



# Visit 17 - Tips and Strategies to Help Me Quit or Cut Back

# Tips and Strategies to Help me Quit or Cut Back

## Choose Your Approach

Several proven treatment approaches are available. One size doesn't fit all, however. It's a good idea to do some research to find options that appeal to you, as you are more likely to stick with them. Chances are excellent that you'll pull together an approach that works for you.



# Tips and Strategies to Help me Quit or Cut Back

## Choose Your Approach Continued

### Don't Give Up:

Changing habits such as smoking, overeating, or drinking too much can take a lot of effort, and you may not succeed with the first try. Setbacks are common, but you learn more each time. Each try brings you closer to your goal. Whatever course you choose, give it a fair trial.

If one approach doesn't work, try something else. If a setback happens, get back on track as quickly as possible. In the long run, your chances for success are good.

Research shows that most people who drink heavily, even those with alcohol use disorder, either cut back significantly or quit.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/support-strategies-quitting>

# Tips and Strategies to Help me Quit or Cut Back

## Tips to Try

Small changes can make a big difference in reducing your chances of having alcohol-related problems. Whatever strategies you choose, give them a fair trial. If one approach doesn't work, try something else. But if you haven't made progress in cutting down after 2 to 3 months, consider quitting drinking altogether, seeking professional help, or both.

Here are some strategies for cutting down to try, and you can add your own at the end. Check off perhaps two or three to try in the next week or two.

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<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/tips-try>

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## Tips to Try Continued....

### Keep track:

Keep track of how much you drink. Find a way that works for you: Carry a [drinking tracker card](#) in your wallet, make check marks on a kitchen calendar, or enter notes in a mobile phone notepad or personal digital assistant. Making note of each drink before you drink it may help you slow down when needed.

### Count and Measure:

Know the [standard drink sizes](#) so you can count your drinks accurately. Measure drinks at home. Away from home, it can be hard to keep track, especially with mixed drinks, and at times, you may be getting more alcohol than you think. With wine, you may need to ask the host or server not to "top off" a partially filled glass..

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## Tips to Try Continued....

### Set Goals:

Decide how many days a week you want to drink and how many drinks you'll have on those days. It's a good idea to have some days when you don't drink. People who always stay within the [low-risk limits](#) when they drink have the lowest rates of alcohol-related problems.

### Find Alternatives:

If drinking has occupied a lot of your time, then fill free time by developing new, healthy activities, hobbies, and relationships, or renewing ones you've missed. If you have counted on alcohol to be more comfortable in social situations, manage moods, or cope with problems, then seek other, healthy ways to deal with those areas of your life.

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## Tips to Try Continued....

### 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.

### 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, see the short module to help you [build drink refusal skills](#).

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## Tips to Try Continued....

### Plans 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 in an electronic message you can access easily).

Or **talk things through with someone you trust**. Or get involved with 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, see the short module to help you handle [urges to drink](#).

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