

Harm Reduction Strategies for Alcohol Use Disorder

Eat a meal before you start



Eat some food before and while drinking, to slow your drinking pace and slow the absorption of alcohol. Avoid snacking on salty foods as you may drink more out of thirst.

Stay hydrated



Alcohol is diuretic and can easily lead to dehydration which is what leads to those nasty hangovers. **Chose lower-alcohol drinks and alternate drinks or sips with water.**

Distract yourself



Occupy yourself while drinking to reduce the amount you're consuming. Try playing pool, singing karaoke, dancing, talking to friends, play video games just to name a few activities to try.

Set drinking times



Day drinking can extend the amount of alcohol you consume and make you more vulnerable to physical dependence. **Try to set start and end times**, such as not before 5 p.m. and not after 12 a.m.

Buy less so you use less



When drinking at home, **buy only what you want to drink for the night.** Buying large amounts of alcohol may be cheaper, but you could end up using more than you want to simply because it's there.

Lower the amount and frequency



In other words, drink in smaller amounts—and less often—than you do now. Can you drink one less day each week? Or one less drink each day? **Don't forgo baby steps**—they are often painless ways to get you going in the right direction.

Drink at your own pace



Avoid drinking in rounds with friends, as you may end up drinking more than planned.

Avoid combining alcohol with other drugs



Alcohol is a depressant drug. Consuming alcohol with other depressant drugs such as benzodiazepines, GHB, or opioids **can increase the risk of overdose and cause loss of consciousness, nausea and vomiting.**

Order single servings

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Order smaller servings of beer, cider and spirits, rather than tall pints or double serves.

Stay Safe



Before you start drinking, have a plan on how to stay safe. **Try handing off keys and phones to loved ones, arranging rides, or have a designated driver in advance to avoid driving intoxicated.** If you are vulnerable to blacking out, drink with a friend who will watch out for you, or drink at home where you are less likely to get into trouble.