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亲爱的经济学家：Dear Economist,我有点想抽烟的念头。抽烟的人似乎能从抽烟中获得很多快乐。但我真的不想让抽烟缩短我的寿命。那么，我可以在什么年龄开始理智地抽烟，以便从中获得足够的快乐，让缩短的寿命变得物有所值呢？I like the idea of smoking. people who do it seem to get a lot of pleasure from it. But I dont want it seriously to curtail my longevity. So at what age could I sensibly start smoking in order to achieve sufficient pleasure to make the shortening of lifespan worthwhile?彼得(Peter)，来自伦敦Peter, London亲爱的彼得：Dear Peter,你指出抽烟有收益也有成本，这一点是正确的，而这意味着抽烟可能完全是理性的。你也暗中承认，抽烟会上瘾，因为你的香烟消费计划似乎将要开始，而且再也不会停止。但这个消费计划的时机可能不太好。首先，有一些证据表明，如果你在年轻时开始抽烟，然后在死于心脏病之前戒烟，你死于心脏病的风险就会迅速降低。（不过，不要问我关于癌症的风险。我是一位经济学家，不是流行病学家。）Youre right to point out that smoking has benefits as well as costs, and that implies that it might be perfectly rational to smoke. You also implicitly accept that smoking is addictive, since your cigarette consumption plan seems to be to start and never stop. But this consumption plan may be poorly timed. For one thing, there is some evidence that if you smoke while young and can quit before you die of a heart attack, your risk of heart disease

rapidly recedes. (Dont ask me about the cancer risk, though. Im an economist, not an epidemiologist.)除了医疗问题外，还有社会问题。如果你现在20岁，而且完全不顾风险地抽烟，你看起来可能有些冒昧、鲁莽，还有那么一点点性感。如果到你60岁的时候，人们看到你在吸烟，他们不会意识到你是聪明地从58岁开始吸烟的。可惜的是，他们只会认为，你从未能把烟戒掉。 Leaving aside the medical questions, theres the social side. If youre 20 years old and smoke in full defiance of the risks, you still have a chance to look brash, daring and just a little bit sexy. If people see you smoking at 60, they wont realise your brilliance in taking up the habit at age 58. Theyll simply assume that, pathetically, youve never been able to quit.因此，我的建议是，吸烟的最佳方案是 要么永远不要开始，要么年轻时就开始抽烟，然后迅速戒掉。你的选择取决于很多因素，其中之一是你对自己意志力的估计。这在事先很难猜测。或许你应该告诉你的医生，说你计划开始抽烟，并问问他如何在开始吸烟后戒掉。至少，你会引起他的注意。 My advice, then, is that the optimal consumption path for cigarettes is either never to start, or to start young and stop fairly quickly. Which you choose depends on, among other things, your estimate of your own will-power. This is hard to guess in advance. Perhaps you should tell your doctor you plan to start smoking, and ask him for advice about how to quit once youve started. At least youll get his attention. 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 www.100test.com