



R.E.A.L. GoalSM: Reduce Alcohol Use

(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)

Example: I will reduce my alcohol intake to the recommended guidelines (up to 1 drink or less per day for women and up to 2 drinks or less per day for men).

The benefits:

- Improved physical health:** Drinking less can reduce your risk of developing liver or heart disease and could help lower your blood pressure.
- Improved waistline:** Alcohol is often called the hidden source of calories. Consuming 100 calories more than you burn every day can lead to a weight gain of over 10 pounds over a year!
- Money saved:** Many people do not realize how much money they spend on alcohol. By cutting back, you could save the money or spend it something you have been wanting.
- Improved sleep:** Alcohol can affect how well you sleep and leave you with less energy. Reducing your alcohol intake could lead to increased energy levels and improve your concentration.
- Improved mental health:** Because alcohol is a depressant, drinking when you are anxious or stressed to improve your mood can have the opposite effect than intended.

Quick tips:

- Set a drink limit
- Keep a log of your drinking
- Choose alcohol-free days
- Try non-alcoholic options of your favorites to mix in
- Make a mocktail (a cocktail without alcohol, even add a garnish)
- Find an activity with friends that does not involve drinking
- Ask for support

The following steps will help you create your own quit plan:

STEP 1: Pick a Date to Reduce or Quit _____

- Choose a date within two weeks to allow enough time to prepare.
- Avoid choosing a date where you know you will be busy, stressed, or especially tempted to use alcohol products.
- Consider posting your quit date somewhere you will see it every day.

STEP 2: Identify your reason(s) to why. Make a list and keep it in a place you can see it every day to reinforce your commitment to quit.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am ready for a positive change. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be more productive/avoid hangovers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to improve my health. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to manage/lose weight. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is too expensive/a waste of money. | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to feel dependent on something. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's a hassle. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to set a great example for others. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's negatively affecting my relationships. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm planning on having a baby. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel judged by others. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

STEP 3: Identify your use triggers. Identifying the situations ahead of time allows you to plan for ways to deal with it or avoid the situation.

Triggers

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Smelling BBQ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating or going out to eat. | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressed/Anxious/Sad | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching sports | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

STEP 4: Develop coping strategies. When you stop or reducing drinking, your system could go through withdrawal as it adjusts. Having ideas to cope with withdrawal ahead of time can help!

- Review your quit plan and delay acting on the urge to drink.
- Depending on your drinking, talk with a doctor before quitting or cutting down to talk about potential withdrawal symptoms.
- Call a friend/family member.
- Do something active.
- Go somewhere alcohol-free.
- Drink water.
- Deep breathe.

STEP 5: Let loved ones know you are quitting. It can be hard to ask for help. Let them know exactly how they can help you quit.

- If friends are drinking here are some suggestions:
 - Plan ahead. Do you know if there will be alcohol there? Have a sober friend to check in with, have a glass of soda or water and keep refreshing it so no one offers a refill.
 - Be the designated driver: if being the sober person in the room is awkward, being the person who is responsible for getting people home safely might be easier.
 - Have an emergency plan: If there is a moment where you are frustrated, hurt, etc. and are going to drink, have a plan for these situations.

STEP 6: Remove reminders of alcohol.

- Clean your spaces to freshen the area.
- Throw away **ALL** alcohol products and accessories. Don't save anything "just in case."

STEP 7: Know where to turn for immediate help. The first few weeks are the hardest. You will experience cravings, preoccupation and temptation to drink.

- Friends/Family
- Spiritual Support
- Alcoholics Anonymous: 844-334-6862
- Talk with your Doctor about medication

Check out these links to learn more:

- [Healthy.com- Cut Back on Alcohol: 17 tips to drink a little less](#)
- [Harvard Health Publishing- 11 ways to curb your drinking](#)
- App: [Cutbackcoach](#), [BACtrack](#)

To choose another goal, go to: <https://www.deancare.com/wellness/real-goals>

For help to translate or understand this, please call (800) 279-1301. (TTY dial 711)