

A black and white photograph of a woman with blonde, styled hair, wearing a light-colored top with a dark collar. She is holding a rotary telephone receiver to her ear with her right hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a wall with some foliage.

No Contact Workbook

*getting over your
breakup faster*

SARAH HORTH

2009 Sarah Horth The Smart Woman's Breakup

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Sarah Horth

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<http://feeds.feedburner.com/TheBreakupBitch-TheSmartWomansBreakup>

My story

The first story in this book needs to be my own. **The ending of my last relationship was swift.** I met Brian through an online dating site and I lost him to online dating. We had been together for two years, had bought a house and were planning to have children. He was the most intense guy I had ever been with – sometimes he was a whirlwind of excitement and at other times he was just hard work. But he was intelligent, interesting and worked hard. When he was ‘up’, we had a good time together.

On my 38th birthday I had my first suspicion he was cheating and five days later I found proof **he was trolling internet dating sites for women.** I screamed at him, took time out and within a week decided that as he was still lying, we had to breakup. It was hard to go from thinking that everything was great in our relationship to being single so quickly. It was hard to get my head around the change.

I did my best to go No Contact with him – we had property and money to sort out so we still had to communicate. I tried to keep it business-like and do it by email but it was hard. **I slipped up – I was not perfect.** But I kept at it as I knew I had no choice. I did not want to be with him anymore, and going No Contact was the easiest way to get him out of my system.

It worked. And it can work for you too.

I'm gonna wash that man...

So you've done it. Or he's done it. Someone's done it and you're on your own. Not that it's sunk in yet that you are single, on your own, footloose, fancy-free, unattached, unencumbered, free to do as you wish. No matter how you name it, it doesn't feel real. You're sitting on your bed staring at the wall, with that bad song running through your head:



Get off that sofa!

*All by myself
Don't wanna be
All by myself any more*

You are sure you should be doing something, but you can't quite work out what. You know there are feelings simmering away inside you, but none are reaching beyond the shock you feel. Is it possible that you've forgotten how to feel? Your mind is stuck on a loop trying to find ways to fix the problem that is unfixable.

Why do you need this book?

Like withdrawal from a drug, a breakup is withdrawal from a person:

(Breaking up) actually heightens the phenomenon of passionate love in the brain circuits of both men and women. That brain region desperately, hungrily seeks the loved one. Withdrawal – as if weaning from a drug – takes over.

Louann Brizindine, Neuropsychiatrist

You will crave your 'drug' – your ex. It is normal to think obsessively about your ex as your brain searches to get its 'fix' of the love hormones. So you need a plan to keep you on track with your breakup. You need to get through this one day at a time – and this book will take you through it, step by step.

Organizing your Ex-Purge

The first thing to do, besides survive, is to get into motion with your Ex-Purge program. Lying in bed might seem to be a better option than getting active and clean of your ex, but you will get through this faster without things that remind you of him hanging around.



Time to get cleaning!

Is there a time limit?

The Ex-Purge program has no set time limit, but most women I talked to spent about two weeks getting themselves unencumbered. Some were faster – clothes and toothbrush packed up, phone number deleted – all over within days. Others had more complex relationships, with more to sort out so it took a bit longer. There is no ‘should’ about this, take the time you need, but be wary that you aren’t dragging it out and using it as a way to stay close to your ex. Right now your ex is a habit you need to break.

Exercise: Decide on your time limit

Make a commitment now to the amount of time you are going to take to wash your ex out of your life:

I will get my ex out of my home and habits by:

What were your habits together?

Your first step is to understand the habits you had with him – understanding what you are giving up when you give up your relationship is an important part of . The routine of being together happened over time - the things you did together were slowly woven into your life.

- ⇒ He was the one you hugged when you had a bad day
- ⇒ He was the one you watched bad TV with on a Tuesday night
- ⇒ He was the one you argued about leaving the bathroom in a mess
- ⇒ He was the one that did the clean-up after dinner parties

You probably didn't notice how he had become the routine part of your life in many small ways as well as in the big things such as money, intimacy, future dreams and sex. Those are probably too big to think about right now – for now concentrate on **the everyday small habits** that have gradually infiltrated your life.

Even if you were the person who initiated the break, you still have to face a life where all the small things you did together are suddenly removed. It will be a relief that some of these things have gone.

Real-life: Sarah's story



I didn't miss Brian's snoring, his leaving at 6am for work, or his addiction his online game. There were nice things I missed too: Brian was fun to hang out with, he taught me a lot about business and gardening, and I knew I could have a hug at any time I needed. It was hard to give those things up to know that companionship was no longer right there.

Exercise: What were your habits?

For you it might be that he left the toilet seat up, was chronically late, or was unable to change a light bulb or the toilet roll. Or for the good things it might have been the play fights you had, the great food he cooked or the mad jokes he told.

1. What annoying habits of your ex are you letting go of?
2. What nice habits of your ex are you letting go of?
3. Who could you share some of the good things with now?

<i>Good things:</i>	<i>New person to share with:</i>

Being aware of all the parts of the relationship you are giving up, will help you to move on from your breakup. You will understand what you are detaching from. This will also start you thinking about who else is in your life you can share the good times with.

Get started on the Ex-Purge

The Ex-Purge helps you to achieve two things:

- ✓ Getting him out of your home and habits so you can move on
- ✓ Helping you to look beyond the shock you are feeling to understand that you are not with him any more.



Try not to drink too much!

Some of you will not feel like doing this, you may well not feel like doing anything at the moment. For others, this cleanse is exactly what you need. If you find it all too hard, get some help. **Get a good girlfriend over, pour a glass of wine** and hand her the Ex-purge checklist from the next page, so she can help you get started. Try not to have too many glasses of wine as you may be tempted to destroy all his possessions rather than give them back!

What if I don't get everything done?

If you still have items left on your list, **break each down into small tasks** and put them in a to-do list – then do them at your own pace.

Don't be too hard on yourself as you're going through some big changes. Hold onto the thought of how good you will feel once you're finished – often the thought of doing is worse than the doing.

Take care of yourself – these are big changes

You gradually adopted the habits of your relationship until they were knitted into your life, and now you've done more than dropped a stitch, you are unraveling the whole sweater so you can start afresh.

Checklist: Home

Check the items off as you manage to complete them:

Sort out **where you are going to live** if you are living together. I have stayed in the same house with an ex (it was my house so I couldn't move), as it was Christmas when we broke up and I took pity on him. He stayed for an extra three weeks and I do not recommend it. It was very hard on both of us and only dragged out the breakup. Quick and clean is far better!

If you don't live together: **search your apartment for his stuff**. Look for everything he might have left at your place and give it back, preferably through a mutual friend rather than in person.

Rack your brain for **what you left at his place** and send him a list. Ask him to search his place for your stuff and get him to send it back – or ask if you can go over when he isn't there and search out your stuff. Leave the key at his place when you go.

Remove photos of you as a happy couple from around your apartment. You don't need to go as far as cut him out of all your photos but take them down off the walls and from your bedside table.

Gather up mementos that remind you of him and **pop them in a nice box** and put it away in the back of your closet. You don't need them hanging around in your new single space.



Make room in your closet for more shoes by returning his things!