



Tips & Tools to Help You Quit Drinking From RethinkingDrinking.niaaa.nih.gov

Strategies to help you quit (excerpted from [Tips to try](#))

- ✓ **Find alternatives.** If drinking has occupied a lot of your time, then fill free time by developing new, healthy activities, hobbies, and friendships, or renewing ones you've missed. If you have counted on alcohol to make you more comfortable in social situations, manage moods, or cope with problems, then seek other, healthy ways to deal with those areas of your life.
- ✓ **Avoid triggers.** What triggers your urge to drink? If certain people or places make you drink even when you don't want to, try to avoid them. If certain activities, times of day, or feelings trigger the urge, plan something else to do instead of drinking. If drinking at home is a problem, keep little or no alcohol there.
- ✓ **Plan to handle urges.** When you cannot avoid a trigger and an urge hits, consider these options: Remind yourself of your reasons for changing (it can help to carry them in writing or store them as a note in a smartphone app). Or talk things through with someone you trust. Or get involved in a healthy, distracting activity, such as physical exercise or a hobby that doesn't involve drinking. Or, instead of fighting the feeling, accept it and ride it out without giving in, knowing that it will soon crest like a wave and pass. Also, visit the Rethinking Drinking website to do a short activity to help you [handle urges to drink](#).*
- ✓ **Know your "no."** You're likely to be offered a drink at times when you don't want one. Have a polite, convincing "no, thanks" ready. The faster you can say no to these offers, the less likely you are to give in. If you hesitate, it allows you time to think of excuses to go along. Also, visit the Rethinking Drinking website to do a short activity to help you [build drink refusal skills](#).*

**Short skill-building activities to help you stay in control are available from [Worksheets & more](#) page on the Rethinking Drinking website.*

Recovering from a drinking episode when your goal is to quit: [9 Practical Tips](#)

1. **Get right back on track.** Stop drinking—the sooner the better.
2. **Remember, each day is a new day to start over.** Although it can be unsettling to slip, you don't have to continue drinking.
3. **Understand that setbacks are common** when people undertake a major change. It's your progress in the long run that counts.
4. **Don't run yourself down.** It doesn't help. Don't let feelings of discouragement, anger, or guilt stop you from asking for help and getting back on track.
5. **Get some help.** Contact your healthcare provider or a sober and supportive friend right away to talk about what happened, or go to a [mutual-help meeting](#), go such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Smart Recovery, or Secular AA.
6. **Think it through.** With a little distance, work on your own or with support to better understand why the episode happened at that particular time and place.
7. **Learn from what happened.** Decide what you need to do so that it won't happen again, and write it down. Use the experience to strengthen your commitment.
8. **Avoid triggers to drink.** Get rid of any alcohol at home. If possible, avoid revisiting the situation in which you drank.
9. **Find alternatives.** Keep busy with things that are not associated with drinking.