

**Leveling Up:  
How Posters on r/StopGaming Describe Video Gaming, Its Consequences, and  
Trying to Stop**

John Gregory Daues  
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University of Houston  
Department of Sociology \*

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\*Department of Sociology, 3551 Cullen Blvd Room 450, Houston, TX 77204-3012,  
jgdaues@uh.edu.

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### INTRODUCTION

Video games are popular enough to be considered normal in the United States today (Gamespot 2010; Martins, Williams, Harrison, and Ratan 2010; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Greitemeyer and Osswald 2011; Cooley 2013; Jordan 2014; Entertainment Software Association 2013; Near 2013; Mason 2014; Copenhaver 2015; Dalisay 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Iwen 2015; Kondrat 2015; Weststar 2015; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Kampler and Joseph 2016; Turner 2016; Choi 2017; Markovits and Green 2017). They are marketed to people of all ages and accessible to anyone that can afford them (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013). In the United States, video gaming as an industry is worth several billion dollars and comprised of millions of players (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013). It is a major source of entertainment, particularly in the middle class, among children, and among adults ages 18 to 30 (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013). While there are stereotypes about the culture of video gaming (particularly, as a culture that reflects hegemonic masculinity), it is safe to say that men, women, and children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds in the United States are exposed to video games or video game advertising (Connell 1987; Kimmel, Brod, and Kaufman 1994; American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Kocurek

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2015; Kondrat 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Cade and Gates 2017).

Almost as conventional as video gaming today, is talk about video gaming being problematic in some way (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a 2013b; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Cade and Gates 2017; Choi 2017). Sometimes, video games are understood to be addictive, and causing of more significant life issues (Cubbins and Klepinger 2007; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Gueta 2013; Saline, Jacke, Kier, Franz, and Mann 2013; Hull, Brunette, Prescott, and Sargent 2014; Jordan 2014; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Smethurst 2015; Kampler and Joseph 2016; Choi 2017). This may be understood particularly in light of the fact that addiction is caused by chemicals that occur naturally in the human body (Faulkner 1991).

Addiction is a serious life issue, is significant enough to cause people to experience dramatic changes in their physical and mental health, and has accordingly been studied by researchers in fields such as medicine, psychology, and sociology (Cubbins and Klepinger 2007; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Gueta 2013; Saline, Jacke, Kier, Franz, and Mann 2013; Akers, Gordon, Reyna and Stevenson 2014; Hull, Brunette, Prescott, and Sargent 2014; Jordan 2014; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Smethurst 2015; Kampler and Joseph 2016; Choi 2017). However, typical of these studies is a consensus that

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addiction is harmful in some way, whether it is related to health, career, or social outcomes (Lindesmith 1938, 1965, 1968; Stephens 1991; Keane 2002; Dietler 2006; Cubbins and Klepinger 2007; Weinstein 2010; Schafer 2011). Because addiction may be perceived as a serious and harmful life issue, then, it is typical to suggest some way of trying to stop addiction (Faulkner 1991; Stephens 1991; Keane 2002; Dietler 2006;). But then again, ideas about trying to stop addiction may be as disparate as ideas about addiction itself.

Because of the disparate perspectives of the disciplines that produce research on addiction, there are many different perceptions of addiction and schools of thought concerning how it should be addressed. Now that researchers have uncovered more about the ways addiction involves dopamine, serotonin, and other naturally occurring chemicals in the human body, additionally, it has been noted almost anything can be addicting, so long as it stimulates these chemicals. Also, in light of the broader life issues that addiction may affect, there is variation in perspectives on how to treat addiction and its consequences.

If considering the broader disparity in perspectives on addiction, and why it may be more difficult to examine video gaming in light of this disparity, then it may be said that the purpose of this thesis is to describe, from a constructionist viewpoint, the ways video gamers think of their gaming. Specifically, I describe how video gamers on a particular website (used similarly to a blog), [reddit.com/r/StopGaming](https://www.reddit.com/r/StopGaming/), describe their video gaming, the consequences of their video gaming, and their attempts to stop video gaming. Using a constructionist perspective, I collected data from the narratives of video gamers and tried to understand their experiences.

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To answer my research questions, I used qualitative content analysis, an unobtrusive method in which the unit of analysis is a narrative (and not an individual), guaranteeing that the choice of method causes no harm to individuals. To gather a sample, I opened r/StopGaming and filtered out the all-time top-rated posts on the site. I then read through the original posts and subsequent comment threads with inclusion criteria to look for any narrative in which the poster (1) mentioned that they played video games, (2) described consequences of their video gaming, and (3) mentioned at least one way they tried to stop video gaming. The final sample size was N=100, at which point I determined that I had theoretically saturated my categories of analysis (Charmaz 2014). To analyze my data, I used a three-step coding phase (Strauss and Corbin 1990). First, I used initial coding by summarizing and listing the data. Second, I used axial coding by synthesizing the larger lists of data and creating categories. Third, I used selective coding by refining these categories so that they reflect my research questions.

Posters on r/StopGaming described their video gaming as an outright addiction, as a compulsion, like taking drugs, as a form of escapism, as something to be moderated, as a lifestyle, as having a gamer identity, or by identifying with r/StopGaming. They described consequences such as experiencing the conventional steps of physical addiction (cravings, tolerance, withdrawal), lifestyle changes, problems with social relationships, problems with their career or academics, wasting time and money, or neglecting other hobbies. To try to stop video gaming, posters described a variety of self-improvement strategies, abstinence, moderation, developing hobbies, or working on social relationships.

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First, I will present a background on video gaming, addiction, and trying to stop addiction, drawing primarily from sociological literature. Second, after listing my research questions, I will describe how I used qualitative content analysis to create a sample and coding strategy to answer them. Then, I will explain the results of my analysis, including more particular details from the narratives. I will discuss the results of my analysis, and suggest ideas for future research. Lastly, I present appendices to display my analysis in lists and tables, and my references for the sociological background.

## BACKGROUND

### *Video Games*

Video games are popular enough to be considered normal in the United States today (Gamespot 2010; Martins, Williams, Harrison, and Ratan 2010; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Greitemeyer and Osswald 2011; Cooley 2013; Jordan 2014; Entertainment Software Association 2013; Near 2013; Mason 2014; Copenhaver 2015; Dalisay 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Iwen 2015; Kondrat 2015; Weststar 2015; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Kampler and Joseph 2016; Turner 2016; Choi 2017; Markovits and Green 2017). It is estimated that as much as half of the United States' (over 150 million individuals) population plays video games (Entertainment Software Association 2013). Video games are marketed to people of all ages and accessible to anyone that can afford them (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013). It is a major source of entertainment, particularly in the middle class, among children, and among adults ages 18 to 30 (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013). In fact, the United

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States' video gaming industry is worth several billion dollars (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013). Video games are even viewed as an “essential communication medium” for Americans, because of the way players develop logic and communication skills through game and team play (Kondrat 2015). Most video gamers in the United States start playing when they are young, in that households with children are even more likely to have video game consoles (Entertainment Software Association 2013; Kondrat 2015; Markovits and Green 2017). Because video games are so popular, and because many video gamers start playing as children, it may be said that video games can be a significant agent of socialization (Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Near 2013; Butler, Call, Meloy, and Zitzman 2014; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Hanukah 2015; Kondrat 2015; Smethurst 2015; Smith 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Millington 2016; Sorensen 2016; Cade and Gates 2017). While there are stereotypes about the culture of video gaming (particularly, that the culture is hegemonically masculine), it is safe to say that men, women, and children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds in the United States are exposed to video games or video game advertising (Connell 1987; Kimmel, Brod, and Kaufman 1994; American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Cade and Gates 2017).

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Indeed, when video gaming, there are moral and sociocultural aspects within video games that are influential to the experiences of the individual gaming (Coyne et al. 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Near 2013; Butler et al. 2014; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Hanukah 2015; Kondrat 2015; Smethurst 2015; Smith 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Millington 2016; Sorensen 2016; Cade and Gates 2017). In general, the sociological literature has established that the symbolic representations present in video games (as well as the dialoguing between other players online) are highly influential in shaping the perspectives of individuals that play them (Coyne et al. 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Near 2013; Butler et al. 2014; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Hanukah 2015; Kondrat 2015; Smethurst 2015; Smith 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Millington 2016; Sorensen 2016; Cade and Gates 2017).

The sociological literature tells us that a little over half of video game players are males (Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009). Many video games cater to male audiences, and many sociologists have studied how these perceptions of the gaming world as a “male space” may influence all video game players (Dietz 1998; Beasley and Standley 2002; Forghani et al. 2006; Ivory 2006; Miller and Summers 2007; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Northup and Shumway 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Ribbens and Malliet 2015; Song and Fox 2016; Turner 2016).



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Perhaps video gamers construct their identity in a way similar to “doing gender” when playing, emphasizing their masculinity to be more like the characters or ideas in the game (Zimmerman and West 2008). Indeed, notions of Connell’s (1987, 2002) hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity are reinforced in video games which portray males as hypermuscular, stoic, and capable of taking on unrealistic challenges, while framing females as oversexualized, submissive, and victimized (Dietz 1998; Beasley and Standley 2002; Forghani et al. 2006; Ivory 2006; Miller and Summers 2007; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Northup and Shumway 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Ribbens and Malliet 2015; Song and Fox 2016; Turner 2016). However, it is important to remember that a little under half of video gamers are still females, who may not be as influenced by emphasized femininity because of the masculine nature of many games (Dietz 1998; Beasley and Standley 2002; Forghani et al. 2006; Ivory 2006; Miller and Summers 2007; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Northup and Shumway 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Ribbens and Malliet 2015; Song and Fox 2016; Turner 2016). When thinking about who may be addicted to video games, assuming that video games generate exclusively male spaces may be an incorrect starting point (Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Near 2013; Cade and Gates 2017). There is simply no consensus on an essential gaming culture (Near 2013; Butler, Call, Meloy, and Zitzman 2014; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014). However, it should be noted that there is still a strong masculine presence within video

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game culture, and this is seen as normal (Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Near 2013; Butler, Call, Meloy, and Zitzman 2014; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Hanukah 2015; Kondrat 2015; Smethurst 2015; Smith 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Millington 2016; Song and Fox 2016; Sorensen 2016; Turner 2016; Cade and Gates 2017).

Almost as common as video gaming today, is talk about video gaming being problematic in some way (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Greitemeyer 2013a 2013b; Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Ash 2015; DeCamp and Ferguson 2015; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Atkinson and Rodgers 2016; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016; Charrieras and Ivanova 2016; Cade and Gates 2017; Choi 2017). Sometimes, video games are understood to be addictive, and causing of more significant life issues (Cubbins and Klepinger 2007; Colburn 2011; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Gueta 2013; Saline, Jacke, Kier, Franz, and Mann 2013; Hull, Brunette, Prescott, and Sargent 2014; Choi 2017).

### *Addiction*

Experts in addiction generally agree that addiction is influenced by a combination of sociological, psychological, and physiological factors (Peele 1989; Faulkner 1991; Stephens 1991; Orphanides and Zervos 1995; Davies 1998; Finlayson, Schneider, Wan, Irons, and Sealy 1999; American Psychiatric Association 2000; Van Rooij, Meerkerk, Schoenmakers, Griffiths, and Van de Sheen 2010; Boshears, Boeri, and Harbry 2011;

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Brown, Ramo, and Anderson 2011; Adachi and Willoughby 2013a, 2013b; Butler et al. 2014; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Adachi and Willoughby 2016). This is evident when considering the variety of ways in which addiction is discussed—as a basic human appetite (Weil 1972); a choice (Biernacki 1986); a sign of immaturity (Milkman and Sunderwirth 1995; Greitemeyer 2013a, 2013b; Kim and Kim 2015; McBride and Drevenky 2016); a psychological dependence (Dole 1980; Anglin and Douglas 2011; Colburn 2011); a psychological problem (Miller 1995; Anglin and Douglas 2011; Godley and Godley 2011); a disease (Faulkner 1991; Leshner 1997); or a function of poor morals (Winick 1962; Preble and Casey 1969; Boshears et al. 2011). This is even more evident when considering the different addictions that have been studied—opiate use (Lindesmith 1938); methamphetamine use (Boshears et al. 2011); heroine use (Stephens 1991); cannabis use (Liebrechts 2013); tobacco use (Akers et al. 2014; Brietenfeld et al. 2014); alcoholism (Dietler 2006); sex (Griffie et al. 2014; Rosenberg, Carnes, and O'Connor 2014; Iwen 2015); gambling and pornography use (Butler et al. 2014); eating (Koerselman 2014); celebrity attraction (Hanukov 2015); Facebook and social media use (Hormes, Kearns, and Timko 2014; Runcan 2015); and video gaming (Kim and Kim 2015).

Furthermore, theories of addiction have been offered from functionalists (Merton 1938; Cloward and Ohlin 1960), rational choice theorists (Becker and Murphy 1988; Orphanides and Zervos 1995), and social constructionists (Lindesmith 1965; Levine 1978; Room 1985; Weinberg 2011). The functionalist perspective involves analyzing addiction as deviant activity (Merton 1938; Cloward and Ohlin 1960) as an adaptation to social structural conditions (Weinberg 2011). A noteworthy theory from the functionalist

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perspective on addiction is “normative ambivalence theory,” which argues that addiction results when agents are exposed to competing normative orientations of addiction (Weinberg 2011). The rational choice perspective of addiction posits that addictive behavior is conscious, deliberate, and calculated (Weinberg 2011). This perspective included economic theorizing on addiction, arguing that addiction reflects a choice that considers future costs and benefits and thus reflects individual preference (Becker and Murphy 1988). In critique of the purely economic theories of addiction, other rational choice theorists have emphasized factors such as regret, learning, and unintentional addiction are predicated on the ignorance of the individual, and that rational choice theories should involve cost-benefit calculation, external environment, and internal sensitivity (Ainslie 1992; Orphanides and Zervos 1995; Elster 1999). Social constructionists argue that addiction is a fundamentally culture-bound phenomenon (Schneider 1978; Weiner 1981; Room 1985; Rudy 1986; Keane 2002; Weinberg 2002, 2005, 2011). Many of these theorists approach addiction from ethnographic or biographic perspectives (Weinberg 2011). Studies conducted by social constructionists often argue that addiction is something that legitimates the stigmatization, marginalization, and persecution of addicts (Lindesmith 1965; Duster 1970; Reinerman and Levine 1997).

While the variation in addiction studies is apparent, the absence of “consistent scientific evidence concerning the etiology and basic characteristics of...[addiction] has created ambiguity and uncertainty” (Hughes 1989). In other words, because addiction is influenced by a variety of factors, is studied in a variety of contexts, and is considered in many theoretical paradigms, the topic might seem like an ambiguous one. From the sociological literature on addiction, concepts offered by researchers such as Lindesmith

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(1938, 1965, 1968), Peele (1988), and Faulkner (1991) may serve as a starting point for the creation of analytic categories. Lindesmith (1938) offered a lasting definition of addiction by characterizing it as (1) an interpretation of withdrawal symptoms being caused by the absence of something, and (2) the use of that something for the “consciously understood purpose of alleviating these symptoms or of keeping them suppressed.” Faulkner (1991:42) describes addiction as a “serious, progressive disease involving the repetitive self-administration of a substance or a process to avoid reality perceptions, through manipulation of internal nervous system processes resulting in damage to the equilibrium of internal biochemical functioning and an inability to relate to the outer world without the use of the selected substance or process.” Peele (1988) categorizes addiction by presenting it as understood by the differing “major visions,” including cognitive-behavior, medical-disease, adaptive, genetic, neurobehavioral, social, learning, ego-analytic, and moral. Stephens (1991:8) characterizes main ideas about addiction by suggesting the three “S’s” as a means of understanding them: (1) the “substance” or means of satisfaction and the types of effects it causes, (2) the “set” or addict’s expectation of the addiction experience, and (3) the “setting” or immediate environment in which the addiction is facilitated. To Stephens (1991), addiction is derived from a positive experience inherently involving and being shaped by these “S’s.” However, a problem with having such broad perspectives on addiction is that the meanings of jargon terms like “trajectory,” “withdrawal,” and “recovery” become increasingly difficult to understand (Stephens 1991:ix). Addiction has been frequently described as a “slippery” concept for research, because its meaning, content, and definitions may change according to cultural, political, historical, and scientific

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understandings (Rise, Halkjelsvik, and Kovac 2015). In light of this, many studies examine perspectives, lay meanings, and beliefs of addiction (Forghani et al. 2006; Blomqvist 2009, 2012; Crawford and Gosling 2009; Van Rooij et al. 2010; Hirschovits-Gerz et al. 2011; Holma et al. 2011; Greitemeyer and Osswald 2011; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Butler et al. 2014; Meurk, Carter, Hall, and Lucke 2014; Meurk, Partridge, Carter, Hall, Morphett, and Luck 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Rise et al. 2015; Bourgonion and Vandermeersche 2016).

### *Addiction Recovery*

While some may question whether a person can really get “hooked” on something that is not actually ingested into the body, addiction theorists argue that video game play does release molecules within the body and brain that produce pleasurable states of arousal, suggesting that game play may become physiologically addictive for some users (Faulkner 1991; Weinstein 2010; Brown, Ramo, and Anderson 2011; Jason, Olson, Mueller, Walk, and Aase 2011; Adachi and Willoughby 2013a, 2013b; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Hull et al. 2014; Jordan 2014; Smethurst 2015). If it is the case that people get addicted to naturally occurring chemicals within their own bodies, one might ask if anything can be addictive. Indeed, addictions to activities such as video games (and similarly, gambling, working, socializing, exercising, sex, and meditation) may be deemed “process addictions” or “leisure addictions” (Faulkner 1991). Process addictions are unique in that they are less likely to be perceived as addictions by friends and family members (Faulkner 1991). As a result, there are few specialized treatments available to treat problems related to process addictions, and people with process addictions may be less likely to enter 12<sup>th</sup> step or other rehabilitation programs (Faulkner 1991). Thus, a

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video game addict that fits within Lindesmith's (1938) definition may feel a compulsive need to play, without actually enjoying the playing. He or she may also have difficulty obtaining the necessary therapeutic or social support to stop.

The concept of recovering from addiction may be as ambiguous as the concept of addiction itself. Currently, there are over 14,000 treatment programs available to treat addiction using a variety of methods, professional approaches, and philosophies (White and Kelly 2011). It may not be so surprising, then, that while the public may understand recovery as a permanent solution, researchers and many clinicians avoid the term (Nielsen and Houborg 2015). For example, some sociologists argue that there is a lack of "robust conceptual models or rich empirical investigations of recovery" (Hser and Anglin 2011). Faulkner (1991) describes recovery as a problematic term, because no one ever permanently recovers from substance use. Some may consider recovery to be abstinence from one addiction; others may consider it to be abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and all other drugs, or define it even more broadly as making healthier life choices (Hser and Anglin 2011). Recovery may be better described as "the ability to function in society and being happy about it," or to "[wake] up in the morning thankful for life," which is a constantly changing state that happens on an individual basis throughout their life (Faulkner 1991:23-235). Indeed, not all common behaviors are present in all addicts, including how they recover from addiction (Faulkner 1991). Removing a substance or process may not automatically cause an addict to stop seeking it. Many addicts may maintain sobriety for a period during necessary times (such as work hours), and return to using when able (during time off work). Additionally, addicts may find it impossible to "socially" engage substances or processes they are addicted to (such as drinking at a bar)

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(Faulkner 1991). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, recovery implies an actual lifestyle change, or a long-term commitment consistent with the life course (Hser and Anglin 2011). One definition of recovery is a state of avoiding relapse, or reverting to the behaviors of substance or process addiction mentioned in these scenarios (Faulkner 1991). To Faulkner (1991), relapses occur because engaging in the addiction is perceived to instantly achieve a desirable state. Thus, addicts may be in a constant state of recovery, in that they have to continue to make an effort to avoid relapsing into an addiction trajectory.

Another noteworthy distinction when discussing recovery is that between “treatment” and “rehabilitation.” Treatment connotes a medical model of recovery, or a system of curing the disease of addiction (Faulkner 1991). In a more medical model of recovery, a physician may identify the problem while prescribing a medical course of correction (Faulkner 1991). Indeed, in this model the addict might be more accurately perceived as a “patient” (Faulkner 1991:23). However, one glaring problem with the medical model is the contradiction of perceiving addiction as both a disease and something contracted by choice. If this is the case, then the “disease” must still be ultimately resolved by personal choice, as opposed to the prescribing of medical procedures by a doctor (Faulkner 1991). Discussing recovery as treatment or rehabilitation, then, may not focus enough attention on the individual addict. Additionally, the concept of “abstinence” is worth discussing in regards to addiction recovery. While some substances and process are not essential to living, others (like food) are. Additionally, if one was to abstain from all potentially addictive processes (which may include all leisure pursuits), this could make life feel sterile or meaningless



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to individuals (Faulkner 1991). Faulkner (1991) suggests that the key is to strive not for abstinence, but for “balance,” and that recovery specialists should help to provide this.

Other noteworthy factors are certainly at play during the recovery process. One important factor is the role of the family in the recovery of the addict (Faulkner 1991:80). Depending on the severity of the addiction (and the social consequences of it), the family may have positive or negative bonds with the addict. The “Family’s Recovery Myth” describes the difficult process of being there for an addicted family member, in which the typical family member starts out strong and hopeful at the time of the addicts’ admission, but at time progresses, begins to fall apart (Faulkner 1991:80). Another important factor is whether or not the addict engaged in their addiction “socially:” do they have friends, coworkers, or family members who still engage in the substance/process? Maintaining relationships with these groups may make addicts more likely to relapse (Stephens 1991; Moos 2011). Personal and social capital (or a lack thereof) may make it more difficult for addicts to afford means to receive treatment (Godley and Godley 2011; Hser and Anglin 2011). Crises (such as economic, legal, medical, relational, etc.) may make treatment more difficult for addicts (Godley and Godley 2011). Conversely, emotional forgiveness and interventions from loved ones may make treatment more psychologically comfortable (Guerta 2013). Personal confidence, motivation, and self-esteem may bring individuals “coping resources” to deal with relapse (Brown, Ramo, and Anderson 2011; Moos 2011). Receiving addiction-related education and training may be helpful in preventing future addiction and relapse (Faulkner 1991:87). Dietary goals may also help the addict achieve a state of balance (Faulkner 1991:90). Engaging in new hobbies or “prosocial activities” that are competitive and creative, such as shuffleboard, croquet, art,

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and drama may be helpful in developing new behaviors to replace addictive ones (Faulkner 1991:161-71; Hser and Anglin 2011). Engaging in religion or spirituality may work similarly to develop new behaviors and ways of thinking (Moos 2011).

Medical models of recovery vary, but a popular model is that of “substitution treatment,” typically used in opiate addiction, in which the aim is to physically stabilize the addict’s body so that they can then achieve social reintegration (Nielsen and Houborg 2015). One example of this treatment is “methadone maintenance” for heroin addicts, in which methadone is used to reduce withdrawal symptoms (Nielsen and Houborg 2015:266-7). Other methods include hospital-based inpatient stays, specialized medical care, or residential care. However, treatment professionals using a medical model of recovery understand that such work often involves a great deal of trial and error with the addict, as stabilization involves “demanding and continuous work of building, repairing, and rebuilding treatment and social rehabilitation arrangements” (Nielsen and Houborg 2015:284). For example, if an addict fails to pick up their prescription, this may cause the treatment process to start over again. Additionally, many medical models of recovery are “acute” (lasting for a short period of time covering the initial detoxification of the body) despite the long-term attention that may be required for treating addiction (White and Kelly 2011). While these kinds of addiction treatment are well-established for recovery from pharmacological substances, however, they may be less helpful in treating lifestyle or leisure addictions, like food, gambling, shopping or video gaming addictions. That so much of the recovery literature nonetheless focuses on them, indicates a lagging understanding of, and scholarship on, more diverse or “non-traditional” addiction types.

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12<sup>th</sup> Step programs are one method that has successfully helped many people recover from a wide range of addictions (Faulkner 1991; Hser and Anglin 2011; Moos 2011). One particularly important part of the success of these programs is that meetings are offered during “leisure hours,” or hours that addicts may engage in addiction trajectories (Faulkner 1991). Another is the social and bonding aspect of the program – encouraging members to come early and stay late, spending time “around the coffee pot” talking, and hosting a number of other events, including birthday parties, clubs, bowling teams, conventions, picnics, dinners, and even dances – which also keep members active during leisure hours (Faulkner 1991). These programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA), or Narcotics Anonymous (NA), have helped individuals become drug free by offering these options throughout their life course (Hser and Anglin 2011). Faulkner (1991) believes 12<sup>th</sup> Step programs are a success in that members go to meetings because they want to. There are some critiques of 12<sup>th</sup> Step rehabilitation. Kurtz (1979) criticizes the tendency of 12<sup>th</sup> Step programs to analyze addiction using the medical model – arguing that “disease” may be inappropriate when not applied by medical professionals and that 12<sup>th</sup> Step programs also fail to correctly address the physical factors of addiction. Additionally, the spiritual factors involved in addiction (as posited by 12<sup>th</sup> Step) are difficult if not impossible to measure empirically (Kurtz 1979). Other critiques by Kurtz (1979) include the absurd paradox of accepting personal limitations – that one must accept themselves as “not god” in order to achieve healing and recovery – and that this understanding implies connectedness with other alcoholics.

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Faulkner (1991) offers a “therapeutic recreation” approach to recovery as another means of addiction recovery (practitioners of which may be called Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, Recreation Therapists, Activity Therapists, or Leisure Specialists). Therapeutic recreation is an umbrella term referring to a “continuum of care ranging from total dependence upon others for the meeting of leisure needs, to total independence” (Faulkner 1991:8). It is a purposeful intervention in the life of addicts to assist in their development of social, emotional, and/or physical skills to engage in a meaningful lifestyle that does not include previously self-destructive behaviors (Faulkner 1991). To achieve this, a variety of measurable objectives are set out and accomplished (Faulkner 1991). The idea is that eventually, addicts can live a life of freedom and enjoyment of leisure without engaging in addictive substances or processes (Faulkner 1991). However, because Faulkner (1991) argues that “there [will always] remain a spark of life waiting to be fanned into full flame...the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist must never doubt that the spark exists or keep looking for the right fan.” In this way, Faulkner (1991) is acknowledging that addiction (and recovery) are ongoing processes throughout the life course and that an addict may never be permanently “cured.”

Another way the addict may engage in recovery is through experiencing withdrawals at home without the help of active medical or therapeutic support. However, Faulkner (1991) argues that this type of recovery may be complicated by other factors. One such factor is how life threatening the symptoms of the withdrawals may be: if medical complications occur, it may be better to have immediate medical attention in close proximity (Faulkner 1991). Additionally, depending on how strong the addicts’ urge to relapse is, they may simply not commit to recovery. Considering that the addict

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may place someone in charge of his or her home while recovering (such as a friend, significant other, or family member), this places the person in a “caretaker role” that Faulkner (1991:85) finds problematic because (1) the addict may hide a supply of the drug at home anyways, and (2) if the addict has any history violence, the caretaker may actually find themselves in danger.

In summary, addiction is a process that people may want or need to recover from, and because it may be a significant process for people that involves their physical, mental, and spiritual health, it has been previously studied by social scientists (Peele 1989; Faulkner 1991; Stephens 1991; Orphanides and Zervos 1995; Davies 1998; Finlayson, Schneider, Wan, Irons, and Sealy 1999; American Psychiatric Association 2000; Van Rooij et al. 2010; Boshears, Boeri, and Harbry 2011; Brown, Ramo, and Anderson 2011; Adachi and Willoughby 2013a, 2013b; Butler et al. 2014; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Adachi and Willoughby 2016). However, now that researchers have uncovered more about the ways addiction involves naturally occurring chemicals in the human body, it has been noted that a variety of processes may be addictive to individuals, and that all of these processes may not have been studied by sociologists (Van Rooij et al. 2010; Boshears et al. 2011; Brown, Ramo, and Anderson 2011; Adachi and Willoughby 2013a, 2013b; Butler et al. 2014; Bleckmann and Jukschat 2015; Adachi and Willoughby 2016). Because millions of people play video games, future research on video game addiction might be necessary to understand video gaming in general, but also the health implications of video gaming. Additionally, learning about how video game addicts recover from their addictions may provide insight into how addicts may recover from other addictions. Thus, the purpose of my master’s thesis is to try to answer how video

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gamers describe their video gaming, their understandings of the consequences of self-defined excessive video gaming, and the strategies they pursue to try to stop their video gaming.

## METHODS

*RQ1: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe their video gaming?*

*RQ2: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe any consequences of their video gaming?*

*RQ3: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe trying to stop their video gaming?*

To answer the preceding research questions, the analytical approach I used is qualitative content analysis. This method is one that is widely used in qualitative research and generally involves investigating underlying themes in texts that are subject to analysis (Charmaz 2014; Hull et al. 2014; Marrying 2014; Tjonndal 2016). I used this method because it is unobtrusive and does not include interviewing individuals as subjects, rather, analyzing text that individuals produced (in this case, from Reddit accounts that do not require any personal information from the individuals that use them). I also used this method because it is an inductive one, and I began my analysis with observations in the data before creating theoretical categories. I first sampled narratives from post threads on r/StopGaming. I then used a three-step coding process to analyze the narratives, including the open, axial, and selective steps (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Hull et al. 2014; Marrying 2014; Borgatti 2016; Tjonndal 2016). I first summarized and listed the data. I then synthesized these lists and began to form broader categories. Finally, I refined those categories in order to more appropriately answer my research questions. My choice of method is largely influenced

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by grounded theory in that I am constructing theoretical categories for analysis that rely on emic understandings of video game addiction (or, the experiences of video gamers that post their narratives on r/StopGaming) (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Corbin and Strauss 1990; Charmaz 2014). Thus, to answer my research questions, the results of my analysis are displayed in tables (see Appendices A-D) that represent the theoretical categories of ways posters r/StopGaming describe video gaming, its consequences, and trying to stop. First, I will more clearly describe the site of data collection, r/StopGaming, including the relevant technical terms about the website and how I came to choose the site for research. Second, I will describe how I created a sample of narratives from r/StopGaming posts. Lastly, I will describe the three-step coding process that I used for analysis. Again, the results of my analysis are displayed in Appendices A-D.

### *Site: r/StopGaming*

Reddit is a popular website that is composed of individual “subreddits” or webpages. There are hundreds of thousands of subreddits, with hundreds being created every day, and each one is dedicated to a particular topic (for example, a television series, a hobby, or a particular perspective on something) (Hayworth 2015; Reddit 2017a). This is an important distinction to understand about Reddit, as previously indicated by sociologists, because visitors of a particular subreddit may be drawn to that subreddit exclusively, thus forming disparate communities (Hayworth 2015). Furthermore, to enforce these communities, subreddits often have rules, moderators, and “flair,” or some form of visual identification symbol (Hayworth2015; Reddit 2017b). When looking for a site to find narratives about video gaming, I used the Reddit search bar and entered “video gaming,” “addiction,” and “video game addiction.” Before long, I stumbled upon

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r/StopGaming ([www.reddit.com/r/stopgaming](http://www.reddit.com/r/stopgaming)), a subreddit that “exists to help those who struggle with or have struggled with compulsive gaming or video game addiction” (Reddit 2017b). Essentially, individuals that choose to participate in r/StopGaming “post” about it by (1) publishing an original thread in which the subject of the thread is a description of the individual’s experience with video gaming, or (2) publishing a comment in reply to an original thread. The subreddit moderators give badges to individuals who formally announce their decision to stop gaming through the site when the individual publishes an original thread about it (Reddit 2017b). These badges work similarly to chips in 12<sup>th</sup> Step programs, keeping an electronic count of the number of days the individual continues to abstain from video gaming (Reddit 2017b). The subreddit has three rules: (1) “Don’t be a dick,” (2) “Don’t beg for games,” and (3) “Don’t get rid of your [video gaming] accounts here” (Reddit 2017b). Thus, the site seemed like a reasonable place to find narratives about video game addiction.

Additionally, because accounts on Reddit can be created without the use of personal information (all that is needed to create an account is to choose a username and password), and because all subreddits that can be found through the Reddit search bar are public (there are also private subreddits, but those are usually only accessible by creating one or by being invited to one), it is conventional for Reddit account names to not contain personal information (Reddit 2017a). Lastly, perhaps because of the sensitive nature of the posts on r/StopGaming (in that addiction is not a socially desirable trait--Dole 1980; Biernacki 1986; Peele 1989), in my analysis I did not find any posts containing personal information beyond first names.



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### *Sample*

After deciding on r/StopGaming as the site for data collection, I chose to purposively sample narratives from posts. To create a sample, I chose to use the “Top” function to filter out the all-time most popular posts on r/StopGaming. I started from the most popular post and began to search for narratives using four inclusion criteria. First, the “post” had to be either an original thread, or a comment on an original thread. Second, within the post had to be self-confirmation of engagement with video gaming. Third, within the post had to be some description of consequences as a result of their video gaming. Fourth, within the post had to be at least one way in which the poster mentioned trying to stop their video gaming. I was able to obtain hundreds of narratives, but believed that I could achieve “theoretical saturation” with a final sample size of N=100, a typical maximum upper limit for a qualitative master’s thesis (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Harvard 2009; Charmaz 2014). This is because all theoretical categories that resulted from my analysis (displayed in Appendices A-D) were supported by enough examples from the sample.

### *Analysis*

To analyze the data from the narratives in the sample, I used a three-step coding process. My idea for analysis comes from a grounded theory perspective on qualitative research, so I will essentially read and reread the narratives in order to develop categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). My analysis techniques lead to categories that are largely influenced by the data, in the content of the narratives.

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Initially, I used an open coding process. This part of the analysis is concerned with identifying phenomenon to construct categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). I read each narrative in response to the repeated question “What is going on here?” For assistance, I used a Microsoft Word document to save the posts. I read each narrative, using the “highlight text” option to color specific text I believed would be useful for creating categories. After reading through each narrative and completing the highlights, I listed every highlighted phrase. I then tentatively organized them, by listing them according to the appropriate research question they corresponded to. The results of this step of the coding process can be seen in Appendix A.

Secondly, I used an axial coding process. This part of the analysis is concerned with disaggregating core themes in order to relate codes across the narratives (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). Essentially, this step is a first attempt at synthesizing the data by organizing them into categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). While these categories may be largely reflective of the final ones, at this stage of the coding process it is typical for the resultant theoretical categories to be less refined because the researcher is focused on sorting core elements within the data for the first time (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). The results of this step of the process can be seen in Appendix B.

