

Smoking

It is well documented that smoking cigarettes has many health risks and causes considerable damage to the body. However, many chemicals in cigarettes can also affect athletic performance.

Tobacco kills up to half of its users with more than 7 million people dying because of tobacco each year. Of these deaths over 6 million are a direct result of tobacco use while approximately 890,000 deaths are a result of exposure to second-hand smoke (World Health Organisation, 2017).

Side Effects

The Carbon Monoxide found in tobacco smoke binds to the haemoglobin in red blood cells resulting in a decreased oxygen carrying capacity. The nicotine in tobacco causes blood vessels to constrict increasing blood pressure and heart rate. This narrowing of blood vessels and reduction in oxygen being transported to working muscles results in reduced physical performance and endurance placing additional strain on the heart. The tar inhaled while smoking causes damage to the lungs, decreasing their ability to work effectively.

During physical activity smokers often suffer shortness of breath, reduced endurance, impaired reactions, earlier onset of exhaustion and have poorer visual judgement.



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

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