

Going sober? Here's how NOT to give up



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You've made the decision to cut out alcohol. Great! Whatever your reason for stopping drinking, whether it's for a month or for good, there may be times you find it hard to keep going. Changing any habit is hard, but it's not impossible. Here are our tips for you on how NOT to give up on giving up.

Know your reason why

Your 'why' is your motivation for making a change and there are lots of reasons why cutting out alcohol is a positive thing to do. It can help you lose weight, sleep better and improve your mental health and even your relationships. Long-term, it will reduce your risk of seven types of cancer. But it's important to know your personal 'why'. By making it personal to you, it will improve your chances of sticking to your goal.

When things feel difficult, reminding yourself of your 'why' will give you a boost of motivation and help you walk away from a drink.

Ask for the support of others

Telling your friends and family about your goals can help them understand why you'll be turning down drinks, or perhaps taking up new activities in place of the pub. Getting their support can also help you stick to your goals.

But there are times when friends and family might not be as supportive as you'd like (and they may not even realise it). If this is the case, remind yourself of your 'why' and that you alone are in control of your decisions.

Avoid 'all or nothing' thinking

If you slip up and have a drink you might feel that you've blown it completely. But this is 'all or nothing' thinking. A sober 29 days out of 30 is still a brilliant achievement. Be kind to yourself and get back on track as soon as possible. You may have had one drink, but can you recommit to your goal right now and avoid having another?

Take it day by day

Giving up drinking is a marathon, not a sprint, so take it day by day. Each day wake up and tell yourself, today is a drink-free day, and then repeat. Focusing on one day at a time will help the journey feel more manageable. What can you do to make today a drink-free day?

Take an audit of your habits

The first step to breaking a habit is becoming aware of it in the first place. So take an audit and think about the times when you would usually drink. Do you always have a drink with certain friends, or at a certain time? Create alternative plans instead. You could make sure you only have alcohol-free drinks in the house, for example. Or, you could make a completely different plan for those times – like having a bath instead of having a drink to relax, or going for a walk instead of drinking to reduce stress. But the key is to become aware of your habits and then form new, healthier ones instead.

Congratulate yourself

Remember, reducing how much you drink is great for your health. So always congratulate yourself for what you have achieved, no matter how small the milestone is.

Even sticking within the low risk drinking guidelines of no more than 14 units a week, with at least three drink-free days, will have significant health benefits. So keep going – you can do this!

See the difference Drink Free Days could make to your health each week by using our DrinkCompare Calculator.