Lastly, I used a selective coding process to create the final categories of analysis in order to answer my research questions. This part of the analysis is typically concerned with the refining of core categories, and making sure the data relates to them (Glaser and

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Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2014; Marrying 2014). I refined my categories by looking at the tables that resulted from my axial coding step, and ensuring that each category was properly operationalized by making sure the examples within each category related to it. The results of this step provide answers to my research questions, which can be seen in Appendix C. To show how frequently these codes appeared in the narratives, in Appendix C I give frequencies for the number of times each code appeared. Because posters may have explained their video gaming, its consequences, or trying to stop in ways that might satisfy multiple categories, these frequencies are not exclusive. In other words, the narratives may satisfy more than one category of analysis.

## RESULTS

*RQ1: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe their video gaming?*

Many of the posters described their video gaming as an outright addiction, or actually used the word addiction when describing their gaming (N=24). Posters described particular steps of the addiction process as well, meaning they had at least some knowledge of addiction.

Secondly, posters often described their video gaming in ways that were not an outright addiction, but might have had an implication of an addiction, or at least a problem. Without using the word addiction, posters described their video gaming as a compulsion (N=28), as something similar to taking drugs (N=11), as a form of escapism (N=7), as something that needed to be moderated (N=15), as a lifestyle (N=33), and simply as gaming (N=9). Lastly, some posters implied their compulsive or addictive video gaming simply by referring to their status as a member of r/StopGaming (N=19).

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### *Addiction*

As many as one fourth of the posters described their video gaming as an outright addiction, actually using the word “addiction” or describing themselves as addicts (N=24). As described by one poster, “I never noticed I was an addict until I found this forum. Actually, it's been almost 2 years since I've realized that gaming is not good to me, that I can't control it, and, since then, I've been trying to quit it, always failing after some time” (LVXT 2017). Posters also showed some familiarity with the addiction process by describing that they were experiencing a particular part of addiction, such as dependence, withdrawal, or recovery. Posters even showed some medical familiarity with addiction, not only by identifying as addicted, but also describing the current state of their dopaminergic system. As one described, “My 2 cents: It might be that gaming is your brain's last attempt for dopamine surges” (JohnYellowSnow 2017). One poster also described themselves as a high-functioning addict, explaining that while they were an addict, they were still able to maintain a functional career. Still other posters described themselves not only as addicted to video games, but to things other than video games as well, such as junk food, caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. As one poster described, “I had been playing Xbox since I woke up 15 hours ago. Two empty Dominos pizza boxes sat open on my desk just staring... Matchmaking is getting slow and my coffee thermos is empty; must be time for bed” (chadee 2016).

In addition to framing themselves as addicts, posters also indicated that they were primarily addicted to particular video games, such as World of Warcraft, League of Legends, and Runescape, or they believed that their addiction began with particular video games. Conversely, some posters described being addicted not to particular titles but to

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particular styles of video games, such as first person shooters, role playing games, or online games. The main point of this category is that posters directly admitted to being addicted to video games. This category exemplifies how video games can be a process addiction that affects the dopaminergic system like any other addiction (Faulkner 1991).

### *Compulsion*

Secondly, some posters described their video gaming in ways other than addiction, but in ways that might have had an implication of an addiction or a problematic course of behavior (N=28). In other words, posters in this category seemed to describe their video gaming with a negative connotation. This is an important distinction to make so as not to assume that posters in this category are directly indicating addiction, but rather, to still describe their problematic course of behavior. In other words, posters in this category described their video gaming with highly negative terms, describing their drive to play video games as an itch, craving, desire, thrill, fix, trigger, need, or urge. As one poster indicated, their post was about “seriously [overcoming] your urges” (play\_time\_is\_over 2017). Another described video gaming as “the last straw, the last opportunity to get a fix” (JohnYellowSnow 2017). A third poster: “I had the urge to play games almost every single day” (itrytogetthingsdone 2017). Yet another: “What helps me? Identifying my triggers and going as far as possible to get rid of them” (SuperSaiyanGod5 2016). I chose to keep this category separate from the addiction category because while this behavior might conventionally be seen as typical of an addiction trajectory, the posters in this category may not have necessarily made this connection.

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### *Like Taking a Drug*

Posters also likened their video gaming to other addictions, including junk food, caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana (N=11). Similar to the compulsion category, posters in this category used words with negative connotations to describe their video gaming. This is important in the same way that the compulsion category is: while not assuming that the posters are describing addiction, but that they may still be describing a problematic course of behavior. Posters described video gaming as being like taking a drug, and explained commonalities in their experiences with video gaming and other addictions. As one poster described, “I’ve quit smoking in 2012. I quit drinking alcohol in 2014. Both were habits that were more than 10 years strong. I feel like those were just practice for quitting games. Thirty years. Thirty fucking years I’ve wasted so much of my life in this shit...Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and games were more important to me than going to college” (Rotten\_Junk 2017). The same poster further described that they “Replaced smoking with learning to cook. Replaced drinking alcohol with drinking tea. I will replace gaming with studying” (Rotten\_Junk 2017). Another poster: “I liken it to switching from heroin to weed or something (although really League would be crack, WoW would be heroin, which I thankfully managed to quit a few years ago, though I just ended up switching to league)” (magic\_purple\_lemons 2017).

Some posters also used a conventional a 12<sup>th</sup> Step introduction, writing “Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_ and I’m an addict” as an identification choice which implied familiarity with other addictions, strengthened the perceived parallel between other substance and process addictions and video gaming, and possibly indicated that some had sought help through traditional 12<sup>th</sup> Step groups. This category also exemplifies how video games can be

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addictive in that the activity is compared to other addictions.

### *Escapism*

Fewer posters also described their video gaming in a number of ways that may be more broadly categorized as escapist (N=7). Posters described video gaming as an “adventure” that they were on (LikeKanye 2016). As one poster described, “[Video games] allowed me to enter a fantasy world where I could be a bear with a bird in his backpack and beat up baddies (Banjo&Kazooie/N64) kill monsters as an undead skeleton (Medieval/PS1), Be a gladiator and hire other gladiators to be the champion and stop evil (Gladius/Ps2), Live in a post apocalyptic world and kick ass (Last of Us, Ps3 -- Startupstevo 2017)...” They indicated that they played video games because of a sense of fulfillment that it gave them.

Posters also described their video gaming in escapist ways that were more emotional or based on emotionally significant personal experiences. One poster argued that they play video games as a way of running from life. Another described playing to cope with the “pain and horrors” of their life: “I’ve been depressed for most of my life, clinging onto games to distract myself from all the pain and horrors that infest my mind” (ssertroftaem 2016). Posters also described playing video games as a way of avoiding trying new things, or meeting new people.

### *Something to be Moderated*

Some posters also described their video gaming more vaguely, as something that needed to be moderated in some way (N=15). Like the “Compulsion” category, posters in this category negatively connoted their video gaming. Posters described their video

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gaming as something to stay away from, to be moderated, to need to stop, to need to quit, that controls them, that cannot be moderated, or is uncontrollable. While these descriptions of video gaming were more vague in that they did not specifically mention addiction, they referenced a struggle to moderate gaming. They also clearly indicated that video gaming was a problematic course of behavior. As one poster described, “We’ll be better off never touching these things again” (DWG03 2016). While this poster does not mention addiction directly, they indicate that video games are problematic enough to be something to never touch again. Thus, while this category may not exemplify video gaming as a process addiction, it does exemplify video gaming as problematic.

### *Impact on Lifestyle*

About one third of the posters described their video gaming in ways that may be more broadly defined as some that had a direct impact on their lifestyle (N=33). Once again, posters in this category used negative connotations to describe their video gaming. While these descriptions of posters’ lifestyles may include specific consequences as a result video gaming (and thus be relevant to the second research question), the details of those consequences are discussed later in this section. The purpose of this category is to explain that some posters described their video gaming by its impact on their lifestyle.

One way posters frequently described their video gaming lifestyle was in terms of its productivity (or lack thereof). Many narratives include descriptions of a video game lifestyle as blatantly unproductive, especially when considering their academics or career interests. Posters also described their gaming lifestyle as unhealthy. This included descriptions of their past or current mental or physical health state when they played video games. Lastly, posters indicated that they identified with their video gamer lifestyle



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and accepted the unhealthiness and/or lack of productivity that they experience while video gaming. One poster described, “I have been playing online MMO's for almost 20 years and I have come to realize that even though gaming is very enjoyable, it is not moving in a positive direction to a more fulfilling and better life” (D-Rob1988 2016).

### *Gaming*

Fewer posters described their video gaming simply as gaming, or as a hobby or interest (N=9). This is important because when the posters described their video games, they did not directly indicate any negative connotation with it. Posters described themselves more simply as gamers, identifying with their length of time gaming, or achievements within the video games they play, without necessarily indicating a negative connotation about them (some posters even indicated a positive connotation: “I have been diagnosed with severe depression two years ago, when i was 19...I always thought gaming is one of the few things in life that actually lighten up my mood and make me think of positive things” (whiteeyy 2016). Posters identified as lifetime gamers, as gamers for a certain number of years, and as gamers since a certain point in time, mostly, since they were teenagers or since a particular video game release. As one poster described, “I started gaming when I was 3 and was easily overstimulated by it” (Shivy\_Shankinz 2017). As another described, “Started gaming when i was very young with different video games. Eventually found diablo and starcraft which i played shitton. When I got into my teens i played alot of Tibia, CS, WoW” (thorn 2016). Posters identified with their in-game achievements, including leadership positions in online games, feats of skill within competitive games, or feats of specialization within role-playing games. This category is important, because while it does not directly indicate

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wether the posters experienced addiction, it does indicate that they felt strongly enough about video gaming to have and describe these experiences.

### *r/StopGaming*

Lastly, about one fifth of the posters described their video gaming more indirectly by identifying in some way with r/StopGaming (N=19). Posters implied problematic video gaming through their familiarity with subreddit terminology, some of which borrowed heavily from 12<sup>th</sup> Step terminology. For examples, many posters started their narratives with phrases such as “I’m \_\_\_ and I’m on \_\_\_ days of No Gaming.” Similarly, other posters described their video gaming by explaining that they had a badge or streak going for their time spent not gaming: “This is probably just another update post and seeing the six in star in my badge I though it would be good opportunity” (phandox 2016). As one poster said, “Hey guys, so I finished my first day of NoGaming” (Astronauton 2017). Another poster introduced themselves: “It has been 21 days. I have not touched a video game in 21 days, and I have never felt better” (ganthelab66 2016). Another poster: “Today I complete 1 year since I quit games” (YouHaveMyBlessings 2016). Some posters explained how long they’ve been following r/StopGaming, or explained that they were members of the subreddit. Generally, posters in this category did not particularly mention video gaming, rather, indirectly implied that their video gaming was problematic through their affiliation with the subreddit (which openly shares its perspective to stop video gaming addiction). Thus, this category is important because it strengthens the connection between video gaming and problematic behavior.

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*RQ2: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe any consequences of their video gaming?*

First, many posters described consequences that are typical of addiction trajectories, such as needing a fix, feeling unable to moderate their video gaming, partaking in other addictions alongside their video gaming (including junk food, caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana), and avoiding other problems in life (N=31).

Interestingly, a few posters described farming to be the epitome of addiction in that they felt an addiction was formed to the in-game rewards received from farming. This is particularly important because farming describes video gaming in ways in which the experience of playing is not enjoyable, which is a common way of describing addiction in the sociological literature (Lindesmith 1938; Stephens 1991). Similarly, almost half of posters described lifestyle changes as a result of their video gaming, and with it, a decline in physical health, mental health, self-esteem, and generally feeling that their lives were not on track (N=44).

Posters also described social consequences as a result of their video gaming (N=23). They described relationship strain with their significant other, parents, and children as a result of their video gaming. Posters also described guilt from relapsing into video gaming, because it meant that they had to reset their badge on r/StopGaming. Others described coasting, or settling in social relationships they believed were not ideal. Similarly, posters also described feeling a general lack of outgoingness, and a desire to stay at home more often than not. Posters also described consequences with their academics or career (N=26). Frequently posters mentioned not spending enough time studying or working from home, or being unfocused during this time as a direct result of their video gaming. Posters mentioned coasting at school and working, doing the minimal

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amount of effort required to pass their classes or keep their jobs. Similarly, posters mentioned having a lack of professionalism in their school and work, and sometimes being confronted about this by teachers or coworkers. Posters also mentioned bad grades or poor job performance as a result of their video gaming, and in other scenarios, dropping out of school or being fired from their jobs. Posters also frequently mentioned having a lack of motivation to improve their education or career, and that they felt they chose gaming over those areas of life.

While likely related to education and career concerns, posters more generally described the blatant time and money that they wasted as consequences of their video gaming (N=30). Posters frequently described the amount of time they wasted video gaming, which many were able to accurately list because of in-game features that allow gamers to see the amount of time they have played for. This amount of time often added up to days, weeks, months, and even a year in time spent playing video games, which posters described as cause for concern. Relatedly, posters described the amount of money they wasted by spending it on their video gaming. While some posters spent money by actually buying hard copies of video games, issues with spending were related to electronic purchases in game, or micro transactions. Posters described the addicting nature of spending money for in-game rewards, and spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on these things. Similarly, on gaming sites such as Steam, where gamers can electronically download new games at cheaper rates, posters spent too much money.

Lastly, fewer posters described the consequences to their hobbies because of their video gaming (N=7). Posters frequently described losing motivation and enthusiasm for their hobbies because they were thinking about video gaming. More directly, posters

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spent less time with their hobbies because they spent that time video gaming. Generally, posters described that they felt that they did not pursue their hobbies because of their gaming.

### *Addiction*

First, almost one third of posters described consequences in terms that may be found in the sociological literature (Lindesmith 1938; Stephens 1991) (N=31). This is an important category because it clearly indicates that posters believed they were addicted to video gaming and experiencing the consequences of this behavior as a result. One such example is that posters described feeling a compulsion to play video games. Posters referred to this compulsion by calling it a craving, fix, or urge. As one poster described, “After my 1 year halt from gaming, I got re-introduced to it through my cousin on Christmas. The craving [of video gaming] after getting close to that false ecstasy has made my mind crazy for the past 2 weeks” (GameOvr 2017). Posters also described a lack of ability to moderate or control their video gaming. Posters described being addicted to other things as well as video gaming, including junk food, caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, sex, and gambling. As one indicated, “...I still have other issues to deal with (smoke too much weed, somewhat unhealthy relationship with porn, things I'm sure many of us here also struggle with -- magic\_purple\_lemons 2017)...” This comment is important in that the poster believes these behaviors are typical to video gamers like themselves. Posters also described using video gaming to hide from a host of other problems in life, ranging from their personal health to their social relationships.

Lastly, posters made direct comparisons between farming and addiction. Farming is the repetitive playing of a video game in order to earn in-game rewards. Posters

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described this as the epitome of addiction, and explained that they did not enjoy farming but felt a need to earn rewards at the rate farming allowed. Furthermore, these posters compared this to tolerance and withdrawal for in-game rewards. This description of farming is particularly important in indicating that posters were experiencing video gaming addiction because the sociological literature indicates that this is a particular experience within addiction trajectories (Lindesmith 1938; Stephens 1991).

### *Impact on Lifestyle*

Almost half of the posters described negative changes in their lifestyle as a result of their video gaming (N=44). This in itself is important because it clearly indicates that video gaming was an overall problematic course of behavior for the posters. Posters frequently described the consequences towards their physical health. Relatedly, posters described consequences towards their mental health. Posters indicated consequences for their self-esteem and identity as a result of these lifestyle changes: “I was fully disgusted with myself and could no longer look at myself in the mirror” (YouHaveMyBlessings 2016). Posters also described a more general decline in their lifestyle, or a decline that they were able to avoid. As one indicated, “...And i wasn't even happy when I was playing. When we'd lose, I'd rage and get angry and my mood would be ruined. When we won, I wasn't even happy, I would just feel relieved. It was such a toxic relationship” (magic\_purple\_lemons 2016). In other words, posters described feelings as if their lives were not on track. One poster described such a lifestyle decline, that they even became homeless as a direct consequence of their video gaming.

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### *Social*

Between one fifth and one fourth of posters also described social consequences as a direct result of their video gaming (N=23). Particularly, posters experienced relationship issues with their significant other. Posters also experienced relationship issues with members of their family. Posters experienced guilt when realizing they would have to admit relapse by resetting their badge for others to see on r/StopGaming.

More generally, posters described coasting in social situations. This usually meant settling in relationships that posters believed may be less than ideal. One poster described doing so by remaining in a relationship with a significant other they believed was abusive to them, simply because they were not motivated enough to resolve the situation (instead, they would rather continue video gaming). Others described a lack of motivation or concern to get out of the house, and typically chose not to leave the house for social outings or to choose video gaming over these opportunities: “To put in simply, I isolated myself from others. I didn't talk much and was shy to try out new things. Because of this my social anxiety became worse. I became depressed and my gaming habits became worse each day. What started playing 2 hours a day, ended 8-9 hours a day” (itrytogetthingsdone 2016).

### *Career and Academics*

About one fourth of posters also described consequences with their academics or career as a result of their video gaming (N=26). Frequently posters mentioned not spending enough time studying or working from home, or being unfocused during this time as a direct result of their video gaming. Posters mentioned coasting at school and working, doing the minimal amount of effort required to pass their classes or keep their

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jobs. Similarly, posters mentioned having a lack of professionalism in their school and work, and sometimes being confronted about their lack of professionalism by teachers or coworkers. Posters also mentioned bad grades or poor job performance as a result of their video gaming. In more extreme scenarios, posters described dropping out of school or being fired from their jobs as a result of video gaming. Posters also mentioned lacking motivation to improve their situation in their careers or academics. In other words, posters indicated that they felt they chose gaming over other parts of their life. As one poster described, “When I was gaming I wasn’t really studying as hard as I could. I was doing maybe 30 [minutes] a day of studying, but never actually [focusing] on the material” (Bigblueduck 2017).

### *Time and Money*

While likely related to education and career concerns, about one third of posters also more generally described the blatant time and money that they felt was wasted as a consequence of their video gaming (N=30). Posters frequently described the amount of time they had spent video gaming as problematic in itself, which many were able to directly indicate because of in-game features that allow them to save this information: “...whereas I used to play the same 3 games for 1000's of hours now my average game time is 100hrs (over months)” (Trump4GodEmperor 2016). As one poster said, “On New Year's Eve I tried to load Dragon Age, only to find my save file was corrupted. 100 hours lost! Fuck” (Mister\_Pez 2017)! Another poster described, “Seven months ago my steam account said 8 hours of gameplay per day” (seunlau 2016). This amount of time often added up to days, weeks, months, or years in time spent playing video games, which posters described as concerning. Relatedly, posters described the amount of money they



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wasted by spending it on their video gaming. While some posters spent money by actually buying hard copies of video games, issues with spending were related to electronic purchases in game, or micro transactions. Posters described the addicting nature of spending money for in-game rewards, and spending hundreds (and in one case, thousands) on these things: “I also got in financial struggles because of all the money i put in for skins, which got worse and worse” (whiteeyy 2016). Similarly, on gaming sites such as Steam, where gamers can electronically download new games at cheaper rates, posters spent a lot of money. This is an important consequence in itself, because it may describe another element of video game addiction that contradicts the typical idea that video games are cheap and affordable (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013). This is also important considering this consequence of video game addiction may have economic implications for people that buy video games, particular, those in the middle and lower classes (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013).

### *Hobbies*

Lastly, fewer posters described the consequences to their hobbies or interests that they felt were a direct result of their video gaming (N=7). Posters frequently described losing motivation and enthusiasm for their hobbies because they were thinking about video gaming instead: “...I decided to learn how to code...I was always fascinated and interested in coding, but because of gaming I always decided to delay that” (itrytogetthingsdone 2016). Generally, posters described that they felt that they did not

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pursue their hobbies because of their gaming. Posters indicated they spent less time with their hobbies directly because of the time that they spent video gaming.

*RQ3: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe trying to stop their video gaming?*

Most frequently, posters described trying to stop their video gaming by engaging in self-improvement (N=58). One way in which posters engaged in self-improvement was by developing their education and career. Posters also engaged in self-improvement by working on their physical health. Relatedly, posters worked on their mental health by seeking professional advice, venting on the subreddit, or engaging in new experiences.

Posters also described trying to stop their video gaming by quitting cold turkey, using an abstinence strategy and completely refraining from video gaming (N=41). Posters abstained from video gaming by deleting their video game accounts or even selling them to other players. Some posters went as far as selling their television set, or getting rid of their Internet connection. Others still gave these possessions to friends or family members. Posters' descriptions of what they should abstain from varied. Some avoided gaming, but turned to gaming-related activities for comfort, such as listening to soundtracks from their favorite video games. Other posters avoided things similar to video games, such as television, social media, and the Internet in general. More generally, however, posters described maintaining a sense of discipline and avoiding addictive behavior. Posters with more knowledge of addiction even described medical awareness of the consequences of abstinence.

A smaller but still notable number of posters described stopping their video gaming not by abstaining from it, but from learning to control it, moderate it, or responsibly engage it (N=18). Some posters moderated their video gaming by regulating

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the time they spent playing. Posters also mentioned using substitutes for video gaming as a means of moderating it, including game-related and electronic substitutes. Other posters substituted their video gaming for non-electronic games. Interestingly, other posters described playing particular types of video games exclusively, so as to avoid the aspects of video gaming they perceived as addicting. Lastly, posters moderated their video gaming by moderating their other, simultaneous addictions, including junk food, caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

Posters described trying to stop their video gaming by picking up new hobbies, or spending more time with existing ones (N=35). Posters listed several hobbies. Many of these hobbies were self-improving in some way, such as exercising, meditating, or learning to cook. Other hobbies were social in that they included getting out of the house and spending time with other people, such as camping, going to concerts and music festivals, or travelling. Lastly, posters described hobbies that were related to gaming and electronics, such as listening to video game soundtracks, learning to program and even create video games, and engaging in electronic activities such as YouTube, Netflix, and social media applications.

Finally, posters described trying to stop their video gaming because of the social consequences that may result from their continuing to do so (N=25). Posters described feeling a sense of responsibility to significant social relationships in their lives, such as their significant other, parents, or children. Similarly, posters described a responsibility to social roles related to these relationships, such as their responsibility to be a good father or a real man. Posters also described a sense of responsibility to the subreddit (by maintaining their badge) or to individuals they met through the subreddit. Other posters

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described feeling a need to distance themselves from social groups related to video gaming, such as friends that play video games, or professional video gaming groups such as streamers (which record their video gaming sessions for live followers and sponsorships from gaming companies). Posters described feeling a need to meet new people, or just get out of the house. Lastly, posters described engaging in prosocial activities such as volunteering.

### *Self-Improvement*

Over half of the posters described trying to stop their video gaming by engaging in some kind of activity that may be considered self-improving (N=58). This is important because it implies that video gaming can have consequences that require self-improvement to fix (especially when considering the health and economic consequences of video gaming and addiction). Posters engaged in self-improvement in many areas, including their career and academics: “I started passing many lessons again and that was the first positive thing after a long time” (samoilaros 2016). The same poster engaged in self-improvement by applying to new schools and jobs (“...[I] started taking lessons in order to take my degree in English”), spending more time studying or working at home, or improving their performance in school and work more generally (samoilaros 2016). They even engaged in self-improvement by working on their physical health: “Great grades again and started hitting the gym. OH GOD. I really missed that feeling” (samoilaros 2016). Some ways other posters went about self-improvement in their physical health condition were changing their diet, learning how to cook, and exercising. Running was the most frequently mentioned exercise by posters: “I created long term goals, short term goals. I started planning for my financial future, I started running daily,

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meditating daily and eating well. I started reading development books like crazy, I've been insanely motivated and also very busy. I schedule out my weeks, and normally don't have much downtime" (basemaster08 2016). Relatedly, posters attempt self-improvement by focusing on their mental health and seeking professional advice, expressing themselves on the subreddit, or trying new things. Some posters more generally described their self-improvement: "Quitting for the first 30 days was really tough because I didn't have a lot to fill the void. It seemed like I had so much time on my hands. I spent it initially watching movies, and porn and watching games. Around the 40th day I started to really make progress. After reading the Slight Edge, which I highly recommend, I started to make small daily adjustments in my lifestyle to improve my life. It started with creating a plan and executing" (basemaster08 2016).

### *Abstinence*

Almost half of posters also described trying to stop their video gaming by quitting cold turkey, or using an abstinence strategy and completely refraining from video gaming (N=41). This is an important and separate category from self-improvement in that abstinence was described as a strategy in itself, and was also frequently mentioned by posters. Posters quit cold turkey by deleting their video game accounts or selling those accounts to others: "Gaming is ruining my life - For 2 fucking years straight I've said 'I'll start tomorrow.' This bullshit cannot go on! I'm so angry at myself. I'm currently uninstalling all the games I have on my computer" (play\_time\_is\_over 2017)...Some posters even described getting rid of their television sets and Internet connection. Others still gave these possessions to friends or family members, to hold onto while the poster decided whether or not they could keep them. Posters' descriptions of what they should

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abstain from varied. Some avoided gaming, but turned to gaming-related activities for comfort, such as listening to soundtracks from their favorite video games. Other posters avoided things similar to video games, such as television, social media, and the Internet in general. As one poster indicated, “Games itself is not the issue, and if you replace games with reddit, tv, youtube, porn, weed you are just wasting your time”

(Trump4GodEmperor 2016). More generally, however, posters described maintaining a sense of discipline and avoiding addictive or problematic behavior: “However I realise now that quitting games isnt what changed my life. Because I also quit reddit, I quit masturbating and I quit wasting time on the internet whether it be youtube or otherwise” (Trump4GodEmperor 2016). Posters with more knowledge of addiction even described medical awareness of the consequences of quitting cold turkey, with one poster describing they will be fine at the end of their 90 day detox (with the belief that their dopamine system will be able to repair itself in this amount of time).

### *Moderation*

Almost one fifth of posters described stopping their video gaming not by abstaining from it, but from learning to control it, moderate it, or responsibly engage it (N=18). This is important because it contradicts the abstinence category (which strives for complete abstinence and no moderation) but was nonetheless expressed by a number of posters. Some posters simply let others borrow (and not keep) their video games: “You don't have to throw your XBOX in the trash, you can lend it to a friend until you think you're ready to moderate or you can sell it again, without losing much” (MCSenss 2016). Some posters moderated their video gaming by regulating the time they spent playing. As one poster described, “I can moderate my gaming and if I do game I play about 30min-

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2hr every few days” (Riemi87 2017)... This included strategies such as playing for a certain amount of time per day, playing during the weekends only, or even taking breaks from gaming for certain periods of time. Posters also mentioned using substitutes for video gaming as a means of moderating it, including game-related and electronic substitutes (such as YouTube videos about video games, or activities like Netflix or social media applications). Other posters substituted their video gaming for non-electronic games, such as board games or role-playing games. Interestingly, other posters described playing particular types of video games exclusively, so as to avoid the aspects of video gaming they perceived as addicting: “I used to only play LoL and cs:s however I've stopped playing these games. I now play soulely single player - progressive games and whereas I used to play the same 3 games for 1000's of hours now my average game time is 100hrs (over months)” (Trump4GodEmperor 2016). This included playing single player games instead of online multiplayer games. Another way included playing social games with people they knew in real life, as described by one poster: “I can still play videogames casually with a close group of friends, but only if we're playing together in the same room...I still play Words with Friends with my mom. I spend about 10-20 minutes a week exchanging moves with her. She's still a word titan and I'm getting crushed in almost every game. Love it, I'm still having fun” (ssertroftaem 2016). Posters also played offline games. Lastly, posters moderated their video gaming by moderated their other, simultaneous addictions, including junk food, caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

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### *Hobbies*

About one third of posters described trying to stop their video gaming by picking up new hobbies, or spending more time with existing ones (N=35). While many hobbies may also be considered self-improving (and thus lend themselves to that category), this category indicates that some posters stopped playing video games specifically by developing hobbies. Posters listed several hobbies (too many to be listed here), which can be viewed in the appendices. Many of these hobbies were self-improving in some way, such as exercising, meditating, or learning to cook: “I’m so happy not gaming it’s unreal. I’m outside a lot more thanks to Geocaching, I’m progressing in my career due to having time to study, I’ve signed up to a new gym and am getting healthier, I’ve even taken full control of my finances and put a budget together which has no room for games or consoles” ([deleted] 2016). Other hobbies were social in that they included getting out of the house and spending time with other people, such as camping, going to concerts and music festivals, or travelling. Lastly, posters described hobbies that were related to gaming and electronics, such as listening to video game soundtracks, learning to program and even create video games, and engaging in electronic activities such as YouTube, Netflix, and social media applications: “I woke up one morning last week and got the idea to just sell my xbox, 3ds, tv, and all my games, and get a radio and some new books, and also cancel my internet (Aug.31 it gets cut off, after I can go to library and coffee shops)” (rpgfiend 2017).

### *Social*

Finally, one fourth of posters described trying to stop their video gaming because of the social consequences that may result from their continuing to do so (N=25). This



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category is particularly important in that it has implications for family relationships, especially when considering that video game consoles are frequently bought in households (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013). Posters described feeling a sense of responsibility to significant social relationships in their lives, such as their significant other, parents, or children. Similarly, posters described a responsibility to gendered social roles related to these relationships, such as their responsibility to be a good father or a real man. This is particularly interesting when considering the importance of gender in overall video game culture and experience (Dietz 1998; Beasley and Standley 2002; Forghani et al. 2006; Ivory 2006; Miller and Summers 2007; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Northup and Shumway 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Ribbens and Malliet 2015; Song and Fox 2016; Turner 2016). As one poster indicated, “You have a family + you game? Then let me guess, you are not spending time with the kids...Not helping your wife with chores, cleaning and laundry? It’s not a life for a married man, that’s for sure” (seunlau 2016). Posters also described a sense of duty to the subreddit, to the streak they had on their account, or to individuals they met through the subreddit. Posters also enjoyed getting on the subreddit simply to express themselves. As one poster indicated, “Hello folks, I am writing here again because I find it extremely cathartic” (DarkRedTwist 2016). Other posters described feeling a need to distance themselves from social groups related to video gaming, such as friends that play video games, or professional video gaming groups such as streamers. As one indicated,

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“Did you lose any friends when you decided to quit playing games? Yes and no. Yes, because most of my friends I had were gaming buddies. Most of the time we played CSGO or Dota on Steam or we messed around in GMOD. We talked about games and nothing else. Since I decided to quit gaming 90 days ago, I do not have that much contact any more with them. I still talk to a few, but roughly 70% with who I communicated a lot I don't have any contact with them” (itrytogetthingsdone 2016). Posters also described feeling a need to meet new people, or just get out of the house. Lastly, posters described engaging in prosocial activities such as volunteering. These strategies for trying to stop video gaming are significant in that they acknowledge the necessity of other people for their success.

## DISCUSSION

### *Future Research: Health Implications*

Future research might consider approaches that can understand the physical and mental health complications of video gaming. This research indicates that there are physical and mental health consequences of video gaming that are harmful to individuals, and these issues may be more aptly understood by approaches with clinical knowledge. Additionally, because this research indicates that video gaming might cause physical and mental health issues, future researchers might also consider individuals with pre-existing physical or mental health issues like those described in the study (for example, individuals with depression) of this nature as groups of interest.

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### *Future Research: Gender*

Another suggestion for future research is that gender may play an important role in the experiences of video gamers. The sociological literature has already established the importance of gender to video game culture and experience more generally (Dietz 1998; Beasley and Standley 2002; Forghani et al. 2006; Ivory 2006; Miller and Summers 2007; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Yao, Manhood, and Linz 2010; Coyne et al. 2012; Hollingdale and Greitemeyer 2013; Ferguson and Olson 2014; Northup and Shumway 2014; Kocurek 2015; Kondrat 2015; Ribbens and Malliet 2015; Song and Fox 2016; Turner 2016). When considering that some individuals in my thesis were motivated to stop video gaming by feeling a responsibility to fulfill a gendered role (such as being a father), future studies might ask questions that focus on the importance of gender in the experiences of video game players.

### *Future Research: Middle Class Families*

This research indicates that video gaming may be a course of behavior that can impact an individual's education experience. Posters described severe consequences to their academics that ranged from a lack of concentration to dropping out, consequences that may be seen as problematic to any student. Future researchers might consider students as a group of interest, especially considering that teenagers and young adults that are likely to be in high school and college are more likely to play video games (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013).

This research also indicates that video gaming may impact an individual's career. Posters described consequences to their career that may also be seen as a problematic course of behavior to any individual with a career. Future researchers might consider

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college students as a group of interest (considering that they may be seen as preparing for a career), and young or starting professionals, especially considering that young adults are more likely to play video games (Gamespot 2010; Entertainment Software Association 2013).

Lastly, this research indicates that video gaming may cause relationship issues with the players and their significant others or family members. This is particularly important when considering that the sociological literature indicates that video games are common in households in the middle and lower classes (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013). While the results of my thesis are unable to confirm demographic information about the posters on r/StopGaming (because Reddit users do not need to give any personal information to create an account), my results did confirm significant life issues in the posters' lives that affected their well-being. Thus, when considering that the sociological literature has already established a connection between middle and lower class households and video gaming (American Psychiatric Association 2000; Behm-Morawitz and Mastro 2009; Gamespot 2010; Coyne, Busby, Bushman, Gentile, Ridge, and Stockdale 2012; Entertainment Software Association 2013), and when considering the issues experienced by posters in my thesis, video gaming might be thought of as a relevant issue to middle class families. Future researchers on video gaming might consider couples, families, or households within the middle and lower classes as broader groups of interest.

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### *Future Research: Methods*

My first suggestion for future research on this topic would be to attempt a more longitudinal analysis of the accounts that produce posts on r/StopGaming. While I analyzed narratives in and of themselves for idiographic details, the longitudinal analysis that may result from reading posts from an account over several months or years could also answer my research questions, as well as new ones. Second, by messaging the owner of an account, another direction for future research may be through electronic interviews using the Reddit messaging system. However, the issue with both of these approaches is that the research may become increasingly obtrusive, by learning more details about the life of individuals (and with that, more personal information), as well as by changing the unit of analysis to individuals in the case of interviews. One strength of the method I used is that it is unobtrusive, and can be used without causing harm to individuals, since individuals are not directly analyzed.

### *Future Research: Reddit*

My last suggestion for future research is that Reddit may be a valuable site for future content analysis on video gaming, addiction, and much more. For video gaming, future research may include using methods similar to the one presented here on subreddits pertaining to video game culture, the cultures of particular video games, or particular groups of players. The specific data of these topics that subreddits may provide through content analysis may aid future studies of video gaming by more intuitively understanding topics such as these. For addiction, future research may similarly use these methods on subreddits pertaining to addiction to other things, the cultures of addicted groups of people, or stopping addiction. Similarly, the data of these topics from

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subreddits may aid future studies of addiction. My larger point is that Reddit is a valuable site for content analysis research on several topics, and by using a reliable method, valid information may be gathered to aid future studies in social science research.

