



Beginners Guide to Tobacco Pipe Smoking

"I believe that pipe smoking contributes to a somewhat calm and objective judgment in all human affairs."

- Albert Einstein





Pipe smoking as a ritual stretches back into the mists of ancient times. It has been a meaningful and enjoyable practice from time immemorial.

So what does this mean for smoking pipes in the 21st Century? Well, certainly a lot has changed in the world, but getting the most pleasure out of pipe smoking still connects back to those ancient practices.

Smoking a pipe can help isolate you from the stress of modern life, help you to both focus and relax.

Enjoying the smoking of a pipe is just as much about the ritual as it is the tobacco.

So to help you take the most pleasure out of your new pipe, we have designed this straight-forward and easy-to-follow guide.

Support

Being a small business, every product review counts since it helps us to compete with the larger corporate sellers. We'd really appreciate your product review. All Whitluck's products come with a 90-day product warranty. If you would like to upgrade your product warranty to a lifetime warranty, email our team at help@whitlucks.com

We'd love to hear your thoughts and if you have any problems please get in touch. Being a small company, you will get a personal response from us :)

About us:

We have a passion for pipes and, at Whitluck's, we believe we can make a difference. Our mission is to provide artisan-quality tobacco pipes at an affordable price. We believe pipe smoking is the finest and most enjoyable form of smoking and we want to share it with the world. When we make pipes, we focus on the important details. We only partner with workshops that follow ethical sourcing practices and produce high-quality hand-crafted products. We hope our pipes will continue to bring pleasure and enjoyment to this special and ancient pastime.

About this e-book:

This e-book is made for buyers of our Whitluck's tobacco pipes. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the express written consent of Whitluck's.

Acknowledgements:

Whitluck's would like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the expert tobacconists and pipe smokers who generously dedicated their time to advising us in the creation of this e-book. Without their years of experience we would never have been able to include such great insight and advice.

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The Pipe: Materials and Design

A good tobacco pipe is a thing of beauty. It should sit comfortably in the hand and be a pleasure to see and hold. A well-crafted and cared-for pipe can conjure emotions and memories, but it also must be respected.

For, as simple as a tobacco pipe may seem, pipe crafting is an ancient art, and a great deal of knowledge and expertise is required to produce quality pipes.

The basic component parts of your pipe:

Chamber

The inner-section of the bowl where the pipe tobacco is burned.

Bowl

The bowl forms a cup-shape outer shell for the chamber.



Stem

The part that you put your mouth to. The stem should fit tightly to the shank.

Shank

Often continuing from the bowl, the shank is between the bowl and stem.

Our pipes are crafted out of Ebony. Finely-textured and smooth, Ebony makes for an excellent tobacco pipe wood, particularly for beginner pipe smokers. This is because Ebony wood provides a neutral smoke that doesn't strongly affect the flavor of the tobacco. It is also strong and durable, if properly cared for.

Our pipe chamber is perfectly cylindrical, allowing you to precisely measure the desired amount of tobacco. The more tobacco you have, the longer and stronger your smoke will be. All our pipes come with a kit that contains all the essential accessories a beginner needs to enjoy their pipe.

The Accessories: Features and Functions



Pipe Screens



Pipe Filters



Pipe Stand



Accessory Pouch



Pipe Cleaners



Pipe Tool

(1) Pipe Screens

Pipe screens are most commonly made of metal mesh, cut and molded into small balls. These can be shaped to snugly fit in your pipe chamber. The purpose of a pipe screen is to allow smoke and fine ash to fall through, while holding larger pieces in place. An advantage of using a screen is that it keeps your pipe cleaner. More importantly, it should stop any large chunks of ash being pulled through the stem and into your mouth. Some experienced pipe smokers also use them as they find it creates a smoother and more consistent smoke.

