

Marijuana in Moderation: Relaxing Responsibly

by Anthony Ortals

Humans like their downtime.

Since [the first cultivation of barley](#), we've been using a variety of intoxicating substances to increase our enjoyment of such times.

Somewhere along the way, as people formed societies increasingly reliant upon rules, a decision was made that some intoxicants were better than others. Often this was based on reasoned analysis: [this substance was simply too strong, that substance had too many harmful side or long-term effects](#).

And then there is marijuana.

40 oz. Good, 2 puffs Bad

Despite the [clearly-documented problems associated with alcohol use](#), advertisers and popular media continues to be inundated with images suggesting that alcohol is not only a welcome component of parties and other social gatherings, [it is nearly a necessary one](#).

Compare this with the popular treatment of marijuana. While there is no outright advertising of marijuana consumption due to its illegal status (in most states), we can look to a body of work in popular entertainment, which continues to overwhelmingly depict pot smokers as 'lazy stoners.' This stereotype would become firmly ingrained in popular opinion, despite the presence of counterexamples [such as music legends Willy Nelson and Bob Marley, along with the previous 3 U.S. presidents](#).

Overdoing something can be bad, who knew?

The misuse and excessive citing of studies' results, such as [this one performed at London universities](#), adds to this negative perception. A clear problem with this study is the fact that they only took PET scans of pot users who were categorized as "heavy/problem" users, along with a control group who didn't smoke at all. The results were hardly earth-shattering, but anti-drug advocates often use them to [overgeneralize the effects of marijuana consumption](#). Meanwhile, concerns about alcohol abuse are

often reduced to a quickly-muttered “Please drink responsibly” at the end of some beer ads.

Is there a time to be lazy?

In this increasingly frantic world, where people are bombarded with messages urging them to constantly achieve and consume, some occasional relaxation can be vital to fighting off the unhealthy buildup of stress and burnout. Some studies have shown that people often use marijuana [for some of the same reasons that we have used alcohol](#): to unwind during time set aside for leisure.

And while news media may splash the more titillating examples of excess like tsunamis, it hardly seems unreasonable to suppose that most people are able to control and moderate their use of either substance. Perhaps as we do with other issues, we should learn to respect the right and ability of people to [make their own informed decisions on the appropriate use of marijuana](#) until they demonstrate otherwise.

It seems Colorado voters have decided to do just that, as [business is booming](#) for dispensaries due to the recently legalized sale of recreational cannabis.