square with a gum strip running along one side.



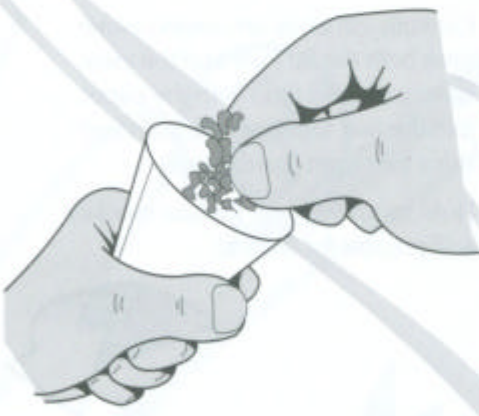


Fold corner **A** over to corner **B** to form a triangle with the gum strip exposed.

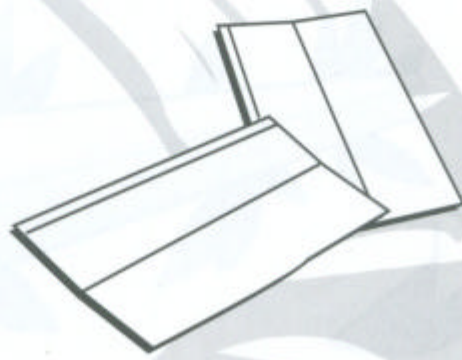
Wet the strip then fold it over to seal the triangle. You should now have something resembling a flat, paper cone.

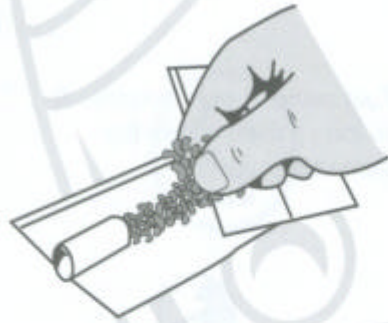


Open up the cone and tightly pack it with mix. Try using layers of different blends.



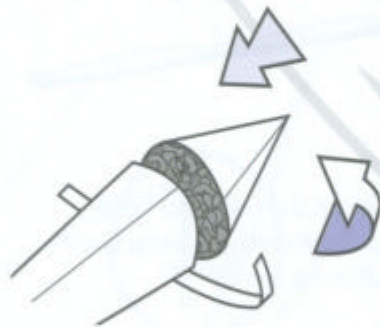
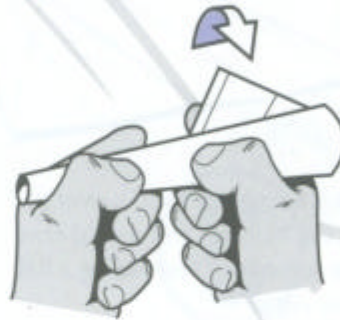
Take two more king-size papers and stick them together at a 45° angle as shown.





Add loads of mix to the papers, forming it into the shape of a cone. Use a large, sturdy roach.

Roll the papers and mix into a big, fat joint with the same end diameter as the cone you made earlier.



Carefully cut away any excess paper from both the fat joint and the cone leaving the mix flush with the paper. Join the two together with gummy strips torn from spare papers.

Hold hands with the Russian monkey and prepare for launch!

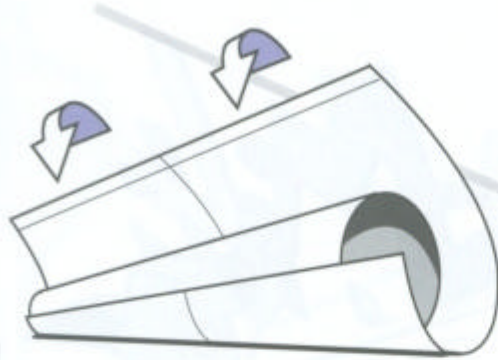




A SMOKE-COOLING CHAMBER AND MULTIPLE JOINT HOLDER, THE WINDMILL IS DESIGNED TO GET YOU SPINNING IN THE BREEZE. ALTHOUGH DASTARDLY DIFFICULT TO MAKE, THE HOLDER LOOKS GOOD AND CAN BE USED AGAIN AND AGAIN.

