

WORKBOOK
AND SELF
HELP TOOLS



ALCOHOL and you

IS IT TIME
FOR A
CHANGE?

Who is this booklet for?

It is good you picked up this booklet. We believe it will be helpful.

You may have concerns about your physical health. Alcohol does take its toll. Perhaps you do things completely out of character under the influence of alcohol. You may be concerned about how it affects you, your family or friends.

This booklet is for anyone concerned that their drinking is affecting them in a negative way.

It is not a replacement for professional help if you need it. See your doctor if that is the case.

Used in excess, alcohol can be very dangerous. For many people, cutting down on their drinking would be a practical step forward. It could avoid a lot of problems in the future.

How will this booklet help?

This booklet will help you examine your alcohol use. It will give you information and practical ideas to help you make choices that are right for you.

You may want to know more about what alcohol does. You may want to take a closer look at your own drinking. You may want to see how people change their drinking habits. If you decide you want to cut down your drinking then this booklet can help you do that.

If you have tried to stop in the past and were unable to, this booklet may help you to think about stopping again. The exercises can be used as self help (on your own) or with the support of someone to talk over the exercises.

We hope you find it helpful.



Whatever your goal, you will see that change is possible. How you use this booklet is up to you. Even small changes to how much or how often you drink can make a big difference.

We wish you well in your efforts.



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Make it work:

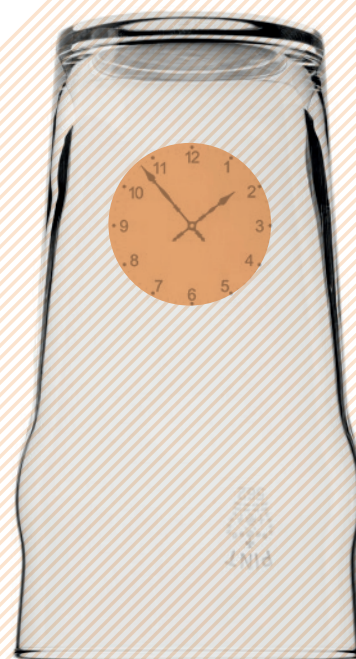
THE METHODS IN THIS
BOOKLET WILL WORK MUCH
BETTER IF:

- 1 You have good reasons to want to change your drinking habits.
- 2 You make changing your drinking a priority for yourself.
- 3 You feel confident to give the task an honest attempt.

IS IT TIME
FOR A
CHANGE?



ALCOHOL
and you



Getting ready

Problems are more likely to develop when people repeatedly use alcohol for the 'drug effect'. Three common situations of concern include using alcohol:

- to cope
- to feel better
- to get drunk

Where does drinking fit into your life?



Why do you think you drink?



I drink to help me relax	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink to show affection	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because it makes me feel good	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because of pressure from friends	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because it helps me sleep	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because I enjoy the taste	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink in order to celebrate	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink to help me do boring things	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink to forget my worries	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because it gives me confidence	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink to be sociable	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because there is nothing else to do	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink when I am angry	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink to get drunk	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink because it's a big part of who I am	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>
I drink out of habit	seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	often <input type="checkbox"/>

Are there other reasons you drink?



I drink because

.....

.....

Could the amount you drink be putting you at risk?



How do you see **your drinking**?

A lot of people in Northern Ireland drink. At a first glance how would you see your drinking?

Where would you put it?

Spectrum Of Alcohol Use



Why look at your drinking?

You may think your level of risk is lower than it is. This is especially true if your friends and family drink a lot. Here we help you find out if your drinking could put you at risk.



What is **risky drinking**?

Have you ever stepped back and had an objective look at your drinking?

Could the amount you drink be putting you at risk of health or other alcohol-related problems?

Here is a quick, easy and confidential way to find out. The AUDIT questionnaire on the next page was developed to help people examine their drinking.

