



ALCOHOL WORKBOOK

EDAS/REACH YOUNG PEOPLES DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICES

This workbook is for completion on your own or with support.

**Speak to your keyworker if you feel you may need support
with this workbook. They will be able to advise
on the best person to help.**

What you need to know...



Alcohol is a **depressant drug** and probably the most commonly used and misused drug in the UK. It is an 'uncontrolled' substance meaning that it does not have any legal classification (Class A,B, or C). To purchase alcohol in the UK you must be 18 years old or above.

Alcohol comes in a wide range of drinks with different alcoholic strengths, colours, and tastes. Alcohol often has labels with useful information, such as how many **units** are in the drink. All labels are required by law to display the strength of the drink (alcohol by volume, or ABV).

What is Ethanol?



Ethanol or ethyl alcohol (alcohol) is the main active ingredient in alcoholic drinks. Ethanol is poisonous. It is a toxin that kills cells such as microorganisms, which is why we use it to preserve food and sterilise surfaces. That is what the term **INTOXICATED** means, you have ingested a toxin (poison).

What are Depressants or 'Downers'?

Substances that **slow down the chemical messaging in the brain** (that depress it) are called **Depressants**, their street name is **Downers**. Alcohol falls into this category.



Why Do People Drink?

Socially, With Mates – A common reason; do you drink alone? What if someone drinks socially every day? Some people might seek social environments as an excuse for their drinking behaviour.



Taste – As with anything we can drink, we can enjoy the taste. This could become a convenient excuse for drinking on a regular basis.

Boredom – Not an appropriate reason for drinking, especially when someone has a lack of routine or structure as people will often say they are ‘bored’ when actually they just haven’t tried doing anything.



To Fit In – Peer pressure is a reason that people drink, if everyone around you does something it is often hard to avoid doing it yourself.

At Parties, Special Occasions – This links in with the ‘fun’ reason, however it is interesting to note how almost all special occasions are marked by drinking alcohol and what this actually means.

Confidence or Courage – This links with the lowering of inhibitions, can lead to people making unsafe decisions or doing something dangerous. As a reason for drinking it can become cause for concern if someone feels they need it to increase confidence in all situations.



To Forget Things – A short term solution which can be very dangerous.

To Deal with Problems or Stress – Drinking alcohol does not solve any problems, it is more running away from problems or trying to forget about them.

Addiction – The physical need for alcohol is not a good thing, your body has become so used to something that it needs it to survive is never good. Also increases the likelihood of experiencing alcohol related health problems.



As a Reward – Some people may feel it is a good treat, again question how often you reward yourself with alcohol and what else you could do to treat or reward yourself. Also how is the alcohol actually rewarding you?



Alcohol and You

Your reasons for drinking will not always be the same. If you find yourself drinking for some of the reasons that can be considered dangerous, maybe it is time to question your relationship with alcohol.

What are the reasons why you drink alcohol?

Why do you continue to drink it?

Does your drinking alcohol put your health at risk? If so, how?

How does consuming alcohol affect you financially?



What Are Units?



Unit is a measurement for Alcohol, like cm for distance or kg for weight.

It is a way of expressing the actual amount of pure alcohol that is in a drink. This allows you to compare how strong one type of alcoholic drink is to another type.

1 Unit = 10 millilitres (ml) of pure (100%) Alcohol or Ethanol.

% = How much of a drink is pure Alcohol, this can also be referred to as ABV – Alcohol by Volume.

Proof = Another term similar to %, it is more an American term for ABV and is double the %.



The current UK guidelines advise **limiting alcohol intake to 14 units a week** for women and men. This is equivalent to drinking no more than 6 pints of average-strength beer (4% ABV) or 7 medium-sized glasses of wine (175ml, 12% ABV) a week.

Working Out Units

Check the label on drinks as they often show the total number of alcohol units in the can or bottle. If they don't, you can calculate the units by multiplying its ABV by the volume of the drink in mls and then dividing by 1,000.

Units and Percentage Quiz

Each picture has two questions. The first one is to guess the percentage of alcohol in the drink and the second is to say how many units are in the drink in the question!