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### APPENDIX A: ANALYSIS: OPEN CODING

#### List 1A: Research Question 1: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe their video gaming?

- gaming, playing games
- sense of escapism, adventure, fulfillment, emotional, run from life, pain and horrors, avoid others, avoid trying new things, shy
- taken things from them
- interest, hobby
- distraction
- itch, craving, desire, fun, thrill, fix, trigger, (need to be stimulated), feels good, urge
- habit
- something to be moderated
- something to need to quit
- high functioning addicts
- addiction, realized they were in the middle of a particular step of it, recovery
- understanding of dopamine system, attempt to get it through gaming, understanding gaming as one way of addiction
- understanding addiction as not just limited to video games, but including video games
- compared to alcohol and cigarettes, “treating it like taking a drug”
- something that controls them, cannot be moderated
- as someone who identifies with subreddit terms (Day \_\_\_\_ of No Gaming).
- self-destruction
- length of time as a gamer, gamer identity (whole life, 20+ years, since i was a kid, 14, etc.)
- wasted time, not beneficial
- unhealthy
- identity, characters, communities, levels and achievements
- something to be stayed away from or quit
- interfering with happiness
- something that causes restlessness
- absurd
- bad version of themselves, future present or past self in a dream, best vs. worse, not who they want to be
- not productive, lack of progress
- fake happiness
- challenge to adulthood
- addiction that developed with a certain game
- lifestyle
- uncontrollable
- identified by being on a streak on r/stop gaming
- problem
- filling a void
- 12th step style
- way to avoid anxiety and depression

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### List 2A: Research Question 2: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe any consequences of their video gaming?

- lack of studying
- lack of concentration, dedication, stamina (mental)
- “coasting” in life: not trying or achieving, settling, food, jobs, school
- lack of professionalism: responding to clients, no energy to come in or perform
- lack of moderation, attempts at moderation
- needed “fix”
- lack of energy (physical), anguish, tired, stamina
- debt
- failed college
- ruined relationships: unable to be with girlfriend, too interested in gaming instead
- insane amounts of time logged into game that measures out to actual days and months, “Destroy social life”
- hours a day or hours a week, cont’d...
- stress (BINGING), depression, mood swings, anger, rage,
- irritability, negative feelings
- nausea, tightness in joints, headaches
- lack of hygiene and health upkeep - brushing teeth,
- “self-destruction”, causes most of problems in life,
- bad diet: pizza, soda, energy drinks, coffee
- other addictions - porn, foods, smoking, drinking
- self loathing, low self esteem, anxiety
- numbing of everything you see....feeling fake, not enjoying other things, indifference
- weight changes
- other problems that are being avoided intensify
- grades
- enthusiasm to go the gym or exercise
- microtransactions
- other hobbies losing time
- worst version of myself
- skipping classes, for sleep or gaming more
- sleep cycle problems
- chose over military, army,
- chose over goals, passions
- farming
- embarrassment to self and to girlfriend
- ignoring pains, sickness, sleep deprivation, even a collapsed lung
- obsessing about gaming when not gaming
- reading threads about gaming
- watching streamers or other gamers
- failing exams
- no motivation
- kicked out of college
- lying to SO, wife, etc.
- relationship strain



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- loss of self esteem of SO
- wife yells at tv
- reluctance to get out of the house
- taking spouse for granted
- fighting with family
- distancing from family
- distancing from friends or girlfriends
- fast food diets
- carb diets
- feeling that life was not on track, “like shit”, inescapable, nightmare, bad dream, “fucked up”, lost control, void in their life
- losing badge, progress, reset badge, losing streak
- staying up all night
- buying tons of games and not playing them much
- never developed art skills, playing an instrument, learning to sing
- girlfriend lost feelings for them
- cravings
- homelessness

### List 3A: Research Question 3: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe trying to stop their video gaming?

- Passing professional certification exam
- Studying for professional exam
- Cold turkey:
- Delete accounts
- Returning gaming consoles
- New activities
- Going out: concerts, music festival
- Chores
- Pets
- Meal preparation
- Avoiding the video game store
- Abstinence
- Going to the gym
- Finding a doctor, counselor, or psychologist
- Resting period: regular sleep schedule
- Picking up new hobbies: music, instrument
- 3D simulation as a hobby, other electronic or technical hobbies
- Personal business, personal website
- Reading as a hobby
- Posting on the website
- Commenting on the website
- Diary or Video blog
- Understanding video games are addicting or dangerous
- Working out
- Reading on the internet

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- Continued abstinence and renewed self esteem
- Sports teams
- Self-development books and audios
- Cooking
- Unsubscribing to games
- Unsubbing to game related channels, pages, gamers
- One day at a time
- Understanding the dopamine system and keeping physical and mental health
- Giving away computer
- Selling game accounts and consoles
- Personal training: exercise
- Cleaning the house
- cooking
- Apply for military
- Apply for college
- Apply for new job
- Knowing career choice
- Drinking tea
- New lifestyle
- Martial arts as a hobby
- Get out of the house
- Meditation
- NoFap challenge (abstinence from masturbation)
- New language
- Listening to game music
- Novels based on games
- Tabletop games
- Podcasts
- Movies
- TV
- YouTube
- Keeping a schedule, calendar
- Lifting weights
- Eat right
- Good nights sleep
- Following the rules of the sub, like the badge
- Positive, productive activities
- Don't binge
- Being bored
- Cycling
- Skateboarding
- Control of video gaming
- Moderation
- Playing social games
- Commitment to significant other
- Epiphanies: wanting to be more productive

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- Buy PC with small memory (macbook air)
- Donated blood
- Donated clothes
- Meet new people
- Meet new romantic interests
- Spending more time with friends
- Started buying birthday gifts
- Walking dogs
- Personal journal
- Throw parties
- Pros and cons list
- Playing single player games instead of multiplayer
- Get a better job
- Learning how to program
- TED talks
- Coding
- Spanish, Japanese
- Finishing college or degree
- Run marathons
- Confessing their feelings by posting
- Forcible abstinence
- “Go to the bottom” and feel the boredom and negativity
- Geocaching
- Running
- Dancing
- Drawing
- Creative writing
- Keeping up with the news
- Not allowing Youtube, reddit, porn, or tabletop games
- Listing reasons why they don’t game
- focusing on career
- disgust with old ways
- Imagining future if continuing gaming
- Resetting badge upon relapse
- Lose weight
- Vitamins and diet
- Foster parent
- Marriage
- Sell tv
- Sell games
- Cancel internet
- Uses radio instead
- Writing short stories
- Financial planning
- 90 days to clear out addiction in basil ganglia part of brain
- Short breaks from gaming, days to months

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- Starting a nuclear family
- Art
- 3d Art
- Recording music
- Realizing too much time has been wasted
- Uninstall games
- Walking
- Ranting/rambling
- Seeing successful peers
- List of activities on subreddit
- Realizing video games were meant to be addicting
- Imagination in self improvement: leveling up, dark self
- Realized video gaming would not help them achieve aspirations
- Moderating other addictions, like coffee and sugar.
- “Lost the urge”
- “Man up”
- Entrepreneur: freelance content writer
- Entrepreneur: motivational speeches
- Sharing tips on their improvement with others
- Stop eating fast food
- Tutoring
- Taking care of aquarium
- Travel
- Multiple hobbies
- New routine
- Go outside everyday
- Accepting life wasn't on right track
- Feeling current accomplishments are inadequate
- Lack of enjoyment of gaming
- Realization that gaming is more stress than fun
- Not being impressed by more talented gamers
- List of reasons about why gaming was bad for them
- List of things they aren't doing because of video gaming
- Posting to vent
- Archery.
- Photography
- Calculating opportunity cost of time spent gaming
- Gradually reducing gaming time
- Video editing
- Talking to family
- Going out with family
- Chatting with romantic interests
- Focusing on graduation
- Reading list
- Movie list
- Cutting out gamer friends

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- Hiking
- Group activities

## APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS: AXIAL CODING

Table 1B. Research Question 1: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe their video gaming?

Category	Examples
Addiction	-Addiction that developed with a certain

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	<p>game</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High functioning addicts</li> <li>-Addiction, realized they were in the middle of a particular step of it, recovery</li> <li>-Understanding of dopamine system, attempt to get it through gaming, understanding gaming as one way of addiction</li> <li>-Understanding addiction as not just limited to video games, but including video games</li> <li>-12th step style</li> </ul>
Compulsion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Itch, craving, desire, fun, thrill, fix, trigger, (need to be stimulated), feels good, urge</li> </ul>
“Like Taking a Drug”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Compared to alcohol and cigarettes, “treating it like taking a drug”</li> </ul>
Escapism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sense of escapism, adventure, fulfillment, emotional, run from life, pain and horrors, avoid others, avoid trying new things, shy</li> <li>-Filling a void</li> </ul>
Something to be Moderated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Something to be moderated</li> <li>-Something to need to quit</li> <li>-Something that controls them, cannot be moderated</li> <li>-Something to be stayed away from or quit</li> <li>-Uncontrollable</li> </ul>
Impact on Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Taken things from them</li> <li>-Gamer lifestyle</li> <li>-Self-destruction</li> <li>-Wasted time, not beneficial</li> <li>-Dependent</li> <li>-Unhealthy</li> <li>-Interfering with happiness</li> <li>-Something that causes restlessness</li> <li>-Bad version of themselves, future present or past self in a dream, best vs. worse, not who they want to be</li> <li>-Not productive, lack of progress</li> <li>-Fake happiness</li> <li>-Challenge to adulthood</li> <li>-Manhood</li> <li>-Way to avoid anxiety and depression</li> </ul>
Gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gaming, playing games</li> <li>-Interest, hobby</li> <li>-Distraction</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gamer identity</li> <li>-Length of time as a gamer, gamer identity (whole life, 20+ years, since i was a kid, 14, etc.)</li> <li>-Identity, characters, communities, levels and achievements</li> </ul>
r/StopGaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-As someone who identifies with subreddit terms (Day ____ of No Gaming).</li> <li>-Identified by being on a streak on r/stop gaming</li> </ul>

Table 2B. Research Question 2: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe any consequences of their video gaming?

Category	Examples
Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of moderation, attempts at moderation</li> <li>-Needed “fix”</li> <li>-Bad diet: pizza, soda, energy drinks,</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coffee</li> <li>-Other addictions - porn, foods, smoking, drinking</li> <li>-Other problems that are being avoided intensify</li> <li>-Farming</li> <li>-Obsessing about gaming when not gaming</li> <li>-No motivation</li> <li>-Fast food diets</li> <li>-Carb diets</li> <li>-Cravings</li> </ul>
Impact on Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of concentration, dedication, stamina (mental)</li> <li>-Lack of energy (physical), anguish, tired, stamina</li> <li>-“Coasting” in life: not trying or achieving, settling, food, jobs, school</li> <li>-Lonely...</li> <li>-Enthusiasm to go the gym or exercise</li> <li>-Stress (BINGING), depression, mood swings, anger, rage,</li> <li>-Irritability, negative feelings</li> <li>-Nausea, tightness in joints, headaches</li> <li>-Lack of hygiene and health upkeep - brushing teeth,</li> <li>-“Self-destruction”, causes most of problems in life,</li> <li>-Bad diet: pizza, soda, energy drinks, coffee</li> <li>-Self loathing, low self esteem, anxiety</li> <li>-Numbing of everything you see....feeling fake, not enjoying other things, indifference</li> <li>-Weight changes</li> <li>-Other problems that are being avoided intensify</li> <li>-Worst version of myself</li> <li>-Sleep cycle problems</li> <li>-Homelessness</li> <li>-Embarrassment to self and to girlfriend</li> <li>-Obsessing about gaming when not gaming</li> <li>-Reading threads about gaming</li> <li>-Watching streamers or other gamers</li> <li>-No motivation</li> <li>-Fast food diets</li> <li>-Carb diets</li> </ul>



## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Feeling that life was not on track, “like shit”, inescapable, nightmare, bad dream, “fucked up”, lost control, void in their life</li> <li>-Staying up all night</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“Coasting” in life: EX’s</li> <li>-Ruined relationships: unable to be with girlfriend, too interested in gaming instead</li> <li>-Embarrassment to self and to girlfriend</li> <li>-Obsessing about gaming when not gaming</li> <li>-No motivation</li> <li>-Lying to SO, wife, etc.</li> <li>-Relationship strain</li> <li>-Loss of self esteem of SO</li> <li>-Wife yells at TV</li> <li>-Taking spouse for granted</li> <li>-Fighting with family</li> <li>-Distancing from family</li> <li>-Distancing from friends or girlfriends</li> <li>-Reluctance to get out of the house</li> <li>-Losing badge, progress, reset badge, losing streak</li> <li>-Girlfriend lost feelings for them</li> </ul>
Career and Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of studying</li> <li>-Lack of concentration, dedication, stamina (mental)</li> <li>-“Coasting” in life: not trying or achieving, settling, food, jobs, school</li> <li>-Lack of professionalism: responding to clients, no energy to come in or perform</li> <li>-Debt</li> <li>-Failed college</li> <li>-Numbing of everything you see....feeling fake, not enjoying other things, indifference</li> <li>-Skipping classes, for sleep or gaming more</li> <li>-Grades</li> <li>-Failing exams</li> <li>-Kicked out of college</li> <li>-Other problems that are being avoided intensify</li> <li>-Chose over military, army,</li> <li>-Chose over goals, passions</li> <li>-Obsessing about gaming when not gaming</li> <li>-No motivation</li> </ul>
Time and Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Debt</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Micro transactions</li> <li>-Insane amounts of time logged into game that measures out to actual days and months, “Destroy social life”</li> <li>-Hours a day or hours a week, cont’d...</li> <li>-Farming</li> <li>-Buying tons of games and not playing them much</li> </ul>
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Enthusiasm to go the gym or exercise</li> <li>-Other hobbies losing time</li> <li>-Chose over goals, passions</li> <li>-Obsessing about gaming when not gaming</li> <li>-No motivation</li> <li>-Never developed art skills, playing an instrument, learning to sing</li> </ul>

Table 3B. Research Question 3: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe trying to stop their video gaming?

Category	Examples
Self-Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Passing professional certification exam</li> <li>-Studying for professional exam</li> <li>-Chores</li> <li>-Meal preparation</li> <li>-Going to the gym</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Finding a doctor, counselor, or psychologist</li> <li>-Resting period: regular sleep schedule</li> <li>-Personal business, personal website</li> <li>-Understanding video games are addicting or dangerous</li> <li>-Working out</li> <li>-Reading on the internet</li> <li>-Sports teams</li> <li>-Self-development books and audios</li> <li>-Understanding the dopamine system and keeping physical and mental health</li> <li>-Personal training: exercise</li> <li>-Cleaning the house</li> <li>-Apply for military</li> <li>-Apply for college</li> <li>-Apply for new job</li> <li>-Knowing career choice</li> <li>-Drinking tea</li> <li>-New lifestyle</li> <li>-Meditation</li> <li>-NoFap challenge (abstinence from masturbation)</li> <li>-Keeping a schedule, calendar</li> <li>-Lifting weights</li> <li>-Eat right</li> <li>-Good nights sleep</li> <li>-Positive, productive activities</li> <li>-Don't binge</li> <li>-Being bored</li> <li>-Donated blood</li> <li>-Donated clothes</li> <li>-Epiphanies: wanting to be more productive</li> <li>-Buy PC with small memory (MacBook air)</li> <li>-Pros and cons list</li> <li>-Get a better job</li> <li>-Finishing college or degree</li> <li>-Confessing their feelings by posting</li> <li>-Listing reasons why they don't game</li> <li>-focusing on career</li> <li>-disgust with old ways</li> <li>-Imagining future if continuing gaming</li> <li>-Lose weight</li> <li>-Vitamins and diet</li> </ul>
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## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Financial planning</li> <li>-90 days to clear out addiction in basil ganglia part of brain</li> <li>-Realizing too much time has been wasted</li> <li>-Realizing video games were meant to be addicting</li> <li>-Imagination in self improvement: leveling up, dark self</li> <li>-Realized video gaming would not help them achieve aspirations</li> <li>-Moderating other addictions, like coffee and sugar.</li> <li>-“Lost the urge”</li> <li>-“Man up”</li> <li>-Entrepreneur: freelance content writer</li> <li>-Entrepreneur: motivational speeches</li> <li>-Stop eating fast food</li> <li>-New routine</li> <li>-Go outside everyday</li> <li>-Accepting life wasn’t on right track</li> <li>-Feeling current accomplishments are inadequate</li> <li>-Lack of enjoyment of gaming</li> <li>-Realization that gaming is more stress than fun</li> <li>-Focusing on graduation</li> <li>-List of reasons about why gaming was bad for them</li> <li>-List of things they aren’t doing because of video gaming</li> <li>-Calculating opportunity cost of time spent gaming</li> </ul>
Abstinence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cold turkey</li> <li>-Delete accounts</li> <li>-Returning gaming consoles</li> <li>-Avoiding the video game store</li> <li>-Abstinence</li> <li>-Continued abstinence and renewed self esteem</li> <li>-Every single day</li> <li>-Unsubscribing to games</li> <li>-Unsubscribing to game related channels, pages, gamers</li> <li>-One day at a time</li> <li>-Giving away computer</li> <li>-Selling game accounts and consoles</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Don't binge</li> <li>-Being bored</li> <li>-Forcible abstinence</li> <li>-“Go to the bottom” and feel the boredom and negativity</li> <li>-Discipline</li> <li>-Not allowing YouTube, Reddit, porn, or tabletop games</li> <li>-Sell TV</li> <li>-Sell games</li> <li>-Cancel internet</li> <li>-Uses radio instead</li> <li>-90 days to clear out addiction in basil ganglia part of brain</li> <li>-Stop eating fast food</li> <li>-New routine</li> </ul>
Moderation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Listening to game music</li> <li>-Novels based on games</li> <li>-Tabletop games</li> <li>-Podcasts</li> <li>-Movies</li> <li>-TV</li> <li>-YouTube</li> <li>-Control of video gaming</li> <li>-Moderation</li> <li>-Playing social games</li> <li>-Playing single player games instead of multiplayer</li> <li>-Playing offline games instead of online</li> <li>-Short breaks from gaming, days to months</li> <li>-Moderating other addictions, like coffee and sugar.</li> <li>-Gradually reducing gaming time</li> </ul>
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-New activities</li> <li>-Going out: concerts, music festival</li> <li>-Pets</li> <li>-Picking up new hobbies: music, instrument</li> <li>-3D simulation as a hobby, other electronic or technical hobbies</li> <li>-Personal business, personal website</li> <li>-Reading as a hobby</li> <li>-Posting on the website</li> <li>-Commenting on the website</li> <li>-Diary or Video blog</li> <li>-Reading on the internet</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cooking</li> <li>-Drinking tea</li> <li>-Martial arts as a hobby</li> <li>-Meditate</li> <li>-New language</li> <li>-Listening to game music</li> <li>-Novels based on games</li> <li>-Tabletop games</li> <li>-Podcasts</li> <li>-Movies</li> <li>-Video editing</li> <li>-TV</li> <li>-YouTube</li> <li>-Cycling</li> <li>-Skateboarding</li> <li>-Geocaching</li> <li>-Running</li> <li>-Dancing</li> <li>-Drawing</li> <li>-Creative writing</li> <li>-Keeping up with the news</li> <li>-Walking dogs</li> <li>-Personal journal</li> <li>-Throw parties</li> <li>-TED talks</li> <li>-Coding</li> <li>-Spanish, Japanese</li> <li>-Run marathons</li> <li>-Writing short stories</li> <li>-Exercise</li> <li>-Art</li> <li>-3d Art</li> <li>-Recording music</li> <li>-Walking</li> <li>-List of activities on subreddit</li> <li>-Reading list</li> <li>-Movie list</li> <li>-Hiking</li> <li>-Taking care of aquarium</li> <li>-Travel</li> <li>-Multiple hobbies</li> <li>-Archery.</li> <li>-Photography</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Resetting badge upon relapse</li> <li>-Going out: concerts, music festival</li> <li>-Posting on the website</li> </ul>

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Commenting on the website</li> <li>-Diary or Video blog</li> <li>-Apply for military</li> <li>-Apply for college</li> <li>-Apply for new job</li> <li>-Get out of the house</li> <li>-Following the rules of the sub, like the badge</li> <li>-12th Step</li> <li>-Commitment to significant other</li> <li>-Meet new people</li> <li>-Meet new romantic interests</li> <li>-Spending more time with friends</li> <li>-Started buying birthday gifts</li> <li>-Donated blood</li> <li>-Donated clothes</li> <li>-Throw parties</li> <li>-Run marathons</li> <li>-Confessing their feelings by posting</li> <li>-Foster parent</li> <li>-Marriage</li> <li>-Starting a nuclear family</li> <li>-Ranting/rambling</li> <li>-Seeing successful peers</li> <li>-“Man up”</li> <li>-Sharing tips on their improvement with others</li> <li>-Tutoring</li> <li>-Not being impressed by more talented gamers</li> <li>-Talking to family</li> <li>-Going out with family</li> <li>-Chatting with romantic interests</li> <li>-Group activities</li> <li>-Cutting out gamer friends</li> <li>-Posting to vent</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS: SELECTIVE CODING

Table 1C. Research Question 1: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe their video gaming?

Category	Examples	Frequency
Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use the word “addiction”</li> <li>-Think addiction developed at a certain point in their life</li> </ul>	24

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Thought they are in the middle of a step in the addiction process</li> <li>-Think they are “high-functioning”</li> <li>-Introduce themselves using 12<sup>th</sup> Step style</li> </ul>	
Compulsion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Phrases listed: itch, craving, desire, fix, fun, stimulation, thrill, trigger, urge</li> </ul>	28
“Like Taking a Drug”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Compare to cigarettes</li> <li>-Compare to alcohol</li> <li>-Compare to marijuana</li> <li>-Introduce themselves using 12<sup>th</sup> Step style</li> </ul>	11
Escapism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Feel need for fulfillment, or that they are unfulfilled</li> <li>-Emotion</li> <li>-Adventure</li> <li>-Running from life</li> </ul>	7
Something to be Moderated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To moderate</li> <li>-To stay away from</li> <li>-To quit</li> <li>-That cannot be moderated</li> <li>-Uncontrollable</li> </ul>	15
Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Productivity</li> <li>-Health</li> <li>-Identity</li> </ul>	33
Gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gamer identity</li> <li>-Length of time gaming</li> <li>-In-game achievements</li> <li>-Hobbyist</li> </ul>	9
r/StopGaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identify as a StopGamer</li> <li>-Identify with r/StopGaming badge</li> </ul>	19

Table 2C. Research Question 2: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe any consequences of their video gaming?

Category	Examples	Frequency
Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Needing a fix</li> <li>-Lack of moderation</li> <li>-Other addictions</li> <li>-Avoiding life issues</li> <li>-“Farming”</li> </ul>	31



## LEVELING UP

Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Physical health</li> <li>-Mental health</li> <li>-Identity</li> <li>-Avoiding life issues</li> <li>-“Not on track”</li> <li>-Homelessness</li> </ul>	44
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coasting</li> <li>-Relationship strain with significant other</li> <li>-Relationship strain with family</li> <li>-Losing badge on r/StopGaming</li> <li>-Staying at home</li> </ul>	23
Career and Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coasting</li> <li>-Lack of studying</li> <li>-Lack of professionalism</li> <li>-Lack of motivation</li> <li>-Dropping out of school</li> <li>-Failing to apply for school</li> <li>-Failing to apply for military</li> <li>-Failing to apply for jobs</li> </ul>	26
Time and Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Debt from career and academic consequences</li> <li>-Debt from video games and in-game transactions</li> <li>-Time spent gaming</li> <li>-“Farming”</li> </ul>	30
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Losing enthusiasm</li> <li>-Losing motivation</li> <li>-Thinking about gaming</li> <li>-Spending time on gaming instead</li> </ul>	7

Table 3C. Research Question 3: How do posters on r/StopGaming describe trying to stop their video gaming?

Category	Examples	Frequency
Self-Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Career or academic applications</li> <li>-Career or academic performance</li> <li>-Physical health</li> <li>-Mental health</li> </ul>	58

## LEVELING UP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Abstinence</li> <li>-Moderation</li> <li>-Hobbies</li> <li>-Social relationships</li> </ul>	
Abstinence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“Cold turkey”</li> <li>-Deleting accounts</li> <li>-Selling accounts or consoles</li> <li>-Selling TV or internet</li> <li>-Giving away accounts or consoles</li> <li>-Discipline</li> <li>-Avoiding gaming-related things</li> <li>-Avoiding addictive behavior</li> <li>-Understanding dopamine system</li> </ul>	41
Moderation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Moderation</li> <li>-Control</li> <li>-Short breaks</li> <li>-Moderating other addictions</li> <li>-Gaming-related substitutes</li> <li>-Electronic substitutes</li> <li>-Non-electronic gaming substitutes</li> <li>-Single player games</li> <li>-Social games</li> <li>-Offline games</li> <li>-Applications</li> </ul>	18
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-List of hobbies</li> <li>-Self-improving hobbies</li> <li>-Social hobbies</li> <li>-Hobbies related to gaming and electronics</li> </ul>	35
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-r/StopGaming engagement</li> <li>-Getting out of the house</li> <li>-Distancing from gaming-related social groups</li> <li>-Forming new social groups</li> <li>-Responsibility to a social role</li> <li>-Prosocial activities</li> </ul>	25

## LEVELING UP

### APPENDIX D: TRANSCRIPTS

1.

Today I did something that I could never have done if I were still gaming  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 5 hours ago by Bigblueduck36 days

Today I passed my Salesforce Administrator certification exam. It took two months of dedicated studying, I started while I was still playing games, but quit halfway through. When I was gaming I wasn't really studying as hard as I could. I was doing maybe 30m a day of studying, but never actually focused on the material.

## LEVELING UP

Around 40 days ago I got pretty serious and decided I would pass my certification by the first week in January, I quit gaming shortly after not because of the certification but it was a part of it. After that I was doing an hour of studying a day, and more recently three to four hours a day. Before I quit I would never have had the concentration to study that much. In college I would half ass everything just to play more League of Legends. I would study two hours before a test and prepare for presentations the night before. I never had to try hard to achieve anything, and still got relatively good grades. This exam was a whole different story. I had to put over 100 hours into studying for it and damn did it pay off. Today is a fantastic GAME FREE day. :D

2.

It's time to stop. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 19 hours ago \* by Startupstev01 day

Video games have been such a great thing for me growing up. They allowed me to enter a fantasy world where I could be a bear with a bird in his backpack and beat up baddies (Banjo&Kazooie/N64) kill monsters as an undead skeleton (Medieval/PS1), Be a gladiator and hire other gladiators to be the champion and stop evil (Gladius/Ps2), Live in a post apocalyptic world and kick ass (Last of Us, Ps3)...etc

But unfortunately they have taken me away from things that mean the most. Now more than ever I've been playing games as a stress reliever because some big changes are happening in my life, but I can't bring gaming with me. Gaming caused me to not respond to clients in a timely manner, to rush projects for that ONE MORE TURN in Civ 6, to stay up at 2am and wake up the next day like a zombie at 1pm. I've overdone it and It's officially time to stop.

I need to take this opportunity to the max and grow, I have so many big plans but gaming will ruin it all. I'm stopping cold turkey starting tonight, I deleted steam, I'm returning my Xbox one S right now.

Edit: Grammar changes

3.

2017 will be better (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 hours ago by Riemi87

I've been a lurker here for awhile and I pop on Discord. I can moderate my gaming and if I do game I play about 30min-2hr every few days. On the weekend, however, if all chores are done and between letting the dog out I game most of the day. It's like my go to and my environment enables me to do it.

Not in 2017. I'm going cold turkey. I didn't play at all yesterday and it didn't bother me.

In a few days I'll get an itch to check out the new content (maybe) but I won't. This weekend I plan to go a few cities north to tour a brewery and to a food stop that has great live music. Any extra time will be taking the dog to the park and doing laundry. It feels great knowing I have all this time that won't be sunk. I got into meal prep too so that will be a nice chunk of Sunday. I really enjoy it too! I have tried a few new meals which are mmmmm delicious!

This is my accountability post. Cheers!

4.

## LEVELING UP

My proudest moment of today (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago \* by GameOvr376 days

After my 1 year halt from gaming, I got re-introduced to it through my cousin on Christmas. The craving after getting close to that false ecstasy has made my mind crazy for the past 2 weeks.

I drove from work. I drove to the electronics gaming shop. I went and held that PS4 console. Me, Begging to play it again. I said no.

After 1 day, I haven't gone back. Thanks, StopGaming. I know you are the only people who can understand this feeling. Thank you for making me stronger.

5.

Anyone else here had a massive, life long addiction to gaming? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Shivy\_Shankinz

I need to try and compare what I'm going through and see if it sounds familiar to anyone else in a similar addiction. I started gaming when I was 3 and was easily overstimulated by it. At that young age my time spent was well moderated by my parents.

The issue was teen years, I lied, cheated, and stopped at nothing to get my daily fix.

Finally, all moderation stopped at 20. The last five years were all in gaming and my health rapidly declined, my mental health in particular.

**My main issue now since abstaining for 6 months is severe mental fatigue, I cannot do normal activities for very long before I run out of energy.** Gym, work it doesn't matter. I've had to severely cut back the length of all my activities and normal routines. It's as if I have a very small pool of energy to start out with every day and once it's dry I'm done, I can literally only do the most basic functions. And if I do something mentally taxing like a favorite past time of playing chess, I'm lucky if I get to play more than one game before noticing very negative consequences.

The funny thing is I've been getting professional help and I've cured my depression. I am the most positive person my friends and family know. Yet I cannot function normally. I hope no one else has had to go through this, but if this sounds like you I need to know this is addiction related and not something else. Thanks.

6.

[–]WilliamTravelle 5 points 1 day ago

if this sounds like you I need to know this is addiction related and not something else...

Seriously consider seeing a physician. If he/she puts you off, see a different one. I'm speaking from the point of major disability with similar background -- stimulation addiction as a kid, lifestyle gamer in teens/early twenties, rapid physical/mental energy decline in mid twenties, disabled by thirty. Stimulation from gaming (and caffeine, etc.) masked my physical illness because adrenaline is good at that.

I went through the "everybody says I'm fine, so I'm fine" and the "maybe a little more counselling..." phases until I physically couldn't work. Don't get that far. Find a doctor that specializes in fatigue/hormones/metabolism. Give the psychological approach a break for a while. And listen to your body when it wants to rest.

Wish I could help more.

7.

## LEVELING UP

Im quitting gaming in 2017 and this is my post to hold myself accountable  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 21 hours ago by GannonHJ366 days

I can't keep playing video games. They have failed me out of college, they have put me in debt (new pc rig and steam sales), ruined relationships, and I do not have the self control to only play them for 30 minutes or an hour. I remember quitting WoW in high school and I had the most successful period of my life following that.

With a new semester incoming and internships needing to be applied for, I have to do something different. I am picking up my hobbies in making music and starting a new hobby in learning 3D simulation on my computer so that it is still put to some use. I also want to get my website business up and coming.

So sorry, season 3 of Overwatch (my opium, already about 350 hours in the game that's ~8 months old), my SR is going to have to stay in place and never change.

Thank you guys so much, it means a lot that there is a community of people who genuinely understand my struggle and support me.

8.

4 days in. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Mister\_Pez5 days

Greetings, fellow quitters.

On New Year's Eve I tried to load Dragon Age, only to find my save file was corrupted. 100 hours lost! Fuck! This was supposed to be my definitive playthrough. This time, I'd promised myself, would be the last time I'd ever farm ram meat in the Hinterlands again. I considered starting a new definitive playthrough – one that did not include farming ram meat this time – but I realised I was lying to myself. I'd farm the ram meat.

In the preceding days I'd read lots of things related to New Year resolutions. "Losers have goals," said Scott Adams, "winners have systems."

"To make this year the same as last year," said S. Anthony Iannorino, "all you need to do is continue what you are doing now. By running the same scripts over and over again, you'll produce the same results. If you don't change, nothing will change for you."

My system and my script was that, as soon as I finished work, I'd turn on my Xbox. I'd play all night, every night. On Fridays and Saturdays I'd sit through dates with my girlfriend, basically frustrated that I wasn't gaming, sometimes trying to pick activities that were related to gaming (like going to places that reminded me of Skyrim, or eating food I could imagine my characters eating).

I'd flirted with quitting before, sometimes leaving my power pack somewhere inaccessible for a few days, but on NYE I realised that I needed to actually change my system. I started by deleting all my games, then a comment in here made me realise this wouldn't be enough of a barrier to relapsing...and so I just sold my Xbox. Some guy showed up and took it away yesterday.

The past few days have been gratifying in some ways, and difficult in others. I've started reading a novel – something I haven't done literally for years – and I'm actually doing productive things in the evenings (including exercising and making contact with friends). I've also felt surprisingly sad about the prospect of never again visiting Thedas or the Commonwealth, or taking part in the Andromeda mission. I miss the NPCs and I especially miss my own characters. I have this irrational feeling that I've let them down,

## LEVELING UP

somehow.

Part of me still wants to go and farm the ram meat.

9.

Fight or Flight. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by DarkRedTwist355 days

Hello folks, I am writing here again because I find it extremely cathartic. I relapsed a lot this week with the release of a new harvest moon-esque game. I guess I was fortunate for this because it helped me further realize just how toxic gaming is for ME.

I almost get jealous that it seems some people are truly content gaming 24/7 and seem to have few side effects. But for me, the effects can feel overpowering. This is actually really good I guess, because the waves of nausea, tightness of joints, lapses in concentration all help to solidify in my brain that I game too much.

And I think fundamentally my problem is that I cannot regulate it normally. I cannot simply stop playing, every time I seriously take up a new game I binge. The effects are so overwhelming that, by the end of a bad binge period, my heart rate and blood pressure are elevated.

My stress is overwhelming. And when I try to quit, I am insanely irritable, but the worst thing I find is that I am frustrated by the people I love around me. I feel like I become Mr. Hyde after enough gaming.

But, that's enough whining from me now. What is done is done, I am going to quit, and create a video a day at least or whenever I feel the urge) to document why I felt like gaming that day, and possibly what I will do instead.

Whether or not this is read, I really appreciate having this place. I think if it wasn't for this place, I would be gaming tonight. Instead, I choose to live in this reality.

Stay Awesome!

10.

