Should You Cut Back on Your Caffeine?

By Royane Real

Many sober, law abiding people who would never dream of knowingly ingesting a mind− altering

drug, actually consume one every day−−caffeine!

Caffeine is so pervasive in our culture and in many other cultures that we often forget it is literally a drug that affects our brain. Caffeine is present in coffee, tea, many cola drinks and over the counter medications.

The real question is−−is caffeine a bad drug, or is it "okay"? Is caffeine even better than "okay", does it do good things for us?

The verdict on caffeine, particularly when taken in the form of coffee, seems to be mixed. There are nutritional advisers who claim that coffee makes us age faster, wears out our adrenal glands, and causes all sorts of untold damage to our cells.

Other researchers claim that coffee, especially if it's freshly roasted and ground, is full of antioxidants, and therefore good for us. Most doctors say that drinking one or two cups of coffee a day is probably not harmful. And of course there are others who say we ought to avoid caffeine altogether.

Many of us feel that we cannot really get going in the morning until we have had our first cup of coffee. We often continue to use it throughout the day whenever our energy appears to be flagging and our brain seems to need additional help to think more clearly.

Does caffeine really enhance mental performance, or is that just a myth? Yes, caffeine does give a temporary boost to brain cells. But the amount required to improve mental performance is not very high.

Even half a cup of coffee will be enough to give your brain a boost that lasts several hours.

Oddly enough, more caffeine is not necessarily better. In one test done when high−level executives were given the equivalent of fourteen cups of coffee in a day, they made their decisions faster, but the

decisions were not of very good quality.

Not every person reacts to caffeine in the same way. Some people experience greater mental clarity, alertness and productivy after a cup of coffee. Others become jittery, anxious, or depressed.

Although caffeine will keep most of us awake if taken at night, it does not have this effect in everyone. In some older people, coffee or tea can improve memory and alertness enough to partly offset the effects of aging.

It is true that caffeine is mildly addicting for most people. Some people can quit using caffeine with absolutely no withdrawal symptoms, while others will feel headaches, fatigue, and experience cravings for caffeine for weeks.

Caffeine works by blocking one of the neurotransmitters − adenosine − which normally tells brain cells

to calm down. Brain cells that have been affected by caffeine will remain excited and on high alert for several hours.

The most noticeable negative effect of caffeine is that it can interfere with sleep. In most people, drinking coffee, tea or cola in the late afternoon or in the evening will cause insomnia.

The quantity and quality of sleep will be greatly reduced, setting in motion a vicious cycle, where the person affected will feel so tired all the next day that he drinks a lot more coffee in order to try feel awake.

If this is happening to you, cut back on the amount of caffeine you consume each day. You may experience fewer withdrawal symptoms if you cut down gradually.

You may wish to substitute green tea for some of your cups of coffee. Green tea has some caffeine, but not as much as coffee.

Remember that your brain won't really benefit from more than one or two cups of coffee in a day.

This article is taken from the new downloadable book by Royane Real titled "How You Can Be Smarter - Use Your Brain to Learn Faster, Remember Better and Be More Creative" To improve your learning ability, download it today from

http://www.royanereal.com

Coffee Caffeine: How Much Is In Your Cup?

By Matthew Hick

Coffee is a complex mixture of chemical components of the coffee bean. Some of these components

are partially destroyed by the roasting process; however, many of these components are not. Caffeine is one of the components that is not affected by the roasting process. With the addition of hot water, the caffeine is extracted from the coffee bean.

Caffeine was discovered in coffee in 1820. Caffeine is an alkaloid that acts as a mild stimulant. It increases the blood pressure, stimulates the central nervous system and the action of the heart and lungs, and promotes urine formation. It also acts as a diuretic and delays fatigue. Caffeine does have some positive side effects. It has been found to help treat migraines since it helps constrict the dilated blood vessels, therefore reducing the pain. It also has been documented to increase the potency of aspirin and to slightly relieve the affects of asthma attacks. It has been suggested that caffeine has been linked to possible cancers and birth defects. However, this has not been confirmed and there are no bans or warnings that have been issued by the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA).

The amount of caffeine found in the coffee beans varies. On average, a regular cup of coffee contains approximately 90 to 150 mg of caffeine. Coffee brewed in a drip coffee maker has about 115 to 175 mg of caffeine while other coffee makers may brew coffee with about 80 to 135 mg. Typically, espresso has about as much caffeine as a regular cup of coffee. On average, a standard espresso cup would have about 100 mg of caffeine. However, the serving size for espresso is much smaller. The actual content of caffeine per milliliter in an espresso is much higher than in a regular brew. Also, caffeine is assimilated quicker when ingested in a concentrated dosage such as an espresso cup.

The amount of caffeine found in coffee blends will also vary. The following are examples of the caffeine content for different coffee blends:

−Brazilian Bourbons: contains 1.20% caffeine −Columbia Excelso: contains 1.34% caffeine −Columbia Supremo: contains 1.34% caffeine −French Roast: contains 1.22% caffeine −Costa Rican Tarrazu: contains 1.35% caffeine −Vienna Roast: contains 1.27% caffeine −Decafs: contains 0.02% caffeine

People hypersensitive to the caffeine found in coffee may decide to drink decaffeinated coffee. This way, they can still enjoy the great coffee taste, yet avoid the caffeine. Coffee can be "decaffeinated" by treating the green beans with solvents called chlorinated hydrocarbons. Once the solvents are removed, the beans are then roasted by ordinary procedures. Most people become accustomed to decaffeinated coffee and do not have to worry about the effects of caffeine.

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