Question 1:

The percentage of Foster's is:

The amount of units in 4 (500ml) cans of fosters:



Question 2:

The percentage of Smirnoff ice is:

The amount of units in 1 (750ml big) bottle:



Question 3:

The percentage of White Lightning Cider is:

The amount of units in a 1 litre bottle:



Question 4:

The percentage of Stella is:

The amount of units 4 pints of Stella:



Question 5:

The Percentage of Vodka is:

The amount of units in 4 double Vodka Redbulls:



Question 6:

The Percentage of Newcastle Brown Ale is:

The amount of units in 5 pints:

Check your answers at the back of the workbook!

The Law

True or False

How much do you know?

CLASSIFICATION OF ALCOHOL:

Alcohol is an unclassified drug

TRUE / FALSE

BUYING AND DRINKING ALCOHOL IN THE UK:

Anyone under 18 can buy and drink alcohol legally

TRUE / FALSE

PERSONAL CONSUMPTION:

Young people under 18 who persistently drink or are found possessing alcohol in public places may be prosecuted.

TRUE / FALSE

IF YOU ARE CAUGHT DRINK-DRIVING:

It's illegal to drive with more than 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood in your system.

TRUE / FALSE

16-YEAR-OLDS IN THE PUB:

Children aged under 16 don't need to be accompanied by an adult in a pub or bar in the UK

TRUE / FALSE

BUYING ALCOHOL FOR UNDER 18'S:

It's legal for an adult to buy alcohol for anyone aged under 18

TRUE / FALSE

PENALTY FOR DRINKING IN PUBLIC:

Young people under 18 who persistently drink or are found possessing alcohol in public places may be prosecuted

TRUE / FALSE

BUYING ALCOHOL FOR UNDER 18'S:

It's legal for someone to buy beer, wine, or cider for someone aged 16 or 17 to be drunk with a table meal while accompanied by a person over 18

TRUE / FALSE

Check your answers at the back of the workbook!

The Effects of Alcohol



Although it's legal for people aged 18 and over to buy and drink alcohol, that doesn't mean it's safe. Just enough can make you feel sociable; too much and you'll have a hangover the next day, and may not even remember what you got up to; and way too much alcohol in a single session could put you in a coma or even kill you.

Thinking

Choices and decisions are harder to make once the thinking process has been slowed down. This is why some people make unsafe choices after having a few drinks.



Breathing

It is slowed down to the point where someone becomes unable to breathe properly and can choke on vomit if they are sick. Death occurs when breathing stops altogether.

Movement

Some people appear clumsy, may lose their balance and bump into someone, which is also how arguments or aggressive acts may start.

Hearing



Loss increases with every drink which explains why the volume of speech goes up.

Speech



Words become slurred and difficult to pronounce.

Visual Distortion

Seeing double or the room spinning.

Alcohol and Anxiety

Alcohol interferes with the body's ability to regulate cortisol and this will lead to long-term increases in anxiety.



Did you know?

Alcohol raises testosterone levels in males and females, which affects both sexual drive and aggression.

The more you drink in a sitting, the more your judgement will be affected, and this can lead to doing things or taking risks that you otherwise wouldn't.



Alcohol and You

How does alcohol make you feel? Circle the ones that apply to you and add any others you would like:

Happy

Excited

Relaxed

Confident

It can also have physical and behavioural effects. Do any one of the following happen to you? Tick them if they do:

- make you feel overly confident or engage in risky behaviour
- make you have a lack of coordination, blurred vision, or slurred speech
- affect your mood in a negative way
- make you feel sick
- make you feel angry or aggressive
- make you feel depressed
- make you have problems remembering things
- causes you blackouts

Alcohol affects people differently, but most become:

- relaxed
- sociable
- un-inhibited

Does this happen to you?

- Yes No

Some people become:

- drowsy or sleepy
- depressed
- confused and anxious
- aggressive

Does this happen to you?

- Yes No



What Can Alter the Effects

Tolerance – The amount your body is used to taking in can impact on how much something affects you, this is the same for most drugs including legal ones such as caffeine.



Gender – Females generally have a lower percentage of water and blood in their body, which can lead to a higher concentration of alcohol in their bloodstream.

Strength, Percentage or 'Quality' – The higher the percentage the stronger the drink, therefore the more alcohol is actually being consumed.



Amount or Quantity – 3 litres of a drink is going to have more of an effect than 1 litre. Again more alcohol is actually being consumed.