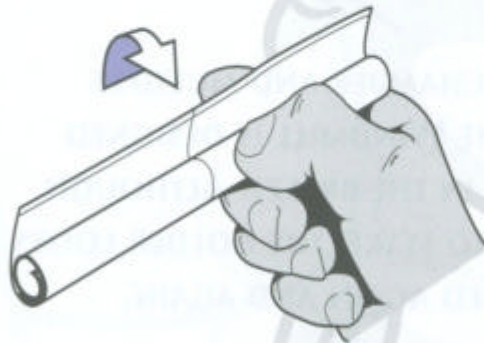
Roll a wide cone from a 10cm by 10cm piece of cardboard. Secure it with tape then trim the end to form a perfect cone.





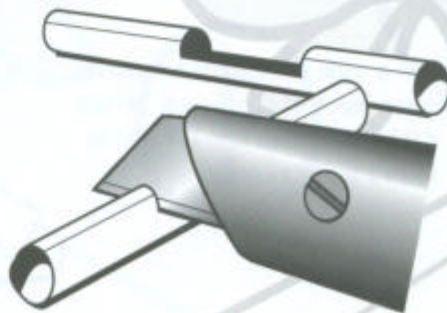
Seal the cone with large papers, leaving 3cm of excess paper at the end, as shown.

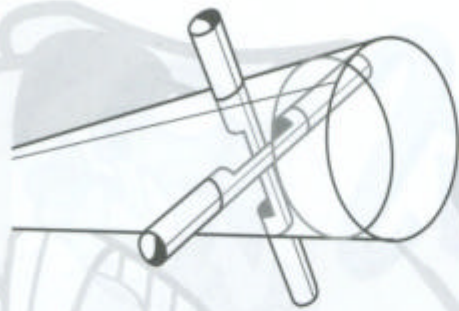
Carefully make four crosscuts at regular intervals around the end of the cone.



Make a long, narrow roach, about the length of a pencil, and seal it with papers or tape.

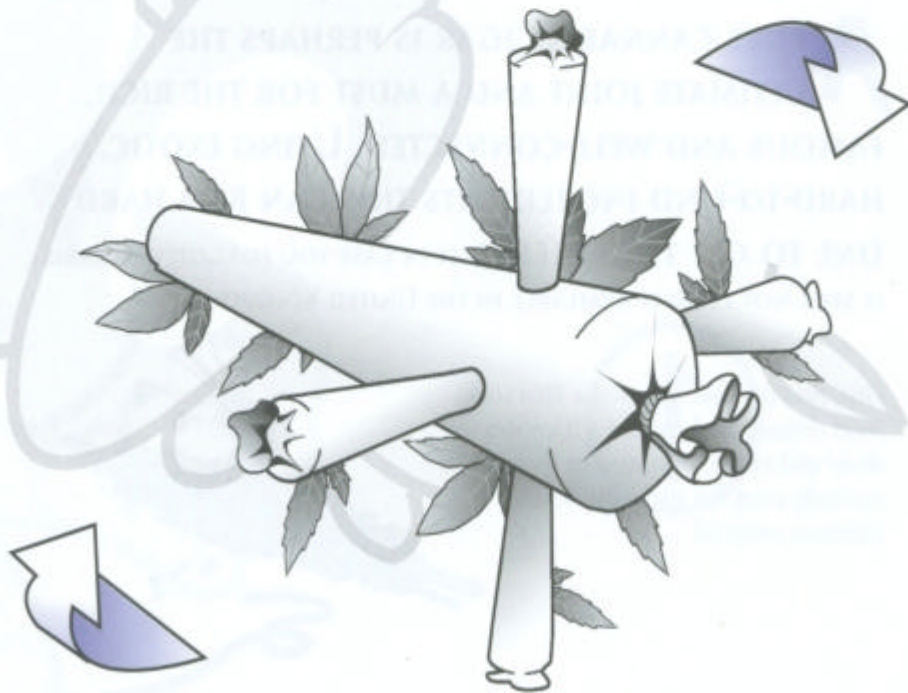
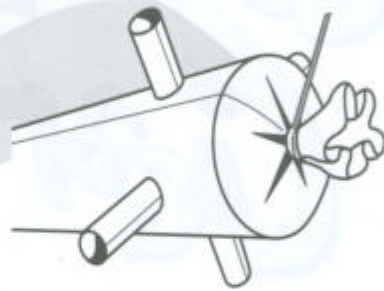
Cut the roach in half, then remove a section from the centre of each segment.