- Read through the questions about your drinking during the past year.
- In the questions, a drink is equal to a glass, can or bottle of beer, one small glass of wine or a pub measure of spirits. A pint would count as two drinks.
- Use the check boxes to mark your answers, and then total the score.





Please tick the box next to your answer for each question, and then add up your score.

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Monthly or less (1)
 ☐ 2-4 times a month (2)
 ☐ 2-3 times a week (3)
 ☐ 4 or more times a week (4)

2. How many units of alcohol do you drink on a typical day when you are drinking? Use page 30 to help you.

- ☐ 1 or 2 (0)
 ☐ 3 or 4 (1)
 ☐ 5 or 6 (2)
 ☐ 7 to 9 (3)
 ☐ 10 or more (4)

3. How often do you have 6 or more units (female) or 8 or more units (male) on one occasion? Use page 30 to help you.

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

6. How often during the last year have you needed a drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?

- ☐ Never (0)
 ☐ Less than Monthly (1)
 ☐ Monthly (2)
 ☐ Weekly (3)
 ☐ Daily or almost daily (4)

9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?

- ☐ No (0)
 ☐ Yes, but not in the last year (2)
 ☐ Yes, during the last year (4)

10. Has a relative, friend, doctor, or health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you should cut down?

- ☐ No (0)
 ☐ Yes, but not in the last year (2)
 ☐ Yes, during the last year (4)

Your total score:

What does **your** score mean?

The AUDIT questionnaire was developed by the World Health Organisation. Higher scores typically reflect more serious problems.

Make it all make sense.

Add up your score...



Now, add up all your scores.

My AUDIT score is



WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE MEAN?

0-7

LOW RISK

8-15

HAZARDOUS

16-19

HIGH RISK

20+

HIGHEST RISK



LOW RISK: Not likely to cause serious harm. Remember, there are no completely safe limits.

HAZARDOUS: Increased risk of harm including physical, mental, social, legal, financial problems.

HIGH RISK: Drinking at this level will eventually result in harm if not already doing so. Risk of dependence is there.

HIGHEST RISK: Definite harm. Likely to be dependent. Ask your doctor for help.

What are your thoughts about your score?



What do you think about your score?

If you scored between 8 and 15 (hazardous level), you may want to think about cutting down, stopping or even stopping for a while. If you are drinking at high risk / highest risk levels, a score of 16 or more, it would be a good idea to see your GP. Your drinking could lead you to serious problems.



Alcohol-related consequences

Excessive drinking can contribute to range of difficulties

- Physical health problems
- Work/education problems
- Emotional problems
- Relationship problems
- Blackouts/memory problems
- Parenting issues /child safety concerns
- Legal problems
- Financial problems



Which of these would you be worried about?

Your Notes



“When people **stop or reduce heavy drinking** these consequences will often **decrease or disappear**”

How people **change**?

Let's look at how change happens. Everyone, no matter who they are, goes through five stages when changing anything like smoking, drinking or other drug use. A person's next step will depend on what stage they are in.

Moving from one stage to the next means seeing "where you are at" and deciding what the best way forward is.

What is the
best way
forward?



What are the **5 stages**?

We move gradually from being uninterested (pre-contemplation stage) to thinking about change (contemplation stage) to committing to make a change.

1 **Not thinking about change** (Pre-contemplation)

Someone who is at the first stage is not really thinking about changing. They like what they are doing. They don't see it as a problem.

2 **Thinking about it but not quite ready to change** (Contemplation)

At this stage, someone is considering change. But... that is all they are doing, considering it. Although they are more aware of the consequences of what they are doing, they are not sure or ambivalent about change.

3 **Getting ready to change** (Preparation)

Someone in the preparation stage has made the decision to change and are getting ready to change. It is a mindset shift. They make a committed, determined decision. The person gets a plan of "how" they are going to do it.

4 **Making change happen** (Action)

In this stage, someone begins to make those changes, perhaps using short-term rewards to keep themselves motivated and often turning to family, friends and others for support.