Food in Stomach – This is not a myth, no food will lead to quicker absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.

Speed – How quickly the alcohol is consumed, 3 pints in 30 minutes is going to have more of an effect than 3 pints over 3 hours. The liver is not given opportunity to process the alcohol, so the effects will be more noticeable.

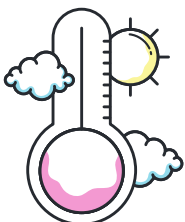
Time Since Last Drink – Someone may already have some alcohol in their system from a previous drinking episode, or 'topping up'.

Mood, Fatigue, and Tiredness – A person's initial mood can have a marked effect on how alcohol will influence their behaviour. If someone is tired and they consume alcohol the effects can be amplified.



Bubbles – Often seen as a myth, however bubbles can have an effect as it is thought to speed up the absorption rate of alcohol into the bloodstream.

Size, Weight, Age – A smaller person will typically have less blood which means that blood alcohol levels will be higher. Age is important as development of internal organs may not be complete so the liver will be smaller and so not process alcohol at the same rate as an adult.



Atmosphere, Heat – The environment around someone can have an effect. Having 3 pints in a hot climate is going to have more of an effect than if it is drunk in a moderate climate. The reason for this is, the heat will be causing the body to use more water and therefore dehydration will add to the effects of alcohol and also lead to quicker absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.



Alcohol and You

Over time your tolerance to alcohol grows and you are unable to achieve the same highs as once before. The effect that alcohol has doesn't last long and leaves you feeling worse the next day. Can you relate to this? Describe your experience with this...

As your drinking has increased, have you noticed a change in your mood, an increase in anxiety or feelings of depression? Please describe how your feelings have changed over time.

Can you think and act in the same way the more you drink? Explain your answer



Alcohol and You

Has drinking alcohol affected your health so far? If so, how?

Alcohol may start out as a sociable drug but can develop into a habit. Did this happen to you? If so, how did it develop to become a habit?

The feeling experienced from drinking alcohol is produced from the release of natural chemicals which are present in the human body. It is the chemicals already present in the body which get affected by drinking alcohol that produce the feeling.



How easy do you think it was/ will be to give up alcohol? Why do you think this was/ is the case?

Did you become addicted quickly and were you surprised by this? If so, why?

The Risks

Physical Health Risks



Drinking alcohol causes a wide range of physical and mental health problems, either because of binge drinking or from regularly drinking more than 14 units per week. The younger the person drinking the more damage the alcohol does, especially on the developing teenage brain.

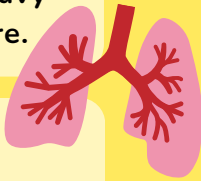


HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Heavy drinking can cause heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and heart failure. It can also lead to an increased risk of stroke.

LUNG AND KIDNEY PROBLEMS

Heavy drinkers have more pulmonary infections and can be more susceptible to pneumonia and lung collapse. Heavy drinking can also cause kidney failure.



LIVER DISEASE AND DAMAGE

'Fatty Liver', Alcoholic Hepatitis, and Alcoholic Cirrhosis are all conditions that cause the liver to cease functioning properly and can ultimately lead to liver failure and death.



CANCER

Drinking heavily can be a contributing factor in the development of different types of cancer, specifically liver, bowel, mouth, oesophagus, and larynx cancers.



OBESITY

Weight problems can occur due to alcohol intake as it contains calories.

PREGNANCY DIFFICULTIES

Alcohol consumption can cause irreparable damage to an unborn child.

VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Might lead to being arrested, injuries, and also damage personal relationships.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURY

Accidents and violence are more likely to occur when people are under the influence.

Mental Health Risks

DEPRESSION

Alcohol affects the chemistry of the brain, increasing the risk of depression. Self-harm and suicide are much more common in people with alcohol problems.



MEMORY IMPAIRMENTS

Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to memory loss and can even produce a blackout, where a person cannot recall key details of events or even entire events.



Risks of Mixing

It is particularly dangerous to mix alcohol with depressants such as benzodiazepine - Xanax and Valium are linked with deaths from overdose. Alcohol and cocaine together can be particularly dangerous. Once they mix together in the body they produce a toxic chemical called cocaethylene, which can cause heart problems, stroke and liver damage.