Extra advice for using pipe screens:

Metal pipe screens can come in different sizes, but our pipe screens are 0.5" and have been selected to perfectly fit in our pipe bowls. However, since the screens are metal they are malleable, allowing you to press the mesh into the chamber until it sits perfectly flush with the bottom of the bowl. Importantly, the screen ball should cover the chamber hole.

(2) Pipe Filters

The pipe filters included in your accessory kit are a 'pass-through' carbon-filled canister type and are one of the most common styles of filter. The pass-through filter is primarily used to reduce the amount of nicotine and tar present in the tobacco inhaled. They also reduce moisture, which does mean they can dull the flavor of your pipe tobacco slightly.

However, because they are absorptive than other filters they also prevent moisture build-up and can keep your pipe running cleaner.

These filters also greatly reduce the potential for suffering from tongue bites, a common problem for beginner pipe smokers, which is exactly why we preferred to provide this type of filter.

Why to Smoke with a Filter?

1. First and foremost, using a filter is considered healthier than smoking a pipe unfiltered. This is because the filter materials are selected to be absorbent to tar and nicotine, which reduces the risk of damaging your lungs, especially if you inhale the tobacco smoke.
2. Pipe filters are known to drastically reduce tongue bite. What is tongue bite? It's a sensation, often described as a 'fuzzy' or 'leathery' feeling and is associated with the hot combustion materials coming into contact with your tongue. Filters help to stop these materials reaching your tongue. However, filters need replacing from time-to-time. Neglecting to do so will negate the benefits of using a filter and increase the severity of tongue bite.
3. Filters can absorb a large amount of moisture. This benefit will be felt especially by smokers of more wet tobacco types and, as mentioned above, too much moisture in the stem can detract from the pipe smoking experience and necessitate more regular cleaning sessions.
4. Another benefit of filters is that they can help control draw, a common issue for beginner pipe smokers. Regulating your draw is important to allow a consistent combustion and prevent ash or unburnt tobacco entering the stem and, eventually, your mouth. Beginners can sometimes smoke too quickly and with too much force. The natural resistance of a filter helps to ensure a slow draw, keeping the smoke cooler and more flavorful.

Why to Smoke without a filter?

Filterless tobacco pipe smoking remains popular in the U.S.A. because, arguably, it provides several experiential advantages. The benefits of pipe filters come from their absorptive properties; however this can also detract from what pipe smokers desire most in their tobacco, flavor.

The number one reason why unfiltered pipe smoking is popular is to ensure the subtle and exquisite tastes of tobacco can be fully enjoyed.

Filters are likely to mute and remove much of the unique flavors of different tobacco types, particularly aromatics. This drawback is felt especially by those pipe smokers who do not inhale, since these smokers are primarily interested in the tobacco flavor.

Additionally, using a filter can make cleaning your pipe more difficult, as they prevent you from running a pipe cleaner through a pipe while smoking.

This means you need to wait until after smoking, once the pipe has cooled to remove the filter and clean it properly. Filters must also be changed regularly to prevent a build-up of gunk inside your pipe, which does add considerably to the costs of pipe smoking.

Also, used filters must be removed within 24 hours of smoking, otherwise the absorbed moisture and tar will not dry and will eventually damage the wood.

So, should you use a filter?

The answer to this question is that it is up to personal choice. Pipe smoking is a personal hobby and is enjoyed for different reasons and in different ways and so your decision to use a filter, or not, should not be decided by someone else. It should be your decision.

It should be noted that there are a wide variety of different filter types employed in pipes, each with their own advantages and drawbacks and so for the future it may be worth considering the different options available when purchasing a new pipe.

Our best advice is to use this information to guide you and give both filtered and unfiltered smoking a try and make your own mind up.

(3) Pipe Stand

This elegant and sturdy chromed metal stand allows you to display and store your pipe when not in use. A stand can also provide a solid platform for beginners to packing their pipe for smoking, until they get more comfortable.

(4) Accessory Pouch

We provide you with this durable pipe bag to ensure that your pipe will remain safely stored and in top condition when not in use or being displayed on the pipe stand.

