

## R.E.A.L. Goal<sup>SM</sup>: Reduce Alcohol Use

*(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)*

**Example:** I will reduce my alcohol intake to the recommended guidelines (up to one drink or less per day for women and up to two 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 on 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) as 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 feel judged by others.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to improve my health.                | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be more productive/avoid hangovers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It is too expensive/a waste of money.       | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to manage/lose weight.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's a hassle.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to feel dependent on something.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's negatively affecting my relationships. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to set a great example for others.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm planning on having a baby.              | <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"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressed/Anxious/Sad        | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching sports | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

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

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

- o 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.**

- o Clean your spaces to freshen the area.
- o 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.

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

**Check out these links to learn more:**

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

To choose another goal, go to: [prevea360.com/realgoals](http://prevea360.com/realgoals)

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