Alcohol and You

Have you experienced any of these risks due to drinking? If so, which ones?

Do you have any concerns about your health after learning about the risks?

What are the risks of continuing to drink alcohol with regards to yourself?

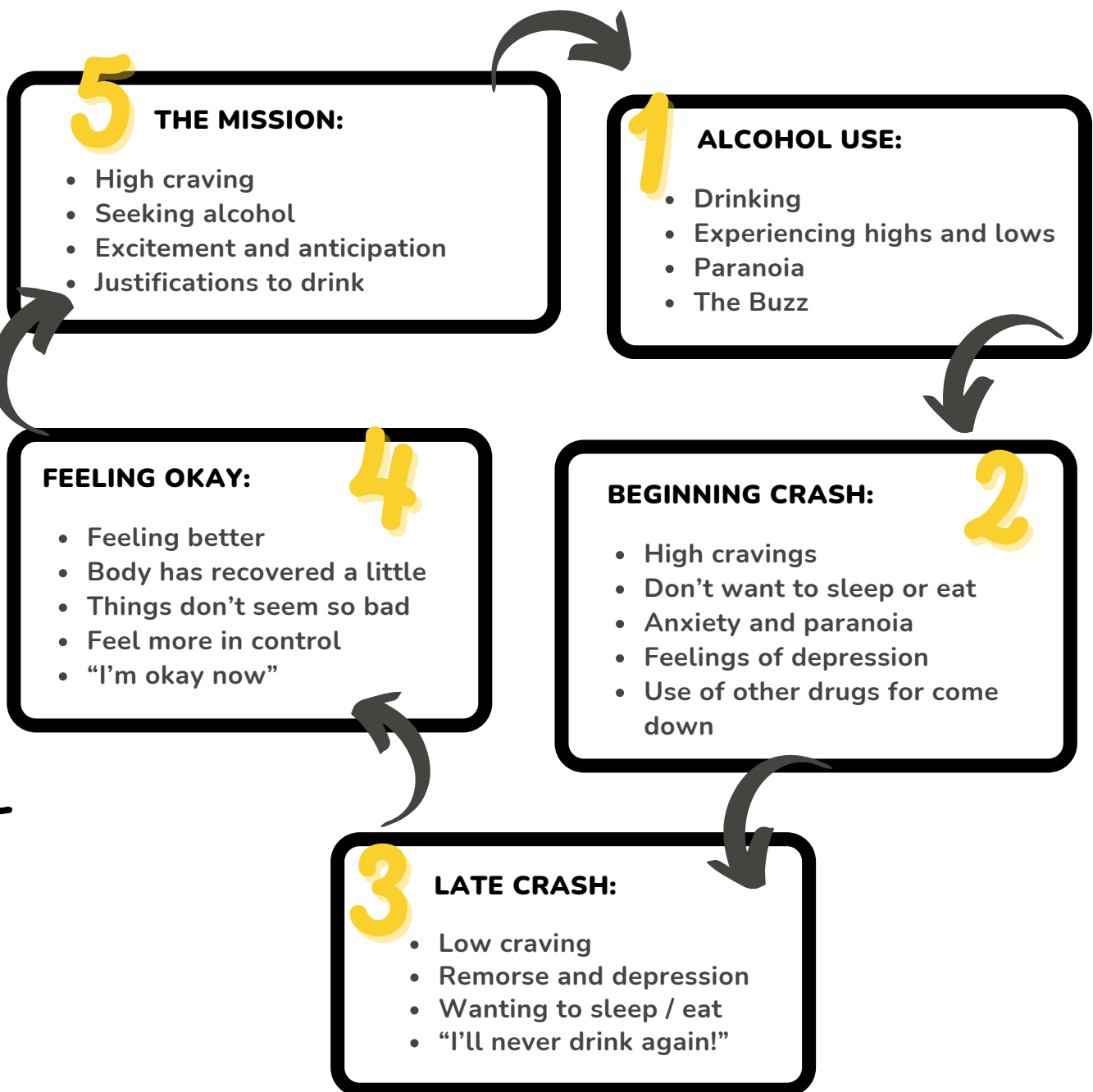
What are the risks of continuing to drink with regards to other people?

What can you do to help overcome these risks?