5 **Maintenance** (Keeping the change going)

Someone in the maintenance stage works to keep the decision to change going.

Where are you in the Stages of Change?



ACTION: Has started change.
3 to 6 months of hard work to
keep the decision going

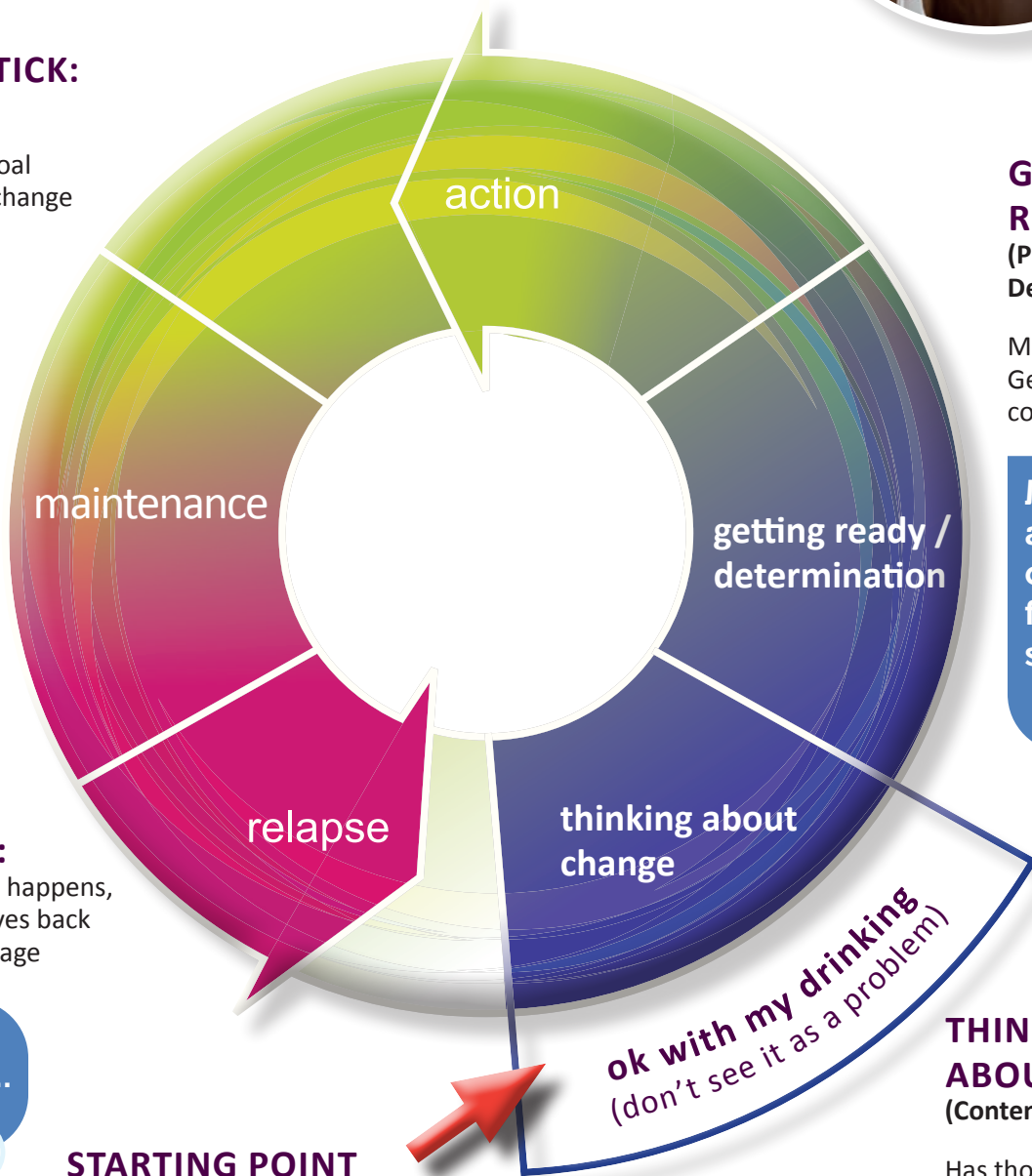
MAKING IT STICK: (Maintenance)

Has reached their goal
and is maintaining change

GETTING READY: (Preparation / Determination)

Mind set change.
Gets a plan, gets
committed

Making
a plan is
crucial
for your
success



SLIP BACK:

(Relapse) if this happens,
the person moves back
to a previous stage

Back to
planning...



