

DATE:	What/Amount used?
	How, Where & Who With?
	Triggers/Feelings Before
	Feelings After
	Consequences of Using

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NOTES



Alcohol Diary

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Are you drinking at home every day?

This type of drinking is nearly always about numbing unpleasant emotions associated with loneliness or isolation; it can also be about the dread of lying in bed before sleep with no distractions, alone with our thoughts which can be unpleasant for some, convinced we NEED the alcohol to sleep.

And sometimes it can simply be a relaxing habit that is turning into physical dependency.

If you're not prepared to stop drinking altogether, this diary is to help you become *CONSCIOUS* about your drinking; by making notes in this diary throughout the week, like how you *FEEL* before your first drink of the day, what you're hoping the drink will achieve, what is its' purpose.

Before your second drink, check if your first one *HAS* achieved it's purpose; write these feelings down. Write anything down in regard to how you feel about each drink, and when you discuss it with your worker in subsequent weeks, you'll have a much better idea of your relationship to alcohol, *WHY* you drink...

...then reducing in a methodic, mild and structured way will be much easier.

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"Binge" Drinking

Social anxiety can be another reason we drink; walking into a bar alone, lack of courage to approach someone new, fear of rejection anxiety about sex, anxiety about intimacy... perhaps we're just keeping up with our friends, or having fun but getting carried away. Knowing how to have fun, but SAFELY can be a learnt skill; Being embarrassed about your behaviour or not being able to remember the night before, getting into arguments, or having risky sexual encounters, can all be avoided if you re-learn some drinking behaviour.

Tips for Cutting Down

Keep a "Drink Diary" so you can see your overall pattern of drinking. If you can remember your drinking from last week, you will have an idea of whether you are drinking too much. You should also be able to understand some of the situations you drink excessively in.

Tell other people you are cutting down – it is easier to stick to decisions when others know what they are.

Choose a similar drink to your usual tipple, but one that is weaker e.g. choose a regular strength lager rather than super strength.

Replace some of your alcoholic drinks with a low alcohol drink or non-alcoholic drink (a 'spacer' rather than a 'chaser')

Start drinking later in the day/evening

Take a smaller amount of money out to a drinking session, so you cannot afford many drinks

Drink alcoholic beverages more slowly

Take smaller sips

Put your glass down between sips

Don't finish your drink before others finish theirs

Make your first drink a non-alcoholic one, particularly if you are thirsty.

Have at least two alcohol free days a week.

Avoid 'rounds' when drinking in pubs/clubs

Decide on a limit for any drinking occasion, for example 5 units – be realistic.

Keep a supply of non-alcoholic drinks at home

Identify different ways of relaxing – these can include exercising

If you are anticipating a heavy evening, avoid drinking on an empty stomach and do not drive.

You may find it difficult to reduce your intake of alcohol around certain people – changing your drinking pattern may require you to steer clear of him/her for a short time, at least until you feel confident of coping with their demands for you to drink heavily.