[–]DWG0349 days 1 point 12 hours ago

I relate to what you're writing here, brother. The negative feelings during and after gaming and the irritability are the worst. I've come to realize that for me and for some people, video games are just literally really a poison. We'll be better off never touching these things again.

**[permalink](#)[embeds](#)[save](#)[report](#)[give gold](#)[reply](#)**

11.

First day, would like to be lvl100 already (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Astronauton1 day

Hey guys, so I finished my first day of NoGaming and I had more time. I think I spent 70% of my time on the internet, did a small (very very small 15min) workout, and the last 2 hours I started studying.

Man I wished I would be lvl100 already. I should have started with studying way earlier, so today was my first 2 hours of studying and I see the mountain of things I have to learn and I am a bit afraid of it. Secondly, I did a very light, short workout to help my body stay in shape - instead of sitting all day long. Wish I would be muscular already and would be doing more professional workouts rather than something I found in the internet.

## LEVELING UP

**Thirdly, I still wasted time on the internet, mostly Youtube, but compared to gaming I think it's less and I don't feel so much attached to my PC.**

I don't know this is weird, was that a good day? I wish there would be a power button and I would "grind" all the things, whether study or gym, to get to the end result. And by grinding I mean pressing buttons. I want to continue NoGaming, but still, there are mountains ahead of me. On the other side, if I wouldn't learn and work on myself I would maybe lose my place in my Uni. And usually I don't want that, it's my first semester and I think that degree would be very helpful in my future.

So just needed to vent, but still, I hope this was a good day. I really wished I would be productive....let's say 70% of my time -^ and 30% maybe relaxing (?). So yeah, hope you'r doing great. **Any advice is welcome :)**

12.

[–]Scott36111724 days 1 point 1 day ago

Any day that I don't game is a good day. If I work out and have a productive day too, those are bonuses. By "good day", I don't mean that I felt great all day. I mean that I wasn't self-destructing my life with games, and I was making bits of forward progress. Progress is the goal, sometimes it feels good and sometimes it doesn't (and can be uncomfortable or even painful). But it does bring more good feelings, stress relief, self-esteem, sense of accomplishment and meaning, joy, and connection with other people over the long term.

13.

Today Marks the day I quit Gaming! I need your help with ideas to keep me busy though... (self.StopGaming)

submitted 22 hours ago by D-Rob1988

Hello fellow ex-gamers! Today I have decided enough is enough. I have been playing online MMO's for almost 20 years and I have come to realize that even though gaming is very enjoyable, it is not moving in a positive direction to a more fulfilling and better life. I will admit I have attempted to give up gaming in the past but that was mainly because I got bored of the game I was currently playing, and eventually just found a new game to start up. However I am 28 years old and it is time to start putting those hours towards more productive things that are going to help me improve and get better.

On the positive side, I do currently go to the gym at least 4 days a week, I play pickup competitive basketball at least twice a week and I listen to self-development audio books daily. The problem I am having is when I get home from work, I am bored so I resort back to what I know which is gaming. I have tried reading books but the problem I have is self-development books tend to get kind of boring to read for a long period of time and I am currently not a very strong reader.

I have thought about trying to cook each night when I get home so I can become a better cook, I have thought about maybe trying to read some more entertaining books each week, shoot I have even thought about buying and selling items on Ebay to make some extra money but mainly to keep me busy. But what I need from you guys is some other ideas or things you guys have done that has TRULY filled that empty time I have when I get off work, so this way I do not resort back to my old habits.

Thanks again and will keep you guys updated as I move forward in 2017!! :)



## LEVELING UP

14.

New start for me 4.1.2017 (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Duno1235[☐]

Hello folks (sorry for my english) I am 22 years old I just realized that most of my problem in life are caused by gaming and wasting my time on youtube or twitch in gaming section.. it all started when I was 14 years old when i was really happy young boy girls loved me I had plenty of friends we was outside almos everyday but then i started playing more and more and stared refusing friends and just playing all day long . Today I am changiing everything i just unsubscribed from wow sold my console and unistalled all my steam games. I know it will be hard you can give me some tips what helps you with this addiction i need start focusing on my future , school and real life . Bye games welcome LIFE :)

15.

[–]**SuperSaiyanGod5** 3 points 15 hours ago

What helps me? Identifying my triggers and going as far as possible to get rid of them. Taking it exactly one day at a time - that's why you see no counter next to my name.

Taking it one day at a time means that you of course have plans like passing the exams etc., but when it comes to addiction you only think of today. You have to take measures to not be bored in the future, but first of all you have to think of today. Don't think that quitting is a matter of a single decision - it kinda is, but at first you're gonna have to actively abstain every single day.

Learn about the addiction. Learn about yourself. Be committed to change in 100%. If that commitment starts to weaken, you have to find it again - preferably in your values, not your emotions. Go to the sidebar, section "New? Start here" and read the quick start guide and watch the FAQs (they are in video form). Also, since you've already deleted all games and are committed, I suggest you get rid of all your games for good. *Block* your steam account and your battle.net account - instructions in the quick start guide. It's difficult emotionally, but since you don't care anymore, what's the difference?

16.

Where to go from here? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Masqueradox3 days

Over Christmas break I installed LoL after playing it on my cousins laptop. Before they I hadn't played it for around a year and a half and prior to that was another year long break. I realized that I was becoming dependent again and so I uninstall ed for good and haven't touched it in 3 days now (I think I'll be able to stay off for good - first day was pretty tempted though). Before that I was jumping from game to game, be it playing Netrunner online, going through a cycle of un-and reinstalling steam to install either Binding of Isaac or Blood Bowl, or on occasion, Civ 5, which one started could last the good part of the day Lots of nights spent watching YouTube streamers play those games in particular too.

I'd like to think I'm over it but there's still some residue left which is why I'm not 100% she I can call myself gaming - free. First of all I've picked up the habit of playing Fallen London, a text based browser game that plays in an lovecraftian alternate history world.

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What I like about it is its non-addictive design, it's practically impossible to spend more than half an hour playing it before having to wait around 3 hours before being able to play again. At the same time in noticing that it's turning into yet another rabbit hole to divr into, with me fervently researching the wiki to find out which move to take next. I'd liken my situation to a person taking a couple steps forward only to take a couple backward, in some sort of odd dance that has the semblance of movement without actually getting anywhere.

Additionally I've noticed that I'm researching my other nerdy hobbies (Warhammer etc.) way more after quitting gaming. I am being more outgoing, gym time has always taken precedence over gaming anyways (an addictive personality can also be a positive thing), but I'd like to move away from mindless browsing and, I guess, from reddit as a whole. There's a lot of good stuff here, this sub is a great example, but it's just so easy to lose yourself in an information overflow.

I hope that was coherent. Even typing it out made a positive difference but if you've got any words of advice they'd be much appreciated.

17.

What an addict looks like (self.StopGaming)

submitted 7 months ago \* by chadee

Summary: Getting to know the addict

I had been playing Xbox since I woke up 15 hours ago. Two empty Dominos pizza boxes sat open on my desk just staring.

Right now it's 5 a.m.

Matchmaking is getting slow and my coffee thermos is empty; must be time for bed. I say goodnight to my fellow gamers and turn off the Xbox. The thought of brushing my teeth doesn't enter what's left of my consciousness. Without walking, I move from my chair to the bed.

Two missed calls and a text from my girlfriend.

The only source of light is the brightly lit screen of my laptop. As I type in "p," the text "pornhub.com" automatically appears in the URL of my browser. I'm excited before I even press "enter."

After finishing up, I close my eyes as YouTube lulls me to sleep.

A voice inside mumbles, "I hate myself..."

"If I hate myself, who is the I, and who is myself?"

Tomorrow will be the same.

Pleasure is what happens when your brain receives a signal that an activity is rewarding. The sender of that signal is a neurotransmitter called dopamine.

Almost everything we do releases dopamine. Some things release a lot of dopamine.

For instance, sex with the girl you've been with for 3 years releases dopamine. Surfing a porn website and jerking off to any number of your favorite fantasy scenarios releases a lot of dopamine.

Playing golf releases dopamine. Playing Rainbow Six Siege with your squad against teams that you're slightly better than releases a lot of dopamine.

Eating a strawberry or cucumber releases dopamine. Eating a pepperoni and mushroom pizza releases a lot of dopamine.

It might seem hard to believe that a cucumber releases dopamine, but it does.

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The problem we have is we develop a tolerance to these dopamine spikes. Our brains come to expect that any activity less stimulating than a dopamine spiking one isn't worthy of our motivation to do so.

Thus, activities which were once pleasurable to us become chores we can't bear the thought of.

This is essentially what depression is.

When I'm depressed or simply stressed over a long period of time I become driven to do things like eat junk food, watch porn, and play video games. This is because these are some of the activities that release enough dopamine to motivate a depressed mind.

These are also things I did often as a kid, when my brain was the most malleable it will ever be. I developed certain connections in my brain that will probably never go away. For this reason, if you've ever known someone who had a drug problem early on in life, you know they will always be an addict. The connection is too strong for your brain to unlearn it.

The next day started just the same. I browsed Reddit in bed before I finally found enough gusto to get up and make coffee.

But then something happened.

As we played Xbox that night, we started to get matched up with pro teams. It was exciting-- until we started losing...and losing, and losing. It wasn't a pleasurable experience anymore.

The flow of dopamine stopped abruptly. I took that opportunity to return my Xbox to the store. It felt liberating--just like it did the other times.

The first time it was Wal-Mart, then Best Buy, you get the picture.

My pre-frontal cortex, or the consciously thinking part of the brain, did not want to buy Xboxes and play the shit out of them all day. As soon as its slave driver looked away, the real I started running and never looked back.

When you're under the influence of your addictions, you are like a slave having to watch his world crumble around him.

Last month my brother in law relapsed on heroin. He was 13 when his brain learned how rewarding it was.

He had a brand new home with my sister, a new car, and so many bills he was constantly under the stress of. For the first time in 9 years, he went to some dealer-- not Wal-Mart or Best Buy, but probably some hood dude in Detroit, and he became a slave.

He lost his family, job, and home.

He didn't want to lose any of those things. He was genuinely a good person.

My mission in life now is to treat my brain only to simple, natural pleasures. It's learning to appreciate things like cucumbers more every day.

A big part of my mission is staying mentally healthy in order to avoid depression and long term stress which would likely result in relapse.

Things that used to seem unimaginably painful are becoming small obstacles.

"The day the body becomes dominated by pleasure is the day it will also be dominated by pain" - Seneca

Lessons learned:

Almost anything unnaturally pleasurable can become addictive

The stronger your addiction's influence on you, the more you are a slave.

Stay mentally healthy to avoid being influenced by your addictions

## LEVELING UP

(I posted this in a different sub a few days ago and they liked it. It seemed appropriate for this sub too.)

Visit my blog On Consumerism for more.

18.

230 Days without gaming. My experience. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago \* by seunlau

Sup

Seven months ago my steam account said 8 hours of gameplay per day. Today, I can't even remember my login info. So I thought that I could give you my perspective on this whole thing, especially for those who want to quit gaming but ask themselves if it's the right thing to do and if things will get any better by doing so.

I will try to be on point. I will be writing about how gaming was affecting my life before I quit and how it affected me days and months after I quit.

The first days/weeks were hard to cope with. After giving away my PC to my Little brother I couldn't stop thinking on the different MMOs and FPS games that I had been playing and the new games that were going to be released in the near future. Simply put, it was like living in hell. I was watching a lot of youtube and reviews on games.

Sometimes, I could sit and play Hearthstone for 30 minutes or so. I did however know that my gaming time had drastically dropped from 8 hours to 30 minutes which I considered a good starting point.

Soon I started cooking and cleaning the apartment properly, something that I never thought about before. I got myself a new hobby, tricking with balisongs. So my Days would end with a Movie and some tricking just to relax.

As time passed by I put more time in training on sit-ups, push-ups etc. I even started Reading a little bit. All this made it so I didn't even have time for 30 minutes of Hearthstone. That's when I asked myself. Bro, you come home from work at 17:00 and you don't even have time to play for 30 minutes! How the hell did this happen? Well, I had suddenly 5 new things I could do to make time pass by and some of them were a MUST to be able to live.

- 1 Cleaning profession! Clean the freaking apartment. Who wants to live in a mess where it smells MCdonalds and subway. Cleaning vs Gaming? Cleaning is not a waste of time, it makes you feel good, enjoy your apartment and invite friends without feeling ashamed.
- 2 Cooking profession! Homemade food is awesome and very healthy. It actually doesn't take more than 30 minutes to create some pretty decent meals when you have learned it. Cooking vs Gaming? Cooking is a must in life. Who wants to eat subway 24/7? Sometimes we want some steak, some nice soup and so on!
- 3 Reading profession! Dude, how many times did I complain about Money and Life? Almost every day. Things like "My salary is low" or "I don't like my colleagues" and the list goes on. Seriously, the solution is not complaints. It's going out there, buying a book and start Reading so that you can educate yourself further and get a better job with BETTER salary, BETTER colleagues. Jobs done.
- 4 Butterfly tricking profession! It's awesome, it's fun, its detailed. Brain is working, better coordination etc. It's simply fun!
- 5 Physical workout profession! Workout vs Gaming? 1 word. Dem girls.

## LEVELING UP

In between all this there were several times where thought, that's it. I will go and buy a brand new PC with the latest hardware and start gaming again. But then again, if I were to buy a PC for 1500\$ then I knew what would happen. I would suddenly stop doing all those 5 things I did before and my life would look something like this:

- Work 08:00 – 17:00 • Play 17:00 – 24:00 • Eat shit food everyday • No training • Get more tired from gaming after work • Cope with shit salary and colleagues every day

In summary, life with gaming gave me fun times but it had its price. No gamer can deny that.

You have a family + you game? Then let me guess, you are not spending time with the kids, not training physically, not able to cook? Not helping your wife with chores, cleaning and laundry?

It's not a life for a married man, that's for sure. Now that was just an example but even without a family, the price that I had to pay for the funz was quite high.

So how does my life look like today?

I'm fit, I can cook food, I enjoy the evening in my clean apartment, I'm quite good at tricking with balisongs even though I haven't done it for a while. I have a better job and I bought a road bike recently to enjoy the good weather even more. My replacement of the latest PC hardware.

Don't misunderstand, I will always look back and remember the old good times. Gaming with friends all day long, laughing, teasing each other, eating junk food every day after gaming sessions and just having a good time. As much as I wish that I was that little kid again so that I can experience gaming all over again I just had to make a decision. Tbh sometimes I wish that my dad pushed me into sports at young age. I love football, I love tennis, I love fighting, swimming, cycling, sprinting. What if I could become a professional sportsman? It's a game in itself. What if I could be one of those in the Olympic Games in 2016 this year, standing in front of millions of people or a talented football player in PSG Barcelona?

Don't think only about yourselves. Think about your children also. Let them become something, let them be proud and make you proud. Life is short; we work like slaves then die aren't we? That is, if we are healthy. Deceases or other health issues could end you before you manage to become 50.

Thanks for Reading guys and good luck.

### **13 commentssharesavehidegive goldreport**

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19.

[–]**Danielpiva**365 days 6 points 6 months ago

Great post, Seunlau! It is very inspiring and I am aiming to stay on the same course as you are.

The prediction of your life with a new computer is exactly how my life was before quitting. Wake up tired, gobble up some breakfast, go to work, arrive at 17:30, eat some fast food, play until midnight, repeat.

There wasn't room or interest for anything else. No literature, no journaling, no exercises, no friends, no personal development.

I remember how I consciously took the decision to not have any appointment or commitment in my everyday life because it would "steal" the free time that I could be

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gaming. So I cancelled my gym, my swimming lesson, didn't go to any class about anything.

The price we all paid is very high. But we don't notice it because we pay a little bit everyday, just a small sum. But it compounds. Almost without noticing, it grows, and grows, until some day we wake up and realize how much it is costing us. If we wake up. I made a lot of progress after quitting too, but it all came to a halt since mid april because personal problems got out of control and the anxiety broke me. I am recovering, slowly, steadily, there have been a lot of setbacks that send me back to the beggining of the journey, but I trully believe that if I keep doing positive things, I will get out of this hole that I digged myself into. And I will only be able to keep doing these things consistently if I do not go back to gaming.

20.

Just deleted every game from my computer. All my saves. I'm 33 years old dammit.  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 24 days ago by Rotten\_Junk24 days

I've quit smoking in 2012. I quit drinking alcohol in 2014. Both were habits that were more than 10 years strong.

I feel like those were just practice for quitting games. Thirty years. Thirty fucking years I've wasted so much of my life in this shit. For what? Not a damn thing.

Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and games were more important to me than going to college. Whatever. For the first time in my life I feel like it's time. This is the last and worst vice I have and I'm ready for the long haul.

My military transcript is being evaluated at my local college for an IT degree and I'm so excited.

I think what is pushing me over the edge with these games is now I suddenly figured out what career I want once and for all. College is so much more attractive when you feel passionate about what you want to learn and study. Sucks it took me 15 years to figure it out, but I am done sitting on my ass making 21 dollars an hour at a dead end job.

Ok I'm done venting. I'll probably never post here again. Should probably delete reddit too. Tough call. I like the career subreddit for advice.

20 (continued)

[–]**Rotten\_Junk**24 days[S] 23 points 24 days ago

Replaced smoking with learning to cook.

Replaced drinking alcohol with drinking tea.

I will replace gaming with studying. First exam is Dec 28th for my first IT certification and I'm almost ready. Gonna fucking rock it because this stuff is interesting as hell and it's fun.

21.

The most powerful thing I did in my quest to stop gaming... (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by Lowenhigh462 days

Hi guys,

Thought I'd drop my 2 cents, because I see everyone complaining about how they have big mood swings, depression, and find a lack of interest in other things. I have none of

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these things now, and I quit gaming just over 3 months ago. I played for 27 years, including long stints (3 to 10+ years) in popular MMO's leading guilds and being extremely involved in the community.

Here is my secret:

**1. Your output is determined by your input.**

**2. Without an input, you cannot output anything.**

A simple way to describe this, and something MANY of you are guilty of, is that you're reading about gaming, visiting the same subreddits, asking your friends about your favorite games (or simply tolerating them talking about it to you), reading magazines, checking up on latest patch notes, etc... Well, what do you think is going to happen?

You're going to get extremely angry and depressed, because you're denying yourself of the thing that you are researching and absorbing!

We, as creatures of habit and creativity, desire to use our knowledge. It's really as simple as this! This is why, as a business man now, I desire to learn more about business: I'm reading business books and subreddits. I'm not reading anything that is gaming related, and I treat it like taking a drug -- One hit and I'm addicted for years all over again.

The second part of this whole thing is that you've got a hole inside your spirit that you've created by stopping a great passion (gaming). Therefore, if you don't fill it, you're going to get angry, depressed, and bitter. You have to fill it! And you have to develop a **new lifestyle** in the process.

For me, that thing I used to fill my gaming time was Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. I also stopped working from home, because by changing my environment, I stopped being quite so tempted to jump onto League of Legends for just *one* more. I also deleted my gaming apps on my phone *AND* PC... I don't even play minesweeper, lol.

Jiu Jitsu is a grappling art that seriously works in real life. Everybody knows Royce Gracie. The fact that he was 6ft 170lbs and had little in the way of muscles didn't matter as he was can crushing 220lb+ strong street fighters. As a recently former gamer, I needed an outlet that I could embrace as a new lifestyle... Not just as a hobby. You need to change your entire lifestyle. Your life needs to revolve around something else!

A little bit more about Brazilian Jiu Jitsu:

\*People that are overweight can do it too, even if you're big. It's very easy on the joints, and doesn't require explosiveness. It just takes humility and a willingness to learn! You'll start out day 1 having a ton of fun.

\*Smaller people and people with handicaps can actually beat WAY bigger stronger people (including girls vs boys).

\*You're going to love it. Especially if you want to try hard.

\*Opportunities to train are literally all over the world in almost every city now.

**TL;DR - Stop looking at gaming articles, stop talking about it, and start doing what I did that took the anger and depression away -- Change your lifestyle with Jiu Jitsu (or another passion). Hobbies aren't enough -- you need to put your ALL into whatever you do!**

Hope this helped you all. I suggest to check out all the links I added... I tried hard and think they will help.

22.

[–]thorn- 2 points 11 months ago

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This is a great post with great advice! I am in a similiar situation as you. Started gaming when i was very young with different video games. Eventually found diablo and starcraft which i played shittion. When I got into my teens i played alot of Tibia, CS, WoW. Quit all of these in favor of a career in poker in my late teens until early twenties when the poker lifestyle caught up to me and I had to quit due to medical reasons. After this I was so depressed for about 6-7 months when I didnt play anything. Then... I found DOTA 2. Spent like 100 hours per week with this game and I loved it. Problem was that I only loved playing and didnt find much joy in other things in life that I usually liked. Anyway, I also quit dota like 4 months ago in favor of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and I'm LOVING it. Its basically a game but with your body. The moves and counters is endless and it has completely replaced the hole in me that used to be filled by gaming. Try it out guys, you wont regret it!

23.

Games are fun. They are really fun. And they are only going to get better.

(self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago \* by play\_time\_is\_over60 days

**TRIGGER WARNING** (but seriously overcome your urges - feels better than running away from them)

Hearing talk about E3, Overwatch and how it's breaking a few streaks.

Let's not lie to ourselves guys. Playing games is **really** fun. I see the banners for Overwatch everywhere. I waited for that game for months. I knew I would kill at that game and it looks so fun, the art is amazing - gameplay looks sick.

I want to go back to playing diablo, I want to hang out with my counter strike buddies. I want to do all these things.

I'm not going to though.

We do not quit games because we want an easy life. We quit games because we want the strength to endure a hard one.

I've spoken to 30 girls, got 3 numbers and lined up a date. I lost 9kg and been at the gym for 50 days. I'm going for my blackbelt at the end of the month. I dumped my abusive ex-gf.

None of this. I mean absolutely none of these things would have been possible if I didn't start by quitting games.

The lonely boring nights have been hard. The withdrawals and brainfog have not made it easy. However the feeling if those small victories everyday is uncomparable to any 'achievement' a game will reward you.

I'm sure games will only become more popular, better designed, more fun. More addictive.

Suffer the pain of discipline less you suffer the pain of regret.

**Tips for anyone wanting to follow my path**

**GET OUT OF THE HOUSE**

I spend 30 minutes a day sitting in a park with a coffee. Heck I'm here right now. Being in nature is spiritual even if you don't believe in God or spirits. Just trust me on that one. I meditate twice a day. In the morning I try to be grateful for all that I have. We are so lucky and free - the only thing holding you back is yourself. I 'pray' for the strength to accomplish my goals (pray to yourself - self-affirmation). At the end of the day you



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reflect on what went well and what didnt. Then you once again show gratitude for this beautiful planet we live on.

Hit the fucking gym. Lift weights. If you dont know where to begin, ill give you my routine. Its harder without a partber - but I dont train with a partner. If you are so nervous get a PT to show you (make sure you use weightlift routine though - no jumping jacks and burpies bs)

If you're overweight - get MyFitnessPal. Enter a goal weight and start counting calories. It gets easy after the first week. If you aint hungry you aint losing weight. You don't lose wieght by exercissing. You can run for 30 minutes and youll only burn off a piece of choclate. Much easier to just not eat the choclate.

Start the NoFap challenge. Even if it's just to quit porn. Try fapping without porn only 1-2 times a week.

Join a legit martial art dojo. Walk in and ask the sensei what his opinion on Budo is. If he says he doesn't know or says "being stronger than your opponents" walk out - that's a mcdojo. If he is japanese he is probably legit. Second to stopgaming, martial arts has been by biggest motivation to improve life.

### **get girls advice (optional)**

Not every guy wants to chase girls. I do. I really really do. If you are one of these guys who want to sleep with lots of women, find a gf, or just get better at women in general. Check out the Approach Anxiety Program from Good Looking Loser. (Dw it's not red pill) pretty sure camerondare even knows of this.

Thats how I got my 3 numbers and 2 dates. Suprisingly easy once you have an instruction booklet (again its not PUA - look good + talk to girls without being a spaz = success). I got numbers by telling girls i thought they where naturally pretty and asking about their day - pretty fucking normal stuff.

Anyway. Stay strong guys. There is so much life out there for us.

### **TLDR**

Games are fun. Life is hard. We play games to run from life. Don't ask for an easy life. Ask for the strength to endure a hard one. Pain of discipline > Pain of regret. Once we stop growing spiritually and technically we are as good as dead.

24.

18 years got wasted in the blink of eye (self.StopGaming)

submitted 3 months ago \* by [deleted]

If you consider quitting or playing with moderation. Just go for the first option. All these achievements, characters, experience mean exactly **NOTHING**, round **ZERO**. What will you do with your maxed level? What will you do with 100% of achievements? Do they affect your real life? Will you put it to your CV or something? They mean nothing and they should not have any value for you.

All this time, which you waste, could be used for more productive activites like learning how to play a guitar, learning a new language, coming back to studying (which you avoid for all this time, you know that right?), or even taking up some lessons from ceramics.

Anything. Just something what could help you in your self-improvement.

Since I was 6 I played computer games. I filled my free time with gaming for entire next 18 years. For my whole youth I was sinking in this mess, didn't socialize much and didn't have real friends. I wasn't hardcore gamer who was skipping school, but I can say that I

## LEVELING UP

was into gaming, which ruined my youth. My good memories from that time are few and far between.

If you're young, please listen, don't follow this path. Gaming will destroy your social life. Everything what you will see in real life would be numb, lifeless; so you would repeat what you do the best, play computer games. You will deepen your depression. You will become socially awkward person with no other interests than gaming topics.

If you can't play with moderation, just quit now until it would be too late. Find something other than gaming what could you do. Nothing is worthy in gaming, so do it now, go cold turkey and self-improve, self-develop yourself instead watching how your life passes. It's the best decision which you could make in your youth time unless you want recover your life thousands hours of gaming later when you finally come in out of the rain if it's happen.

Mark my words, my friend.

25.

[–]SFBusiness 9 points 3 months ago

Someone left me in Orgimmar completely gearless and destroyed my hearthstone. I could have asked one of my warlock buddies to warp me back Ironforge or started the long zeppelin ride back but instead I deleted my paladin. I was a Gladiator rank right after S3, I had progressed through all the PvE content (albeit I never fully cleared Nax), and was a lynchpin on the best PvP team Alliance side.

I started working out more and eventually met the lady that I married this year. All because of that realization when I sat down on, logged in, and then thought about spending 1-3 hours finding my way back to Ironforge.

Never regretted that moment, but I do occasionally play CS:GO now. After logging more than 2-3 hours in playing session I turn off the computer or even just get up and walk away. My addiction doesn't control me anymore and I wish I learned that earlier on in HS. I wonder what I could have done with all that time but I am ecstatic I made the right decision eventually.

**[permalinkembedsaverreportgive goldreply](#)**

26.

Two years without games. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago \* by ssertroftaem940 days

I've been depressed for most of my life, clinging onto games to distract myself from all the pain and horrors that infest my mind. For over a decade, I've known that my best years were long behind me.

Today marks my two year anniversary without games, and let me tell you, life is sweeter than it's ever been. I'm mentally and physically stronger than I've been my entire life. I'm focused, healthy, and happy.

I'd like to leave you guys with some words of encouragement and share some truths that I've discovered throughout my journey to help you with yours.

**The struggle gets easier.**

I know a lot of you are suffering. You've made some drastic life changes and your mind and body are freaking the F out. The struggle is hard today but it will get easier. Here's the glass half full: For most of you, the compulsion to play games will never be as bad as

## LEVELING UP

it is right now.

You will discover unimaginable curiosities and experience great joy in other aspects of life. Sure, sounds like something I stole off a fortune cookie, but no, it's something I truly believe because I've experienced it firsthand. There's so much beauty and wonder and happiness waiting to be discovered. Life is hard but it's also amazing beyond any of our comprehension.

I don't know if the compulsion to play games will always be there. Will I still have the itch to gank people in World of Warcraft in twenty years? I have no idea. But like I mentioned, the compulsion to play games does lessen over time.

### **A note about "passion".**

I see a lot of posts about not having passion, boredom, and being numb to the world. If you are struggling to find your passion, I couldn't have put it any better than Elizabeth Gilbert (the Eat, Pray, Love author). Here's a short video and a short blog post, both reiterating the same idea to follow your curiosity.

### **Casual gaming and my experiences with potential triggers.**

Personally, **game music works wonders**. I can enjoy the music and reminisce without that overwhelming urge to play. For me, game music is like re-experiencing a memory from my childhood or re-watching a scene from a movie. I often listen to videogame music while lifting weights.

EDIT: **Novels based on games have also treated me well**. A professional author's take on the franchises I already enjoy are mostly great. They give me an extra taste of the lore, characters, and events that I originally fell in love with in the game. (I've drudged through some bad/cheesy game novels too. For the particularly awful ones, I just tell myself they're not canon and move on.)

For the most part, **tabletop games are fine**. I gamed with a certain group of people for about a year, ended up detesting the way that some of them played. Some people just have an unhealthy obsession with winning and it makes the environment uncomfortable for everyone else. I just want to chill, eat, drink, and laugh with friends. But those games always ended with people spewing vitriol and poison all over the place. And over what? We're fighting over robots, unicorns, and gold pieces. We're mad at each other over things that are fantasy, things that aren't real, things that don't exist outside our imagination. What a complete waste of time and energy to watch adults fervently argue about pieces of cardboard. However, with the right group, I know I'd be able to enjoy tabletop games again.

I can still play **videogames casually with a close group of friends**, but only if we're playing together in the same room. I know myself too well - me in my home with them in theirs is a snowball waiting to roll out of control. I can't trust my urges to allow videogames in my home.

I made a new rule, **no more fighting games**. I just don't have fun with them anymore. There's so much time and energy involved in order to be adequate in a fighting game, so many rules to learn, timings to encode into muscle memory, etc. My friends play the old arcade style where "loser passes controller", so the next person waiting will have to fight the previous winner. If I'm the one always winning, I'm not having fun because I feel like a big fish in a small pond, and I know my friends aren't enjoying me slaughtering them. If a friend's always winning, I'm still not having fun because I feel like I'm a training dummy instead of giving them a good and fun fight, and of course it's demoralizing to

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lose almost every match for two to eight hours. With this particular group of friends, it's always one person winning while everyone else sits there and yawns. So goodbye to fighting games. I've had great experiences with them in the past but I just don't have the time to enjoy them anymore.

I still play **Words with Friends with my mom**. I spend about 10-20 minutes a week exchanging moves with her. She's still a word titan and I'm getting crushed in almost every game. Love it, I'm still having fun.

### **Let's Plays are a different story.**

I started watching one or two Let's Plays a day. It was great, like hanging out with old friends and playing our old games again. But my Let's Play viewing spiraled out of control and I spent way too much time watching these videos. And no, I wasn't just listening while doing other things, I actually sat there watching. I wanted to judge the players' strategies and choices, and make guesses on how I would have done in their place. I watched these videos so much that I recognized the enemies and their patterns before the person playing did. I knew maps, attacks, and the mechanics of games that I've never even played before.

Through these Let's Plays, I even reasoned with myself that "playing a couple of these games casually in the future wouldn't be a big deal." But it totally would have been a big deal!! I can barely limit my Let's Play views, how am I going to handle casual gaming? It hurt but I had to cold turkey it and throw the Let's Play bookmarks away. Another farewell to old friends.

### **What do you do for fun now?**

Still the most common question I get after telling someone I'm done with games. It's like the whole world can't comprehend a life without gaming.

In the morning, I listen to podcasts. At night, I read books. And inbetween, I listen to music, I play with my dogs, and I write. I watch about 30-90 minutes of TV/YouTube/Better Call Saul a day. Three times a week, I lift weights. And finally, I visit friends once or twice a month. That's really all I do for fun. I'm enjoying living a simple low-key life.

### **The time spent on social media.**

I want to make a huge note that I don't spend as much time on social media as I did before. Don't get me wrong, social media's great in so many ways, it's changed modern society and affected the way we live and think. I check social media sometimes to see how certain people are doing, or yak about Game of Thrones with my bros. But for the most part, social media has just been a complete waste of time. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, even Reddit. It's just a sea of people regurgitating similar content, me learning about the prejudices of family and friends, and a place where we can all collectively dump our remarks and bookmarks into the void. Yeah, I splurge on social media sometimes, maybe once or twice a month, hitting "like" on the conveyor belt of babes that Instagram feeds me. But for the most part, ain't nobody got time for that. I'd rather spend my time cultivating meaningful things.

### **Writing, journaling, and private thoughts.**

I can't stress enough how valuable writing has been for me. Writing feels like I'm pulling all the chaos out of my brain and organizing it in a neat little spellbook. Writing calms my anxiety, lessens my depression, and empties my buzzing head so I can sleep better at night.

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Years ago, I used to write a lot of blog posts, used to reply a lot on Reddit, used to spend so much time throwing everything out there on social media. And even though family, friends, and strangers often participated with my posts, it was nowhere near as satisfying as writing for myself. Writing my innermost thoughts without fear of judgment or retribution is one of the most freeing things I've ever done. No anxiety, no heavy editing, no worries about spelling or grammar, just letting my mindgrapes explode on the page. I highly recommend keeping a private journal. I've solved so many of my own problems, and slayed so many powerful demons, by just writing it out and looking at my life objectively.

I personally don't have to worry about privacy so I write in a physical notebook. If you're interested in writing an uncensored private journal but don't have the freedom to do so, I recommend typing on your computer or phone, and password protecting your device. Or invest a little time researching encryption, or set up a private blog (or Evernote account) and log out after every entry.

### **Calendars.**

Keeping a calendar has kept me straight. I've used material calendars in the past, but there would be days I'd forget to write in it. Then I'd stop using it for months at a time. Also, material calendars cost money.

I recently started using Google Calendar. I can access it from my desktop, phone, and tablet. It's free and everything automatically syncs to my Gmail account. I check the calendar 2-3 times a day, glancing at it like I'd glance at a map in a game, to make sure I know exactly where I'm going and exactly what I'm doing that day. With the help of Google Calendar, I've found that being on time is now exceptionally easier.

Towards the end of my day, I set up goals that I want to do the next day, I delete or re-schedule tasks that I didn't get to, and I check off the things I accomplished (literally copying and pasting this emoji: ☐). It's a very satisfying process. Looking at my calendar is like looking at a completed quest log or a chronological list of real life achievements.

### **Weightlifting.**

EDIT: I started lifting weights about six months after quitting games. I'm a skinny, shorter-than-average guy, and never thought that weightlifting was for me. I can't count the times someone's told me, "You have a runner's body." So when I tried running (on and off for several years) and hated it, I just assumed that exercise wasn't for me. I've totally been missing out. I love lifting heavy ass weight, I love being strong.