STARTING POINT

I am ok with what I am doing (Precontemplation)
Does not see a problem.

THINKING ABOUT IT: (Contemplation)

Has thought about
change, but has not put
this into action

Where do you think you are? _____

What makes you think this? _____

What is your next step? _____

Ideas on page 14 may help you answer this.





Your Notes



(Source: Prochaska, JO and DiClemente, C 1982) For further reading have a look at Changing for Good by James Prochaska, James Norcross, and Carlo DiClemente (1994: Avon Books). It is good for helping people change a range of things like smoking, drinking and other health related issues.

Dealing with relapse

Relapse is always a possibility. Although relapse can be discouraging, it can be an important opportunity to learn from and decide to try again. The key is to look back and develop a plan for the next time. Perhaps plan better for high-risk situations (like being around people who drink heavily).

What can you do to support change?



We do not say change is easy. What else is going on in your life? The influence of friends or how much support you have will have an impact. You will have different needs depending on what stage you are at.

Stage of change	What can you do to move forward?
(Pre-contemplation) I am ok with what I am doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase your awareness of the harm alcohol can cause. (Read the section Low and Risky Drinking: What you Don't Know Can Harm You.) • Challenge positive attitudes toward drinking • Get other interests
(Contemplation) I am thinking about change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify reasons to change • Discuss fears or concerns of not changing • Build your belief that you can change if you want to • Consider what is important to you
(Preparation / Determination) I am getting ready to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how best to make the changes you need • Make a plan • Get support (see help and support section)
(Action) I am changing and keeping my change decision going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps towards changing • Work on preventing relapse • Build other interests, hobbies • Find other ways to relax, socialise • Build your skills of coping, decision making • Make changes in your lifestyle and friends
(Relapse) I have slipped back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get back on track / review your plan • Learn from what happened • Build your confidence so you can try to change again • Talk to people who have successfully changed • Get support (see help and support section)

Heaviest drinking day

TAKING STOCK

To help you look at your drinking, think about a 24 hour period when your drinking was at its worst.

[illegible]

What was good about this particular day?

What was not good about it?

If I continue to drink at this level, I might worry that...

Benefits from drinking less

Your choice.
It is entirely up to you.



When you drink alcohol to excess, there are risks to all areas of your life. These risks can be avoided or minimised by not drinking at all or drinking at a 'low risk' level (see p31). Whatever you decide to do is entirely up to you.

Possible reasons for cutting down. In the last three months:



YES NO

Have you woken up unable to remember some of the events of the day/night before?

☐ ☐

Do you argue more with family or friends under the influence of alcohol?

☐ ☐

Do you feel rotten the day after drinking?

☐ ☐

Does your drinking affect your finances?

☐ ☐

Have you given up hobbies, sports, interests and spent more time drinking instead?

☐ ☐

Do you tend to depend on alcohol in certain situations?

☐ ☐

Which ones?

.....

Have you hidden the amount you are drinking from those you care about?

☐ ☐

Have you behaved in any way that you regret when drinking?

☐ ☐

Does alcohol seem to change your personality?

☐ ☐

Have your work relationships been affected through your drinking?

☐ ☐

Time to think.

Think about what you would like to change and the reasons why



Your Notes

Now mark the reasons below that take you away from what is important to you:



Have you woken up unable to remember some of the events of the day/night before?

☐

Do you argue more with family or friends under the influence of alcohol?

☐

Do you feel rotten the day after drinking?