(5) Pipe Cleaners

Pipe cleaners are an important tool for keeping the internals of your pipe fresh and clean after a smoke. Pipe cleaners are also great for making fantastic stick figures!

(6) Pipe Tool

This pipe tools provide a variety of small gadgets designed to help you in packing, smoking, and emptying tobacco pipes. Our '3-in-1' pipe tool combines the key gadgets you'll need in one handy tool. This tool contains a pick, reamer, and tamper.

The Tobacco: Making a Selection

Tobacco can be bought at your local shop or online. A specialist tobacconist store can be a good place for beginners to start, as there should be good advice on hand to help you make the right choice for your personal taste. As you grow in confidence, you may wish to start visiting online stores for their wide international selection.

Tobacco products are mostly a blend sourced from various parts of the world. Tobacco blenders tend to use different types of leaves to produce a variety of desirable flavors, burn rates, and mouthfeel.

In the same way that winemakers mix varieties and brewers combine malt and hops to change the flavor of beer, tobacco blenders do the same with the following leaves:



Virginia

A naturally sweet and light leaf, it has a quick burn and is a popular flavor choice.



Kentucky

The fire-curing process results in a dark colour and smoky aroma.



Burley

Known for its slow burning properties and its nutty, relatively mild flavor.



Latakia

A strongly-flavoured variety, its smoky flavor adds punch and color to a blend.



Perique

A famous Louisiana-based leaf that is often sought for its spicy notes.



Oriental

The general category for Middle Eastern leaves (Latakia included). Known for their often bold and spicy profile.

The Tobacco: Making a Selection

Selecting your first pipe tobacco can seem daunting if you don't know what you're looking for, but it doesn't have to be complicated and trying new blends is all part of the enjoyment. Blenders use different proportions of these various tobaccos to create interesting and unique overall flavor profiles.

Overall, tobacco blends can be divided into two categories: aromatics and non-aromatics. These two types provide a great starting point.

Aromatic

Aromatic blends have had additional flavorings mixed into the tobacco. Flavor types are therefore practically unlimited. Popular additives include vanilla, nuts, whiskey, fruit, chocolate and many more.

The 'flavor' is, however, most noticeable in the aroma, rather than the taste. Hence, beginners can sometimes feel disappointed when the taste doesn't quite match the aroma.

Although they might not necessarily taste as they smell, aromatics do produce pleasant fragrances to fill a room.

Non-Aromatic

Non-aromatic tobaccos are in fact not always 'unflavored'.

A sweet, alcohol based, liquid (i.e. casing) is often mixed into most tobaccos to draw-out their natural pleasant flavors. But if the casing is neutral or mild and doesn't greatly alter the flavor or aroma of the tobacco, it is considered a non-aromatic. These tobaccos are sought for their natural and more traditional flavor.

However, various complementary tobaccos are still often blended together to enhance their flavor profiles.

There's no right or wrong when it comes to pipe tobacco, the enjoyment of each blend is ultimately up to the user. But our advice is, find your local pipe-centric tobacco shop and have a banter with the tobacconist, they will help advise you on what's in each blend and how it will smoke and taste.

Get experimental with blends, try different styles of cut, bounce between aromatics and non-aromatics until you find something that suits your style. Then go try something new again!



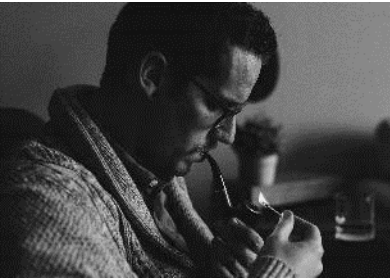
Packing Your Pipe

To ensure a good smoke, it is essential to correctly pack your pipe. However, there's no way around it, learning to do this just takes time, practice and patience. It's fair to say, the art of packing a pipe is the most challenging part of pipe smoking and can be frustrating for beginners.

