

WHY DO MY DRINKING HABITS MATTER?

Has drinking caused problems at home or work? Has it changed your mood for the worse? These are signs that you might want to look at your drinking habits. Your life is too important to be messed up by alcohol.

How does alcohol affect your life right now?

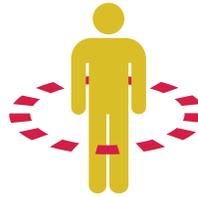
WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- **Overall health.** A hangover's one thing, but overuse can have long-term health effects. And drinking doesn't mix well with meds.
- **Safety.** Drunk driving, increased violence (and yes, unplanned pregnancies or STDs). Alcohol can make life messy.
- **Stable relationships.** Friends, family and co-workers are key in your life. Don't let your alcohol use cause problems.
- **Avoiding legal and money troubles.** The cost of getting a DUI/DWI can run in the thousands of dollars. 'Nuff said.

TRY THIS AT HOME

List three situations that prompt you to drink and three things you could do instead. If you're stressed, try deep breathing or a hot bath. If drinking's an end-of-day routine, plan to take a walk instead. Your theme? Recognize and replace.

FIVE WAYS TO GET STARTED



Make it personal. By drinking less, what will you protect in your life? Keeping this in mind can help you stay on track.



Set a limit. Whether at home, a ball game or a party, plan ahead by setting a limit on the number of drinks you'll have. Simple, yes. Effective? Oh yes.



Give yourself a pass. Lots of people don't drink at social events. Need a little help to mingle? Ask if there's a job you can do to keep busy.



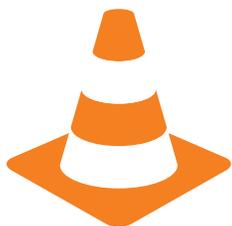
Downsize. "One drink" can be more. Use a smaller wine glass, pour less liquor or skip the pint for a 12 oz. beer. (For strong craft beer, go for even less.)



Move it. At home, try storing alcohol out of reach (the garage, a high cupboard) for a few days. Making it harder to get lets you pause and reconsider.

REALLY? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

- Your blood alcohol level is affected by the amount you drink and how fast, body size, gender, food in your stomach and the mixer in your drink.
- People who can “hold their liquor” are at greater risk for developing alcoholism and liver, heart and brain damage.
- What’s one drink? A beer is 12 oz., wine is 5 oz. and hard liquor is 1.5 oz. Binge drinking is 4 or more drinks in about 2 hours for females. For men, it’s 5 or more.
- Men who drink too much are more likely to be impotent and infertile.
- As people age, they can become more sensitive to alcohol’s effects. So, the amount you drank at age 30 can have a stronger effect at age 70.



PLAN FOR YOUR ROADBLOCKS

We all encounter roadblocks from time to time. Try planning ahead with this technique recommended by personal-change experts: First, envision the benefits of reaching your goal—starting with your personal vision. Then, imagine your biggest roadblocks and how you’ll get past them.

ROADBLOCK	STRATEGY
When I go out, I have too much to drink.	I’ll plan to order one alcoholic drink and make my second drink nonalcoholic.

WRITE YOUR PERSONAL VISION

Create a short phrase capturing a benefit of reducing alcohol, whichever benefit is most important to you. Say it anytime you start to veer from your new path.

Example: My relationships come first, and they’re better when I don’t drink too much.

My personal vision

WHO SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR EFFORT TOWARD DRINKING LESS?