☐

Does your drinking affect your finances?

☐

Have you given up hobbies, sports, interests and spent more time drinking instead?

☐

Do you tend to depend on alcohol in certain situations?

☐

Have you hidden the amount you are drinking from those you care about?

☐

Have you behaved in any way that you regret when drinking?

☐

Does alcohol seem to change your personality?

☐

Have your work relationships been affected through your drinking?

☐

Perhaps some of your answers point you towards some of the benefits you will experience if you drink less.

Weighing it all up; the **decision balance** exercise

**WEIGH UP
PROS AND CONS**

Write down some good things about both continuing the way you drink and also changing the way you drink.
Do the same for the bad things (negatives).

Continue my present drinking pattern	Change my drinking pattern 
What will I gain?	What will I gain?
What will I lose?	What will I lose?

Next, give a score of importance to each item

1. Slightly important 2. Moderately important 3. Very important 4. Extremely important

STAY THE SAME, CUT
DOWN, OR QUIT?



What are your reasons to change your drinking?

Reason 1

Reason 2

Reason 3

Reason 4

What would
you want
different for
yourself?





Is it time for
a change?

Decision time; what do you want to do
with your drinking:

STAY THE SAME,
CUT DOWN,
OR QUIT?

You have taken a closer look at how your drinking is affecting you.

Any goal you now set is entirely up to you. Making a decision and a commitment to work toward your goal is important.

What are you going to do?

If you stay the same, that is your call. Both quitting and cutting down takes effort. What might help you with that decision?

STAY THE SAME, CUT DOWN, OR QUIT?



Quitting might be a better choice when

Honesty tells me trying to *control* my drinking just won't work for me.

I have tried to cut down before and it just did not work.

The consequences of me continuing to drink are just too much (health, relationships).

My mental health has been really affected.

I worry that I am dependent. I want to have more control in my life and my use of alcohol is controlling me.

I am in trouble with the law or have financial problems.

Cutting down might be a better choice when

I know I am not going to quit.

Drinking does not interfere with my quality of life or well being.

The level of my drinking has benefits that outweigh the consequences.

My drinking does not interfere with my work, education, etc.

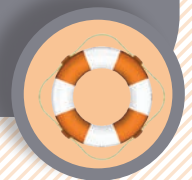
I can set a limit or say no at times.

I know it is costly, but I am willing to take the risk.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN **ANY** DRINKING IS TOO MUCH

- When driving or operating machines
- When pregnant or breastfeeding
- When taking certain medications
- With certain medical conditions, eg. liver problems
- You can't control your drinking

IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE?



Setting your goal

Looking over what you have read and written, which is the best goal for you?



Time to commit.



Cut down my drinking

☐

To cut out drinking for a while and then work to cut down

☐

To stop drinking completely

☐

See page 26 for important information about withdrawal

A period of abstinence

To get started on any work to cut down your drinking and keeping to that level, a period of 6 to 8 weeks of not drinking any alcohol may be recommended. This will give your liver and other parts of your body a chance of getting back to normal.

Research suggests people who avoid drinking for this length of time do significantly better in controlling their drinking. If possible agree to a period of abstinence with your support worker, GP, or family member.

Any period of not drinking will be helpful in your attempts to cut down.