Insert the two segments so that the cut-outs are completely inside the cone and facing its narrow end. Seal any gaps with tape or gummed strips.

Seal the end of the Windmill with the excess paper, using thread or tape. To use the windmill, roll the numbers of your choice around the protruding roaches and enjoy a four-way smoke of quixotic proportions.



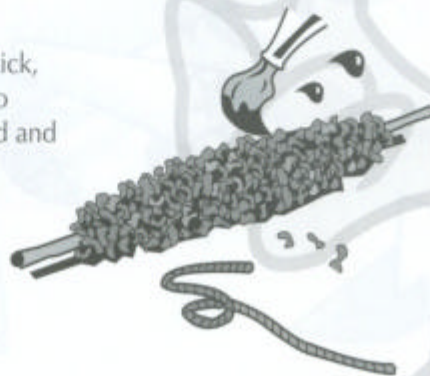


Cannabis Cigar



A PURE CANNABIS CIGAR IS PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE JOINT AND A MUST FOR THE RICH, FAMOUS AND WELL-CONNECTED. USING EXOTIC, HARD-TO-FIND INGREDIENTS THIS CAN BE A HARD ONE TO GET TOGETHER. JUST IN CASE YOU FORGOT: CANNABIS IS STILL NOT LEGALLY AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

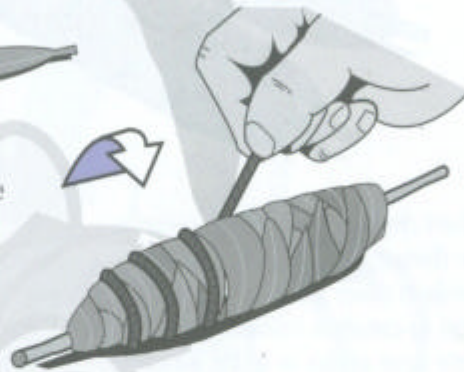
First, find or make yourself a Thai stick, (bud densely tied around a bamboo sliver and cured) remove any thread and carefully coat the stick with liquid cannabis resin oil.





Wrap the coated stick with small, uncured, 'top' leaves, taking care to remove any stems.

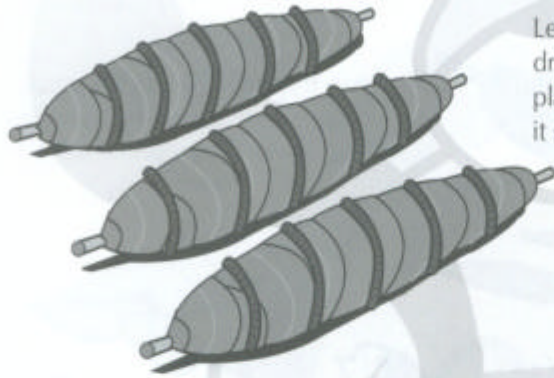
Secure the leaves with thread and coat with more liquid resin. Leave the cigar to dry in a dark, dry and warm place for a day or so.



Remove the thread and repeat the entire process. Use progressively larger cannabis leaves until the cigar is suitably fat.

