



Consider Reasons To Cut Down or Quit Drinking

The purpose of this step is to think about the best reasons for you to cut down or quit your drinking. The reasons vary for different people. The list identifies some of the reasons why people decide to cut down or quit drinking. Check the boxes next to the most important reasons for you.

- To live a healthier life
- To achieve more in my life
- To be a better parent to my children
- To reduce the possibility that I will be injured or killed in a car crash, or that I will injure or kill another person

- To perform my job better
- To improve my marriage or my relationship with my partner
- To set a good example for my children
- To improve my relationships with other important people in my life
- To increase my chances of having a healthy baby, if I become pregnant again

- To consume fewer empty calories (drinks containing alcohol are high in calories)
- To be a happier person
- To save the money that I spend on drinking
- To look younger
- To feel better
- To not have the legal system involved in my life
- To have more control over my life
- Other: _____

Choose the three most important reasons to you for cutting down or quitting drinking and write them down here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





Identify Risky Situations

Your desire to drink may change according to your mood, the people you are with (or whether you are alone), and the availability of alcohol. Think about when and where you drink. Try to identify situations that make you want to drink. For example, one person made the following list:

- When other people (especially my partner) are drinking, I am likely to drink
- When I feel bored and depressed, especially on the weekends
- When I have an argument with family members
- When I feel lonely
- When tasks or expectations make me feel anxious, stressed, or like I'm a failure
- When I want to have fun or feel good
- When I want to fit in

The following list may help you remember situations or moods that make you want to drink.



Situations		Moods	
→ after work	→ sporting events	→ anger, resentment	→ anxiety, fear
→ certain places	→ television or magazine ads	→ boredom, loneliness	→ criticism
→ social events	→ friends	→ feelings of failure	→ frustration
→ family stresses	→ other people drinking	→ joy, happiness	
→ parties	→ watching television	→ exhaustion	
→ use of tobacco	→ after a fight	→ loneliness	
→ weekends	→ holidays		
→ weddings			
→ sleeplessness			

Identify the three situations or moods when you are most likely to be tempted to drink. Write them below:

1. When _____

2. When _____

3. When _____





How to Handle Risky Situations

In certain situations, especially if you are having a bad day, you will find that you are tempted to drink. It is important to figure out ahead of time how you can make sure you will not drink when you are tempted. Here are some tips from other women about ways to cope without drinking when life gets you down.



Think of something pleasant that you could do for yourself or with your family:

- Ask your partner or a friend to play cards or another game, or talk about something totally different.
- Telephone a sober friend or visit a sober neighbor.
- Go for a walk, exercise, or play a sport.
- Take a hot bath or shower.
- Watch a movie, or read a book or magazine.
- Drink a soda or some other drink without alcohol.
- Write your feelings down in a notebook.
- Listen to music.
- Surround yourself with positive people.



Other things that might make your life less stressful:

- Tell yourself that millions of people argue without having to drink.
- Tell yourself that drinking will not improve the situation, and it might make it worse.
- Discuss with your partner ways to avoid arguments.

Some of these ideas may not work for you, but maybe you can think of other ideas that might work well. If so, please write them down here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



How to Handle Risky Situations *continued*

Now, identify ways you could handle with the risky situations you listed on the last page.

- 1.** For the first risky situation or feeling, write down specific ways you might handle it without drinking.



- 2.** For the second risky situation or feeling, write down specific ways you might handle it without drinking.



- 3.** For the third risky situation or feeling, write down specific ways you might handle it without drinking.



Notice that some ways of dealing with a risky situation or feeling may be the same and some may be different. It is important to discover what will work for **you** in situations that you face. In making this list you are learning about yourself and about methods other than drinking to help reduce stress.



Guidelines for Helpers (or Support Persons)

Sometimes it's easier to change a habit with the help and support of a friend. The individual who gave you these tips has chosen you as the person to provide encouragement and support as she changes her drinking behaviors.

As with any habit, behavior change is a difficult process. This can be even more difficult with the addition of a new baby to the family. You can help by reviewing the steps outlined in her Healthy Moms Workbook and by giving her encouragement and support. To have trust, you must keep sensitive information just between the two of you...unless she has given you permission to involve other people.

Do not criticize, even if you become annoyed or frustrated. Remember that changing habits is never easy. There are bound to be good weeks and not-so-good weeks. It may be your support that makes a difference for successful drinking changes.

Thank you for your willingness to support your friend or family member as she sets and tries to meet new goals for cutting down or quitting drinking alcohol. Research shows that it is often easier to change a habit with the help and support of a friend or family member like you!

Goal for alcohol use/nonuse:



SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT TO DO:

■ Ask your friend how she would like you to support her such as:

- ➔ Help plan strategies to make it easier to stop or cut back.
- ➔ Talk on the telephone for support when needed. If you need to define appropriate times to call, go over this with your friend.
- ➔ Do some fun things together that do not involve alcohol.
- ➔ Help her when life is stressful—as it often is with a new child! You might help her find a babysitter or invite her to lunch.
- ➔ Go over her drinking diary to see if you can identify behavior patterns.
- ➔ Encourage her to use contraception if she is drinking and sexually active.

(continued on back)



Guidelines for Helpers (or Support Persons) continued

- Set a time in a few weeks when you will both discuss whether this type of support is helpful to her, and whether you are still available and willing to help.
- Be understanding and be a good listener. You might not always agree with what she says, and she might make choices that you think are wrong, but you can always listen.
- Encourage use of alternative, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Expect setbacks. If things don't go well, try to discover:
 - What led to the setback?
 - What were the consequences?
 - What could be done differently to prevent another setback?
 - What has worked in the past?

and then help her make some specific plans for handling similar situations in the future.

- Be a cheerleader. Help her to believe she can succeed.
- Celebrate successes together (but not with alcohol)!
- Encourage her to follow up with her health care provider.
- Keep everything confidential.

SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Don't be judgmental or critical.
- Don't expect instant success or perfect results.
- Don't get discouraged.
- Don't overextend yourself. Be honest with yourself and with her about what you are able to do.