

Changing Drinking Habits

Changing your drinking habits is important to regaining or remaining in control over your drinking, actions and behaviour. This page gives some pointers of how to start to make changes to make a positive difference.

Good Reasons for Changing & Goals

Deciding on good reasons for changing your drinking habits will help you to succeed. A good reason is one that makes sense to you, a reason that you believe in. There are dozens of reasons but here are a few examples:

- You will save money and be able to spend it on other things you enjoy.
- You will lose weight.
- Less likely to have arguments with those around you.
- You will have more energy.



When planning to change your drinking habits it is worthwhile having a goal to work towards. Goals can be daily, weekly or monthly. Set your goals weekly and remember to monitor your drinking to work out if you are meeting your goals. The main thing to remember is if you do not meet your goals keep trying, work out strategies to help in the future.



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Pace Yourself

- Know how much you have drunk. Try keeping a record, remember to record the ABV or % of the drink as well as how much you consume.
- Make them singles, Try having longer drinks, top up with a non alcoholic mixer to slow the rate of alcohol intake.
- Start later, make a rule for yourself about when you start drinking. Think about starting to drink later in the day, if drinking in the evening plan to go out later so that you have less time to drink.
- Try a spacer, have a non alcoholic drink in between alcoholic ones. That way you will space out your drinking and consume less alcohol overall.
- Take smaller sips, plan how long a drink should last and slow down the rate at which you drink. Taking small sips, less often will help to make a drink last longer. Putting a drink down between sips will also mean you slow your drinking.
- Only take enough money out with you that you intend to spend.



Distract Yourself

- Go out with someone you trust and enjoy their company and conversation.
- Try something new, instead of drinking take up the activity you have always been interested in. Drinking can take up a lot of time and having something else to fill that time will reduce the opportunity and time you have for drinking.
- Do something whilst drinking, darts, skittles, pool or a quiz. All these take time and reduce the amount of time available for drinking.
- Change your drink, familiar drinks increase the desire to drink. Try something new, if drinking spirits try them with a mixer to



make a long drink that will last longer.. Be sure to find out the alcohol content of what you are drinking to ensure your overall consumption does not increase.

Look After Yourself

- Eat healthy and a substantial meal prior to drinking. The alcohol is absorbed more slowly and give a pleasant sensation if you have eaten prior to drinking.
- Beware of eating crisps or peanuts when drinking, these make you thirsty and mean you drink more. If having a snack try having a non alcoholic drink with it.
- Learn to refuse a drink, practice what you would say, you are the one who decides what and when you drink. Be prepared to say "No thanks, I'm cutting down", "Sorry, doctors orders". You may like to request a non alcoholic drink instead.
- Day of rest, Give your body a break from alcohol for a day.
- Don't drink alcohol if you are angry, depressed, sad or tired.