Despite an injury (which was my fault; I was being a jackass) and a few sicknesses, I am still lifting weights regularly. My bodyweight is about 5 lbs lighter than last year, yet I'm magically stronger. The human body is an awesome machine.

June 2015 vs June 2016 5-Rep Maxes:

- Squat - 165 lbs -> 185 lbs (+20 lbs)
- Bench - 122 lbs -> 135 lbs (+13 lbs)
- Row - 115 lbs -> 135 lbs (+20 lbs)
- Press - 87 lbs -> 92 lbs (+5 lbs)
- Deadlift - 180 lbs -> 230 lbs (+50 lbs)

(Here's a pretty neat color-coded side-by-side visual of my progress provided by Symmetric Strength.)

Level ups all around. I didn't get a video of my 230 lb deadlift, but here's my attempt at a 225 lb personal record (sporting my lucky shirt).

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If you're interested in weightlifting, I recommend StrongLifts. In my opinion, Alan Thrall makes the best comprehensive tutorial videos for all the basic compound lifts: Squat, Bench, Row, Press, Deadlift.

Also, drop by /r/fitness some time, the people there are good folk. (Be wary of their comments though; some are misinformed, others love their satire.)

### **Final note.**

Everyone, please be healthy. Eat right, exercise regularly, and for God's sake get a good night's worth of sleep. So many diseases and ailments can be prevented/avoided with healthy eating habits, healthy sleeping habits, and moderate exercise. One more time: Food, sleep, exercise. Getting healthier is not hard. A better health means a better quality of life.

Come on, we did it in games - we upgraded, we leveled up, we exchanged old gear for new ones, we learned new skills, spells, strategies. So let's do it in life! Strive to be a better cook, a better artist, a better writer, whatever interests you, whatever's important to you. Strengthen your relationships with your tribe, your neighbors, friends and family. Do everything you can to be a better person and live a better life.

### **tl;dr**

Let's be better.

2015 post:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/StopGaming/comments/39dqff/a\\_year\\_without\\_games/](https://www.reddit.com/r/StopGaming/comments/39dqff/a_year_without_games/)

EDIT: I added some comments on game novels and added an intro to the weightlifting section. Thank you everyone for the kind words.

28.

Introducing Myself - ex-alcoholic, ex-addict to pot, cocaine, cigarettes, and pornography. Won all of them. Gaming still gets me. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 days ago by LVXT2 days

Hey guys. I never noticed I was an addict until I found this forum. Actually, it's been almost 2 years since I've realized that gaming is not good to me, that I can't control it, and, since then, I've been trying to quit it, always failing after some time. However, I never thought this was an addiction. "No, it is only something I enjoy doing, and that's why its hard to quit". After relapsing many times, I started to suspect it was an addiction. I've been addicted to alcohol, pot, cocaine, cigarettes, and pornography, and I notice the feeling I used to get with those, is the same feeling I get when gaming. I guess I was ashamed to confess to myself and my wife that it was an addiction. That I was still addicted to something.

Gaming doesn't keep me totally from doing the rest of my duties; it doesn't make me arrive late at my job, miss college, or gym, and it doesn't take all of my time with my wife either. My reason to quit was another one: I realized it controls me. If I had to choose between gaming and another activity, I would feel very urged to game instead of the other one, making up any excuses I had to. I would encourage my wife to do something for her (like drawing, or taking a nap), just so I could play games while she was doing her stuff. I realized this was not normal. I was not supposed to prefer gaming over spending time with my wife. Moreover, even if I managed to choose the other activity, I wouldn't be able to enjoy it like I should, because my mind would keep urging me to play. Not only games made me leave other hobbies (like reading my books, going

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out with my wife, improving some skill), but it was also taking, gradually, my pleasure in doing those things. I've tried all possible ways of moderation, like restricting the days/time I could play, the kind of games (from mp to sp), I mean, everything. I always would control myself for a while, and then completely lose it. I just can't control it. I get triggered even by board games, because of the competition in it. Also, there's that thing: even when I could control myself for a while, I would be all day craving for the moment for me to play. And if anything got between me and me gaming time, I would be angry, even though I used to hide it.

So, as I said, I began to suspect it was an addiction, but I think I didn't want to admit it. This vacation, me and my wife came to our families' city (we moved to another city when we got married) to spend some time with our parents. My wife went to her mother's house, I stayed at mine's. My mom has an I5 PC, with 30mb bandwidth connection (for my country it is a lot). I relapsed 3 times in a week, after being a long time without lapses. So it occurred me to search about gaming addiction on the internet. After seeing the description of the symptoms, feeling, and the patterns, I realized, once and for all, I'm an addict. I came upon this sub, and read much of the content of it, and it helped me a lot. I got my badge and thought: that's it! Now that I know it's an addiction, I'll be able to finally win it. I'll just face it like I faced the other addictions I had. I asked my mother to put a password on her pc, and got rid of my steam account. "It's time to win this thing!". This was the day before yesterday. Today I relapsed. I asked my mother to login the pc for me to study (I really would), but when she walked out the craving got me and I played.

Back to day 0, resetted my badge, trying again, I won't give up. This is what makes me feel better: I didn't give up. I won't accept this addiction as normal. When I fought against pornography, I relapsed many, many times, but I never gave up, and, at some point, I finally won it.

So, basically, what I wanna say is: 1. This sub is really important. Without it, I wouldn't realize I was addicted to gaming, neither notice the importance and the gravity of it, and how I need to struggle a lot more if I really intend to quit. All the things I've been reading here have been helping me a lot. Your work here is amazing, keep on. 2. This addiction is no small one. I was an alcoholic (used to drink everyday, compulsively, been through an alcoholic coma), smoker (2 red label packs a day), pot user (5~6 cigarettes a day, 10 on weekends), cocaine (5g every weekend, sometimes on the week), pornography (3~5 times a day). I never relapsed into alcohol, cocaine or cigarettes. I relapsed once into pot, 2 years and a half ago; never again. I relapsed many times on pornography, the last one almost 2 years go, been clean since there. But gaming addiction got me stronger than all of those, since it's almost 2 years I've been trying (unsucessfully) to quit. It's a real addiction, as tough as drugs, so don't take it lightly. Don't think you'll quit without facing a lot of abstinence. Be ready for that. You will face a lot of it. But it's better going through that than staying enprisoned.

Thanks for all your work here, it's very nice to enter this battle with the help of y'all. For the ones who are starting the fight (like myself), keep fighting, I can say by experience: the feeling of satisfying your addiction, is not even 0,001% as pleasant, as the feeling of getting rid of it.

TL;DR: Gaming addiction is as hard as (or maybe harder than) alcohol, pot, cocaine, cigarettes, and pornography.

## LEVELING UP

29.

[–]JonnYellowSnow32 days 3 points 1 day ago\*

My 2 cents: It might be that gaming is your brain's last attempt for dopamine surges. It might be that it is not necessarily more or less addicting than the other things you overcame, but it might be that since you eliminated all the rest - gaming is the last straw, the last opportunity to "get a fix". I'm in the same boat (minus the substance addictions). I quit gaming, then porn now I'm stuck internet surfing with the hopes of finding something interesting. I justify it by only surfing for addiction and "get your life together" subreddits and information, but still I get that slight familiar feeling of pleasure that I came to recognize as dopamine release when I find something of value...

I believe that there will always be something for us. If its not one thing its another. I read a submission of an ex alcoholic that said he recently understood to develop a day trading addiction. He would constantly check on his stock throughout the day and will feel very anxious while not looking at it, "because he might be missing a sudden drop or a sudden jump". He saw that it made him feel very similar to how he felt when he was suffering from his addiction. It might be a problem of our generation.

It seems to me that at the moment the only solutions are:

- 1 Keep yourself occupied with positive productive activities.
- 2 If you are doing something that brings you satisfaction, always be mindful for the source of that satisfaction. What did you actually **DO** in order to deserve this feeling?
- 3 Don't binge. Never binge. If you binge something you that gives you fast rewards - it becomes an addiction.
- 4 If you binge something that gives you very delayed rewards - you burn out and gradually loose motivation to continue that activity
- 5 Be mindful - which relates to everything before it. Spend as little time as possible on autopilot. I recently installed an app on my phone that strikes a gong and vibrates every 15 minutes. It reminds me to be mindful and to analyze if what I'm doing does not fall into the repetitive patterns of addiction.

30.

You do not belong here (self.StopGaming)

submitted 5 months ago by OdoRacer

I am 33. So I was hanging out with my wife and daughter at the mall the other week. I was at day 3 of nogaming. It turns out that there was a CS:GO tournament going and two teams of teenagers were competing. As I walked by I have imagined what it would be like for me to actually play with those kids in this tournament and I have paid extra attention to my thoughts. I had only one "you don't belong here".

31.

Being bored isn't a bad thing. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 month ago \* by keeblur170 days

Last night I got home from work, did my evening jog, took a shower, ate and then just laid in bed being bored. As I was laying down I questioned why I, as well as much of this generation, always feel the need to be stimulated.



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It was then that I realized, I didn't so much feel bored, I felt free. I spent a good hour and half just letting the world around me pass, not trying to influence anything in it, or convince myself that I had to do anything. I also gave up the idea that I should somehow be ashamed of being bored, like in my lack of doing something I am somehow uninteresting.

It also made me wonder what being "bored" meant to people of earlier generations, when technology wasn't running so rampant in our lives.

32.

Truth is, nothing else feels the same (self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago by [deleted]

I stopped gaming about year ago by selling my pc (although I did play melee on and off). Since then i have tried everything: gym, cycling, skateboarding, friends, drugs, cooking, drawing, focusong on my studies, etc. Honestly, most of the people I have met I have not been very fond of and I think I actually have fewer friends now than I did then. People all have their vices, most adults I find enjoy sex and alcohol, I really do not. I have met many girls and had multiple opportunities to have sex but I am just dissinterested. The past year has been spent pondering the meaning of life in a state of constant existential crisis and I have come to the realization that there isn't one. I always feel this pressure to do something that is truly expressive or artistic or productive but forcing yourself to do the things you think you want to do and not the ones you actual feel the want to just makes you depressed and tired. For me, nothing really feels better than dropping a huge combo that i practiced on someone in melee or carrying a game of league and I think that's ok. I sat down on my cousins computer and played a match of overwatch and found myself full of laughter and bliss for the entire experience. Dedicating yourself to a career is just as meaningless as dedicatong yourself to a ladder in a game, it is all just an illusion that we will ourselves into. Maybe I should just stick to gaming until that joy no longer exists. If I maintain my health and my job, I don't see why playing video games to my hearts content should make me feel guilty when forcing myself to socialize with people that I don't really care about just makes me feel like an actor and a shell. Just wanted to share my story because it seems to be the opposite of how most others feel.

33.

**[–]plastic\_\_bag** 1 point 6 months ago

I feel exactly the same. I haven't gone a year without gaming, but a couple of months. I've been going to the gym, and it does feel better to get some exercise, and I've done just about everything you've listed above; but I feel like I have to forcefully do these things because I do not naturally gain happiness from them. Aside from going to the gym, I don't find much of anything else rewarding. I feel kind of 'fake' most the time, because I'm trying so hard to be someone I am not. Idk.

That being said, I do not think excessive gaming makes me any happier. But I definitely feel a void when I completely rid myself of it. And nothing has been able to fill that void so far. Perhaps balance and discipline is key.

**permalinkembedsavegive gold**

34.

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Last two nights: Foot, Back Rubs for me Girl (self.StopGaming)

submitted 22 days ago by Librapoet

She's an awesome girl, my fiance. Every morning, if I forget to pack my lunch for work - and I am notorious for forgetting that task - she takes care of it. She never complains. She just handles it. She's affectionate, patient, nurturing.

And for years, I've been... indifferent. Every night, rushing home, tearing through a perfunctory workout or brief list of chores - and then straight into gaming. For hours, usually until bed.

The night before last, I sat down and gave my girl a foot rub. Last night, neck and shoulders.

It's the kind of thing you do during the courting phase, then promptly let slide after a few months or a year of living together. It wasn't about sex; I didn't want or expect anything. What happened next both thrilled me...and broke my heart.

My fiance looked at me...almost like she was unsure of who I was...and said Thank You, I needed that, it's been a rough day.

My girl thanked me for doing something nice for her. Like you'd thank a stranger who doesn't have to hold the door when you walk into a store. Like I was doing her some sort of rare favor she didn't really deserve.

And then I began to wonder: how many other days were rough? How many other nights has she sat hoping I would just...touch her? Not as a precursor to sex; not with expectations. But just because I WANTED to.

I have to admit...it's been a long time since I've done something like this. To my shame, by that, I mean Years. I've been too distracted, always something to DO. Always chasing that rush of stimulation. Back rubs? Those aren't FUN (except, I did enjoy it, seeing her so happy and relaxed). All this time I've been too distracted bit crap video games.

And she's been there. Waiting. Quietly helping me find other things. Walking me slowly back to reality. Not bossy or bitchy. Just...steady and patient.

I've put the computer away. I've got years of back rubs and foot massages and cuddles and smiles to catch up on.

It's time to get started.

35.

To all you young people out there (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 month ago \* by ganthelab66 days

It has been 21 days. I have not touched a video game in 21 days, and I have never felt better. I started playing video games at the age of 6. Me and my best friend got ourselves a gameboy color each, and we would spend hours on hours every single day gaming on this gameboy. Our parents would react and tell us the get outside, but we would just bring our gameboy with us and play outside instead.

I am now 20 years old, and I have had this exact attitude towards gaming ever since.

There was nothing I wanted more than to play video games. You might look at me today and say "You're in college studying computer engineering, how can you say video games have been that bad for you? You must have done something right?". To be perfectly honest, I really dont deserve to be where I am today. Ever since I got that gameboy, I have half assed every single thing just to get home and play more video games. I quit all type of sports, I lost contact with every single friend that didn't play video games with

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me, and you can just forget about girls. I have never been in love in my entire life. But 21 days ago while laying in bed trying to sleep, something inside my just clicked. I realized I wanted to make something out of myself, I am tired of half assing through life. I got up, turned on my computer, uninstalled everything related to gaming, unsubscribe from every single gaming channel on youtube, cleared my browser history, and sent a message to my friends saying I had to quit gaming and why. Luckily they supported my choice even though it kind of makes it hard for us to keep in touch. I ended up selling my gaming PC and bought a Macbook Air, which really helped my urges to play (Because I can't play shit on this thing).

I can not explain the difference this has made on my life, and I just wish I could have done this earlier. I really want to reach out to you younger guys out there that is considering this. It won't be easy, it was actually very fucking hard, but I am SO glad I made this choice, which is why I am now posting my first ever reddit post.

Note: I am sure this post is full of bad constructed sentences, just keep in mind that I am from Sweden. Thanks for reading! :)

36.

I'm so much happier since I quit playing League of Legends (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 months ago by magic\_purple\_lemons

I just wanted to post a little of my experience, hopefully it serves as motivation for those struggling with gaming addiction, specifically that endless timesink that is League of Legends.

I have a fairly demanding job (evenings, weekends) and I used to get so stressed out about having to work late because it meant I would have less time to play League. I would resent having to spend time with friends or with my girlfriend on weekends because i would wish i was playing League instead.

And i wasn't even happy when I was playing. When we'd lose, I'd rage and get angry and my mood would be ruined. When we won, I wasn't even happy, I would just feel relieved. It was such a toxic relationship.

I haven't managed to cut video games out of my life entirely yet, but I have switched to single player games (or less intense multiplayer games when playing with friends). I liken it to switching from heroin to weed or something (although really League would be crack, WoW would be heroin, which I thankfully managed to quit a few years ago, though I just ended up switching to league).

I just wanted to make this post to tell everyone out there struggling with gaming addiction that it is so worth it. I know it's hard but it really is liberating. I feel like I have so much more time in my life now, and I am much less stressed at work and in my personal life.

I still have other issues to deal with (smoke too much weed, somewhat unhealthy relationship with porn, things I'm sure many of us here also struggle with). But it's a first step.

One thing that helped me was allowing myself to fail. When I tried to quit before I would get so angry at myself when I would give in and play a game. That would lead to a binge of gaming and a return to the vicious cycle. Instead, you have to live at the margin. If you give in and play one game, it's okay. I actually did play one game last week. But it's about trying as hard as you can to make the right decision each time temptation rises.

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If you mess up once, it's okay. Don't let that one slip up ruin the next 9 times. Reward yourself every time you resist, but don't punish yourself every time you fail.

37.

I got to the end of the 90 days Detox Period. Did my life improve? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 9 months ago by Danielpiva365 days

Short answer, yes, absolutely.

It improved so much that I will keep it going. I am sure that my life is better now, that I am more in sync with my long term goals and I am feeling way better - less anxiety, higher self esteem. Why go back?

So let's list the things that changed in my life since quitting! I did one at 30 and another at 60. Now this one is after 90 days! It is very similar to the 60 one, but with some new things!

The idea to write about this subject is to have clarity of what changed in my life and to give ideas or motivate my fellow comrades here in StopGaming!

- I donated blood with a friend. I procrastinated for more than 9 months to donate;
- I donated some clothes for charity and got a cleaner and lighter wardrobe;
- I started Kung Fu classes! Still going strong, training around 4 hours a week! I started it around 70 days ago. My first exam will be in May and I am really confident I will be able to do it (but I still have to train hard to achieve it).
- I met new people and new girls. Had four romantic engagements so far and I have a date tonight - coincidentally it will be on my 90 day milestone! A nice way to celebrate!
- Went on a trip with one of these girls without a lot of planning ahead. In the past, I would be very disheartened to take this trip if it meant staying three days without gaming. We are also planning another trip for the end of April;
- Hanged out with my friend more often. If I was still gaming, I would have stayed home instead of going to a party or a bar with my friends;
- Started buying birthday gifts for close friends, instead of just showing up at their parties empty handed (and went more often to birthday celebrations);
- Started working out twice a week with a personal trainer. I just finished my first month today;
- I started going by bicycle to work again, everyday. When the gaming got bad, I usually would go to work by Uber in order to save commute time and arrive earlier at home;
- I am Spending more time with my dogs, including walking them more often and for longer walks;
- Lost some weight;
- Read six books so far (Including "The Power of Habit" and now I am reading "The Slight Edge");
- Started writing in my journal again. Right now I am on a 42 days streak! It is my record by very, very far.
- I achieved Level 25 in English on Duolingo, finished the Spanish Skill Tree on Duolingo and got a streak of 398 straight days that I practiced another language in Duolingo (my native language is Portuguese);
- Started doing two edX courses and they are progressing well;

## LEVELING UP

- I am learning Math again at Khan Academy - and it was a suggestion from someone from this sub!
  - Watched movies more often;
  - Didn't miss a single day at work! Yes, I used some personal days in order to stay home gaming over the last year. I even took a two week vacations where I didn't do anything besides gaming.
  - I threw three parties at my house, where I grilled homemade hamburguers to my friends!
  - I am cooking more often and learning new dishes;
  - I checked out prices and conditions for the following classes: Cooking, Guitar Lessons and Motorcycle Lessons. Unfortunately they were all very expensive or very far from my commute, so I didn't start any of them;
  - Managed to wake up with out using the snoozing button (10 straight weeks now);
- I guess these are the most important changes that happened in the last 90 days! There are a lot of things I still want to change, but I am absolutely sure that my life improved a lot since stopping!
- So that is it! Wish you all good luck in your journey =]

38.

1 year since I quit gaming -Summary (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 month ago by YouHaveMyBlessings415 days

Today I complete 1 year since I quit games. So here I will tell about my journey trying to give back to this community that gave me motivation to quit.

I was trying to quit gaming a year back, it took 4-5 relapses before I finally quit. I was fully disgusted with myself and could no longer look at myself in the mirror. My reasons for quitting were so strong, that it overpowered all the reasons for playing games. [I also bet all my skins to intentionally lose them, which heightened my frustration and made it a bit easier to quit]

Many people advised me to quit slowly, but that didn't work for me. The games are made addictive so its hard to control yourself once you're in the zone/gaming high.

I spent most of my time studying or watching non gaming related YouTube channels (TEDx, motivational, book summaries, business advice, top 10 rules of success,etc).

Initially I was freaked out, my self-confidence was totally shattered and I didn't have any skills. But slowly over time my belief in myself improved after hearing all those YouTube videos. I joined Toastmasters few months back and I'm progressing in my communication skills there.

Now I'm currently working on being productive and getting good at planning.

BTW, recently few of my classmates would talk to be about gaming and stuff, I would give them tips and stuff and talk about all the cool things I did during gaming. It tempts me sometimes to play, but internally I know how it has effected my life and that I won't ever touch video games again.

Hope it helps someone out there. [it also helps to learn the psychology behind all this, read other top posts]

39.

Quitting CS:GO was the best decision of my Life (self.StopGaming)

## LEVELING UP

submitted 6 months ago by whiteeey217 days

Hey guys, I just stumbled upon this subreddit and thought i'd share my story. I have been diagnosed with severe depression two years ago, when i was 19 (I've not been feeling well for much longer). I always thought gaming is one of the few things in life that actually lighten up my mood and make me think of positive things. It was 2 weeks ago when I decided to quit CS:GO, the only game i really played at that time. I put in over 40 hours per week and had lots of "buddies" to play with. But i recently noticed, that i didnt play to be feel better, but out of routine. It was just part of my day, like going to the toilet or eating dinner. I also got aware of my feeling whilst playing the game. The pressure, the anxiety, the guilt i put on myself when we lost games or i didn't perform well. I actually didnt have little or any fun. I also got in financial struggles because of all the money i put in for skins, which got worse and worse. So one day, I sold all my skins on OPSkins.com for real money, deinstalled the game and sold my steam account.

Today, I still feel relieved and much more happy. When I play games now, it's only for like 2 Hours a day, some days I dont even play anything. The games i play are mostly old singleplayer and RPGs I enjoyed when i was younger. Blast from the past, you could say. All in all, I have more freetime, more real social interactions and am MUCH more happier.

Maybe this inspires some people that struggle with the pressure of online competitive games. Thanks for reading and have a beautiful day :)

40.

Hi there! My name is Jack and I am trying to quit gaming as a whole. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago \* by itrytogetthingsdone310 days

I have been gaming my whole life. Since I was a little kid I played Pokemon on the Gameboy and played many other games on the consoles. I switched to PC gaming and played more and more... And now I am trying to combat my game addiction.

I played for a long time Battlefield and World of Warcraft. I played WoW first and played it almost 8 hours a day back in high school. After WoW I decided to play BF and I played that also hours a day.

If I look back at those days, I wished I didn't waste my time playing those games. I wasted literally thousands of hours playing those games. For what beneficial purpose? None.

Now I am at college I want to focus to improve my life style. Gaming itself won't be good for me in the long-run. It isn't necessarily that gaming is bad, it is that I am simply not able to play games moderately. The only way for me to quit gaming is to get rid of my gaming rig, so I decided to sell my gaming PC and everything and decided to invest in a Mac Book.

I try to improve my life in ways possible: I decided to get a better job to improve my work experience. I am also trying to make more social contact. I always used to be shy and fell isolated. Now I want to improve that by meeting new people.

I am starting to go the gym the work on my body. I used to be very active with body-building, but gaming totally ruined it. Now I am determined to train hard as a beast again. I started to learn how to program. I am currently learning Python and will follow an advanced level course in Java soon.

I spend also more time on my Mac Book editing videos and doing some graphic design. I

## LEVELING UP

always enjoyed editing so I am picking that hobby up again.

Reading books. I was never a fan of reading books. However, I recently read the first book of GoT and now I am totally hooked reading them :P

There are many ways I still want to improve in my life, but for now I want to take it easy and do other productive things. I want to obtain my degree and want to improve my skills further.

Quitting gaming will be difficult for me. Gaming has always been a part of my life, but quitting as a whole is the only solution to improve my life and getting rid of my addiction.

I haven't been gaming for 8 whole days. It is difficult, but I am getting there. And I am not giving up.

People of StopGaming, nice to meet you and I can't wait to learn more!

41.

I did it! I finished the 90-days detox! LONG ASS TEXT INCOMING!

(self.StopGaming)

submitted 7 months ago \* by itrytogetthingsdone310 days

90 days ago I decided to stop playing games because it was negatively affecting my life. I posted the reason why I wanted to quit playing games on this sub-reddit 3 months ago. I decided to quit cold turkey and decided to better my life in many ways as possible. I will share my experiences each separately.

*If you want to have a TL;DR, check at the end of this post.*

Every month I share my experiences of my detox. You can read my first 30 days experiences here. My 60-days experiences are able to read here.

### **Why did you quit playing games and did you start with the 90 days detox?**

Pretty obvious answer for this question. To put in simply, I isolated myself from others. I didn't talk much and was shy to try out new things. Because of this my social anxiety became worse. I became depressed and my gaming habits became worse each day. What started playing 2 hours a day, ended 8-9 hours a day. I procrastinated *A LOT* and I didn't sleep well.

One day I was pissed off how my life was and I was 100% determined to change that. I decided to search online for help for compulsive gaming and I discovered this small sub-reddit thanks to the TED talk I saw on YouTube of Cam discussing video-game addiction. Here is the link for the lazy in case you're interested. That was the moment my life started to change slowly.

### **How were the few days of the 90-days detox?**

Difficult. Seriously, it was difficult for me to adjust to a new life-style. Every thing I know was gaming. When I came home from work, I played games. When I finished college, I went home playing games. Almost every day was involved gaming. I didn't know something else because I was afraid to try out new things.

As a result of this I had the urge to play games almost every single day. The temptation was really big for me to play. Every time I thought: "Playing one match can't be bad, right?" I tried to fight the urge and I managed not to get tempted.

However, a few weeks later you are slowly getting used to the new life pattern. You realized you have much more free time and you start to explore new hobbies.

### **What hobbies did you take after quitting cold-turkey?**

## LEVELING UP

- The first hobby I decided to learn how to code. I was always fascinated and interested in coding, but because of gaming I always decided to delay that. I started with a course on Codecademy. I did the web-development course and the Java-course. I managed to finish them pretty quickly and I decided to hop on to a different place to learn to code. After browsing I discovered FreeCodeCamp. This one is more challenging and difficult compared to codecademy, but this one helps me to understand the fundamentals of web-development. I am currently almost done with the Front-End Development curriculum. :D
- Next to coding, I decided to join a gym. First I decided to go to the gym three times per week. Now I go 5 times per week. I started to eat much more healthier. When I was gaming, I ate very unhealthy. Now I am more conscious of what I am eating and I also lost 10 kg because of it. (22 lbs for 'Muricans). I see also progress at my muscles now I started to weight lift more often.
- I also listen to a lot of podcasts now. Cortex and Hello Internet are my favourite podcasts I listen to (*I am quite a CGP Grey fan* :3). I also listen to a lot of podcasts involved in coding. By listening to this I know more about coding and I expand my knowledge because of this.
- Lastly, I also decided to learn Japanese. Reason for this is because I am going to study abroad next year in Japan for six months. So there is that. :P /r/LearnJapanese/ is a pretty good place to start in case you're interested to start learning Japanese.

### **Do you still have the urge to play games?**

Compared to a month ago, not much. Sometimes you want to play a game, because your friends are telling how great that game is or you're getting bombarded with commercials of a new game (*cough I am looking at you Blizzard, with you damn Overwatch cough*). But all in all, my urge is much lower now compared to 90 days ago.

### **Did you lose any friends when you decided to quit playing games?**

Yes and no. Yes, because most of my friends I had were gaming buddies. Most of the time we played CSGO or Dota on Steam or we messed around in GMOD. We talked about games and nothing else. Since I decided to quit gaming 90 days ago, I do not have that much contact any more with them. I still talk to a few, but roughly 70% with who I communicated a lot I don't have any contact with them.

No, because after quitting gaming I had new people with who I can hang out with. I try to be more social and decided to have more fun with a group.

### **Did you relapse?**

Almost. Like...almost every day the first 30 days. :S

### **What are your goals for in the future?**

- Working much harder to improve my coding skills. I am getting better at it and I want to expand my knowledge of it.
- Becoming more fluent in Japanese. It will be difficult, but I am also eager to learn a new language. The fact that I am going to live there for six months helps me to motivate me to do my best.
- Continue working out the way I do.
- I am going to start to learn to cook. I honestly hate it, but I think learning how to make certain dishes will help me on the long-run (and the ladies :P).
- Definitely finishing my degree. I slacked a lot when I used to game. Now I am much more capable to prioritize my goals.



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### Now your 90-days detox is over, will you play games again?

Honestly, I have no clue. Maybe I will, maybe I won't. I am now much more happy and I have other things I want to focus on. Gaming is the last thing on my list.

I wouldn't say I am done now. I still have the urge sometimes so I will keep on improving myself.

### Any tips for me?

- I have a pretty cliché, but straight-forward advice: Stay **determined** and **dedicated**.  
There will be times, your motivation is at its lowest point. At these moments, you are vulnerable and you are easily dragged back to play games. An important tip for this is to remind yourself why you started with the detox. Was it because you feel depressed or was it because you want to improve your lifestyle. Reminding yourself is (in my opinion) the best way to do this detox.
- Have goals. I am not talking about big goals, but small goals. Small goals can be for example, cleaning up your room, taking a walk outside, working out, cooking, joining a club/organization for a hobby, etc. These goals are easily obtainable and will give a morale boost to achieve more difficult and big goals.
- **An important last tip:** It is very easy to replace your gaming addiction with another. It can be for example very easy to watch Twitch Streams, Youtube videos, social media or mindlessly browsing Reddit. (oh the irony). To prevent this, try to restrict your time on those sites. Several addons helped me make my internet surfing a little bit more productive. I use these addons: Chrome: Block Site

Firefox: Leech Block.

I will leave you with this quote of Rocky Balbao: [Link](#)

In case you do not want to click on the link, here is the quote:

*Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place and I don't care how tough you are it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it. You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard ya hit. It's about how hard you can get it and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done! Now if you know what you're worth then go out and get what you're worth. But ya gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him, or her, or anybody! Cowards do that and that ain't you! You're better than that!*

Remember, never give up. You are strong and you can do this. Stay *determined* and *dedicated*.

Good luck!

Jack

PS: My name is actually not Jack. :D Plus if you want to know more about my experiences, feel free to message me :D.

**TL;DR Had a shit life when I used to play games. Quitted gaming and my life became slowly better.**

42.

One Year now! (self.StopGaming)

submitted 3 days ago \* by MCSenss368 days

One year ago I realized that gaming was interfering with my happiness and decided to

## LEVELING UP

quit.

I started with the 90 days challenge. After finishing that I knew that I was going back to gaming so I expanded to 180 days. After 180 days my life has improved so drastically that the urge to play games was gone. I always tried to have a full schedule with different activities to find something I want to stick to (turned out to be tennis, what an amazing sport), go to the gym, playing piano and spent the rest of the time reading (at least one book a week).

I

- have made so many new friends,
  - found a girlfriend,
  - did so many different things,
  - met so many amazing people at charity work,
  - ran a 10k,
  - am going to finish my study this year
  - and already have an amazing, very well paid job waiting for me,
- and that's only the tip of the iceberg.

Few days ago I talked to my 'friends' that I played with back in the days. Want to ask what changed for them? They are one year older and I swear they didn't change/grow/develop AT ALL.

I am completely done with that. I am an adult now. So I want to thank you all! Special thanks to Cam, he encouraged me to keep going when it was really tough and I'll never forget that!

### EDIT

I would highly recommend to read "Dale Carnegie - How to win friends". It improved my interaction with other people by a large margin and made many more beautiful friendships possible.

43.

[–]MCSenss368 days[S] 2 points 3 days ago

It's such a huge thing and I have so many feeling and thoughts that it's difficult to streamline it into a text, at least for me. Just one thing. The by FAR most important change is my feeling towards time.

When I was gaming I was constantly thinking about how little time I have left (everyday) and that everything I do, be it school or going out, takes even more from that precious time. And if you want to get better at a game you just can't have enough time, so that I really really wanted to earn money as a pro or streamer just so that I can play more. And this leads to very short sleep (I always felt that's a waste of time), avoiding of relaxation like chilling at the beach and it leads to unhappiness because you can't really solve that problem. So when you quit gaming you realize that you have a lot time. In the beginning you will be bored to death. But soon you will find things to do, you will probably find so many things that you have to decide which one you prefer. Now I can enjoy what I'm doing without thinking about getting back home to start Steam

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[–]MCSenss368 days[S] 3 points 3 days ago

After the 90 days I was very keen on attempting to moderate it, actually I was too keen on it. I just felt that I am not even remotely over it.

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I had the strongest urges at around 150 days actually. 80% of the time I was thinking about gaming, but that went away after one week and since then the urge is completely gone. Like death struggle.

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[–]**FoxFoundFreedom**4 days 2 points 3 days ago

Interesting that the urges came back strong after almost half a year!

You mentioned that you have made a lot of progress but how are the urges if they arise now and what actions do you take to cope with them?

**[permalinkembedsaveparentreportgive goldreply](#)**

[–]**MCSenss**368 days[S] 1 point 3 days ago\*

Yes it really caught me off guard, especially because I had by far the strongest urgest to play EVER. But I stayed strong and after that I seriously never had any real cravings again.

I figured out that gaming itself was not the real problem but it was me, and as soon as I fixed me, the gaming disappeared as well!

[–]**MCSenss**368 days[S] 2 points 3 days ago\*

You don't have to throw your XBOX in the trash, you can lend it to a friend until you think you're ready to moderate or you can sell it again, without losing much.

I don't want to tell you "No, moderation is useless" because I fear that you might just go back to gaming, leaving all your good intentions behind. But I think it's not really going to work out. I truly believe that it messes GREATLY with your way of handling things.

When you don't play and you don't waste your time browsing or watching TV or whatever I will promise you: you will go out. You will die because of boredom. You will find hobbies, you will find new interests, new people, you will change yourself in a way that you like yourself again. Use the motivation you have right now.

As always it's just my humble oppinion and it's your life. But you already found your way here, and I (and everyone that committed to the detox) swear it is totally worth it

44.

Seriously, why am I even playing this game? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 24 days ago by BullsOnCharade

So I got into WoW in highschool, about 9 years ago. I left home, didn't bring my computer, and I don't remember being upset about not being able to play or anything.

Fast forward to June of this year when I needed to get a computer for some schoolwork (I'm in college now, was in the military after highschool) and figured I'd try out WoW again since my courseload in the Summer was pretty light. I ended up going from all A's in those courses to B's. No big deal.

Then this semester happened. My courseload was the worst it's been and for some reason, I just kept playing WoW. Legion launched the day of my first day of class. I was pretty good about not playing too much for a while, and then I started playing more and more. I wanted my artifact power everyday. I had to get my dailies in or I'd get behind. I wanted my legendary, so I'd obviously have to run more dungeons. It's a ridiculous cycle.