Cycle of Addiction

Most habits usually develop into a cycle, which is similar to a washing machine cycle (wash, rinse, spin, and back to wash again). Heavy alcohol drinkers often get cravings and find it hard not to drink.



You may bounce between the first two stages all night, or for days, but eventually, you will move through the cycle. If you want to give up drinking alcohol, you have to interrupt this cycle, usually between feeling okay and the mission.

Cravings: Urges to Drink



Cravings are strong urges to drink. They are normal. Almost everyone who stops or cuts down their drinking or can't get any alcohol for some reason has some cravings. **Can you think of a time when you were really craving a drink?**

Cravings tend to happen in events or situations that you have previously associated with drinking, also called 'triggers'. Examples of 'triggers' could be: **experiencing a particular emotion, specific people or places, a particular time of day, boredom, and isolation.**

Sometimes the feelings are very strong and it is hard to think about anything else. Sometimes the feelings are weak and you can easily get your mind onto something else.

Cravings only get stronger if you give in and 'feed' them. They will eventually weaken, die down and go away if you don't give in to them.

You may have noticed that cravings tend to last only a short time. They generally last between 30–60 minutes but few people give themselves the chance to prove it.

Handling Cravings/Urges

Urges usually come and go in waves and so it is important to ride them out. This is called **urge surfing**. Imagine you are a surfer on a board riding a wave – you need to stay on that board and ride that wave until it subsides without falling off. Therefore, if your urges feel intense, try to distract yourself for a little while and you will soon notice that the worst part has passed. **Each time you overcome a craving, it makes the craving weaker next time and makes you stronger as your technique for resisting improves.** Knowing that they are short-term will help you handle them. If you ride them out, they will weaken.



If your cravings are feeling strong try:

Distracting: do something unrelated to drinking.

Delaying: check the time and make a deal with yourself not to have a drink for at least half an hour.

De-stressing: it's important to take time to relax and unwind, e.g. have a bath, walk, or listen to music.

Keeping the craving in perspective: don't get carried away. Cravings won't last forever and will not hurt.

Remember the negatives: often when having cravings people tend to remember only the positive effects of drinking and forget the negatives.

You win every time you beat your craving. It makes the craving weaker next time and makes you more confident you can resist having a drink.



Alcohol and You

Triggers & High-Risk Situations

Another useful strategy for handling cravings/urges is to avoid situations with strong personal triggers.

Triggers are feelings or events that cause strong thoughts about wanting to drink. They can be internal (certain moods or feelings) or external (sitting down to watch TV, listening to music, or having a visit from friends).

High-risk situations include times and places where you usually drink. For example, if you usually drink with certain friends, then you will probably feel like drinking whenever you are with them.

What are your internal (thoughts and feelings) high-risk situations and triggers?
e.g. bored, stressed, angry...

What are your external (situations and places) high-risk situations and triggers?
e.g. someone offers me a drink, being with friends who drink, watching a video



Withdrawal Symptoms

Although not everyone gets them, you may get some withdrawal symptoms after you stop drinking alcohol. These can be uncomfortable but are not dangerous and usually only last a week or so.

Withdrawal symptoms are actually signs that your body is getting used to going without alcohol. So, they can be seen as a good sign of progress.

Psychological Symptoms

- feeling cranky and irritable
- anxiety
- disorientation
- depression
- anger
- craving/urges to drink



Physical Symptoms

- headaches
- sweating
- nausea and vomiting
- pulse rate over 100 beats per minute
- loss of appetite
- tremors or shaking
- restlessness
- insomnia (difficulty sleeping)



During any period of withdrawal, it's important to look after yourself: eat well and drink plenty of water, get a bit of exercise, try and get some regular sleep.

The techniques of distraction, delay, and de-stressing can be helpful ways of dealing with symptoms (p. 16). Try to keep them in perspective.

Milder symptoms usually start within eight to 24 hours from the last alcoholic drink.

Severe Symptoms Can Include:

- hallucinations (seeing, hearing, or feeling things that aren't real)
- seizures
- delirium tremens ('DTs')

Delirium tremens is a severe indication of alcohol withdrawal. Symptoms include:

- severe disorientation
- increased heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing problems
- uncontrollable restless behaviour





Alcohol and You

Withdrawal Symptoms

Have you experienced any of these symptoms due to alcohol withdrawal?

