

Six top tips for cutting down on alcohol and improving your health

If you're thinking about cutting back on alcohol, it can feel confusing, daunting or even overwhelming knowing where to start – especially with pressure to drink more from those around us and constant nudges from clever alcohol adverts and promotions telling us that alcohol is the answer to stress, fun, connection and celebration.

But change is possible. Here are a few tips to help get you started.

1. Write down your reasons for cutting down

Think about how alcohol makes you feel and write down what you're looking forward to most by cutting back – whether that's improved sleep, feeling fitter, having less anxiety, saving money, or improving your relationships.

2. Know your triggers

Drinking habits are often reinforced over time through repetition. So, when it comes to changing drinking behaviour start with understanding your triggers. Ask yourself: when do I drink more, where, who with, and how am I feeling at the time?

Once you know your triggers, plan simple ways to manage them – and adjust your plan as you go.

3. Cut out the drinks you're having out of habit

Spot the times in the week where you drink out of boredom or habit – like the post-gym beer or mid-week glass of wine – and start cutting those out. By letting go of those extra drinks, your weekly units will quickly reduce.

4. Switch to alcohol free drinks

Alcohol-free drinks are widely available, and swapping drinks is much more effective than just cutting them out. If you are visiting friends, ask if they will provide some alcohol-free options, or consider taking your own.

5. Reduce your weekly units with a few simple tricks

Swap pints of beer for halves, large glasses of wine for small glasses, and double measures of spirits for single measures. Make every second drink a glass of water. And choose a lower ABV percentage of your preferred drink type to reduce the number of overall units.

Having something to eat before you drink and, if possible, while drinking will also slow down the rate alcohol is absorbed into your bloodstream and help you pace yourself.

6. Recruit a trusted ally to support you

Telling someone about your decision to cut down on alcohol and why can be incredibly powerful. Having support from someone you trust can help you stay motivated, celebrate successes, manage setbacks, and keep you accountable and on track.

Even small changes can improve sleep, mood, energy, relationships and overall wellbeing – with the positive effects extending far beyond ourselves.

Start by checking
your drinking today!

Check your drinking – quick, free and non-judgemental
alcoholchange.org.uk