So today I was taking one of my finals and realized I had no fucking clue what half of the stuff on the paper in front of me was. I'm pretty sure I squeaked by with a C in the course, but really? Where the fuck did all of that time go? And then I look at my two max-leveled toons on WoW with several weeks of /played time between them (both started at Legion).

## LEVELING UP

And that's where my time went. And the game isn't even that *fun*! It's just that I play it out of fear of getting behind! It's absurd. I'm really done with it. Typing this out helped me tremendously. I don't think I'll quit playing single player games, as I've always played them when I have spare time and they help me relax, but this online nonsense has got to go.

Great community you guys have here, thanks for reading, those of you who made it all the way through!

45.

I quit playing for 18 months. Then I started again. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 8 months ago by Trump4GodEmperor

I quit almost cold Turkey for 18 months. It was good, my life completely changed - I went from a 70kg social-anxious Virgin to a 90kg (muscle not fat) to getting non-stop high distinctions and pulling women.

However I realise now that quitting games isn't what changed my life. Because I also quit reddit, I quit masturbating and I quit wasting time on the internet whether it be youtube or otherwise.

I forceably abstained from all distractions and focused solely on my physical, mental and spiritual state. Whether it be praying every day for 1hr, working out every day for 2 or studying everyday for 4.

However i only did this because i was unhappy. Then i got happy, and slowly games started creeping back into my life.

However the games changed. I used to only play LoL and cs:s however I've stopped playing these games. I now play solely single player - progressive games and whereas I used to play the same 3 games for 1000's of hours now my average game time is 100hrs (over months)

Games isn't the problem in your life. It's simply distracting you from the problem (s) in your life.

What quitting games does, is let you sink deep into that hole. Seep down deep into the pain, the anxiety, the despair and futility of it all. Then something will happen when you hit the bottom and have no further to fall. You will get fed up, you will get angry, the fire will grow inside you, that fire of courage - once you have nothing left to lose you will not fear to fail - and you will succeed.

This is why there are so many posts of "I quit games and nothing happened". Games itself is not the issue, and if you replace games with reddit, tv, youtube, porn, weed you are just wasting your time.

Removing games is to just remove the distraction, remove that thing you do to escape feeling anxious - then face the anxiety, survive it then test its mettle. Quitting games made me say yes to opportunities i would have been too afraid to do previously. Mmm i notice now my life is not as good, Ive gotten too comfortable having my girlfriend and easy life, coasting through uni - something eill break soon and im sure ill be back here saying i quit games again.

46.

6 months went pass...what have changed? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago by phandox496 days

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Hello StopGaming!

This is probably just another update post and seeing the six in star in my badge I thought it would be good opportunity.

So here I am, half a year without games. From 12+ hours of WoW daily to 0. What have changed? How I feel? What's new?

This might sound a bit narcissistic as I'll be talking about myself a lot but I think you can take some step I did if you are struggling with your journey. Quitting games cold turkey gives you A LOT of time. Though a lot of us are used to be tied up to computer screen so you might get like: "Meh, I quit gaming but I am still on facebook / youtube / reddit / etc. It's not that hard actually just sites are more boring than my characters..." This is the part where the possibility of relapse is very very high in my opinion. You are bored, you don't know what to do, everything is meh...so why not return to games. But noo don't do that! Key to success is to start doing something COMPLETELY NEW. Something that you have never done before just try it out and see how it goes. Acting, geocaching, running, dancing, drawing...anything! Personally I try out ballroom dancing for fun and I thought it might get me to different social circle. Hell yea, I am having a ton of fun taking dancing classes and I consider learning more and more.

But that was once per week...Gah that's not enough! So I was reading about all this fuzz with running how it can make you happier and so...I was like hell no, when I work out somehow, I am tired and just want to die - definitely not happy.

However I just started small. I felt ridiculous. My first "runs" were 1(!) minute running and 10 minutes of walking, repeated about 4 times. And that was it! I felt like this is just worthless but I will stick to the plan. 4 times a week I did this each week increasing the difficulty. After 3 weeks I felt like, hell yea I am doing progress! I can run longer, walking shorter...this actually feels like a competition! Remember that satisfying feeling from video games when you are climbing the ladder / killing bosses...I got the same emotions from running! I felt more excited for running I bought good running shoes, clothes and felt even more into it because I poured some money into it and it motivated me to do it more and more.

Long story short, now I regularly run about 35 kms a week ( something I would never though I would be capable of! ) and feel really good about myself. As a side effect I used to have a bit of a belly and it just disappeared! 10 kgs lighter, everything starts to fit on me better, I feel more confident... ( what a feeling when you can wear those great pants you have for 2 years in wardrobe... 8-) )

So yea, running is fun but let's do something more daring! What, Irish dancing classes at my uni? That's like riverdance no? Might be cool! Let's do that! And just like that I start taking the classes loved it and found out it's awesome workout...You will sweat more than one t-shirt I guarantee it. After all those active sports I needed something to relax and unwind. Then I looked up over the shelf and see those books there, covered in dust. "Huh, I always wanted to read those but I didn't have much time cause....gaming." I facepalmed myself and when I wanted to chill and relax I just took my book and start reading those awesome stories. Totally hooked and asking myself, "Wtf have I been doing, this is totally awesome."

And I noticed after implementing those changes, I changed too. Feeling more at peace, confident in my own skin. I used to avoid random conversation, heart was beating when I had seen someone familiar on the other side of street. But now? I just wave, have a nice

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chat, catch up. It brightens my day! I stopped avoiding people I reach out for them, still learning to be a better listener and I am actually interested in things they say!

Well there is also another big part of life that changed. After about 3-4 years I found someone to feel close to, my amazing girlfriend. And if I haven't done those changes before I don't think I would stand a chance. You see, when you feel good in your skin, people notice. People notice that you are confident and they start to be curious. You can actually be interesting since you take not so common things in your free time! ( you won't meet single dancer, who also do irish dancing, running and study IT, everyday from what I've heard! :D ). So yea, I didn't have to worry what to talk about as I used to. I though, I got some interesting hobbies let's give it a try. I've stop analyzing, had a great dance, chemistry was there and rest went somehow on auto-pilot.

So conclusion? My life is back on the track I think. I still waste my time on the internet I guess, but it's not that destructive. However I don't think I will ever return to games. I see I don't need them but there is also a little bit of fear, that if I start, I might fall back to it. So I'd rather avoid it all together.

Keep it up guys! It's definitely worth it :)

47.

Clean for 2 years. Just wanted to share my story. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago by samoilaros

Hello everyone,

As I mentioned on the title it's been 2 years now since I stopped gaming. I was addicted to FPS games. Specially to the competitive scene of Call Of Duty [PC] . I think that CoD was my way out of everyday problems. There were many problems in my family and this how i used to find peace. Put on my headset, log in at TeamSpeak and get lost in-game. I was fully aware that games were wasting many many productive life hours but back then I didn't really care.

December of 2013. Life decided to make everything worse. My father died at an industrial accident. Fully shocked I kept pushing myself to become better in-game. I quit basketball. Only thing that was giving me a smile was CoD. I became one of the best players in Greece, Elite player in Europe. But I wasn't happy with my life. I lost my father, my University degrees drop rapidly and my girlfriend always mentioned that I should stop playing and get back on my feet.

February of 2014. I'm done with gaming. One of my teammates started cheating and that was it. I felt disgusted with myself, with my teammates, with life. I started realizing how much I was missing my father. I understood that I wasn't myself anymore. I was a ghost . My mother and my girlfriend said to me that whenever I play I become really offensive . I couldn't stand hurting my beloved. I couldn't imagine making my father feel bad, if there is a possibility seeing me from somewhere.

March of 2014. Back to University. I started passing many lessons again and that was the first positive thing after a long time. But still, so many hours to fill!

September of 2014. Great grades again and started hitting the gym. OH GOD. I really missed that feeling.

December of 2014. First anniversary of my father's death. Really dark month. Never thought of going back to games. Despite of the bad psychology. I was in general very well. Back on track with my University, exercising, i was socially active again, hanging

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out with my girlfriend and my friends. I was feeling good again!

August of 2015. Broke up with my gf. We were together for 7 years and I really wanted to live life. I was feeling imprisoned and I really wanted to be alone. I was really intrigued to go back to gaming . This time Counter Strike. So I secretly installed the game, I played for 2 days. This is when I fully understood that I cannot get the same satisfaction that I used to get. My mother also told me that I started being offensive again and If I feel okay. I never told her that I had reinstalled a game. Uninstalled the game, sold my GPU instantly. But again, so many hours to fill.

November of 2015. I started dancing. Greek folk dancing with my best friend. Also started taking lessons in order to take my degree in English.

18th February of 2016. Today. Totally game free, single guy but totally ok with it, filled my days with great hobbies. I even started taking photography lessons. In one month I'm going to have my first dancing performance and in two months my Proficiency examination! Until June I'll graduate! :D

I just wanted to share my story. I had 2 rough years. But if you really want you can for sure quit gaming, regardless of how life you might think it treats you. You can really find numerous hobbies to discover your self !

And yeah, some times life can be difficult. Don't give up. Don't let your self be negative. Give it time, do good and you'll start feeling better.!

Take care everyone! And be strong.

G.S

48.

Today I quit games, porn and reddit. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 8 months ago \* by play\_time\_is\_over60 days

Quitting Games is not enough especially if you just replace games with something like reddit, youtube, twitch, porn, weed etc.

To get the most out of quitting you really need to abstain from any kind of distraction or waste of time. For instance I quit in the past for 6 months, but in that 6 months all I did was paint Warhammer. It was only marginally better than gaming.

The real reasons I don't play games is because I'm afraid of hard work. This is the crux of it, so I will remove anything that distracts me from doing the work I know I need to do.

My main focus upon quitting games is to:

- Get better grades
- Get my black belt (and my body back)

Secondary focus:

- Learn to code.

Allowed distractions:

- Reading
- Drawing
- Things like TED talks.
- news.
- Reddit (only with this sub and similar subs, writing helps me a lot)
- Games that I personally create in unity.

Disallowed distractions.

- Games

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- Youtube (especially gaming videos)
- Gaming Forums
- Reddit (Everything not related to this sub or asking questions about code)
- Porn / masturbabtion.
- Warhammer

Gaming is ruining my life - For 2 fucking years straight I've said "I'll start tomorrow". This bullshit cannot go on! I'm so angry at myself.

I'm currently uninstalling all the games I have on my computer - then I'm going to go to my laundry which I haven't done in 5 days, then open up my project that I haven't opened in 3 weeks. Guys I can't do it alone, and I hope you will bear with me as I'm sure I'm going to vent my heart out over and over again on this sub as I push through this process.

Best luck to everyone.

**EDIT** 7 Hour update.

Reporting after only 7 hours? ridiculous right?! Well as I assume many of you know the first few weeks can be the toughest - plus I'm using this as an account as a journal to look back on to either be proud of myself or see where I went wrong.

So I quit games, porn and reddit at about 1:30pm today. I had already fapped once, and after getting up in the morning I resisted reddit for all about.. 30 minutes. After I quit I did my laundry, I did do my assignment, only about 30 minutes, but enough to show something in class tomorrow. Most importantly I trained today (martial arts) for 1hr 45mins which is 2 classes. Usually I'd only do 1 but knowing I'd be tempted to game when I got home I did 2. Usually after class I'd reward myself with KFC and a guilt-free game binge. Not today though.

I promised Sensei I would do the morning service (meditation) so I must keep my promise, it only takes 20 minutes but it is suprisingly hard to force yourself to do.

I know it's only 7 hours but I feel 2 major emotions. The first is a very heavy, looming dread, a dread that I will relapse and fail my goals but I'm hoping with the support on this sub I will not succumb! The second is I'm also feeling like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I never seemed to have enough time "Oh I'll only play for 2 hrs then I'll do my work" "hmm I'm bored now, a quick game or 2". Regulating my playing time was extremely stressful - simply saying **ABSOLUTELY NO GAMES, NO MEMES, NO PORN** is an extremely easy way to manage these issues :)

I feel if I keep this up I will actually complete better things in my life, I will actually learn to code, and continue drawing and modelling.

Although these are not my priority. My number 1 priority is to quit games for as absolutely long as I can!!!! I have uni tomorrow so it won't be too hard, the weekend will be the challenge. Thanks.

49.

Relapse - resetting my badge (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago by farthestworld621 days

It's been 316 days, more or less, and I'm resetting my badge. I relapsed.

I didn't realize I was relapsing until tonight. You see, I thought I was safe. I started an account on a site called Roll20, and I put together a group of people to play D&D 5th Edition. And I DMed, and so it was safe, you see, because I wasn't 'playing'. I was doing something else, I guess. Maybe storytelling? I don't know. But it certainly wasn't



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'playing', so it was fine.

Then I started to make maps. MAAAN, this was good. I felt that same kick, just like back when I played games. That endorphine rush, like an old friend I hadn't seen in a loooong time. But this was okay. This wasn't gaming. It was just... I don't know. Creativity? Expression? Art? I was building beautiful, intricate maps. This was totally legit. Nothing to see here.

Except... I've just spent \$100 on shitty map tokens, and over 100 hours in the last few weeks building incredibly detailed maps, and my work is suffering, and all my other creative pursuits that were so meaningful to me have also been suffering, and I haven't been exercising as much since I started, and...

Tonight I lay in bed and found myself feeling the same old feelings. The same bitterness that I'd wasted the day, the same resolve to do better tomorrow. And then it dawned on me: these are the exact same feelings as before. The exact same promises I made to myself every night for over ten years, before finally deciding one day I'd had enough. And here I was again.

It was so clear, then. It was the same thing. The same addiction. But today, I wasted no time. I got out of bed, sent off an email to the group telling them I couldn't continue, cancelled my Roll20 membership, and reset my badge.

So it goes. One step at a time. One day at a time. One reset at a time. Keep the fight strong, my friends, and never give in.

50.

Reasons why I don't game. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 months ago by [deleted]

- 1 My anxiety skyrockets
- 2 I feel like I become the worst version of myself when I game
- 3 I feel like I'm coming from a place of emptiness and not abundance for my girlfriend, family and friends
- 4 The disparity in productivity when I'm gaming vs when I'm not is huge.
- 5 I actually accomplish things when I don't game (6 months as an English Language Teacher and half way through year one in an economics degree)
- 6 I'm better able to help those around me
- 7 I can look back on the last 240 (ish) days and be proud of what I've done. I haven't been perfect (Rick and Morty is too easy to watch) but I have achieved way more than I would have gaming.
- 8 I'm consistent. This is the biggest one for me. Before when I was gaming I would be so erratic with my personality, now I have some measure of stability with my sense of self.

If you've found this list helpful I'd love to hear the reasons you guys don't game :)

51.

I just relapsed, and I'm glad I did. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 3 months ago by play\_time\_is\_over60 days

Last night I installed some stupid RPG game on my phone, spent \$7 on in game purchases and played for 2 hours. Then I quickly thought why am I playing this shit and downloaded hearthstone and bought the \$6 starter pack.

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I started playing at about 3pm and stopped playing about 12:30am. I had an 8am lecture the next day which I'm currently not at.

### **Why I relapsed**

Several reasons. The last few weeks have not been good for me. I've really been struggling with motivation and getting my uni work done, after an exceptional mid-semester result (a HD and a D) I have totally lost motivation for uni. I've started talking to my ex again which I think left me emotionally vulnerable and finally I didn't take my SSRI medication that day which i believe affected my mood. Combine this with a habit of watching hearthstone youtube videos and boom.

### **Why I'm glad I relapsed**

It taught me something. I've been building up in my head how awesome video games are and how they're my only chance of happiness. Then I played it and it wasn't that good. The other thing it taught me is that doing nothing is still better than playing video games. Even if I decided to do nothing last night, I would have gone to bed earlier and I would have spent the time reflecting on the day. Instead I gamed, it felt like the time I played vanished in an instance. My ex texted me and it totally caught me off guard like I had been caught with my pants around my ankles.

It has ruined my momentum for today which I can see leads to a deadly cycle.

Finally it taught me why I eventually relapsed. It's been happening for 3 weeks now because I haven't motivated myself for uni. Part of this is I stopped reflecting on my daily progress. I think reflection through writing is hugely powerful, and this has shown me I need to continue doing it.

Right now, I don't feel like resetting my counter. I don't see it as starting again, instead I see it as "out of the last 150 days, 1 of them I played games"

Well I feel disgusted in myself today, and the game makes me sick. I had all these messed up dreams of letting people down and being late for things / abscent minded. My brain fog is through the roof. I guess I just needed that hit to remind myself how bad games actually are.

Doing nothing is still better than playing games.

52.

Dream made it so clear (self.StopGaming)

submitted 3 months ago by Swinship7 days

I'm a 30 year old dude, Super unsatisfied with my lot in life with the knowledge that it's my fault. I'm depressed and just continuing to circle the drain while I play games which makes me think I am Happy. I have been trying to get out but old habits die hard and my weakness takes hold. And I keep convincing myself that I'm a gamer who loves games I keep quitting and coming back like an abused spouse, I have a longing to try anything else but not the willpower.

So I had a dream last night and I dreamt my 30 year old mind was placed in my 20 year old body back in 2006, I was so happy! With nothing but all the time I'd wasted in the last decade back in my hands! Nothing but possibilities!.

Naturally I woke up back in 30 pretty bummed, wondering why my brain wanted to kick me when I'm down. I hopped in the shower and thought about it, I do my best thinking there I find. And I realized that yeah I want to go back to 20, who doesn't. But one day 40 year old me will want to go back to now. What would he do now to prevent himself from

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being a worse off me from today. He'd be stoked to have another decade back. And I got a crazy body high realizing that 40 year old me gets to!. So I started researching schools to go back to, I bought a book on learning Japanese. and tonight I'm going to box up my games. I'm trying to live like a time traveller would fixing his past.

Maybe it's a goofy notion but I think it's working. I'm gonna do it a day at a time. Thanks for reading my novel

TLDR: Had a dream that made me realize I can fix my future now like I'd want to for my past. Gonna fix my life.

53.

Gaming is the Only Thing I've Ever Worked For (self.StopGaming)

submitted 7 months ago by Amnesia\_sc

**TLDR (still kinda TL)** I tried to break this down into sections of my life which incidentally are also broken down into periods where I was focused on a particular game more than others. Basically, I've chosen gaming over high school, college, the military, hygiene, friends, relationships, pursuit of goals, and health for about 15 years now. Today is my first day without but it kinda sucks so far. I wanted to post here because I've never admitted to anyone that this was a problem before.

It's ironic, but the only thing in my life I've ever actually buckled down with and put in serious unrelenting effort with is gaming - the thing that's meant to be a leisurely pastime. When I first got into gaming, I was about 13. Prior to this, I was really good at baseball, basketball, writing, drawing, and I loved to read. Unfortunately, at this time everyone was hitting puberty and I still hadn't so I started to fall behind my peers athletically and started focusing on arts more.

Then, I got invited to a friend's "LAN party." I had no idea what that was at the time, but when I got there they had rented out a computer lab and they were playing Starcraft over LAN. I was god awful at it, but I can't remember ever having more fun sucking at anything in my life. I was the commander of a civilization and of an army. I was in control of defending my people from an evil alien race. I was thrilled! I asked for Starcraft for Christmas, got the rest of my friends into the game, and we spent all day every day playing and talking about Starcraft. My internet wasn't fast enough so I would go over to my grandparents' house twice a week to play vs other people and the rest of the time was playing offline. I was awful at it when we first started but I was *determined* to be the best and by the LAN party the next year, I was the force to be reckoned with.

A year and a half later, I was in high school and a lot of kids were playing Counter-Strike: Source. I got a gaming computer so I could play too, met my first internet girlfriend through the game (yes, *first...*) and now the addiction was even stronger. I had a whole new game to learn (this one I actually felt decent at when I started, I was lucky enough to randomly pick the P90 so that helped) and I now had a growing social network of people who I only gamed with.

Soon after, World of Warcraft released and I spent my Christmas money on it shortly after it released. That was the beginning of the end, my friends, because I now had an online persona that I liked *way* more than my real-life self. In college, I met a guy who played World of Warcraft competitively and that introduced me to the world of competitive gaming - not playing to pretend or escape, but playing to *win*; abusing everything you could to get an edge on your opponent (this was new to me because prior

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to this I felt that PvP was more of a role playing experience and I would only play like my character would).

### **Real Life Implications**

High school was the first time gaming really interfered with my life. I dropped out of my AP classes because all of that homework interfered with my gaming. By senior year, I was absent almost half of the year, missed just about every homework assignment, and I was failing almost every class. Through some serious begging and truly panic-induced tears, I was allowed to graduate if I could complete every homework assignment I had missed in the 2 months before graduation. I had a really good friend who was valedictorian and let me borrow his notes so that I could complete all of the assignments. In college (a technical school costing about \$40k/year for 2 years), I started skipping class to practice my gaming or level up my WoW characters to stay competitive. After I missed a day or two I'd start to feel anxious about facing my professors so I'd just skip a whole week. Obviously I failed out of that program, but they cut me a break and let me choose another academic track... which I also failed out of due to the same reasons. \$40k later I had nothing to show for it so I joined the Army to help pay that back.

The Army was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was in the best shape of my life, I had no computer so no access to gaming. I was socializing and doing a hell of a job with it. I had a girlfriend and a ton of friends and I was still in training! Towards the end of training, I ordered a laptop capable of gaming and decided to give the latest WoW expansion, Cataclysm, a try. I immediately lost all progress. I started skipping workout sessions, broke up with my girlfriend, and stopped hanging out with my friends - I had a ton of time to make up for with my absence from WoW!

When Starcraft 2 came out, I was awful at it. I was super Bronze League but there was so much to learn! The sense of progress was incredible and no game had ever given me such a great feeling when I beat someone. I was living in filth. I would make it to work alright but I was fucking up behind the scenes big time. I was living in filth. I would get off work, get on the computer, and play until 11PM, stopping only to get the pizza from the delivery guy. At one point, there was so much garbage and rotting food in the room that I found maggots in the carpet. I just had shit *everywhere*. I would also forge doctors' notes saying I had to have bedrest. When my commander found out about that, holy shit that was a bad day.

I didn't even get to deploy with my unit because my command found out that I hadn't packed any of my things that I was supposed to and that I had been cutting myself so I ended up committed to a hospital "for crazies." (I was really suicidal at this point, imagine the stress knowing you're going to a warzone and not having the self discipline to pack the shit you need to survive). I was discharged from the military and released into the wild. Shortly after, I found out my girlfriend of 3 months was pregnant.

4.5 years later I have a second child on the way and I'm finding that I have no free time to get to the place I want to be financially, professionally, academically, or personally but I somehow find time to game for 6 hours every night. I'm very highly ranked in Starcraft 2, CSGO, *and* Rainbow 6: Siege but I don't even care anymore and I haven't in some time. There's no end game. I used to play to be the best among my friends but I don't have any friends that give half a shit about gaming anymore because they're doing adult stuff and I'm still not. I'm out of shape, I have a huge list of things I want to accomplish, but I'm doing nothing about any of it.

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Last night I decided it would be my last night and I was really anxious about it. I decided I would only stop until Overwatch came out but the more I think about it the more I think I would just spiral back down. I've stopped for short periods of time before to "prove" I'm not addicted, but it shouldn't be this hard. I really want to play video games, it's harder and harder as the day goes on. I'm a web developer and I was finally getting a lot of work done on a big project I've had looming for a long time and when I hit a roadblock it was all I could do to not let myself make excuses. "I just need a break, I need to unwind, I need to put my mind on something else so I can focus when I come back. Just play a couple of rounds, that's perfectly normal, then I can go back to working. I don't need to *give up* gaming, I just need to tone it down to an acceptable level."

Even writing it now it doesn't sound like a bad idea. I *can* quit. Logically, I know I *want* to, also. Part of me though says that I don't want to. I crave that temporary thrill from a close game, that adrenaline when a match comes down to a few milliseconds of who can click and press the right things, that feeling of accomplishment dominating the scoreboard.

This sucks lol.

54.

Reset my badge; 169 days progress report. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago \* by [deleted]

Hi all, I mostly lurk on this sub but I really wanted to write today, mainly so that I could read it and take responsibility more than anything but any comments are appreciated.

So I reset my badge. I was previously sat on 169 days, except it really wasn't. Basically after stopping gaming I found myself in a position where I only had one game on my PC - Diablo 3. I still played it when I was bored, or when my gf wasn't here. Sometimes it was two hours a week, sometimes 7 hours or 14 hours a week in the evenings. It was on and off so I didn't really consider it an issue. Anyway this has been going on for the past few months. Something in the back of my head told me I didn't really want to play this game, especially when you consider the nature of the game (*for those who don't know, it is the epitome of time wasting, you do the exact same thing again and again and again until the numbers on the screen get a bit higher*) it really is boring.

The straw that broke the camels back was a few weeks ago, I had a day off work, booked holiday that I had completely forgotten about. I had a full day for myself, it was great! I sat down in the morning to play some D3...and then it was afternoon. And then it was 5pm. And then my gf came home and I was still sat there in my pyjamas having played D3 for 9 hours straight. We both laughed about it but inside I felt like crap. I've done so well with all other aspects of quitting that this incident made me feel like a cheat or a failure.

So I took action. I stripped down my gaming PC, and sold what I could down at the local trade in. I used the money to buy a second hand, but very nice, Asus Chromebox, which fits my usage model perfectly, and prevents temptation. I also destroyed my Steam and Blizzard accounts, just to be safe.

I'm so happy not gaming it's unreal. I'm outside a lot more thanks to Geocaching, I'm progressing in my career due to having time to study, I've signed up to a new gym and am getting healthier, I've even taken full control of my finances and put a budget together which has no room for games or consoles. All in all, it was probably the best thing I've

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done with my life after quitting smoking, and I wanted to speak about this time off the wagon, before I get well and firmly back on it.  
Thanks for reading my rambling.

55.

Ten years in less than a week (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 months ago \* by geeky\_latina3964 days

It will be 10 years since I gave up the game I played compulsively.

A lot happens in 10 years, no matter what we do.

But:

- I finished my college degree
- I turned my game hacking skills into computer hacking skills (and now program for work)
- I lost 35 lbs & kept it off
- I corrected nutritional problems
- I started exercising regularly
- I learned skills for dealing with depression, anxiety, and seasonal affective disorder without meds
- I got married & became a foster parent

I have been able to play the occasional close-ended game (like Gone Home, a story game. But I no longer have the obsessive desire to game. I'd say I game less than 10 hours/year now.

You can do this too, it's worth it!

edited: formatting

56.

I quit gaming recently. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by rpgfiend

I am 36 years old. I will be 37 next month, and as the big 4-0 looms closer I began to really question what I was doing with my time. I have played games with most of my free time for the last few years, only playing alot sometimes before then but I would still occasionally make time to read and write.

But until recently I barely wrote a thing and hadn't even finished a book in I don't know how long, spending countless hours playing xbox. I woke up one morning last week and got the idea to just sell my xbox,3ds, tv, and all my games, and get a radio and some new books, and also cancel my internet(Aug.31 it gets cut off, after I can go to library and coffee shops.)

Friday night last week I decided wth, and posted a listing on kijiji. The next day I sold it, and I felt like a burden had been lifted from me. I gave my brother access to the \$2000 and up worth of games and dlc I had.I am now spending more time writing and reading. I still have my laptop so I can download shows and movies and watch something now and then.

Yesterday I decided I would write a short story each day for a year, just to make writing a habit and create some raw material to go back and revise later. I wrote the dumbest short story yesterday, but I laughed while I wrote it because it was my story and I after I felt like I had done something worthwhile. Wrote another story earlier that was a bit better.

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Giving up the gaming is one of the best things I have done in years. If it's something you are thinking of doing and it's a thought that won't go away, just do it. Then do something nice with some of the money and take your granddad out for dinner or something.

57.

Dramatic changes 114 days no gaming (self.StopGaming)

submitted 9 months ago \* by basemaster08172 days

Writing this to reflect a little on my experiences since stoping gaming.

I was a casual gamer, I'd play on down time and nothing too hardcore like competitive gaming. I still felt that my mental time was occupied by games away from the computer and also I used it as an easy filler for empty time.

Quitting for the first 30 days was really tough because I didn't have a lot to fill the void. It seemed like I had so much time on my hands. I spent it initially watching movies, and porn and watching games.

Around the 40th day I started to really make progress. After reading the Slight Edge, which I highly recommend, I started to make small daily adjustments in my lifestyle to improve my life. It started with creating a plan and executing.

I created long term goals, short term goals. I started planning for my financial future, I started running daily, meditating daily and eating well. I started reading development books like crazy, I've been insanely motivated and also very busy. I schedule out my weeks, and normally don't have much downtime.

Where as before my life was mostly work, play games hang out with the partner. Now it's like, wake up early clear my mind, meditate, exercise eat well. After work, I work on side projects that build my skills and advance my career, I go out with friends and I've been exploring my gender and sexuality which has done miles in helping me understand and express myself better.

I'm far beyond the person I was before I started, and It's just crazy to think that I'm comparing myself to me only about 4 months ago.

The biggest thing that keeps me going is my pride around the number, which is 114 days today. I told myself "I can do 90 days, of course I can do this! It shouldn't be hard."

Though sometimes it was hard. I had dreams of playing games and then waking up wanting to play them. I kept reminding myself of my number of days and used will power and distraction to overcome my cravings.

Did you know the basil ganglia is the part of the brain that gets triggered for addiction? Apparently, it takes about 90 days to clear this out, even though the neural pathways can also be permanently affected. Addiction is a crazy thing.

Today, I've had more downtime than usual because I'm sick. I felt the craving to open up a game, but I've stopped it by writing my experience here.

58.

TIFU playing Overwatch (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 days ago by Kezr34

I'm currently writing this from a hospital bed.

Last Friday evening I was playing Overwatch when i started to get what I thought was a really bad muscle spasm/cramp in my upper left back. It was competitive match so continued to play through the pain despite it getting significantly worse.

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About 20min later the match ends and I take a moment to asses myself. I realise the left side of my chest is now extremely painful too and I'm really struggling to breath. I'm pretty sure I'm having a heart attack.

Long story short I wasn't having a heart attack, rather my left lung had spontaneously collapsed (somewhat common in tall, thin men and they don't know what causes it). Still fairly serious. What really concerns me though is despite extreme pain and heart attack like symptoms I continued to play through "becaused ranked", I never even considered stopping.

I always believed I was fairly in control of my gaming but this really was a wake up call. I'm going to stop gaming for at least three months then re-assess my gaming future from there.

59.

Just turned 30, this time I'm finally doing it (self.StopGaming)

submitted 13 days ago by Obduction

I'm finally quitting video games. I have for one year before and it was one of the best, most productive years of my life. I want that back. I'm starting a little family and they deserve the best version of the man I can be; not a little man child.

I want you all to know you aren't alone, and you're not wrong about games being destructive. The people who disagree are deluded and shilled by the media itself. Of course they don't want you to think it's bad. But it's raising an entire generation of man children.

I plan to use my newfound free time to get better at art. I do 3D art in the game industry but for the last ten years I have been horribly depressed that I'm not further along in my career. That's the main reason I want to do this. At 30, im now seeing getting old isn't a joke, it really happens. Before I knew it, I'm getting what I consider to be pretty old, but games have stunted my growth in all ways, possibly even physical (poor posture).

All that time wasted, it's sad. It takes me around 60 hours to finish an RPG, my favorite. I know first hand what you can learn and do in sixty hours. I've programmed entire games in less time than that (little indie hobby progets), I've even recorded some a CD in about that time, and wrote a novel. Just with free time from not gaming as much. I am hopeful of what I can create without gaming entirely.

One of my favorite parts is that I can stop obsessing all day about what I'm going to play later. I had so many games I would stress hard about what to play and it was exhausting. Well, thanks for reading. And merry Christmas to everyone. Hopefully you guys got some awesome non gaming gifts. I will be spending my holidays with family and drawing any chance I get. I remain very hopeful for all of our futures without video games.

60.

How I conquered my urge to play MMOs, and thus quit gaming as a whole. Since I've stopped, I finally began on writing my novel. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 month ago by Vhett35 days

I'll preface my post with the revelation I had concerning MMOs. In an MMO, you gamble your time.

There's no better way to state it. You gamble your time. You either get a drop, or you



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don't. At max level, you don't even get EXP, you get nothing.

After I realized this, I checked the hours of time I wasted, at it was over a *year* of playing. A year. Of playtime. I'm only 23. I've spent a year of playing WoW alone, not including *any* other games.

After I realized that half the time spent was probably hunting down rare drops, I solidified that I don't want to go back to that.

Now I write. Something I planned to do several months ago while I was still playing games. Every day I gamed, I told myself "Well, my inspiration to write isn't here right now.". Now that gaming doesn't distract me, I've written over 16 pages in just under a week, and completely finished my worldbuilding (shout out to /r/worldbuilding for that). In all, I feel better. I think my badge should say 3 days, but it's been longer. I simply figured I'd mark it down as the 1st so it's easier to keep track of.

Anyways, thanks for reading. If anyone has questions or wonders how I don't feel a draw to gaming anymore, I can try to elaborate. I spent 11 years playing WoW, so quitting has been that hardest thing I've ever done.

61.

I uninstalled League of Legends (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 months ago by 3v01v3d\_4p3

Hello, people!

I'm so proud of myself to be finally able to write a post on my own in this subreddit. I've been browsing it for a long time, thinking of the day that I will StopGaming.

In my late teen-years I used to have so many passions. I loved going out. I spent many hours reading economical articles and market analysis. I even made a couple thousand bucks from currency trade when I was 19.

Ever since I was 13-14 y.o. I've been playing video games. Although I never admitted I am a "gamer". In the last years this grew into a full-time addiction. I lost all if my passions. I haven't read anything for the markets. I started failing my exams. But I didn't seem to notice any of this. All I used to think about was playing video games.

It is maybe one of the hardest decisions I have made lately. But I did it! I uninstalled League of Legends.

62.

My first 30 days without gaming (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by dlawnroac43 days

Hello, it's been 30 days since I stopped gaming, and because I don't participate in this subreddit very often, I'd like to share here a few thoughts about my first weeks.

My first two weeks

Originally I thought stopping gaming would be easy for me, since I spend 40 hours a week at work and don't have so much timme for gaming anyway. But since gaming was all I did in my free time, stopping was much harder than I expected. Especially the first two weeks were very difficult, I was still depressed and often had gaming dreams at night. One thing that kept me going was saying to myself that the fact I'm feeling so bad

## LEVELING UP

really means that I'm doing the right thing and that I do have to stop gaming.