How did you manage or how do you plan to manage these symptoms?

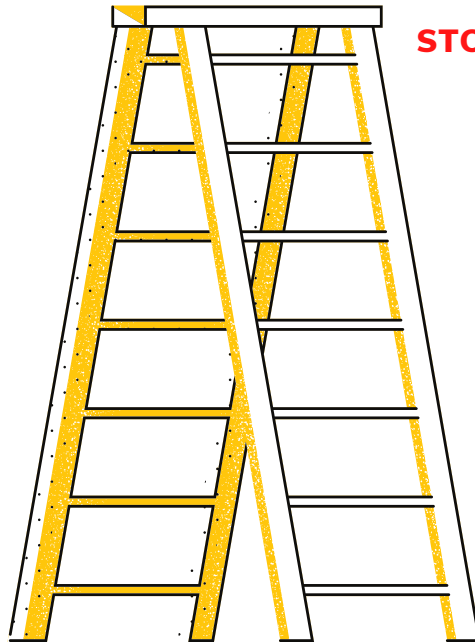
Which strategies do you think would work best for you?





Alcohol and You

THE LADDER OF CHANGE



STOP USING

CONTROL USING

CONTINUE AS NORMAL

Where do you see yourself on the ladder?

Where would you like to be on the ladder and why?

How will you get there?





Alcohol and You

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Using this **Decision-Making Model** you can learn to think through all aspects of why you are making a decision to change or to not change.

The purpose of this model is for you to **become more aware** than you may be now so that you can make an **'informed choice.'** Having a choice is really important because it means that you have real power in your life.

You can easily learn how to change things that aren't so good for you and take responsibility for your actions.

List the **POSITIVES** of drinking alcohol
(e.g. what are the benefits and rewards for drinking)

List the **NEGATIVES** of drinking alcohol
(e.g. what don't you like about it during or afterwards, what bad consequences happen)

List the **POSITIVES** of **NOT** drinking alcohol
(e.g. what **do** you like about **not** drinking)

List the **NEGATIVES** of **NOT** drinking alcohol
(e.g. what **don't** you like about **not** drinking or what bad things happen)





Alcohol and You

CHANGE PLAN SHEET

What do I want to change (this could be anything!)	
The reasons I want to do this are:	
To do this, I will need to take these actions	
People who could support me in this area	
What are my possible obstacles to change?	
How will I deal with obstacles?	
I will know my plan is working when....	



Reduce the Risks

MAKE SAFE



The only risk-free drug use is no drug use, but if you are drinking, or considering drinking alcohol, this advice will help **minimise** the risks to your health.

Don't mix it with tobacco

Smoking and drinking alcohol usually go hand in hand – people who drink are more likely to smoke than non-drinkers, and vice versa.

Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes together greatly increases the risk of developing head and neck cancers.

Slow Down Your Alcohol Unit Consumption

- Drink at a slower speed and wait longer between alcoholic drinks
- Alternate with non-alcoholic drinks
- Drink alcohol with a lower percentage (ABV%) strength
- Pour your own drinks so that you can keep track of what you are consuming

Drinking Behaviour

- Do not drink alone
- Give your body a break, choose some days a week when you will not drink
- Limit how many drinks you will have each day, every week and/or every month
- Make plans to cope with social or stressful situations
- Always have a plan of how to get home safely from a social event

Don't Mix With Other Drugs

Any time you mix drugs together you take on new risks.

Do not drink alcohol if you are on medication or using illicit drugs. Alcohol has the ability to amplify the effects of other medications or substances and this can cause harmful interactions or stop medications from working.