We reckon that most people who give up on learning to smoke a pipe probably did so because they couldn't master packing a pipe quickly enough to suit them. To avoid frustration, take pleasure in the process and your mastery of it. Take it as an opportunity to slow down, ease your mind and relax. And, as always, practice makes perfect.

So, let's give it a shot, shall we? The most common technique for packing a pipe is the "three layer" method and it's a good place to start out. Remember, if it doesn't work out, just try again. Before long you'll be packing like a pro!

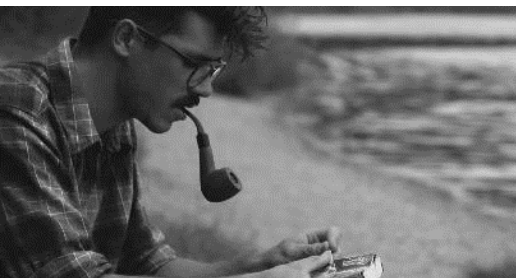
Packing Your Pipe



1/ First, ensure your pipe is completely empty and free of any ash or leftover scraps. Take a pinch of fresh tobacco with your fingers and gently push it to the bottom of the bowl. If your finger doesn't fit, you can always use the tamper on your 3-in-1 Pipe Tool. The tobacco should fill about half of the chamber.



2/ Next, grab another helping of tobacco and, in a similar fashion, press this down on top of the first round. This time you can press a little firmer. The chamber should now be about 3/4 full.



3/ For the third time, take another pinch of tobacco and firmly press it down on top of the first two. This final amount should bring your tobacco almost to the top of the bowl, but with a slight space remaining.



4/ Next, take a test draw through the pipe. If you find little to no air coming through, knock out your tobacco and start over. Remember what we said about patience? But believe us, mastering this process will be worth it once your tobacco is lit.

Note

When breaking in a new pipe, some people recommend filling the chamber only to 1/3 or 1/2 the depth described above for the first few smokes. This helps to form a protective cake of charcoal in the chamber, although not all smokers agree with this approach.

Lighting Your Pipe

A good pipe lighter is the best way to light your pipe. Since the flame comes from the side of these lighters it makes it much easier to tip the flame into the bowl.

Don't be too concerned if you find it difficult to keep your pipe lit at first. It's usual even for experienced smokers to have to re-light several times, especially towards the bottom of the bowl.

Remember to relax and enjoy yourself, that's the whole point, after all. With practice, you'll find it easier to keep your pipe lit.



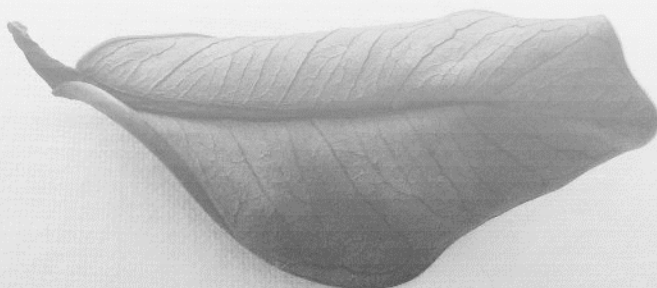
Lighting Your Pipe

1/ Charring Light Getting your pipe lit correctly at the start is the best way to keep it lit for longer. The most common technique for a good smoke is to light the pipe twice. The first light is called the 'charring light' or 'false light'. Use a match or lighter and move it around the bowl in a circle while taking gentle draws on the pipe. Do this until the tobacco is evenly lit. Wait, you're not quite there yet. Let this charring light die out.

2/ Tamping Next, get the surface of the tobacco even again using your tamper from your 3-in-1 Pipe Tool. This also serves to put out any remaining embers created during the charring light (remember, that's OK). You are now ready for what pipe smokers' call the 'true light'!

3/ True Light Using the same process as for the charring light, hold the flame above the tobacco once again. This time, take longer, more deep draws, while moving the lighter in circles several times. Once the smoke you're drawing has become consistently thick and your tobacco in the chamber has developed a nice red ember, your pipe is lit!

