

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The text is centered in the white space between these shapes.

Visit 14 - Techniques for Saying No - Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

How do I cope with not
drinking
AND
telling others “No thanks”



Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Plan Ahead to Stay in Control

Even if you are committed to changing your drinking, "social pressure" to drink from friends or others can make it hard to cut back or quit. This short module offers a [recognize-avoid-cope](#) approach commonly used in cognitive-behavioral therapy, which helps people to change unhelpful thinking patterns and reactions. It also provides links to worksheets to help you get started with your own plan to resist pressure to drink.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/building-your-drink-refusal-skills>

Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Recognizing Two Types of Pressure

The first step is to become aware of the two different types of social pressure to drink alcohol—direct and indirect.

- **Direct social pressure** is when someone offers you a drink or an opportunity to drink.
- **Indirect social pressure** is when you feel tempted to drink just by being around others who are drinking—even if no one offers you a drink.

Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Recognizing Two Types of Pressure Continued....

Take a moment to think about situations where you feel direct or indirect pressure to drink or to drink too much. You can use the form below to write them down. Then, for each situation, choose some resistance strategies from below or come up with your own. When you're done, you can print the form or email it to yourself.

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Avoid Pressure When Possible

For some situations, your best strategy may be avoiding them altogether. If you feel guilty about avoiding an event or turning down an invitation, remind yourself that you are not necessarily talking about "forever." When you have confidence in your resistance skills, you may decide to ease gradually into situations you now choose to avoid. In the meantime, you can stay connected with friends by suggesting alternate activities that don't involve drinking.

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Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Coping With Situations You Can't Avoid: Know Your "No"

When you know alcohol will be served, it's important to have some resistance strategies lined up in advance. If you expect to be offered a drink, you'll need to be ready to deliver a convincing "no thanks." Your goal is to be clear and firm, yet friendly and respectful. Avoid long explanations and vague excuses, as they tend to prolong the discussion and provide more of an opportunity to give in. Here are some other points to keep in mind:

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Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Coping With Situations You Can't Avoid:
Know Your "No" Continued.....

- Don't hesitate, as that will give you the chance to think of reasons to go along
- Look directly at the person and make eye contact
- Keep your response short, clear, and simple

Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Coping With Situations You Can't Avoid: Know Your "No" Continued.....

The person offering you a drink may not know you are trying to cut down or stop, and his or her level of insistence may vary. It's a good idea to plan a series of responses in case the person persists, from a simple refusal to a more assertive reply. Consider a sequence like this:

- “No, thank you.”
- “No, thanks, I don't want to.”
- “You know, I'm (cutting back/not drinking) now (to get healthier/to take care of myself/because my doctor said to). I'd really appreciate it if you'd help me out.”

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Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Coping With Situations You Can't Avoid: Know Your "No" Continued.....

You can also try the "broken record" strategy.

Each time the person makes a statement, you can simply repeat the same short, clear response.

You might want to acknowledge some part of the person's points ("I hear you...") and then go back to your broken-record reply ("...but no thanks"). And if words fail, you can walk away.

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Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Script and Practice Your "No"

Many people are surprised at how hard it can be to say no the first few times.

You can build confidence by scripting and practicing your lines. First imagine the situation and the person who's offering the drink. Then write both what the person will say and how you'll respond, whether it's a "broken record" strategy (mentioned above) or your own unique approach. Rehearse it aloud to get comfortable with your phrasing and delivery.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/building-your-drink-refusal-skills>



Today's Writing Session:

Building Your Drink Refusal Skills

Choosing not to drink alcohol is become much more socially acceptable!

More non-alcoholic drink options are available & people of all ages are taking about the health risks of drinking.

Once you start choosing not to drink alcohol regularly, you will feel better and you will serve as a healthy example to people that are watching you - including kids, young people, and adults silently struggling with alcohol drinking.



It can be challenging to decline a drink at first, but it gets easier with time.
And people will respect you for it!

Place today's date in your notebook.

Describe 2 situations where you might need to say "no thanks."

*Who is involved?

*Where could this happen?

*When you do decline a drink and/or opt for a non-alcoholic beverage – who are you setting a good example for? Your kids? Your friends? Yourself?