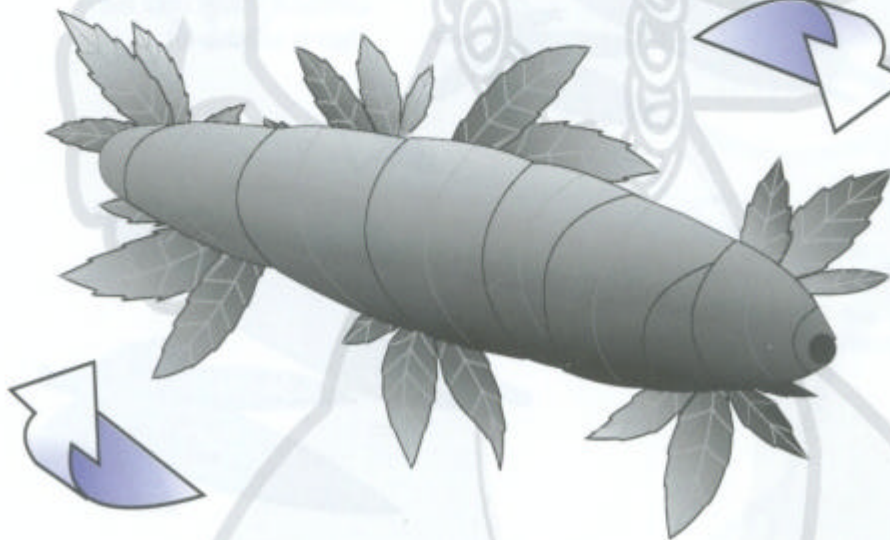
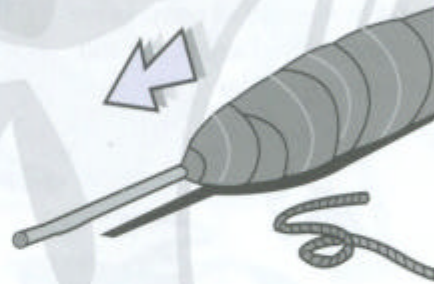
Use large 'sun' leaves to seal the cigar, add a final coat of cannabis resin and secure with more thread.





Leave the finished cigar to dry. In a dark, dry, temperate place. In two to three weeks it should be ready to smoke.

When drying is complete, remove the thread and carefully pull the bamboo sliver from inside the cigar to create a smoking tube. Store your cigars in a dry, air-tight container - the longer you leave them, the better (and stronger) they will get.





info.

Using Cannabis

Cannabis (or *hemp*) has enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with humankind for over 8,000 years. The plant has been cultivated all over the globe and for many years was the world's most common crop. Cannabis has been called "the most useful plant in the world" – here are some of the reasons why.

Getting High

There are records dating back to 2737BC of cannabis being used for its psychoactive effects in medicine, recreation and religious ceremonies.

When ingested, THC travels into the bloodstream and then directly on to the brain, where it targets brain cell receptors concerned with memory, emotion and coordination of movement. In 1992 a naturally produced neurotransmitter – *anandamide* (a name derived from *ananda*, the Sanskrit word for bliss) was discovered which targeted the same receptors and mirrored the effects of THC.

A socially acceptable drug in the nineteenth century, it is only comparatively recently that cannabis users have suffered the hard hand of the law. Sparked by the (now laughable) rantings of a few 'moral' speakers

and fuelled by lobbyists fearful of the burgeoning threat by hemp to their oil, cotton and timber industries, cannabis prohibition caught fire in 1930's America. Incorporated (under US pressure) into the international drug laws, cannabis soon became illegal throughout most of the world.

Manufacturing and Industry

Cannabis (or hemp) is a highly versatile resource. The Business Alliance For Commerce In Hemp has so far recorded over 50,000 commercial uses for the plant. Environmentalists and forward-thinking industrialists alike point to cannabis as a feasible and entirely sustainable substitute for fossil fuels and lumber. It can be used in the production of paper, textiles, construction materials, plastics and even petroleum. This is no recent revelation. Up until the nineteenth century, hemp was the world's number one crop. It provided the lifeblood for global commerce, war and industry—much as oil does now. Even as late as WWII, the American government ran a campaign to encourage farmers to grow cannabis for the war effort.

One reason cannabis is such a uniquely valuable plant is because of the fibres contained in its stems. These can be woven into strong, durable fabrics, made into rope or processed into a pulp which is similar (and in many ways superior) to wood pulp. Incredibly, one acre of cannabis will produce as much paper pulp as four acres of woodland.

Hemp is also an excellent source of cellulose – the starting point for the production of organic plastics. Unlike plastic made from petrochemicals, plant-based plastics are bio-degradable and have far less environmental costs.