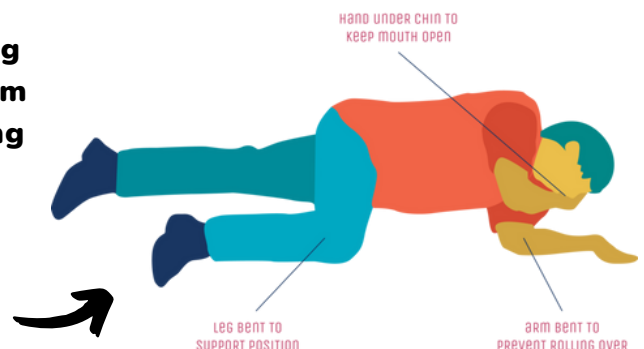


Stay in Control

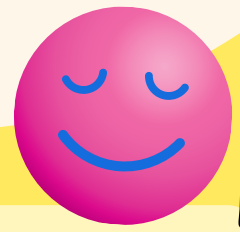
If you or someone you are with is having a bad time while drinking alcohol, the information below will help you stay in control:

- If you feel bad due to drinking, you should think about stopping, if only for a short time. Give your mind and your body a break.
- If you drink every day, have a couple of days off each week. Have fewer drinks a day, add less alcohol in your drink, or have drinks with a lower alcohol percentage.
- If you are trying to cut down, avoid places, people, or events that remind you of drinking alcohol.
- Don't buy extra, thinking you will save some for tomorrow – you probably won't.

If one of your friends appears to be suffering from the negative effects of alcohol get them to sit in a chair and lean forwards supporting their head in their hands. In this position, if they vomit, they won't choke. If they are unable to sit up like this, then lay them in the recovery position:



Relapse Prevention



'Relapses' and 'slips'

A **relapse** is when you return to your old level of drinking alcohol. A **slip** is a 'one-off' case of having a drink, which does not necessarily mean you will have a full relapse.

It is quite common to make mistakes when you begin learning a new skill. Changing your alcohol drinking is no different, and you may make the odd mistake.

If you do have a slip it is important to remember that this doesn't mean you have failed, or you are unable to change or can let yourself slip into a full relapse. What is important to long-term success is how you handle the slip. How to handle it will depend on how it happened. The slip may have been intentional or unintentional.

Intentional Slips

Slips can happen 'on purpose' for a couple of reasons. You may tell yourself that you are tired of sticking to your plan and want a night off. Or you may decide that you deserve a reward (a drink) for what you've achieved so far, or it is just too hard. If this happens to you, think carefully about your reasons for wanting to change.

- Consider your reasons for changing. How important are these to you?
- Remind yourself that each slip reduces your chances of long-term success. Your craving will return more strongly, which means more hard work.

Unintentional Slips

You may have a slip, despite your best intentions, because you find yourself in a high-risk situation with your guard down. If you do, look at your strategies to see what can be improved.

- did you just slip into an old habit again without thinking?
- are you finding some high-risk situations too hard right now?
- is there a better way of dealing with them?



Plan ahead for dealing with a slip

A slip can feel like a crisis and getting back to your chosen goal will take some effort. Here are some things to do.

If you have a slip you can:

- **get rid of the alcohol and get away from the situation where you consumed it**
- **remind yourself that one drink or even a day of drinking doesn't have to result in a full-blown relapse**
- **remember that feelings of guilt or blame will pass**
- **call for help from someone you trust**
- **look at the slip to see what triggers there were and your reaction to them**
- **think about what you expected the alcohol to change or provide**
- **set up a plan for coping with similar situations in the future**

Answers

Alcohol Units Quiz

1. **Fosters** – 4% and 8 Units
2. **Smirnoff Ice** – 5% and 3.75 Units
3. **White Lightning** – 7.5% and 7.5 Units
4. **Stella** – 5% and 11.4 Units
5. **Vodka** – 37.5% or 40%+ and 7.5 units or 8+ units (higher depending on percentage)
6. **Newcastle Brown Ale** – 4.7% and 13.4 Units

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They must be accompanied by an adult.

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It's legal for an adult to buy alcohol for anyone aged under 18

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It's illegal except for 16-17 year olds and to be drunk with a meal whilst with an adult.

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TRUE

BUYING ALCOHOL FOR UNDER 18'S:

It's legal for someone to buy beer, wine, or cider for someone aged 16 or 17 to be drunk with a table meal while accompanied by a person over 18

TRUE

How many did you get right?

Need Support?

For further support and advice contact the **EDAS/Reach Young Peoples team. We are here to help!**

We are a specialist free and confidential alcohol and drugs support service for under 25s living in the county of Dorset. We offer non-judgemental advice and information about how to keep safe and discuss potential treatment and support options.

Get in touch with us on 01202 741414 or 0800 0434656 - option 2.



EDAS



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