

## *Chapter Three*

# Joints

## *Taking an Active Role with Rolling Paper*

Ever since the marijuana renaissance of the 1960s, the joint has been hailed as the cannabis classic. Even classics wane in popularity and do not reign forever. Presently, only half of all cannabis smokers still smoke joints.<sup>1</sup> The rest have migrated to hand pipes, water pipes, and herbal vaporizers. Pass that joint? Instead, the time may have come to pass *on* that joint.

### LET'S GET ROLLING

Grind or crumble some cannabis bud, spread the shreds or crumbs onto a thin sheet of slightly translucent paper, shape that sheet into a long and narrow cylinder, and then seal that cylindrical bundle along its length. You've now rolled yourself what decades ago was called a "reefer." Nowadays, one of the few vestiges of that nickname remains in references to the cult classic movie, *Reefer Madness*. The street slang name now more in vogue is "joint."

Simple and small, the joint is traditional, portable, concealable, disposable, and shareable. One convenient thing more—it is smokable. While it takes some practice to learn the science and fine art of rolling your own joint, once you've mastered the technique you can claim your cred as a cannabis connoisseur. If you're not there yet and in need of a tutorial to learn how to take an active role with rolling paper, you'll find an overabundance of instructional videos on YouTube. When less than

five minutes in length, some videos are even cleverly edited precisely to 4' 20", the underground code number for cannabis. "Wanna hang out to toké up? Meet ya at 4:20 p.m."

## CUTTING CORNERS IN YOUR USE OF ROLLING PAPERS

If you happen to have a pack of rolling papers stashed along with your stash, go dig it out and hold it in your hand. Do you really want to hold that paper in your lungs? Even thin paper merely adds to the toxic load, so the goal while rolling a joint is to use as little paper as possible.

Two thin joints, compared to one thick one, require two sheets of rolling paper rather than one sheet. That's one valid reason for rolling thick joints. With practice, regardless of how thick or thin the joint, one sheet should get you rolling, thus reducing your use of rolling paper.

Another way to cut corners in your use of rolling papers is to cut its corners. The inner edge of the paper that faces you when you begin to roll does not need to be as wide as the other edge farther away from you that has adhesive to seal the joint. So trim the two corners facing you where you start rolling. Some brands even omit that one extra step by providing two corners that already are trimmed.

The thinner the joint, the more room to breathe. Being cooled by air along all of its outer edges, joints aerate the smoke before it reaches your lips. That's why smoke from joints goes down the hatch more smoothly than smoke from most hand pipes. And that's why novices have an easier time first smoking joints than first smoking pipes. Indeed, for novices, joints may be the ideal "cannabinoid drug delivery system," but only for budding novices.

"Feds Go to Pot!" exclaimed the *New York Post's* front-page headline when the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published its groundbreaking study about medicinal marijuana in 1999.<sup>2</sup> The study surprised proponents of the herbal remedy for both its accuracy and its advocacy. The IOM, however, cautioned that "[a]s a cannabinoid drug delivery system, marijuana cigarettes are not ideal."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, if you're no longer a tenderfoot and are already a master roller, then the time may have come to shed that skill and leave joints behind you.