4/ Puff Don't forget to puff! Because tobacco can be quite moist, it will go out if not puffed regularly. You can choose whether to fully draw from the pipe but keep regularly taking a puff. Due to the moisture, you will eventually hear some gurgling in your pipe. This is a natural process of combustion. A pipe cleaner can be used to remove some of this moisture but remember a regular full clean out is required too.



Lighting Your Pipe



Avoid using 'wind-proof' lighters at all costs. The flame will likely burn the edges of the bowl. Make sure to always use matches or a pipe-smoker's lighter.

Some Common Issues

If a pipe is correctly packed and lit, you shouldn't need to go through the whole process again if it goes out. You'll only need to take a few draws with a flame held over the tobacco for it to relight.

The key message is: a tobacco pipe is not a cigarette, it will not stay lit without help. But don't worry, even long-time smokers normally have to relight their pipes from time to time!

The pace at which you smoke (i.e. the rhythm that you draw from your pipe) is very important. You should enjoy a regular but relaxed smoking pace. With practice and experimentation you will achieve the perfect pace for you. The idea is to puff frequently enough to keep the tobacco lit, but not so frequently as to cause the pipe to burn too hot, which contributes to tongue bite and may damage your pipe.

If you can't hold the bowl of your pipe comfortably in your hand, or if you can't hold the side of the bowl against your face for more than a few seconds, then you're smoking too fast. If this happens, set the pipe down for a few minutes to cool, then re-light and start again.

Someone once described the perfect smoking pace as one where the pipe is always on the verge of going out.



After Smoke: Cleaning & Caring

To best care for your pipe it should be cleaned after each smoke.



Cooling

Once you're done smoking, feel free to do nothing! Relax and let the pipe cool. Once cool, you can tamp down any remaining tobacco to extinguish it. Just to be absolutely clear: never, ever, take apart the pipe while it's still hot, it can cause the stem to crack.



Use the 3-in-1 Tool

You can use the long end to scoop the tobacco out of the pipe. And, afterwards, blow through the empty pipe to remove any remaining dottle (tobacco remnant).



Pipe Cleaner

Use the pipe cleaners to clean out the shank and stem. Take the stem off the pipe. Slightly moisten a pipe cleaner and push it all the way through the shank until you can see the end at the bottom of the bowl. Gently blow through the shank to clear away any loosened ash. Repeat this process for the stem.



Alcohol Swab

Your pipe can be swabbed with alcohol to help cleaning. A pipe cleaner or cotton swab dipped in alcohol can be used to remove hardened gunk that can block airflow and affect flavor. It's best to finish this process by using a dry pipe cleaner to remove remaining moisture. Some pipe smokers do this after each smoke and others don't bother with it at all. Our advice is to use an alcohol swab to clean your pipe after every three to four smokes.

After smoke: Cleaning & Caring

Remember, when cleaning:

Never open a hot pipe. The stem and the mouthpiece are made of different materials. If opened while hot, rubber can expand slightly and this will give you difficulties putting the components back together.

It is very important to look after your pipe properly. If you take care of your pipe it will last for many years and only improve with age.

Whatever blend of tobacco or methods you use smoking a pipe, like writing a good novel, takes a lot of tinkering and patience. But the work is worth it. The pleasure of smoking a pipe can unlock ideas, order your thoughts, and settle disputes.

I particularly like how Scottish playwright Sir James M. Barrie puts it in his book *My Lady Nicotine: A Study in Smoke*. Writing about the arrival of smoking to England, he said:

The glory of existence became a thing to speak of. Men who had hitherto concerned themselves with the narrow things of home put a pipe in their mouths and became philosophers.

Poets and dramatists smoked until all ignoble ideas were driven from them, and into their place rushed such high thoughts as the world had not known before.”

- Sir James M. Barrie

We hope you enjoy your pipe and wish you many years of happy piping!