How I almost relapsed

After 2 weeks things got a little better, but still from time to time I got cravings and urges to start gaming again. One of the most difficult days was just three days ago, when I was really tired and stressed from work because a lot of problems piled on. When I left work I was so down I practically decided I'd install this one game and start playing again.

Fortunately, it takes me 20 minutes to get back home and during the time I was able to calm myself down. And at home, instead of installing game I got rid of my Steam account for good (using the guide at

[https://www.reddit.com/r/StopGaming/comments/2t384s/how\\_to\\_get\\_rid\\_of\\_your\\_steam\\_account\\_in\\_60\\_mins/](https://www.reddit.com/r/StopGaming/comments/2t384s/how_to_get_rid_of_your_steam_account_in_60_mins/)). Which, in retrospect is what I should've done on Day 1, but I thought uninstalling all games + Steam was enough and at the time I just couldn't make myself throw away the account with all ~200 games I spent so much money on.

Activities I do in my free time

- **Writing a journal** - I started writing a journal the day I stopped gaming and would recommend it to everyone. Writing about things I managed (or didn't manage) to do during the day really motivates me. Plus, even though it may sound silly, it feels really good being able to write e.g. "It's Day 31 since I stopped gaming."
- **Programming** - Programming is what I do for living for some time already, however I started working also on my own programming project (nothing serious, just to learn something new) in my free time. Of course, this I do mostly during weekends because after 8 hours of programming at work I'm usually not in the mood to do it again at home.
- **Arduino** - I'm a software developer and know very little about hardware and electronics, so I bought Arduino Starter Kit and started doing some really basic exercises (the most complicated thing I've done so far is connecting Arduino to temperature sensor and to LCD that then displays the detected temperature).
- **Learning how to cook** - I can't cook almost anything (am really glad we have a canteen at work where they cook quite well:-)) and so during the past few weekends, I tried to learn how to cook at least some simpler meals. And surprisingly, I really liked it and will definitely continue with it.
- **Walking** - I wish I got outside more this month, but I caught some nasty cold and had to stay mostly indoors. Still, at least I walk everyday to work (20 mins one way) which I really like (especially in the morning it's a nice way to get ready for workday, think about what I have to do etc.)
- **Learning Spanish** - I use both Duolingo and Memrise, because they are a little different; I don't spend a lot of time with it, but I try to do at least some short practice every day
- **Reading** - When I was younger, I used to read quite a lot, but then I stopped because I was too "busy" playing games. During January I managed to read 3 books (only 1 in Czech and 2 in English, so I practiced a foreign language that way too) and hope to read more in the next months
- **Meditation** - At first I thought the meditation is just silly, but a week ago I decided to try it and so far I really like it. I've completed the first seven exercises on Headspace.com and even seriously consider paying full subscription at least for a month.

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### Conclusion

I can't say my life changed completely since the time I stopped gaming and I can't say I suddenly feel great and/or much better than I was feeling a month ago. However, I'm 100% sure I did a right decision to stop gaming (and to even throw away my Steam account), I don't regret it at all and am making at least slow but steady progress. I'd like to thank you all on this subreddit, because even though I'm not contributing a lot, I do read most of submissions to this sub and reading about other's experiences helps me a lot. I hope this post will help someone at least a little as well. Good luck to us all!

63.

Unmotivated about everything, lack of dopamine due to video games?

(self.StopGaming)

submitted 13 days ago by brapbrapbomoclat15 days

Whenever I don't game I feel unmotivated to do anything else but play video games again. Right now I'm just sitting behind my laptop and the only thing I really want to do is play video games. Is it true that years and years of gaming have wired my brain in a way where only gaming spikes my 'dopamine release', and therefore all other activities seem useless/boring, because they don't give me that instant gratification?

That's the way I look at it now. I don't quit because it costs me too much time or money, or causes relationship issues. I quit because I want to find other, more long-term rewarding activities fun again. I want to beast in the gym, I want to become good at my job, I want to run a marathon someday and do volunteer work. But as long as I play video games, my brain stays wired in a way in which only video games seem truely fun and rewarding.

Due to all this I've been feeling depressed and very apathetic when quitting video games. Also my anxiety is spiking because I feel like I have nothing to distract myself. I'm just going through the motions hoping my 'theory' as described above is correct, and my brain just needs time to rewire itself and then everything will feel alright again.

Kind of rambling here but just wanted to type it out, get it out of my system. 'Rewiring' my brain so that I can find fun and get motivated about real life is what motivates me the most. Any others that feel the same way?

64.

I'm done. Effective 12:00 pm today, I'm not playing videogames any more.

(self.StopGaming)

submitted 3 months ago by wankerbanker85

I posted here earlier this year, back in March I got kicked out of college. I said I wasn't ready at the time and I truly wasn't. Today, that all changed. I sit with my two friends, and they're both successful in my previous career path (how i met them), yet I'm here, struggling away, hiding away from life by gaming, and lying to my fiancee about it.

I'm a recovering drug addict as well and I know videogames have affected my recovery in this area as well, by being a distraction I embrace as opposed to healthy activities like going to meetings and being around friends.

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Enough of my excuses. Enough of wanting to play all the time.  
I quit. Thanks for reading my story / rant.

65.

Quitting at 31... Better late than never? (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by Phaelix138 days

I've been what you'd call a high-functioning game addict for most of my life, I guess. I learned early on that if you want to get by in the world, you don't lead with the fact that you play video games... in fact if you can, you never mention it at all. I'm just the kind of antisocial guy who never comes to Friday drinks and doesn't have a heap of friends. At home, I play games, of course- first thought when I walk in the door, and never quite enough to be enough- but I also have a reasonably successful career, a wife, and I managed to tear myself away from the computer enough to earn a Masters this year- it's easier than you think if you're a bit of a nerd to start with. But any time and energy that doesn't go into keeping up appearances vanishes into the time vampire that is video games, and as time has gone on, the stress has started to show on my life, and especially on my relationship with my wife. She has most certainly taken the brunt of my addiction, and it's really a small miracle that we're still together at this point.

Lately she's been trying to get me doing more constructive things with my time by just sort of booking in slices of time until most of the weekend is booked. It's not a terrible strategy I guess, but as you all know, that kind of change isn't going to come from outside- a game addict like me sees something that threatens pristine gaming time, and no amount of window-dressing is going to hide it. So this weekend she's at it again, and seeing my glorious weekend of gaming get nickel-and-dimed down to a few slivers here and there, I start to feel a little hemmed in. I get a little angry. I decide it's time to speak up and assert my right to spend some quality time with my game of choice. Righteous. It does not go over well.

After a brief altercation, she leaves in a huff, and I start going over my usual grab-bag of justifications and rationalizations and moral relativistic bullshit in my head. By the time she gets back I've marshalled the troops and I ask for a talk, where I trot them out on parade like a battalion of bullshit soldiers. "I feel like you're trying to push out the time I need to unwind. It's like you can't even acknowledge that this is something that's important to me." I'm hammering this high-caliber rhetorical ammunition downrange, but I'm getting zero hits. In fact, it's quiet. Way, way too quiet. Something is wrong. There's a look on her face that's different to every other time we've hashed this out in the past, and now I'm Wile E. Coyote, holding a fake roadrunner, looking down at a mile and a half of fresh air and reeling from the mental whiplash of going from totally right to totally wrong in a split second.

"I feel like all I do is acknowledge that you want to play games. If we go out and do something it's like you're doing it as a favour to me. Like it's something to appease me so you can get back to playing games." It goes on. There are tears. She says more but the rest doesn't matter because I realise she's right, and I'm wrong, and it's depressing as fuck. I don't even know what fun without games looks like anymore. The closest thing I have to an aspiration some days is a long weekend and a new game- I'm staring down the barrel of middle age and this is not the kind of life I had in mind. Eventually she leaves, tells me not to worry about the stuff we booked, just think about what I want to do. I say

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yeah, and okay, and I'll think about it, but it's a lie. I already know what I need to do. So here I am! Time to kick this thing. 20-odd years is a good run with a hobby, and I won't say there aren't things I'll miss. After flirting with a million "cut-backs" over the past decade I know that I can't play video games in a healthy way, so this is how it has to be. Wish me luck.

I've deleted everything, and unsubscribed from all my games-related podcasts/subreddits/etc. I'm looking into some hobbies and other constructive things to do with the buckets of free time I'll be freeing up. As some of you might have picked up, I'm a bit of a nerd, so if you have any good articles reflecting on quitting games and the nature of game addiction, I'd love a link. This place seems like a great resource, and I'm looking forward to putting some days on this shiny new badge.

TL;DR: Quitting games way too late after long-suffering wife gave me a wake-up call. Give me all the help you got, I'm gonna need it.

66.

[–]**simple\_pants** 3 points 4 months ago

Good job making this effort for your wife and marriage and already cutting the games and related stuff out of your life.

I'm 33 and in vaguely similar situations. In the past year I've played a lot of splatoon on the Wii U (10-30 hours week, which for me seems like a lot for someone who has to work and has a wife) My wife hates it as I get frustrated at times and yell at the tv and end up in bad moods.

This year I've reduced playing and also tried quitting a few times. In the current run I've been 2 weeks clean and haven't wanted to play at all. I think that each time one tries to quit, there is some loosening of the addiction and realization of the truth of what games really are, even if we fail and return to gaming. With enough tries I believe one can strike the final blow eventually with an all-out effort, such as you are doing now.

You have an awesome "why" to motivate you. You also have the right idea to find other hobbies and things to fill the hole of video games. I recommend looking up gamification. It's basically applying some of the elements in game to various activities and skill to make the journey more interesting and fun.

An example is lifting weights. I've heard an interview with the guy from nerd fitness website where he compares to the beginning at the gym as a newly created player in a game. They have to learn the basics and figure out their strength and weaknesses, just like a new player learning the mechanics of a new game and what their character base stats are. As they put in the work over the time, it is like grinding in a RPG game acquiring experience points until you level up, which in the gamification you can set as reaching certain weights in a certain lift, or reaching some target weight or skill and that's leveling up. The same basic setup can be applied to other skills or hobbies as well.

I've also been applying principles of role playing or imagination to my own self improvement to make it more interesting and motivating. For example, I picture my desire to play games as some sort of dark shadow that appears and whispers temptations to me. I know it's trying to drag me back down to somewhere I don't want to be and I resist it like some scene in a movie. I want to best it so I've "sealed" it away (wii u all the way in the back of the closet, un-sub splatoon subs, forums, and youtube channels) and am vigilant if it creeps up.

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good luck man. sorry if my post is rambling.. just woke up from a saturday nap lol. I'm on this journey too so know that others are right there fighting with you!

**permalinkembedsaverreportgive goldreply**

67.

My 2y success(ish) story, and the tips that really helped me. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 8 months ago \* by LikeKanye

**2y Ago:** I had just entered college, and it was so not what I expected. I thought that by being inside college, things would fall in their place, that I'd make lots of friends, get lots of girls, party a lot, and get by with decent grades. I had this vision that college would sort of be like spring break in Cancun. I thought that my life would be fixed by that one thing, college.

But no "one thing" can save from who you are. As a heads up to the people of this sub, past me included, no, quitting gaming won't be the "one thing" that saves your ass from your shitty life.

I was skinny-fat, college didn't change that.

I was anti-social, college didn't change that.

I was terrible with girls, college didn't change that.

I didn't really like myself, college didn't change that.

And quitting games also will do none of that. Believe me, I tried. I went cold turkey for 90 days, everything pretty much stayed the same, except that it wasn't gaming, it was now Netflix, Youtube, Reddit, Reading Fiction, and so on.

Truth be told, change was, and still is really slow for me. And it'll probably be for you as well. Don't expect to turn your life around in 90 days, willpower will only take you so far. What you need are habits, and habits come with time.

**How I "made it" :** When I realised that I would never be who I wanted to be, I made the decision to cold turkey on gaming for 90 days. It seemed pretty obvious that it'd work, because I don't see 6h/day League of Legends players out there getting girls. The correlation checked out!

Of course that didn't work, you don't magically become Chad Thundercock as soon as you delete League, it takes time and effort. So after the 90 day netflix binge fiasco, I decided a different approach. I decided that in order to get what I wanted (friends, girls, money, health, fun <sup>yes, gaming had ceased to be fun</sup>) I needed to improve upon myself.

How did I do so?

**Developing good habits :** Go online, search how to create habits, it really is not that hard. Anyway, I made a habit out of gym, I made a habit out of studying. Gym takes up 1:30 hours a day, Studying takes up another 1:30. So instead of "virtually" decreasing my gaming time, I kept on gaming on my free time, but I had 3 less hours a day to do so. Just like that I "naturally" went from 6h a day, to 3.

**Meeting people :** This is probably the advice that has helped me the most, so pay attention. **IF YOU HAVE THE MEANS (time and money), YOU SAY YES.** That applies to everything your friends invite you to do. Even the stuff you think you hate. Let me explain further. By doing this, you are going to expose yourself to new people, even if you think you won't, you are. I'll admit, at first it'll suck, you'll be awkward, people probably won't be super interested in you, and you'll think that that's not for you. But trust me on this one, show up in time, be nice. It'll all work out.

## LEVELING UP

I know that because I lived that. I accepted a friends invitation to go play soccer, and I hated soccer. I also didn't think any of the players were going to be my friends.

I accepted a friends invitation to go to a party, and I hated parties.

But after time showing up to a bunch of soccer games where my team usually lost, and a bunch of parties where I ended up talking to the drunk guy who's depressed, I started to make friends. Two soccer players became really good friends of mine, and one of the guys who partied with me also became really friends with me.

All of a sudden, the games were less shitty, and the parties less lonely. So I was happier, funnier, more enthusiastic at playing soccer, and at partying. And all of that made me more interesting, more social, which made me more friends. More friends invited me to do more stuff, like kayaking, and making small trips to nearby cities for fun. And those experiences made me even more interesting, and so on. You get the idea.

I now had 10 or so **GOOD** friends of mine. I was comfortable every time I was with them, even when doing things I hated.(unrelated story, I joined an RPG group, and hated it. But is sucked a lot less cause they were my friends.) Being comfortable with my body(yay gym) and around my friends, allowed me to be myself. To the point where I kinda became an extrovert. I could now sing to my favourite Taylor Swift song (everyone has one, admit it.) as loudly as I wanted, because I was comfortable being myself. I could overdress, or underdress to every occasion without feeling awkward, I love myself, and the people who are around me, usually do to. So why feel uncomfortable?

**But what about your addiction to gaming?** I still play games, to this day. But there's just not enough time to be addicted. I got shit to do, I gotta show up to soccer, I gotta show up to finish the goddamned RPG adventure, I gotta show up to the parties I was invited, I gotta lift and study. There just isn't time to waste by playing games.

**Today :** I don't really like to brag, but for this post's intention, I'll do it a little, sorry.

Right now, I am at a point in my life where I can honestly say that "I am who I wanted to become back when I entered college". Except for the money, the rest came with time, and trusting my process. Making friends, and agreeing to go do stuff with them, made me more friends, which lead to me doing interesting stuff, which gave me lots of stories to tell. That allied with my newly wound gym&social confidence allowed me to become interesting, which lead to girls. Sooo, Friends, check. Health(which we all know is code for abs and benching 200), check. girls, check. fun, check. Still missing money tho, but working on that.

To give you guys a snapshot of what my life looks like :

Monday ~ Friday: Study, gym, work on some side-projects, look for a job. Usually I find 4-5 hours a week to hanging out with friends.

Weekends: Soccer and RPG on sundays, usually hungover tho (but I still go). Friday night is usually clubbing.

Saturday normally goes like this:

Morning ~ afternoon some fun, family friend stuff with a few good mates. We did Kayaking a couple of times, Rafting once, Beach games a lot, poker/board games some times, and a bunch of random ass shit (this one time we decided it'd be a great idea to cook a giant hamburger pizza. It was.)

Saturday Night: A.K.A. the most important moment of the week. Usually I choose from the options: Heavy partying with friends, not so heavy partying with the girl(s) I'm into(hookups really likely, taking her home not so likely, but happens once in a full

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moon), random ass shit again (barbecue&swimmingpool night ; or something like it).

**Tomorrow:** Honestly, I'm fucking happy, but still not satisfied. There're still a couple of things I gotta work on, and I am working on them. I took control of my life.

**TL/DR:** Go read the topics "How I made it", "Dev. good habits" and the 2 first paragraphs of "meeting people"

Any questions you guys may have, any help you may need, ask away, I'll do my best. However, it is also really possible that I can't help you, because your experience is different than mine, but it doesn't hurt to try.

68.

I finally sold my Ps4 (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by slidinggoal351 days

This was a powerful step. I haven't played in 2 weeks, and no longer had PSPlus. So it was just standing there. I now have it no more. I'll put the money in my bank account so I use it as a savings incentive.

Areas improved... I now do 250 pushups a day, 1500 a week! I still walk 45 mins up and down the hill 4 times a week.

What I should watch now... I got an app that tells me I spend over 3 hours in my phone on average :OO:O it's insane. Coffee I should keep it 2 a day.

I go out with friends more and I'm more relaxed and not thinking about fifa formations.. Baby steps.. You can do it.

69.

No Longer a 31 Year Old Gamer (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago \* by eXaer336 days

I'm over it... that's the only way I can start this post and explains exactly how I feel, short and sweet. I have been a gamer ever since, starting as young as 6 years old with F-Zero and A Link to the Past. Born and raised along side the internet and all the addictive games that came with it, like Everquest, World of Warcraft, Dark Age of Camelot and the Diablo series.

I have read a lot about why people quit and arguments that it's more about balance. Well, that's why I am posting this. It's easy enough for people to explain that they just balance thier gaming, but some of us cannot do this. Yes, gaming is my escape, but it's an escape that is ruining the rest of my life. I don't believe gaming has always been an escape, as I used to be very active in my younger days. Then something happened, I had a moment in my life where I dealt with what I thought was a fun girlfriend who turned out to be a cheater that drove me deep in the gaming escapism. She became pregnant and virtually wrote me off, not letting me know if the child was mine or not. I was ready to man up, I had a job at the time but was seeking more wage to support what I believed to be my child and in the end, she just told me it wasn't mine, didn't want me to stress over it because of that fact and that was that. Turned out she was married the whole time to another man, I was so young and foolish to ignore every blatant signal of this. It was during this incredibly stressful 8-month span of my life that I began to use gaming as a means to avoid how I was feeling and what I needed to be focused on in the real world. Fast forward roughly 10 years and here I am; I am a 31 year old man, married, decent job, great wife, own my own house that we built, etc. However, I'm fucking empty inside.



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My wife, who at this point in our 6 year marriage, has been more than patient with me. However, I take it all for granted. I come home and the first and last thing I want to do with my freetime is game. I have desires outside of gaming and hobbies that I do still enjoy, but nothing trumps gaming. I waste long blocks of time on the weekend gaming, I stay up late after she goes to sleep alone and game, I play clash of clans on my phone instead of working at my job and as you can see, it's bad.

So this is it, TL:DR: gaming was fun, life was stressful, gaming became an escape. I'm done though, last war with my clan on clash will be my last moments gaming, hopefully forever.

My plan? I want to learn the guitar so that will help fill some time. I want to get back into hiking, something my wife and I used to do and enjoy together. I will continue to get better at fishing, I live in the Pacific Northwest and there are many new opportunities out there for fishing. I'm buying a kayak and exploring the many waterways around here. I'm going to work on being a man around the house; fixing things, selling things I promised I would get rid of, cleaning and cooking for my wife that works longer hours than me. I'm going to focus on my health, eating well and exercise.

So raise your cups, here's to the end of an era. Cheers

70.

From WoW Junkie to Living on Street. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by [deleted]

Hey not that anyone gives a fuck, but I ended up homeless on street. Long story short: The house I've been renting for last couple years got sold. Shit just hit the roof, my add kicked in and a lot of other things piled on top so..(fighting my 15+ year gaming addiction, depression etc etc)

It has been 14 days. What I'm doing now? I'm getting some help from charity and hoping for a fresh start. In these two weeks I've learned a lot of different things that I never thought about it before.

So kids and grown ups, don't mess with things, and fight your addiction as much as you can. Life is not a joke, you should appreciate every moment you live.

71.

From Gaming Addict to CEO and Motivational Speaker (self.StopGaming)

submitted 7 days ago by venchito14

I was a computer addict for 12 LONG YEARS. You read it right, 12 years. I started gaming at seven years old. From classic strategic games like Warcraft 2 to multiplayer games then to RPG (role playing games). I've spent half of my life learning the basics of playing different and newly released online games.

But then I decided to quit at age 19. I was getting behind on my academics and social situation. I've switched my interest and hobby to other things like playing musical instruments (guitar/piano), reading books (self-help books), sports (badminton), attending social groups and ultimately went back to my WRITING. I became a freelance content writer for two years, half a year as a VA/marketing assistant then started my journey as an entrepreneur of one of the leading digital agencies in Asia - SharpRocket.

I also now conduct motivational talks and corporate training to companies here in PH. My life was never the same again. I've shared all the lessons and tips that helped me

## LEVELING UP

achieve freedom in my life and unleash potentials for self-improvement in my latest post on how to stop playing video games.

72.

My Story ( I quit and you can too(: ) (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by SplendourTalks

Daniel: I was 12 when a friend introduced me to runescape (online computer game), mum and I would argue about who would get the internet connection (dial up problems). This was only the beginning. Fast forward through 10 years of unconsciously fighting with my family, gradually distancing myself from my friends/school and lacking any interest in leaving my safe place behind the computer screen.

8/08/2015 The computer still controls my life, 21 years old and I am half running half walking home from work (supermarket deli) just to jump straight on the computer (league of legends) and eat my Red Rooster meal. It felt sooo good to get away from thoughts like "I hate my job," "Where am I going in life?", "I am a failure", "No licence at 21, what is wrong with you?". I knew gaming was fucking with my life yet I could not bring myself to do anything about it until..

01/09/2015 Enough was enough I wanted to start connecting with people not the internet, I wanted to experience the outside world and this is where my self development journey began. It wasn't easy, you think you can just shake off years of escapism in one motivational thought, I relapsed around 10 times after deciding to quit.

01/09/2015 – 24/04/2016 In those 7 months gradually, I swapped Big Macs and McChickens for kale and fresh fish, computer games for audio books and youtube videos for exercise. I accepted where I was in life, stopped blaming and realised I was responsible and did not want to escape reality anymore, I fully stopped computer games on 04/02/2016 and started surrounding myself with like minded people (youtubers). I began other habits I learnt through reading such as planning my day, setting goals and positive thinking.

20/05/2016 I now want to continue to improve every day, I still struggle with maintaining habits and other parts of my life, but self-improvement it is a super fun process if you be present and enjoy the journey and not place happiness on the end result.

The whole process itself took about a year (from the initial thought 'I need to stop this'). If you want to share you experiences or ask tips on how you can do it effectively private message me. You can also follow the instagram 'splendourtalks' where I post daily and we can chat and go through the process together (:

73.

60 days.. My thoughts.. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago by addictedgam3r110 days

I completed 60 days yesterday and wanted to post my thoughts here to recap what I have been going through.

- 1 The temptation never really goes away. Boredom, depression, anxiety etc. can be big triggers. So watch out.
- 2 Watching an occasional YouTube gaming video is okay but not helpful. It can scratch an itch, but it's rarely helpful and almost as bad as wasting time playing video games. That said, I am not too hard on myself for watching an occasional video, it is after all a good source of entertainment and should be used as such. Just don't

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- end up replacing gaming with YouTube.
- 3 Your brain will rationalize playing games in all sorts of ways. You might tell yourself that you are wasting time by sleeping/internet etc., but those are just temporary since you are in process of replacing a long running habit. Be wary when your brain tries to steer you towards gaming because you were not productive 1 day. It's a trap. Your first goal is to break your dependence on games and your 2nd goal is to be more productive. If you are able to do both at the same time, congrats you are amazing. If not, then know that you are only human and there are others who are in the same boat. Take it one day at a time.
  - 4 Exercise is huge! I was very motivated initially to start exercise and get in shape when I quit gaming first. Because of this I had first 30 days easier than the last 30 days. Not exercising traps my mind into a loop of low self esteem, depression, more urges for gaming which translates in me sleeping more or wasting time on YouTube, which again cycles to me being more self critical.
  - 5 Finding a hobby could be great. My last couple of weeks have been hectic at work. This has caused me to obsess over games in past. But this time I ended up spending my extra time on learning new programming concepts and revise old ones. I also started mentoring my colleagues at work due to my new found knowledge. I am going to talk to my boss for a raise or find a better opportunity ;)
  - 6 No-gaming has definitely lifted up the fog from my brain. I feel I can concentrate better, remember more details of every day life and new experiences have become interesting again.
  - 7 I have been reading more books to fill up my time. This has also helped me a lot when meeting new people as I can converse about topics other than gaming.
  - 8 Giving up gaming "forever" is a hard thing to do especially when it has been a huge part of you for better part of your life. I keep reminding myself of why I took this decision - to be better, more responsible person in my life. This forum is immensely helpful for that.

Thanks again to everyone who share their experience here. You have helped me keep going when it became tough.

Hi everyone, my name is addictedgam3r and I am a gaming addict!

74.

I quit. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 8 months ago by bunski27

I quit. no, really, i'm done. I've been gaming for so many years for so many hours, all these games made me so stressful yet i choose to game anyway. People always told me i'm a late bloomer, so there, at age of 27 i'm finally gonna quit.

So many hours that i could have spent with family. Learning a new language, taking care of my aquariums... or, i don't know, travel a bit. Outside of my 4 walls i don't know much.

I've had thoughts about quitting every once in awhile, i guess these thoughts needed time to grow and settle in, i didn't want to believe that i'm actually thinking about quitting.

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So there, i quit. Already uninstalled everything.

The only thing that scares me is the regret i'm gonna feel knowing i spent so much time on video games. Any advice?

Thanks for being here to read.

75.

90 day detox done...what a breakthrough (self.StopGaming)

submitted 9 months ago \* by Supajin379 days

Hi everyone. This post is 2 days late, but I figured someone might benefit from seeing this and I should be contributing back to the community that helped me out so much anyways. Skip past my history if you just want to see how my 90 days went.

### **Me**

A quick history about me, I've been playing games since I was 6 or so. My addiction truly began at the age of 9 or 10 when I started playing games on websites such as miniclip.com and addictinggames.com. I later found out about Runescape during this time and that was my first main gaming addiction. After that I bounced around to various MMORPG's on my PC and various console games. Overall, Runescape was my most played game which I quit at the age of 18 (4 years ago). My other addictions have been to Minecraft, Diablo, PoE, various steam games, and finally LoL.

I've averaged 12-15 hours a day most of the time either playing a game, reading about a game, or watching video content about a game. My mind was constantly consumed with ways to improve and this escapism eventually caused me to fail greatly in my academics. I started to slip around 11th and 12th grade since more work was required outside of class, but I still managed to pass with a good gpa. After that I went to university for a year and dropped out since I couldn't pass most of my classes.

### **90 days journey**

I found it relatively easy to quit my gaming addiction this time. I truly hit rock bottom in the 3 months leading up to that day. My gaming addiction was my fault. It caused my relationship with my SO at the time to suffer as well as with my family. I also had no friends in real life outside of my cousins. 3 months before I started this detox I was going to the gym for 3 days a week.

I tried various times to go cold turkey, but I always went back to gaming. My entire life I tried to moderate, but I could never get it down. A comment by Yxven really sums how I felt,

When I game, every moment not spent gaming feels like a waste of time.

I made a list of goals for 2016 and broke those down into monthly goals. Then I broke those down even further as to what steps I could take to accomplish them and what I could learn every month so I could see progress. I started to up my gym regiment to 4-5x a week, learn mandarin chinese daily for 30 minutes, read a book a month, play at least 30 minutes of guitar a day, and daily learning of coding.

What really helped me out was seeing my new activities and hobbies in a daily tracker. Everyday marking one of these off in an app I installed made me feel a sense of accomplishment.

In the first two weeks I played offline games with my brother or cousins a couple of times for 2-3 hours. Since then I had no desire to game and saw icons for games as a mental distraction since it would bring up memories of the past. I ended up uninstalling

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every game on my PC since I didn't see the point of how gaming would make me succeed in any of my goals.

In the days leading up to the 85th day I had a bit of a slip-up. I used to make gaming videos for Runescape which I found while cleaning out an old laptop and started to rewatch a few of them. After this I watched some YouTube videos that I loved about that game. On the 85th day after seeing a nice video I wanted to see how it was so I installed it and jumped online. I usually go online on this game every couple of months for an hour just to relive some of that nostalgia. I went on it and instantly felt the desire to succeed, to set up goals and succeed inside of that world.

After an hour, I realized that the fantasy in my head was just trying to relive the fun I had in my past. I'm a different person now with my productive hobbies though. I uninstalled it and had a good chuckle about how silly my thoughts were. Hopefully that doesn't count as breaking the detox. I think that slip-up made me feel even stronger about not requiring gaming to be apart of my life.

### Analysis

90 days are over and the journey has just begun. I've been game-free nearly the entirety of that detox period and at the highest point of my life physically as well as mentally. I've been fairly successful in my courses this semester and even picked up a part-time job. I've read 3 books which really changed my perception on life. I've successfully hit the gym 4-5x a week and my body is proof of my progress. I've memorized a song on the guitar and nearly a few others, but I now know how to play chords and read tabs easily which is amazing compared to what I knew before I started.

This has gotten too long, but a few tips of what I learned:

- *Be aware of how you spend your time and what distracts you most.*

If it's not aiding you in your goals then cut down on it less or remove it completely.

Watching less youtube and spending time on various social media and reddit/all made me waste a lot of time.

- *The first 30 days are the most difficult.*

Just remember to keep yourself busy and outside of games. Even laying down doing nothing or meditating is better than playing.

- *Go outside everyday, no matter what*

I can't emphasize how much this helped me out. Whenever I chose to stay inside for a day, I would feel useless and trapped in a box like how I used to feel back when I was addicted to gaming.

### Ending

There's still a lot of work to be done though to accomplish my dreams and goals and progress towards it daily will make it count.

Hope I explained everything well, thanks for taking the time to read this and good luck on your own journey.

76.

Tomorrow Marks The Anniversary of my Heavily Rationalized Relapse  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 month ago by AdminsHelpMePlz

Guys, I'll keep this short. You guys are busy. Especially with being thankful for this

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awesome community that supports each other while most scoff at it like it's a joke. Quitting games was very hard. I had to accept my life was shit. I had to fix everything. I couldn't escape anymore. I mean you can through books movies TV etc. But, it's not the same as gaming.

I'm here to tell you I did it. I owned every console and still wasn't happy in my entertainment room. I crashed my motorcycle, started NoFap and someone recommended r/stopgaming to me. Thank God!

Yeah, I eventually began to focus on myself. Meditate more, yoga, weightlifting. I was super happy and healthy. I would still play smash on the weekends with my gamer friends. We had smash get-togethers with like 7 ppl. It was a blast. After we would talk watch a movie. Play poker here and there.

But, guys listen. I fucked up when I Rationalized moderation(year later). That shit is very hard to do. Be careful. I made my clause games are played in person together for fun that's it. No video games in my room by myself.

All those Black Friday deals got to me(the deals are worse this year as in much better. It's like the console's and games are practically free.) I wavered because I was weak. I wanted to fill a need which wasn't being fulfilled in my life.

I bought an Xbox one etc. Played little bit here and there. Scheduled time to play with buddies. Eventually, 30 mins became 1 hour. Then I would go that wasn't an hour I spent 10 mins updating and talking. Then, 2 hours wasn't enough. You get the picture.

When you are up all night playing then see the sun come up and it hurts your eyes. You have to rush to school, work, etc. Throughout the day, I would constantly think of the game in my head. How to be the best or can't wait to play that game again.

Every aspect of my life that improved went to shit. Meditation Muscle gained gone from starving myself by playing more. I wouldn't cook food anymore and just run and grab a packet of pretzels or Belveeta biscuits. Even when I would have the patience to cook rice chicken vegetables. I would be like hurry up, it took too long to chew all that food. Hate to say it hygiene went down. No Chapstick, trimming facial hair, flossing, scrub a Doo your body, trimming nails.

I'm sure many of you relate. Btw, I'm sure most of you guys weren't plebs. You guys were actually good gamers. Maybe not pro level. But I'm sure you guys were proud of your standing when you played with friends.

I just want to say. Thanks again. This community is great. I had severe cognitive dissonance. Your existence made me question my life choices. I hated you guys but then learnt I needed to accept I had problems. I really hated that I had to quit gaming because I loved it. One of my favorite hobbies as a kid. But, after I bought an Xbox 360 and was introduced to online gaming. It changed me forever.

Be careful, what you introduce into your life. Don't allow yourself to fall into the same traps as before. Life has meaning it's beautiful. Search for and achieve true fulfillment rather than masking the pain. Sometimes, when you're hungry and you eat a big bag of potato chips instead cook chicken and broccoli. That will fill you up and give you what your body needs instead of chips that will never satisfy your bodies need for nutrients. Make the best of the rest of the year. Don't slip back. This shit is ingrained into your brain and rewiring is a difficult and long process.

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77.

12 years of investment in nothing (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by Rapolus131 days

I cant believe where am i right know. In my point of view i am as fucked up as i can. I am 25 years old and in my view i have accomlished nothing in my life. I havend found any place in this world but before my monitor. So much sunny days where wasted, so much money i could made, so much time i could spend with familie or friends. I am crying to see what i have become. I wanted stop for years but i always fall back in my safe place where everything is fine and if it isn't i can delete this save and start a new. But life can't handle this way. I am in the best mood to stop forever and i joint here to help in bad days. So this is the start i am 2 days without gaming until now. How did you accept all the failures hey come from runnig awayin life and start gaming. I have to handle this feelings.

Greets Rapolus

78.

Dear r/StopGaming (self.StopGaming)

submitted 6 months ago by OffshoreSail152 days

I recently realized that I don't even enjoy playing Dota 2. It's so much stress trying to coordinate a team of strangers to work together to win the game. After every game, you are back to square one. You either won or lost the last one, and you feel like you should play "just one more" until your whole day is taken away by hours of sitting at your messy desk playing Dota. I feel like this game filled a hole in my life when I needed something to occupy my time, but it's just not needed anymore. There are plenty of better things to do than watch hours of streams and playing hours of Dota. It has probably impacted my mental and physical health.

Anyway, I don't need this game. Every game is a bundle of stress, and in the end you are stuck with a whole lot of wasted time and a cloudy unfocused mind. I don't need a MMR to tell me my self worth. I don't even admire players who spend thousands upon thousands of hours of their lives on this game. Sure there are better players than me. Sure I could probably get better at the game if I wanted to. Gaming is just not in my own best interest and it's not what I want for my future.

