

A close-up photograph of a man's face and hands. He is wearing a grey hoodie and a black leather jacket. His hands are clasped together in front of his mouth, and he has a tattoo on his left wrist. The background is dark and moody.

ADDICTIONS

A TALKING POINTS LESSON FOR
ENGLISH READING & SPEAKING

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Introduction

What is addiction?

What kinds of things can people be addicted to?

Are you addicted to anything?

Addiction

What is addiction?

The dictionary says: It is the condition of being enslaved to a substance or activity.

Many addictions can cause physical or mental harm.

In the past, when people thought of addiction, they thought of drug addicts — people addicted to heroin or cocaine — unable to work or live within normal society and living in desperate conditions.

But later we came to recognise that people could be addicted to other substances. Alcohol or cigarettes became known as highly addictive substances.

Later still, we found that people could be addicted to gambling. Many a man or woman has lost everything they had in their life — a job, a home, even a marriage — because of a gambling addiction.

But now addiction experts have discovered a whole new array of addictions. One of these newer types is internet addiction.

This affects many people, but the most vulnerable group are teenagers.

For example, many boys and young men become addicted to online gaming. Online games may encourage teenage boys to give up all other pursuits in life just for another hit.

Many of these young men have lost the ability to communicate on a normal level and lead anti-social lives.

In some rare cases, victims become violent if they do not have access to a computer or internet connection.

Some countries have taken necessary action against this and set up Internet Addiction camps. Places where boys can 'dry out' and rejoin the real world.

People are also becoming addicted to food. This is a very difficult addiction to treat because people must consume food.

It's not like we can just stop eating.

Some scientists argue that this is because much of our modern food has a lot of added sugar in it. It is not so much an addiction to food as an addiction to sugar.

But it is slowly killing thousands of people every year as they cannot stop eating.

Fast-food companies are in every country and soft drinks exist all over the world. They accept no fault in this and still spend millions on advertising.

Another strange new addiction — in complete contrast to food addiction — is exercise.

Believe it or not, many people are now becoming addicted to doing exercise. Whereas most people would regard three or four visits to the gym as perfectly adequate, exercise addicts are going many more times than that.

Some would even say they live in the gym.

Early morning workouts, followed by a run to the office, then a short routine at lunchtime and then a marathon session in the gym after work.

It doesn't sound possible, but this is extremely bad for your health!

Heart conditions, lung problems and even mental issues such as anxiety and depression have been reported.

Many psychiatrists argue that addictions are caused because of some trauma that happened to the person during childhood. Many of these people get addicted to something in their adult life or in their late teenage years and use the addiction as a way of dealing with the trauma from the early part of their life.

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is addiction?

What can addictions cause in the victim?

What drugs did people often associate with addiction in the past?

What other substances did people discover were addictive?

What behaviour can be addictive?

What three things can someone addicted to gambling lose from their life?

What is one of the newer addictions that experts have found?

Which group is most at danger to internet addiction?

How are boys or young men affected by this?

What basic life skills do young men lose due to internet addiction?

What can sometimes happen if an internet addict cannot get their fix?

How do some countries solve this issue?

Can people become addicted to food?

If so, how?

How many people does this kill every year?

Do fast-food companies or soft drink companies take any responsibility for this?

What addiction does the article finally mention?

Why is it dangerous to do too much exercise?

How can too much exercise harm your body?

Why do people get addicted to certain substances or behaviour later in life?

Essential Vocabulary

addiction	condition	enslaved
substance	activity	physical
mental	harm	drug addicts
heroin	cocaine	desperate
gambling	array	vulnerable
teenagers	online gaming	encourage
pursuits	anti-social	violent
access	internet connection	dry out
rejoin	the real world	consume
advertising	strange	contrast
gym	adequate	workouts
routine	marathon session	lungs
anxiety	depression	psychiatrists
trauma	childhood	

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

"I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any

notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

What addictions are prevalent in your country? Is there any help provided for these people?

Are you addicted to anything? Think of all the things you consume or do every single day — are these addictions?

What should be done about people who have addiction problems? Is there any help for them?

Cigarettes and alcohol are legal in most countries of the world. But thousands of people get addicted to these things and they often have very serious health issues. Do you think it's right that cigarettes and alcohol are legal at all? Why/why not?

Is there a difference between being addicted to drugs and being addicted to the internet? What are the differences? What are the similarities?

How can doctors treat someone addicted to food? After all, we all have to eat. How can someone stop eating so much?

How can we treat a young man who has internet addiction? What steps should he take?

Do you think there is no hope for someone addicted to drugs? Why/why not?

How is it possible to become addicted to exercise? Why did someone like this get addicted to exercise?

Can we just ban all harmful substances? Is this a good idea? Why/why not?

Credits

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