



Tips for cutting down your Drinking

South Tyneside
Adult Recovery Service

Cookson House, River Drive, South Shields.
Tel. 0191 917 1160

To keep your risk of alcohol-related health problems low, men and women should not regularly drink more than 14 units per week. That's roughly six pints of average strength beer, or 10 small glasses of lower-strength wine.

If you regularly drink more than 14 units a week, you could be putting your health at risk.

Try these simple tips to help you cut down.

Why should I cut down?

Cutting back on alcohol can have several positive effects on the way you look and feel – often within just a few days.

You might notice that:

- your skin begins to look brighter
- you have better quality sleep
- you have more time and energy

And while you enjoy these changes, you'll also be reducing your longer term risk of some serious illnesses such as cancer and liver and heart disease.

Tips to help you gradually reduce your drinking

- **Set a limit.** Before you start drinking, set a limit on how much you will drink through the night and stick to it.
- **Set a budget.** Only take a fixed amount of money to spend on alcohol.
- **Let them know.** If you let your friends and family know you're cutting down and it's important to you, you could get support from them.
- **Take it a day at a time.** Cut back a little each day. That way, every day you do is a success.
- **Make it a smaller one.** You can still enjoy a drink, but go for smaller sizes. Try bottled beer instead of pints, or a small glass of wine instead of a large one.
- **Have a lower-strength drink.** Cut down the alcohol by swapping strong beers or wines for ones with a lower strength (ABV in %).
- **Stay hydrated.** Have a glass of water before you have alcohol and alternate alcoholic drinks with water or a soft drink.
- **Take a break.** Have several drink-free days each week.

Long-term benefits include:

Mood

There's a strong link between heavy drinking and depression, and hangovers often make you feel anxious and low. If you already feel anxious or sad, drinking can make this worse, so cutting down may put you in a better mood generally.

Sleep

Drinking can affect your sleep. Although it can help some people fall asleep quickly, it can disrupt your sleep patterns and stop you sleeping deeply. So cutting down on alcohol should help you feel more rested when you wake up.

Behaviour

Drinking can affect your judgement and behaviour. You may behave irrationally or aggressively when you're drunk. Memory loss can be a problem during drinking and in the long term for regular heavy drinkers.

Heart health

Long-term heavy drinking can lead to your heart becoming enlarged. This is serious and can't be completely reversed, but stopping drinking can stop it getting worse.



Immune system

Regular drinking can affect your immune system. Heavy drinkers tend to catch more infectious diseases.

Getting Help

You should never abruptly stop drinking or rapidly reduce your units.

Instead, seek advice from a GP or healthcare professional to gradually reduce your use of alcohol safely. Or contact South Tyneside Adult Recovery Service on [0191 917 1160](tel:01919171160).

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Accessing the service

We offer a range of free, confidential and non-judgemental services for individuals and their families whose lives are affected by drugs and/or alcohol, and who live within South Tyneside.

Our aim is to support people to stay safe and live happier, healthy lives, free from drugs and alcohol.