Although it is hard for the oil-fuelled psyche of the twentieth century to grasp, it is perfectly possible to produce fuel from plant material. Hemp is one of the best sources of biomass fuel. Had history turned a different path we could well be filling our cars with hemp-sourced fuel.

Cannabis hemp is, in many ways, the ideal environmentally friendly resource. It grows easily, even in poor soil, virtually anywhere in the world and requires few damaging and expensive pesticides. Unlike fossil fuels, it actually consumes carbon dioxide and produces oxygen, thereby fighting the greenhouse effect. A global economy based on plant matter

rather than fossil fuels would spread wealth, phenomenally reduce pollution and provide more economic independence for 'third world' countries blessed with perfect growing conditions. Cannabis has deep, far-reaching roots and these are invaluable in preventing soil erosion – an enormous problem in many parts of the developing world. Much of the flooding and erosion in Bangladesh (responsible for endless famine, disease and poverty) is blamed on the fact that the country, whose name literally translates as 'land of cannabis', can no longer grow its traditional crop.

If you'd like to know more about the story of hemp and its many uses, Jack Herer's seminal book *Hemp and the Marijuana Conspiracy: The Emperor Wears No Clothes* (HEMP Publishing, Van Nuys, CA) is packed full of primary evidence and makes an excellent starting point.

Medicine

At the beginning of the century pot was one of the most commonly prescribed medicines. Queen Victoria famously used cannabis tinctures to ease her PMT. Historical trivia aside, the medical profession widely agrees that cannabis has still an invaluable role to play. The anecdotal and scientific evidence that cannabis can be of real help to sufferers of numerous illnesses (including cancer, AIDS/HIV, MS and glaucoma) is both well-documented and overwhelming. That millions of medical cannabis users risk prosecution everyday to ease their symptoms is testament in itself to the benefits of the plant.

Cannabis is an incredibly unproblematic medicine. Judge Francis Young of the American Drug Enforcement Agency wrote that marijuana is "...one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to mankind." Bizarrely (but predictably), it is illegal for doctors in the UK to prescribe cannabis, despite the fact that it can be used in place of many, far more harmful and expensive legal drugs.

Is it safe?

In short, yes. Virtually all the valid scientific studies point to cannabis being an incredibly safe substance. That is not to say that cannabis cannot do harm. Any drug can have adverse effects when abused or overused and pot is no exception. Extensive research and thousands of years of anecdotal evidence have given us a good idea as to what cannabis does to the mind and body.

Short-Term Effects

Cannabis is unusual in that it produces effects similar to those of many different psychoactive substances. The drug does not easily slot into any of the normal psychoactive groups (depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens) and displays characteristics distinctive to all three. A group of people using cannabis may swing from introspective states of dreamy detachment to high-energy conversation and collective euphoria.

The short-term effects of cannabis use are largely dependent on the quality of the substance and the individual's mood, personality,

previous experience and mood. Studies show a marked difference in effects between 'first-timers' and 'veteran' smokers. It seems that with repeated use, a user learns to anticipate, recognise and enjoy the effects whilst an inexperienced smoker may just feel confused and dizzy. Environment and company also influence the experience. For instance, subject X smoking joints in a room crowded with strangers might experience paranoia and fear whilst subject X smoking identical joints in a room with a few close friends might feel particularly relaxed and at ease.

PLEASANT SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Some of the more common subjectively positive experiences include the following (often in this order):

- Euphoria and/or a feeling of general well-being
- Uncontrollable hilarity (or 'the giggles')
- Increased sociability and talkativeness
- Enhanced perception of colours, music, art, nature, wallpaper etc.
- Increased mental energy, lateral thinking and creativity
- Major changes in consciousness (man)
- Distortion of time and space
- A ravenous appetite (or 'the munchies')

UNPLEASANT SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

Negative subjective effects, more common amongst new users, may include the following:

- Forgetting what one was saying, thinking or doing, often in the middle of saying, th... Err, sorry, what was I saying?
- Paranoia - often related to the fact that the user is aware they are breaking the law
- Anxiety and confusion
- Fatigue and drowsiness
- Visiting a 24-hour garage
- Losing your keys

CANNABIS AND DRIVING

Any drug that affects perception will also affect the ability to drive and cannabis can have an adverse influence on driving performance, especially when used in high doses or when combined with other drugs. However, the results of a comprehensive study (carried out in 1996 by the U.S. National Highway Transportation Safety Administration) shows that driving impairment from cannabis use is far less serious than that caused by alcohol use and is comparable to the effects of many 'over-the-counter' medicines such as flu remedies.

