



My Drink Diary

A four week tool to track your drinking and provide useful advice



What are alcohol units?

One way of understanding the impact alcohol has on you is to know how much you drink.

It is really common for people to not know what units are or what they mean. A unit is one way of us measuring how much alcohol we drink. Units also help us to understand how strong our drinks are.

Units tell us how much pure alcohol is in our drinks. A unit is 10ml of pure alcohol. Often the number of units in a drink is shown on the label.

If you drink wine or spirits at home, you probably don't use a standard glass.

- A bottle of wine (75cl) has 6 standard (125ml) glasses.
- A large (1 litre) bottle of spirits has 40 single measures.
- A medium (70cl) bottle of spirits has 28 measures.
- A bottle of fortified wine (75cl) has 15 measures.

The government recommend a limit of 14 units of alcohol per week for both men and women. It's important to know that no amount of alcohol is 'safe', but drinking under 14 units reduces the risk.

Alcohol units



Examples of units in common drinks



Understanding what we're drinking is important but it can be a challenge to know how many units are in our drinks.

One unit equal 10ml or 8g of pure alcohol, which is around the amount of alcohol the average adult can process in an hour. The number of units in a drink is based on the size of the drink, as well as its alcohol strength.

- A 750ml bottle of red, white or rose wine (ABV 13.5%) contains 10 units.
- Alcopop (275ml, ABV 13%) = 1.5 units
- Single small shot of spirits* (25ml, ABV 40%) = 1 unit
- Small glass of red/white/rose wine (125ml, ABV 12%) = 1.5 units
- Bottle of lager/beer/cider (330ml, ABV 5%) = 1.7 units

• Can of lager/beer/cider (440ml, ABV 5.5%) = 2.4 units

• Pint of ordinary-strength lager/beer/cider (568ml, ABV 4%) = 2.3 units

• Pint of lower-strength lager/beer/cider (ABV 3.6%) = 2 units

• Standard glass of red/white/rose wine (175ml, ABV 12%) = 2.1 units

• Pint of higher-strength lager/beer/cider (ABV 5.2%) = 3 units

• Large glass of red/white/rose wine (250ml, ABV 12%) = 3 units

*Gun, rum, vodka, whisky, tequila and sambuca. Large (35ml) single measure of spirits are 1.4 units.

You can also use the unit calculation formula on the drink diary pages to work out the units in any drink.

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Making a decision to change your alcohol use

Changing your drinking habits is a big decision and involves thought and commitment. Change doesn't have to mean stopping completely, you may just want to cut down.

Two factors that are important in helping you to change successfully are how important it is to change your drinking, and also how confident you feel about doing so.

Have a think now about how important you feel it is to change your drinking. How would you rate this importance on a scale of 0 to 10?



Making a change is personal

What could change to make it more important for you to change your drinking?

Now take some time to think about how confident you are that you could change your drinking. How would you rate your confidence on a scale of 0 to 10?

How could you improve your confidence in your ability to change your drinking?

To successfully change a habit you must be ready and want to make the change. The more important a change is to you and the higher your level of motivation, the stronger you will be when facing the challenge of changing your drinking.

There are many benefits to reducing how much you drink. Here you can find out a bit more about the benefits that interest you. It's important to consider what matters to you and think about which of the benefits are important to you.

Sleep better

Alcohol can really disrupt your sleep. When you've been drinking, your sleep will be poor quality and you can wake up feeling tired and groggy. Cutting down or stopping drinking can help you sleep more soundly and wake up feeling more refreshed.

Lose weight

Alcohol is full of empty calories. This means that there is no nutritional value in the alcohol you drink. Alcohol is full of sugar and can lead to weight gain. Cutting back how much you drink means you will be consuming far fewer calories.

Improved behaviour

Drinking can sometimes lead to problems with your behaviour. This might include behaving aggressively when you've been drinking or forgetting things you have said and done. Cutting down your drinking means you are less likely to get into trouble or damage relationships with a loved one.

Make a goal

It can be useful to know what you are aiming to do. Do you want to stop drinking completely? How about drinking only at the weekend? Do you want to limit how many drinks you drink in an evening? Once you know what your goal is, you can start planning how you'll get there.

Drink water

Drinking alcohol can leave your body very dehydrated. Drinking water will help to keep your body hydrated. You can also try alternating alcoholic drinks with soft drinks, to give your body a break. Sip water slowly rather than drinking it in large quantities - you'll absorb it better.

Tell your friends and family

It can be helpful to talk to friends and family and explain you are going to cut down your drinking. This can help to avoid difficult situations where people expect or encourage you to drink.

Friends and family can also be a great source of support whilst making a change.

Changing habits

It's important to be patient with yourself and celebrate small successes along the way. Remember, changing a habit takes time and effort.

Start by creating a plan for change. Think about finding alternatives to fill your time. It is a good opportunity to try a new hobby, sport or activity, and possibly meet new people.

Help and support

There is a range of support available for people who want to make changes to their drinking. Some support will be more helpful than others depending on what your goal is and your individual preferences.

Online support

There are lots of different websites which offer you information, advice and support.

Drinkaware - this website provides lots of useful information about alcohol, including advice on how to cut down - www.drinkaware.co.uk

NHS - the NHS provide drink and alcohol information on their website. Here you can find out more about the health risks of drinking, and stories from people who have cut down - www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support/

In person support

There are a number of ways you can get support in person to help you make a change to your drinking.

Alcoholics Anonymous - many people have heard of AA. AA is a fellowship of people who identify as alcoholics. AA members support each other to become sober. AA is both free and anonymous. You can find details of local meetings via their website - <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

GP - if you are worried about your drinking then a good place to start is with your GP. They will be able to give you advice and offer you support.

Turning Point - we offer a range of treatment programmes, including for people who are not dependently drinking, and can provide access to community and inpatient detox. Support is available both online and face-to-face. For more information visit our website - www.turning-point.co.uk.

My reflections



Reflecting on our week can be a useful way to recognise what has gone well, what we have struggled with, and what areas we want to work on for next time.

You can bring this to your next key working appointment or workshop to support discussions about your goals and further support you need.



Reflections on **Week One:**

Reflections on **Week Two:**

My reflections



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Reflections on **Week Three:**

Reflections on **Week Four:**