79.

90 days detox complete ! :) (self.StopGaming)

submitted 8 months ago by Fhellman350 days

So I made it to 90 days without gaming and here are my thoughts and what have changed. The first two weeks were really hard since I quit cold turkey and did not have a job or any social activities. So I thought to myself, "what did I do before I got into gaming". I played a lot of guitar so I picked that up, playing a few hours a day and improving a lot. I also picked up reading and cooking (I ate o lot of fast food while gaming). I still had way to much time on my hands and a poor economy so I spent a few hours a day job hunting, it only took about 2-3 weeks until I had my job as an assistent to a disabled guy. I still

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lacked that social contact so I called up some old friends and started going out on the weekends, meeting a lot of old friends but also making new ones. I have this new found confidence and I really feel like myself again, like I was before getting sucked into gaming.

### **Keys to success**

- The will to never give up
- Accepting myself
- Doing what makes me happy
- A lot of social activities

My best tip for you guys strugglin out there is to get out of the house and stay there! Make your home into a resting place and activate yourself all the time, even when you don't feel like it. Make up goals and push it, no one will do it for you!

### **What now?**

Nothing changes really, I will keep going forward improving myself. This place has really helped me a lot, when I had a hard time I got great support from you guys and just reading the posts here helps! I hope this post will be of use for someone, stay strong fellow game quitters! :)

80.

Deleted All Mobile Games (self.StopGaming)

submitted 9 months ago by nofartsonmars

Just deleted all my games. 28 years old, moved to Boston w my girlfriend over a month ago and still don't have a job, haven't met friends, never go outside. I've been gaming since I was 10. I have an extremely addictive personality. The routine and familiarity bring a sense of comfort and adrenaline at the same time. Time to focus on building something for my life. Goodbye Bloons Tower Defense. Goodbye Risk mobile. Goodbye Flick Homerun Derby. I'll be focusing on job searching, and have thought about getting into whittling something w my hands and practicing my ukulele, and maybe work out a bit. I'll try to check in next week to update. Wish me luck.

81.

Applied for a badge! Uninstalled everything! (self.StopGaming)

submitted 12 months ago by atomicSOLDIER277 days

I am not looking for any karma or anything. Feel lost but damn it feels good. I manned the fuck up and cleaned my computer of all virus. was done abt 20 minutes ago.

It took me 2 hours to uninstall every single game I had on my machine. Perhaps I will feel better ina few days after I get a hold of myself. However I feel great still, in a proud way. I am no longer a bitch.

82.

I am feeling very motivated, let's smash it this year!! (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 days ago by Addicted\_20161 day

I have just asked for my badge to be reset, my best streak was just shy of 250 days last year but for the last 3 months I have been struggling with relapses and in just 3 months it has undone a lot of my progress from earlier on the year, mainly work at the gym, my



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academic work and socially.

However the relapses for the last 3 months have been useful, I have compiled a 5000 word document on how every aspect of gaming made me feel and why I need to quit for good, in the last 3 months I have tried everything, to playing online, to playing single games to only playing games when I am round a friends house. Nothing has worked and I already knew it wouldn't because I have been trying to quit for like 7-8 years but I have never documented my thoughts and feelings at the time. Without this documentation my brain forgets how bad it was at the time and is allowed to rationalise playing again.

Anyway I feel like this year is going to be the year for me to finally quit indefinitely, I am fed up of quitting for say 3 months and then relapsing and then repeating, I am making the biggest commitment of all and quitting indefinitely. For some of you guys first starting to quit I definitely recommend just aiming for 90 days to begin with but in order for me to move on I cannot leave any doubt. Anyway I have said to myself that if I ever want to play I have to read the document I have written first and I can't see how I could play after reading it so hopefully this works.

My main goals for 2017 are to have 100% attendance at University, to go to the gym 4 times a week and to meditate each day and of course not to game. Good luck to all of you with your goals. I don't know about you guys but I am feeling very motivated and I have my resolve to quit back!!!

83.

Video games ruined my life, today is the day I quit for good. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 28 days ago \* by mirlmao28 days

I'm not really too sure what to write so this will probably turn into a rant about my past experiences so i'm sorry for that but here goes nothing I guess.

Basically i've been playing video games since I was literally 2 years old, i'm 19 now.

Literally the only memories I have from when I was below 5 consist of playing video games like runescape, sonic and what not, other than one memory of breaking my arm, though in my opinion I don't really think I was "addicted" to video games until I was about 11 when my father died, without realising it I suddenly turned all of my attention to video games, I was decently smart when I was in primary school (not sure if it's called that in other countries but basically school from when I was 5-13), I even got an award for being the best student in the school at maths, and then I got to high school and everything just sort of started coming down, I literally couldn't focus on school in the slightest, I would never do any homework or anything, regardless of what it was, I would miss countless days of school to the point of which the school called my mother and gave her a warning about my attendance and it being a genuine problem when I was missing at least a day every week, basically school just never worked out for me after that point. I ended up dropping out of school after finding the excuse of doing an IT course, I ended up completing the 3 month, free one and then moved on to doing a 6 month one that cost about \$8000, I spent most of my time in that class playing video games or watching videos about the games so as shocking as it sounds I completely failed that course and just ended up with the student loan.

Ever since then my mum has constantly been telling me I need to get a job and I would just brush it off, I didn't want one and even now as i'm writing this I still don't want one. I moved to Australia in 2015 to try and do something different, I lived there for about 5

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months with some family friends from when I was young, and I had a job over there for about 3 months before the shop unfortunately closed down. I still played video games whilst over there just an extremely reduced amount. As sad as it sounds I could quite comfortably say in that 5 months I spent over there I lived more of my life than I have in the past 4 years excluding that time. I had a girlfriend whilst over there working, in fact that's the only girlfriend I have ever had actually.

Basically because of video games i'm sat here at 19 with no qualifications, friends, job, social skills or anything and i'm just sick of it so today is the day I stop it all, I just can't see any point to waste any more of my time on this anymore, i've spent over 4,000 hours on league of legends, over 5,000 on call of duty games, and i'm sure it would come close to 10,000 hours on runescape, as embarrassing as that sounds. I literally don't even find video games fun anymore, and I haven't for a long time, but what I would do previously would just be search for a new game, I thought that was the only problem I had and that I needed to just find a new one, but now i'm here thinking about it and i'm realising that that isn't actually the problem, and that the problem is me, I need to just stop playing video games. All of that time I could have spent actually doing things with my life, so now it's time for me to make sure I never touch them any more.

Edit: The main reason for writing this is not just to share all of this with some people I just felt like writing something like this and thinking about it all would make me realise how much stupid shit I have done about this and how much time and money I have wasted.

Any advice and/or motivation that anyone could offer me to help me get through withdrawals that I know will happen would be very much appreciated.

**84.**

I really need to stop (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 months ago by SoulRig79 days

I found this sub last night after doing what I've done far too many times, sitting up to 4AM playing DotA when I need to be up at 6 to go to work. I know that it's a stupid thing to do yet I just keep doing it.

I don't even enjoy playing any games anymore either, I buy the new titles thinking that I'll play them and feel like my money hasn't gone to waste but then I'll spend maybe 45 minutes playing them and then never touch them again. The amount of wasted money is ridiculous.

So I sat there last night at 4AM and just thought, fuck it, and uninstalled all my games, uninstalled steam, origin, b.net and I just need to get out and do something with my life. I've been doing this shit for years and I have not a single thing to show for it. I'm going to be coming home from work in about 10 hours and I honestly just don't know what I'm going to do because I won't be playing a game for the first time in God knows how long. Just needed to vent a little and put my thoughts into words, thanks for reading. I'm yet to look through the FAQs on the sub but that'll be one of the things I'll do when I get home from work.

**85.**

My declaration of war (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by Cubusphere122 days

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I can't count the times I've quit gaming, just to relapse after a day, a week or even a month. I'm done. I just recovered from a sickness and instead of resting I spent 14h+ a day playing various games.

As I work in IT I already look at a screen for 7h a day. Then I get home, pet my cat a little, turn on my PC, play until 9pm. Dinnertime! The faster, the better, eating while watching YouTube of other people playing. More gaming, then bedtime. That's my life in a nutshell. Weekends are even worse. My social life outside of work is nonexistent.

I've been addicted for as long as I can remember. What really reminds me is when I get eye twitching and pain in the hands. For the positives: I ride the bike to work (1h daily), I eat healthy (mostly vegetarian) and I have a great and rewarding job. About anything else is a mess. I do the dishes when I run out of them, same with laundry. Letters and Emails pile up for those rare power-days, where I get stuff done.

Enough! I want to get back to photography, I want to start archery, I want to do a bit of bodybuilding, I want to actively search for a relationship, I want to keep in touch with my family. There's enough time in the week for all of that if it wasn't for gaming.

Now I'm quitting for real. I'm telling you, I'm telling my few friends, I'm even telling my father.

"The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the Personal Computer, but we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then, we shall prevail." (George IV, 77 years ago, slightly altered ;)

TL;DR: I declare war on my gaming addiction. I'm done, forever. Day 1.

edit: formatting

86.

336 days later, and I'm starting back at 0. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by RubenTheDuck118 days

Yes, that's right: I am starting at 0 days again.

Why? Well, in short: I lost control. Wanna hear the long story? Then continue to read.

It all started a few months ago, I couldn't help it to play a really old game again for the nostalgia. It seemed innocent, but it was the start of me losing the wheel (I don't know if that's a real proverb, but screw it). I deleted the game after an hour or 2 and decided not to look anything up about games anymore. But it happened pretty often, that I started watching video's about gaming. And now, during summer brake, these last weeks I got really bored. And I started downloading a game. But it was wrong, I knew it, so I deleted it again. Only to download it again when I was bored again... and again.

I didn't consider it as gaming, but now I do.

Today is the day, today I'll get my shit together. I want to make something of my life.

Spending it in front of a screen, just to

satisfy my feelings. No, that's not what I want!

The only problem is: I know what I want, but I'm pretty sure that when I'm bored again, I will not be reading, or making short films, or going geo caching. I'll be stuck behind some stupid screen.

So, what am I gonna do? Well, I'll force myself I guess. I'm not sure. What I do know, is that this will not happen again. Hard times are coming, but I'm ready for it! Discipline is

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the thing that I'm gonna create for myself.  
That's about it, thanks for reading!

87.

How I overcame my gaming addiction. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 months ago by fabri\_jinga126 days

Hello, today begins my new life challenge, one that I have been planning for a long time now. I am a 21 year old Canadian guy who is studying Software Engineering at University. My grades, as of now, are average given that my CGPA is 3.3/4.3 (B+ average OR 77-79%). I strongly believe that online video games has had a negative impact on my ambition, my academics and my overall life. I would like to share, with you guys, my action plan to quit gaming ,my thoughts, and hopefully help or inspire someone.

### My Gaming History

After reading a couple of posts in this sub-reddit, I have always been curious about what games or consoles the authors were addicted to. I think that it can help the readers relate more.

- I was born in 1995
- The first video game that I played was *Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo* in the late 90's on my father's computer.
- Around 2001, I got my first console; a PS One.
- In 2002, I got my GameCube.
- In 2005, I spent most of the summer playing *Super Smash Bros Melee*.
- From 2006-2008, I played *Runescape*.
- In 2007, I bought a PSP and I played *Monster Hunter Freedom 2*.
- In May 2009, I bought my Xbox 360 , where I played *Call of Duty 4* and *Fallout 3*.
- In August 2009, I got Xbox Live.
- On November 11th 2009, I bought *Modern Warfare 2*.
- On November 9th 2010, I bought *Black Ops*.
- I created my steam account in May 2010, where initially I played *Half Life 2* and *Counter Strike Source*.
- In January 2012, I restarted playing *Runescape* until early 2013.
- I first tried *League of Legends* in the summer of 2012.
- The summer 2013, I played Xbox 360 single player games such as *Assassin's Creed*.
- In December 2013, Started playing *Dota 2*.
- I sold my Xbox 360 and all games in the summer of 2014 for CDN \$120.
- Summer and Winter of 2014, 2015 and 2016 I played *Dota 2* and some *League of Legends*.

### My Gaming Play Times

I only listed the games where I spent more than 50 hours or that I could calculate the number of hours played. For this reason, all the games in older consoles are not listed.

Game	Playtime
Dota 2	1526 hours (64 days)
Modern Warfare 2	50 days approx.
Runescape	50 days approx.
Black Ops	25 days approx.

## LEVELING UP

League of Legends	537 hours (22 days)
Call of Duty 4	20 days approx.
Fallout 3	400 hours (17 days)
Steam Games (excluding ones on this list)	371 hours (15 days)
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	200 hours (8 days)
Counter Strike Source	133 hours (6 days)
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	<b>6647 (277 days)</b>

### Analysis

It is shocking to me that I wasted AT LEAST 277 days of my life playing video games and as of now, I did not benefit in any way from it. It's quite the opposite; gaming screwed up my eye sight (- 4.00 prescription), got me out of shape, and all that time was **quick pleasure without long term benefits**. If I had worked all that time for the minimum wage (assume CND \$10), I could have earned theoretically \$66,460. Also, if I had studied or worked out, I bet I would not be writing this post.

### My Thoughts of Gaming

As of now, September 2016, I believe that some video games are a work of art, while others are just made for pure profit. I know that a handful of people can make a living out of video games using platforms such as Twitch and YouTube. Additionally, professional gamers can earn millions of dollars in competitions. However, that is not my case what so ever. When it comes to me, gaming is a waste of time, since I do not gain any benefits other than forget about the things that I should be doing. I also used to get this weird feeling of regret every night after I spent all day gaming. Every night I would say "tomorrow I will be productive", but the next day my urge of gaming brings me back to my pc to game all day. That cycle repeated so many times. Don't take me wrong, gaming has a bright future with the constant technology improvements such as VR, and a growing industry. I felt like buying a new gaming rig after watching the Battlefield 1 trailer for the first time. I am glad that I didn't. I don't consider gaming with moderation a bad activity. I just cannot control myself, so the problem is me.

### Why am I quitting?

The main reason why I am quitting gaming is for a better future. If I continue gaming at this frequency, I will regret it later when my friends start getting married, landing nice jobs, starting companies or buying houses. The numbers that are on the table were shocking to me, and I was quite ashamed to be honest. I hesitated to post them, but I did to help you guys realize how many hours we *waste* on gaming. I am happy that I still have control of my life and that I realized this before something happened.

Another reason is because I am starting to feel old when I play online games. I don't like the feeling that I get when I play online video games, and there are 11-12 year old kids in the same lobby as me. I feel as though I am wasting my life. There are also new activities that I want to try, such as video editing and vlogging. I think that I spent enough time gaming (see the table above), and it is time to move on.

I am just glad that I realized how many hours, I have *wasted* and that it is not too late now. Hopefully, I also helped one of you guys realize that you were in the same sinking boat.

### My Action Plan

I think that in order to quit gaming, you must have a strong action plan.

## LEVELING UP

- **The best way to start would be by gradually reducing your gaming time.** This would allow you to familiarize yourself with the feeling of deprivation of gaming. I have been only gaming on the pc ever since I sold all my consoles. I remember that every time before school started, I used to uninstall all my games. However, I remember always being on YouTube and Twitch watching people play video games. For this reason, I strongly recommend to permanently delete all your social media accounts related to gaming such as your Twitter, Twitch, YouTube, etc. Which is worst in my opinion, since I am helping a random guy make money while I was my time and do not benefit what so ever (only the quick pleasure).
- **After, the next step would be to find a hobby or something to fill up that void.** There are tons of hobbies out there, you can just google for some ideas. Personally, since I am studying Software Engineering, I started learning new software technologies, and programming languages/frameworks. I also started taking online courses related to web programming to boost my resume. This really paid off, since I got an internship in a prestigious software company as a Front-End developer. I will start September 6th 2016. I will be working until December 2016, and then go back to school in January 2017. I am saying this to motivate you guys, not to show-off. I strongly believe that if I can do it, then anyone can. Also, I will start a monthly blog, where I will keep track of the progress I make, the things I learnt, funny mistakes that I did, etc. The last thing, an the most interesting in my opinion, is that at the beginning of each month, I will give myself some challenges to keep my life fun and entertaining. For September 2016, my challenges are to run 30 minutes per day on the tread mill ( haven't exercised in 3 years) and continue with my strict diet. Another challenge for this month will be to watch at least one movie per week, and hopefully finish a trilogy.

### My Plans For the Future

I intend to do activities/changes that will benefit me in the future. I will list a few the activities that I plan to do before Summer 2017.

- ONLY ALLOWED TO WATCH YOUTUBE ON SATURDAYS; 2HRS MAX (no more procrastination)
- Go to the gym (many benefits)
- Start swimming (many health benefits)
- Continue with my diet (many health benefits)
- Go to sleep everyday at maximum 10:30pm (No more sleep deprivation)
- Do a monthly blog (improve writing skills, keep track of time)
- Build web applications to improve my resume and get another internship summer 2017.
- Go to at least 3 hackathons (improve coding skills, socialize, meet employers)
- Read the news (stay up to date, can start conversations)
- Learn video editing and vlogging (improve communication skills, keep track of time)
- Learn Photoshop (boost my resume, can create crazy websites)
- Learn more about buying properties, start-ups, stock markets, etc.(personal interest, possibility to make money)
- Read/Learn about Bitcoin and Ethereum (personal interest, possibility to make money)

## LEVELING UP

**88.**

Not even a week in... (self.StopGaming)

submitted 4 hours ago by TankDS

I am barely a week in to my controlled gaming schedule as we will call it. I only play games on weekends after I have done everything else that I need to do. To be honest not playing games all week makes the playing them at the weekend feel less rewarding, meaning that may even phase out but it's early days yet. Either way, I have already found that I have far more interaction with my family and I am more willing to do overtime at work and just enjoy the little things in life too. Because I find that I am no longer looking for that next gaming fix, instead of getting in the door and going straight to the PC I talk to family and sit down and just relax, doing other things. If anyone reads this and is considering quitting or maybe just limiting game time like I have, I highly suggest it, you just have to be strong willed or take measures to protect yourself. Good Luck, to you all.

**89.**

It's been 10 months since I quit DotA. Here's what has happened in that timespan...  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago \* by throwthrow231232

- On a whim I started to learn japanese around a month after I quit gaming. I have learned Japanese to the point where I can speak and read pretty decently. I know and can read around 1300 vocab words, which already covers around 85% of actual Japanese text. So I can grab a random japanese book, read it, and actually get a basic understanding of stuff. Oh and I can watch anime and also get a basic understanding of stuff without subtitles.
- I am gonna be travelling to Japan for a month in april, along with my learned Japanese I'm gonna be fucking stoked. I'm an anime lover (aka weeb) and this has always been my dream. I'm gonna be finishing up my 4k vocab words before the trip.
- Not to mention, some aussie anime lover girl on twitter who has been following me for some reason is also fucking stoked that I know japanese and is going to japan, so we have a nice long twitter convo. This sounds stupid but it feels good to get female attention especially as a loner gamer for the past 20+ years of my life.
- Oh, and IRL? I work as a part timer at a restaurant. Grill coworkers have for some reason been a bit flirtatious with me. One girl said to me "I love your clothes. I keep telling my guy friends ppl who dress well get laid". Another girl who is has a pretty extroverted personality has actually initiated multiple conversations with me! And we actually have nice small talk. Feels good. Not sure if this is due to quitting gaming, but I find that I'm MUCH calmer, nicer, and more patient now that gaming is out of my life. When I was playing DotA I was used to muting that angry rager, raging at this or that guy, and this can go on for 5 hours daily. So you can imagine the mental difference that no-gaming has made on me.
- I actually got A's this semester in my comp sci courses. Back when I was playing DotA I would get B's and C's. Basically I was "that guy" who is smart but played a ton of video games. Removing video games changed a lot.
- I've always wanted a career as a professional artist but never "found time" to do it. Well after I quit gaming I am now spending 4 hours daily practicing. I have finished so much more artwork in these past 10 months than I have in the past 3

## LEVELING UP

years of college where I played a ton of DotA.

- I can enjoy the little things in life so much more. After my nightly shower, I can do japanese flashcards for one hour in bed and totally enjoy it. I've been reading so much more now too. Those things are oddly relaxing to me now. I also sleep much earlier too, at 9-10pm. Back when I was playing DotA a lot, after I shower I would *try* to read, but then get this urge to turn on the pc to *play one more game*. And usually I end up playing 2-3 games until like 1AM or something.

If I had to sum it up... I gave up the chance to rank up in DotA, and instead I'm now ranking up in real life. And it feels fucking good man.

90.

A brief tale of my own personal success beating video game addiction.  
(self.StopGaming)

submitted 16 hours ago by decaffienatedhoffy

Before I get into the brief summary of how I got to where I am now, I just need to say that I'm far from perfect. I've still got plenty of vices that I need to tackle in short order ... but the #1 thing that was wasting my years in my childhood has no real hold over me anymore. Just so you have some sort of idea of where we're going to end, I turned 26 last month, and I play video games maybe once or twice a month for a handful of hours at best -- and I almost always /hate/ playing them unless I'm getting something in return (facilitating a friendship, or understanding sound design/music scoring, etc).

I wasn't an easy kid to be around. For most of my Grade 1 - 6 education, teachers constantly complained about my attention span. My inability to finish homework or pay attention in class would prompt them to consider putting me in a special needs class, or have discussions with my parents about possibly medicating me with Ritalin. Thankfully, neither of those things happened. When I was about eight or nine years old, my constant yammering and jumping around eventually had its toll on my parents, so they placated me with a gaming console passed down from my older sister. I won't bring up any potentially addiction-triggering thoughts by telling you what that console is, but let's just say it was enough to start a pretty unhealthy childhood filled with excessive gaming instead of socializing.

Fast-forward. Some shit changed when I hit 12. I lost my biological mother to an aneurysm and an uncle to what I believe was pancreatic cancer. They were important pillars in my life that I was especially close to, but the writing was on the wall ... my addiction to games gave me an outlet to avoid having to actually deal with the loss of family. Tragically, I never really processed either of their losses in any way that a normal person ought to. Kids that were invited out to my mother's funeral thought my mind was baked, or that I was some unfeeling robot, incapable of really feeling any heartbreak over personal loss.

A year later, I was diagnosed with epilepsy. I had an overactive corpus callosum, so I'd get lots of cross-talk between the hemispheres of my brain and get micro-episode seizures throughout the day. One day I had a fairly serious seizure which prompted an emergency visit to the hospital ... where I continued to have several more. The end result: I survived -- seizures are rarely fatal -- but the doctors put me on Tegretol, which was pretty successful in treating the underlying cause. In other respects, the Tegretol really balanced me out. It made me less hyperactive (though nevertheless, still deficient in focus). But I



## LEVELING UP

was more withdrawn than ever before because I had lost more friendships, and especially because I was just entering into middle school for the first time and didn't know how to really operate in this strange, new environment. I got more and more obsessed with games, to the point where I think I was consistently failing middle school classes. Eventually my parents (father and stepmom) had enough of it and did the best thing they ever could have done: they kicked me off the computer and restricted my access to one hour a day.

Without games, I needed to find a new way to spend my time. It wasn't long before I picked up the bass guitar as a means to stave off boredom. In a Freudian sense, I was able to sublimate my love for video games into something more healthy. I would start learning how to play video game music on guitar and ultimately learn the value of engaging in activities that give you a return on your investment. I won't sugar coat it when I say that there were a lot of moments where I was right back to square one. Once in a while I'd pick up Guitar Hero or Rock Band for a few weeks during the years when those games were at their peak. Those games had an immediate, short-term payoff at a time when I couldn't just pick up and play all the songs that were on those games.

But I got older, graduated high school, and somehow fooled the admissions at a prestigious local university into thinking I was intelligent enough to be in the science program. That's more or less when things turned around, and for the better. I had a lot of personal realizations during my stint as a Bachelor of Science student ... that games were no longer getting in the way of my success as a student, but rather my new obsession with MUSIC was (go figure!). I also learned a lot about balance, how much time you had to put into X to get Y effect. I changed my major and minor to Psychology and Music, and discovered for myself that the point of going to University wasn't to chase my half-baked dreams of becoming an M.D., or even my latter-years ideal of chasing a PhD in Psychology. It was to really become a cold, hard pragmatist, and to use my newly trained skills to see future opportunities for success and to carve out problem spaces where I can succeed.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves here. I -just- graduated in August, so I am speaking a bit optimistically. As for what I am doing and working on in the interim, I am ... *drumroll* working on establishing myself as a local musician in a progressive metal band, as well as an independent games composer and producer (oh, the irony!). What I've found and absolutely cannot deny is that part of what was drawing me to games in my childhood was the amazing music, rather than the gameplay. I know it for certain now that I run absolutely no risk of getting obsessed with games ever again. Case and point, I raved about Fallout 4 in 2014 and early 2015 only to play it a total of two times when it actually came out -- and I didn't even buy the game. I went over to a friend's place to play it, and I had more fun just talking over the game than actually playing it. The thought of playing a game still rouses me from time to time ... up until the actual activity comes 'round. Then I get bored pretty damn fast.

Do I still play a game once in a while? Yes -- maybe once or twice a month. The last time I sat down to play a game for any significant length of time, it was because a friend of mine wanted to play co-op Divinity. Normally, the only kind of game that I play on a semi-regular basis is Dungeons and Dragons ... it's very much a social game that requires a lot of creative effort and imagination. At the very least, what I get out of that is unique moments that only a group of friends in the same room can enjoy!

## LEVELING UP

TL;DR: I overcame my gaming addiction to become a more well-adjusted, educated twenty-somethin' and ultimately substituted that gaming addiction with a music composing/producing addiction. At least composing music makes me some money.

(b'\_)b

Peripheral Goals for 2017: - Get on top of my reading/watching list and finish them (Tim Ferris' "Four Hour Workweek", Daniel Levitin's "The Organized Mind", Matt Halpern's "The Working Musician's Playbook"). - Get better at jazz music. I want to feel like less of a hack when I'm improvising! - Continue with my diet. Lost ten pounds since Mid-nov! - Quit porn. T\_T

Cheers guys.

91.

The next step in my recovery: stop watching video games on youtube.

(self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by brapbrapbomoclat1 day

Hey all,

I've quit gaming for a while now. I'm now on an 18 day streak. However, I still watch youtube videos of my favorite streamers like 1-2 hours a day. I feel like it's keeping my addiction going, so from here on out I vow to quit doing that as well. It's going to suck because it's my main activity for relaxing after a stressful day at work, and it's a long time habit. But if I can quit playing games, then I can quit watching them as well!

Another thing I really struggle with is missing the social aspect of gaming. I have a few gaming buddies which over time have become my best friends. I used to game with them all day and we hung out a lot in real life too. But whenever we hung out we always just smoked weed and took turns in playing video games. I've hung out with them one last time after I quit and I realized how sad it actually is. All they do (and I used to) is play video games and smoke weed all day.

Now that I've "seen the light" I'm trying to get them to see that it's a real problem, and that life outside of gaming is so much better. I don't want to come off like a hypocrite so I'm going about it tactfully. But I really hope that I can win them over to my side in the long run, and make them stop gaming as well.

We only communicate on skype chat now. I don't talk to them anymore on skype because they're just playing, and we don't hang out in real life anymore because I don't want to be in a situation like that anymore. It fucking sucks, because they're good guys with possibly bright futures, and I miss them.

Well, in the end I guess it's for the best. I hope that in time they come to the realization that games are indeed a problem, and we can be friends again. I feel kind of lonely now that I've had to cut them out of my life. I guess it's time to find some new friends, with which I can have a genuinely good time in real life.

Thanks for reading.

92.

I dont like my life at all, i feel like im only interested in league of legends.. Just uninstalled somehow because final exams are coming (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by LoveArt96

I dont know if i will manage to dont play that game, but my life can be really fucked if i

## LEVELING UP

wont pass my subjects in that month :(

+I have to learn something not interesting for me, im studying finances and accounting, but learning is still better that lol anyway..

So depressed, anxiety is coming cause of thought of studying

93.

[–]**Scott3611** 1728 days 3 points 10 hours ago\*

When I was in early recovery, I was lost for things to do. It helped to try out the things that my friends were into. Some of them I was into, others not. One was hiking, which it turns out I loved. I ended up hiking all 48 of the 4,000 footers in my state.

I bring this up because so many of us are so used to filling our time with a solo pursuit (i.e. video gaming) that it's natural and easy for us to try to fill our time with other solo pursuits, like working out, reading, watching videos, learning programming or a new language, etc. Those things can be good, but people like us are desperately in need of social pursuits, fun things that involve other people. Community service work can be fantastic. I met some great people that way. Hiking with other mountain lovers has been great. Recovery meetings with other people are great. I've also organized ultimate frisbee games and karaoke nights. I'm not specifically recommending these things, just pointing out that there's a big wide world full of people and interesting activities out there. The only sure way to find out whether or not they suit you is to give them a try.

94.

Time to buckle down. (self.StopGaming)

submitted 18 hours ago by dorj

It happened again... After quitting more than a year ago I've fallen. Recently a close friend of mine had passed away and with his death I fell into a depression. I once again began to play. I hadn't realized what I was doing until it became a problem again.

However, this weekend I made it a point to get rid of anything gaming related in my room. Got rid of my PC, keyboard, mouse and other accessories. All that's left is my MacBook which I don't game on. It feels bad that I started to game again but I think I needed to fall in order to become better. I'm looking at this as an experience to learn from. Now I'll be ready to deal with my friends death. I'm ready to continue on my journey of improvement. Thanks for reading.

95.

The More I Game, the Emptier I Feel (self.StopGaming)

submitted 1 day ago by Inhanihilist

Anybody experience this sensation? I'm convinced that I game to fill some sort of void in my life. Yet, paradoxically, any amount of gaming starts making me feel hollow. It's like the pleasure center in my brain has died a slow death and I no longer experience normal feelings.

[–]**Inhanihilist**[S] 1 point 9 hours ago

Thanks for the comments, guys. Definitely some good insights.

I'm trying to substitute other activities for gaming, but I have terrible physical/mental

## LEVELING UP

fatigue (I'm chronically ill) so gaming is so easy for me to fall back on. I forced myself to read yesterday, and, although it was exhausting, I felt good about it afterwards. I also did a calisthenics routine for about 40 minutes.

**[permalinkembedsaverreportgive goldreply](#)**

96.

1 Month without gaming (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by Crador94378 days

Hey, it's been a little over a month since I decided i have to stop. BEST DECISION EVER!!

My relationship suffered so much from my gaming addiction that my now ex girlfriend lost her feelings for me. ;-( She told me several times over the time of 3-4 months that she thinks I have a problem but i never realized and said I'm fine I can control it.

Well we spent Christmas apart and had both time to think about everything. I realized that I am wasting my life and just play because i don't have any other real time consuming activity. Also i noticed how much my girlfriend is suffering. But when we met again after Christmas she broke up with me.

That was the big bang which made me realize how big of a problem i had. I instantly sold my computer and PS4, started to go to the gym regularly again and hang out with friends. I have to say eventhough I am still down because I lost my girlfriend and we probably won't get back together my life has improved a lot.

I can't believe what I have been missing the last year. Since I stopped I haven't had any craves to play again. But I think this is partly because my girl left me which made it very clear for me that I should never play again to not make the same mistake and lose the most important person in my life..

To everybody who is still struggleling wether to stop or not, GO FOR IT! Think about things that are REALLY important in your life. Does gaming do anything good for it? Probably not!

97.

3 and a half years. No games... (self.StopGaming)

submitted 11 months ago by Jacobiscool21636 days

Hey there. I have been posting a lot of YouTube videos lately and i wanted to actually speak out and tell a little about myself and introduce myself to the community. My name is Jacob and I am an addict. I have been free of games since july of 2012. The last game i ever played was a smart phone game called Osmos. The game that i played the most and still haunts me from time to time is Minecraft. I also played a lot of battlefield 3. In July of 2012 I ran out of my house because i could not stop playing. After i felt that pull to let go of my college, finances, home, and everything else and just play it all away I freaked out and ran upstairs. At first i thought about ending it. But instead i cried myself to sleep. The next morning i promised myself i would stop playing. So i picked up my smartphone and started browsing productivity apps. Next thing i know it is 8 hours later and I am playing this game i downloaded instead. I hadn't gotten up out of bed to use the restroom eat or do anything else. when i realized what i was doing. That no game on a screen was safe for me. That i had no where else to go i just ran. I ran out of my house and ran to my friends next door. They just happened to be in Narcotics Anonymous and i didn't even

## LEVELING UP

know that at the time. They brought me to a meeting. I have not played a game since. Later on I joined Olga and then later CGAA. I still go to their meeting to this day. Since i have been in recovery I went from being the forever alone guy to having lots of friends and attention from girls. I have more money than i ever dreamed i could have. I'm a college graduate and have passive income. Sounds to good to be true? All I had to do was stop gaming and work the steps. Without the steps i would not have 3+ years of not playing. Without stopping games i could have never worked the steps. So it was 2 things. First i had to stop. Then i had to work the steps. Hope you guys enjoyed hearing my story. Thanks for letting me share!

98.

I am quitting today and this is to remind myself why (self.StopGaming)

submitted 2 days ago by perplhayz2 days

It's been a long build up to this. I never realised the problems in my life because all this time I was buried in a game of CSGO, league of legends, WOW over a long period of time. It was just one game to the next one. I don't have any self-control. My studies turned to shit because I was always cramming because I was always up late not sleeping playing games, sleeping in. It was my way of avoiding the anxiety and depression in my life. But i'm going back to what I did before video games. In high school I loved reading, writing and playing guitar. It's time to brush the dust off my books and my old guitar. I'm going back to training and fighting like I used to do before it all happened. For how long this will last, I don't know. All i know is that if i read this post I will remember why I am doing this. I'm taking back my life lads. I'll see you all at the end.

99.

43 year old gamer - Trying to stop (self.StopGaming)

submitted 17 days ago by thechamp73

day 2 - first day was easy. Just worked with my wife all day getting ready for Xmas. Today its hard. I really do want to go shoot something or hit someone with a hammer (in a video game only lol). I have no idea what to do with myself. I am just about Netflixed out...its 1022pm and it feels like 8pm for me. Need to find something else do to.

100.

Just uninstalled everything after logging 120 hours over 2 weeks on Steam alone (self.StopGaming)

submitted 10 days ago by Nexavus10 days

I've been in denial for quite some time, but it was finally brought to my attention by some of my friends in Discord that I was absolutely addicted. Thought about it for the day, decided tonight that I was going to delete it all. Removed 800GB of games from my hard drives, going to go for the 90 day detox. A day early for a New Year's resolution, but who cares. Wish me luck!

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