

Visit 9 - Ready for Change

Ready.....or Not?



Are you ready to change your drinking?

If so, choose whether to cut down or quit and make your change plan. Don't be surprised if you continue to have mixed feelings. You may need to re-make your decision several times before becoming comfortable with it.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/ready-or-not>

Ready.....or Not?



Are you ready to change your drinking?

If not, consider these suggestions in the meantime:

- Keep track of how often and how much you're drinking.
- Notice how drinking affects you.
- Make or re-make a list of pros and cons about changing.
- Deal with other priorities that may be in the way.
- Ask for support from your doctor, a friend, or someone else you trust.
- Take steps to be safe.
- Come back to visit this site from time to time.

Planning for Change

Are you ready to change your drinking?

Even when you have committed to making a change, you still may have mixed feelings at times. Making a written "change plan" will help you to solidify your goals, why you want to reach them, and how you plan to do it.

A sample form is provided below. After filling it in, you can print it or email it to yourself.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/ready-or-not>

Planning for Change

Goal:(select one)

- I want to drink no more than drink(s) on any day and no more than drink(s) per week (see [low-risk drinking limits](#)).
- I want to stop drinking.

Timing: I will start on this date:

Reasons: My most important reasons to make these changes are:

Strategies: I will use these strategies:

People: The people who can help me are (names and how they can help):

Signs of success: I will know my plan is working if:

Possible roadblocks: Some things that might interfere—and how I'll handle them:

Roadblocks:

How I'll handle them:

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/planning-change-alcohol-reduction-plan-template>

Drinking Tracker Cards

If you want to cut back on your drinking, start by keeping track of every drink. Below are two different forms you can print, cut out, and keep with you. Either one can help make you aware of patterns, a key step in planning for a change. Try one form or try both to see which is more helpful.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/alcohol-consumption-tracker>

Drinking Tracker Cards

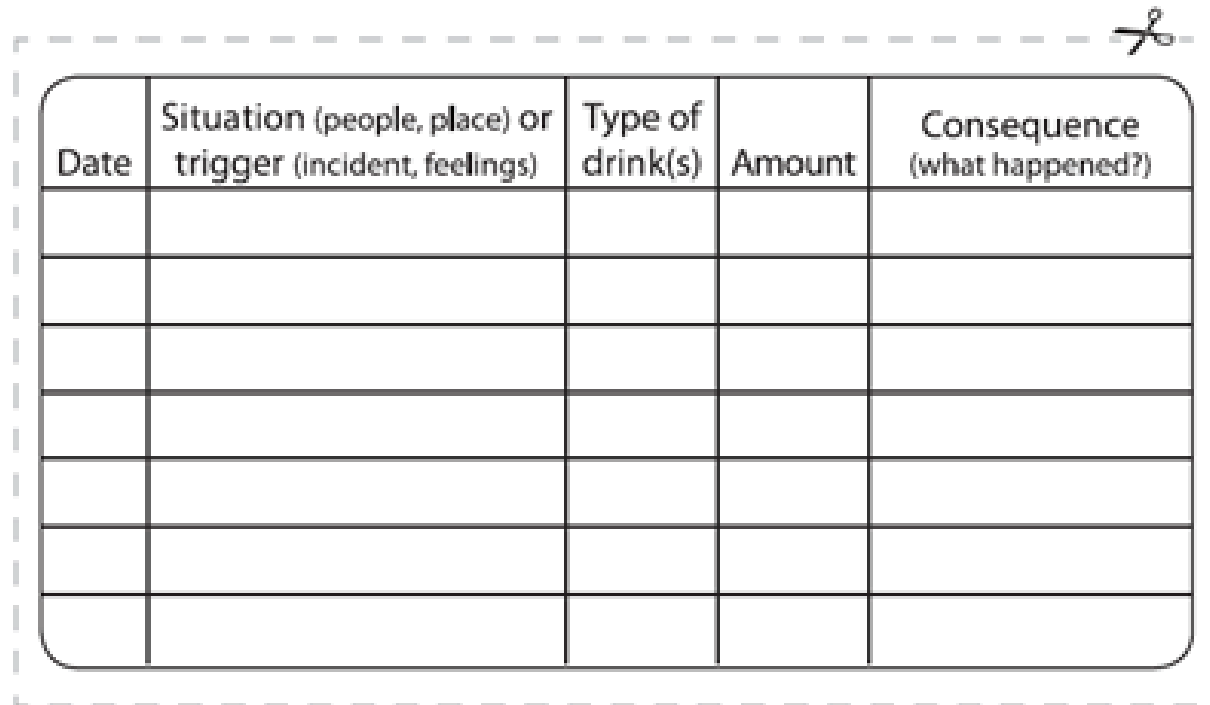
The [4-week tracker card](#) is a simple calendar form. If you mark down each drink before you have it, this can help you slow down if needed.

GOAL: No more than ___ drinks on any day and ___ per week.								
Week starting	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Total
___/___								
___/___								
___/___								
___/___								

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/alcohol-consumption-tracker>

Drinking Tracker Cards

The [Drinking Analyzer Card](#) can help you examine the causes and consequences of your drinking patterns.



Date	Situation (people, place) or trigger (incident, feelings)	Type of drink(s)	Amount	Consequence (what happened?)

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/alcohol-consumption-tracker>

Don't Wait For a Crisis or to "Hit Bottom!"

When someone is drinking too much, making a change earlier is likely to be more successful and less destructive to individuals and their families.

<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/Thinking-about-a-change/Its-up-to-you/Ready-Or-Not.aspx>

To Cut Down, or to Quit?

If you're considering changing your drinking, you'll need to decide whether to cut down or to quit. It's a good idea to discuss different options with a doctor, a friend, or someone else you trust.

Quitting is strongly advised if you:

- Try cutting down but cannot stay within the limits you set.
- Have had alcohol use disorder or now have symptoms.
- Have a physical or mental condition that is caused or worsened by drinking.
- Are taking a medication that interacts with alcohol.
- Are or may become pregnant.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/cut-down-or-quit>

To Cut Down, or to Quit?

If none of the conditions above apply to you, then talk with your doctor to determine whether you should cut down or quit based on factors such as:

- Family history of alcohol problems
- Your age
- Whether you've had drinking-related injuries
- Symptoms such as sleep disorders and sexual dysfunction

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/thinking-about-change/cut-down-or-quit>



Today's Writing Assignment:

Place today's date in our notebook.

What are your goals? Do you want to quit completely? Do you want to cut back? If so, what is your target number of drinks per day? Can you get down to 0? Maybe just 1-2 per drinking day?

Write 2-3 sentences describing your short term goal (next 1-2 weeks) and a longer term goal (next 1-6 months).

Once you are done a staff member will come check on you and go over your written material with you.