

## 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. Sometimes it can simply be a relaxing habit that is turning into a 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 its 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 methodical, mild and structured way will be much easier.

## "Binge" Drinking

Social anxiety can be another reason we drink; walking into a bar alone, dutch 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

1. *Keep a "Drink Diary" to see your drinking pattern:* This will give you an idea of whether you are drinking too much and be able to understand reasons for excessive drinking.
2. *Tell others you are cutting down:* It's easier to stick to decisions when others know what they are.
3. *Choose a similar drink to your usual, but weaker:* e.g. regular rather than super strength lager.
4. *Replace some alcoholic drinks with low alcohol or non-alcoholic drink:* A 'spacer' rather than a 'chaser'.
5. *Timing:* Start drinking later in the day/evening.
6. *Limit your cash:* Take a smaller amount of money out to a session to limit how much you can buy.
7. *Pace yourself:* Drink alcoholic beverages more slowly, take smaller sips (put your glass down between sips) and try not to finish your drink before others finish theirs.
8. *Make your first drink non-alcoholic:* This is important, particularly if you are thirsty.
9. *Alcohol free days:* Try to have at least two alcohol free days a week.
10. *Avoid 'rounds'* when drinking in pubs/clubs.
11. *Set your limits:* Decide on a limit for any drinking occasion, for example 5 units – be realistic.
12. *What's in your cupboard:* Keep a supply of non-alcoholic drinks at home.
13. *Relaxing without alcohol:* Identify different ways of relaxing – including exercise.
14. *Food:* If you are anticipating a heavy evening, avoid drinking on an empty stomach and do not drive.
15. *Avoiding triggers in the short term:* You may find it difficult to reduce your drinking around certain people – you may need to avoid them in the short term until you feel confident of coping.

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### Get in touch:

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# Alcohol diary

Day	Time	What drink	Feelings before (what triggered drinking)	Place (i.e. home, pub)	Who with (i.e. friends, alone)	Money spent	Feelings after	Days total units
<i>Monday</i>								
<i>Tuesday</i>								
<i>Wednesday</i>								
<i>Thursday</i>								
<i>Friday</i>								
<i>Saturday</i>								
<i>Sunday</i>								
							<b>Total units for the week:</b>	