Long-Term Effects

For such a widely-researched drug, a lot of controversy and confusion still surrounds cannabis and the long-term implications for its user's health. Studies have been repeatedly debunked as politically-motivated scaremongering or just plain, old, bad science. Many of the flaws in the investigations revolve around their failure to relate to the actual use of cannabis in 'real life'.

In truth, there is little sound evidence to suggest that long-term cannabis use singularly causes significant physical or mental health problems. An examination in the widely respected medical journal *The Lancet* (11th November 1995) concluded: "The smoking of cannabis, even long-term, is not harmful to health". Others disagree, so let's take a look at some of the claims relating to long-term effects on the human mind and body.

Long-Term Effects on the Mind

There is no doubt that cannabis has a profound effect on the mind during intoxication, but arguments of enduring effects are hotly contested. A complicating factor is that, as cannabinoids stay in the body for up to fifty days, there is a danger of residual effects being confused with permanent damage or change.

MOTIVATION

The occasional forgetfulness and lethargy (the so-called *amotivational syndrome*) that effects some heavy cannabis users seems to be dependent on continued use and/or the normal personality of the individual. Much of the thinking surrounding amotivational syndrome is

rooted in the sixties, when the establishment viewed cannabis as a primary cause of social unrest and deviancy. There is no evidence at all of an enduring effect after use is discontinued and many heavy users lead complex and busy lives without any apparent difficulty.

MEMORY LOSS

Short-term memory loss (as in 'what was I doing just now?') is a well-known symptom of cannabis use. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this a permanent, or ongoing, effect.

DEPENDENCE AND TOLERANCE

Cannabis is often described as a 'non-addictive' drug. However, as with most drugs (including tea and coffee) an element of social or psychological dependence is possible for some users. Cannabis 'habits' tend to be based more around the simple desire to repeat a pleasurable experience rather than real compulsion. Problematic addiction that seriously interferes with a user's normal life seems to be very rare indeed. Surveys show that most cannabis users stop use in their late twenties.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that tolerance to the effects of cannabis does develop with continued use, although it is possible that this is due to users adjusting to, and learning to cope with, their inebriated states. Conversely, experienced smokers are often better able to 'feel' lower doses of cannabis than inexperienced users.

THE 'STEPPING STONE EFFECT'

In the absence of any strong health or behavioural problems connected with cannabis, anti-pot campaigners tend to dredge up the old 'stepping stone' or 'gateway drug' routine. The premise of this seems to be, that whilst cannabis may *appear* to be fairly harmless, smoking a joint (or munching a hash cookie) is just the first step toward puffing on a crack pipe and selling your grandmother's best china for skag. Some would say this is like claiming the odd glass of sherry is a slippery slope ending under a railway arch with stained pants and a bottle of meths.

If, (just for one mad moment), we accept the logic of the gateway argument - that taking 'soft' drugs leads to 'taking' hard drugs - then where exactly is this gateway? Does the buzz from strong coffee lead to a thirst for gin and then on to a craving for PCP, or what? Is drinking Redbull just a warm-up for a rabid crystal meth habit? Should we ban strong mints?

The only obvious truth in the cannabis gateway argument exists because cannabis is banned in the first place. Buying or using an illegal substance often brings users closer to other illegal substances.

Whatever the arguments, it is a fact that whilst most heroin or crack users have smoked cannabis only a tiny proportion of cannabis users will ever go on to take heroin or crack.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Claims that cannabis can cause serious mental illness have been a common feature of the anti-cannabis campaign ever since the 'Reefer Madness' propaganda of the 1930's. In fact there is no evidence to show that lasting mental disorder can be directly caused by cannabis. Whether the drug may trigger a latent illness, or make worse/improve an existing one is open to question, as there are a myriad of everyday elements in a person's life (relationships, health, work etc.) which have that capability. Those who are suffering from, or have a history of mental illness should obviously approach the use of any psychoactive drug with great care.

The short term psychological problems most often connected with cannabis – such as agrophobia, paranoia, anxiety (the FEAR) and confusion – mostly arise from heavy and/or continued use and usually vanish once use is stopped. Any problem symptom should be seen as a sign that you should take a break from use or at least cut down.

Long-term Effects on the Body

RESPIRATORY DISEASE

The smoke from an *ital* (pure) cannabis joint delivers three times more tar than your standard filter-tip, more than five times more carbon monoxide, and hits the throat and lungs at a higher temperature. This has lead some experts to declare that, blow-for-blow, cannabis smoke is more likely to cause respiratory disease and cancer of the lung, throat and mouth than tobacco smoke. One American study has shown an increased incidence of throat cancer amongst cannabis smokers. Other experts point to evidence that respiratory cancers are largely caused by the radiation present in tobacco tar and suggest that the carcinogenic

nature of cannabis is overstated. Whatever the case, any comparison with tobacco should be tempered by the fact that a twenty-a-day habit of unshared ita! joints is relatively rare.

There is no conclusive evidence that moderate cannabis use leads to significant damage to the respiratory system. However, the standard tobacco/cannabis joint must (at least) carry the same risks as an unfiltered cigarette. Avoiding the possible danger of respiratory disease is easy: do it the Stir Crazy way and eat your pot instead.

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

Both reputable and highly disreputable sources have put forward the claim that cannabis causes brain cell death. Such claims are highly controversial and no permanent effects have ever been demonstrated in humans. Whatever the truth of the matter, there is no evidence to suggest that, even if damage does occur, there is any noticeable change in behaviour or mental performance.

REPRODUCTION

Bizarre claims that cannabis reduces libido, causes men to grow breasts, and disrupts menstruation in women have been circulated since the sixties. You won't be surprised to hear that (yet again) there is no scientific basis for these claims.

Male cannabis users do produce a higher proportion of two-tailed spermatozoa which tend to be too confused to make it to the ovum. Coffee drinkers also experience this phenomenon and cannabis users will be relieved to know that there are usually millions of the single-tailed variety ready to step in and do the deed. In any case, the genetic coding of the sperm is not affected.

IMUNNOLOGY

There is some evidence, both real and anecdotal, to suggest that cannabis use may have a slight, temporary effect on the body's immune system. There is nothing to show that this possible effect is more significant than that suffered with the similar effects of moderate alcohol or caffeine use. Much of the evidence may originate from contagious diseases (especially the common cold) hitching a ride on joints passed between friends.

Is it legal?

Estimates put the number of regular cannabis users in Britain at between three and five million, with more than one in three young adults thought to have tried the drug at least once. Cannabis use is now an everyday part of British culture. It is seen as increasingly acceptable throughout much of society. The trend of tolerance seems set to continue but for the time being, cannabis is still very much an illegal substance with users at risk of serious life damage from prosecution, incarceration and a criminal record.

Cannabis and The Law

In the case of *simple possession* of small quantities of cannabis the police will normally avoid prosecuting first-offenders. Alternatives to prosecution include an *informal warning* (i.e being told-off unofficially or, more seriously, a *caution* (i.e being told-off officially). Cautioning results in a criminal record but not a criminal conviction.

Although the current advice for police is to caution, the law is open to

interpretation and different police forces and individual officers have varying policies (formal and informal) for applying these laws. Repeat offences of simple possession and the more serious offences of **supply** and **cultivation** are much more likely to result in prosecution.

Confused? you soon will be. When it comes to breaking the law with cannabis there is plenty of scope for choice.

POSSESSION

Simple possession is interpreted in law as knowledge and control but not necessarily ownership. In effect this means you can be charged with possession if someone living in your home has cannabis and you know where it is and have been told you can use it. Possession offences also include **attempted possession** (yes, you can be busted for buying mixed herbs), **past possession** - where there is evidence of possession within a specific time period and **internal possession** - where there is evidence to suggest that cannabis has been ingested (or inserted!) into the body.

SUPPLY

Supply can range from passing a joint to importing tonnes of hashish. The guidelines on sentencing for trafficking are based on a sliding scale relating to the offence and amounts involved. Custodial sentences are common at the mid-to-high end of this scale.

As with possession there are a whole group of offences which can be listed as trafficking: **possession with intent to supply** - where there is evidence that the amounts found are not purely for personal use; **offering to supply**; **conspiracy to supply**; **incitement to supply** etc., etc.

CULTIVATION

Cultivation has become a far more common offence since the beginning of the home growing craze. Needless to say, growing cannabis in the United Kingdom is illegal without a license from the Home Office (sorry, fat chance). Problems arise because the amounts grown tend to be significant in the eyes of the law and may attract an additional charge of intent to supply. As with possession and supply, strong mitigating factors come into effect if the substances found are deemed to be for personal use or for non-profit distribution amongst friends or known users. Purely medicinal use of cannabis for the symptoms of serious illness is becoming more acceptable as a mitigating factor.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Conviction for a cannabis-related offence can leave you with more than just the sentence of the court. Due to a number of laws, institutional practices and the attitude of society toward drug users in general, the consequences of a cannabis conviction can be far-reaching and may include the following:

- Losing your job or being excluded from particular careers. Employers (especially those of the main professions) don't look kindly on drug convictions.
- Public condemnation – local newspapers (especially those of the small town variety) love a drugs story.
- Being banned from driving if convicted of driving whilst under the influence. Extensive drug testing is currently being considered.
- Refusal of a bank or building society loan if convicted of supplying or intent to supply.
- Refusal of immigration requests and even temporary visas for work or holidays by some countries including the USA.
- Possible difficulties with fostering or adoption proceedings and, in some very extreme cases, the removal of children into care.

Self-Protection

The best advice for avoiding prosecution is, of course, not to commit an offence. The social acceptance of cannabis use in youth culture and a perception of relaxed policing can lead to an over-casual attitude to the drug. It is worth bearing in mind that over 85% of drug convictions are for the possession of cannabis, often with permanent implications for the offender. The second-best advice for avoiding prosecution is to be very, very careful. Being charged with offences more serious than justified is sadly a common occurrence. Weighing instruments, a divided stash or amounts over an ounce or two can mean a charge of intent to supply rather than simple possession. Helping out your mates, especially on a regular basis, can be a risky business.

Suspicion of cannabis possession is frequently given as a reason for police to stop and search and suspicion of supplying cannabis allows authorisation for phone-tapping and search warrants.

If you are arrested by the police the advice is to know your rights. If you are caught 'red-handed' with a small amount of cannabis it may be best to hold up your hands and admit to possessing the drugs for your own *personal use*. This is most likely to result in a talking-to or a caution rather than a charge. In other, perhaps more serious cases, it may be best not to admit to an offense or otherwise incriminate yourself before obtaining the advice of a solicitor which you are entitled to, free of charge.

CREDITS:

A big 'who-hoo!' goes to the following people for their help and involvement in the making and success of this handbook:

Andrew McBeth, All @ Big Buds, Ed Rosenthal, Helen Marquis, Irene & Pete @ Stuff, Julie Daghish, Martin @ Avalon, Natalie Holland, Roger Liggerstorfer, Steve Ford, Walter @ Viz and anyone else who I might have forgotten.

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Warning: Cannabis is a prohibited substance in the UK.
Stir Crazy is for fun and education only. Don't break the law.

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WARNING

This book contains information about illegal substances, specifically the plant Cannabis Sativa and its derivative products. Bobcat Press would like to emphasise that cannabis is still very much a controlled drug in the United Kingdom. As such, the use, supply and cultivation of cannabis may result in heavy penalties that can threaten liberty and livelihood.

The aim of the publishers is to educate and entertain. Whatever the publishers view on the validity of current legislation we do not, in any way, condone or encourage the use of prohibited substances. If readers wish to construct the designs detailed within this publication they must, to stay within the law, do so using legal substances.

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