Your agreement with yourself

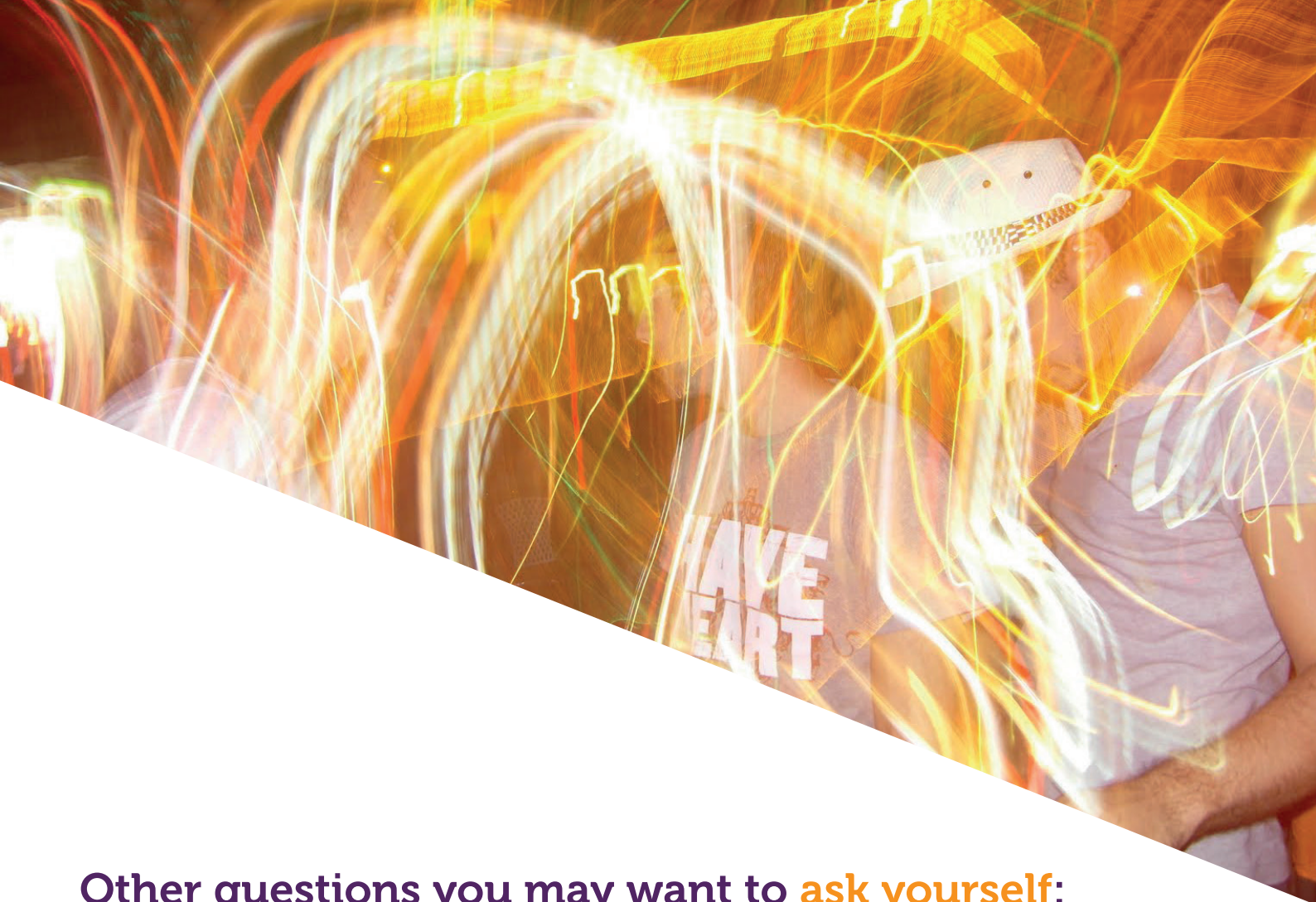
I will start on this day _____

I will not drink more than _____ units in a single drinking session

I will have _____ alcohol free days per week

I will not drink more than _____ units in a week





Other questions you may want to ask yourself:

How important is it for me to achieve my goal (do something about my drinking)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT IMPORTANT					VERY IMPORTANT				



In the next 3 months, how confident am I that I achieve my goal?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT CONFIDENT					VERY CONFIDENT				



Can you think of anything that would help increase your points by one?

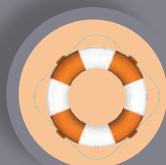
A large, rounded rectangular area with horizontal blue lines, intended for writing a response to the question above.



Ways to cut down

There are many ways to help yourself stay within your limits. Here are some suggestions.

- Decide your personal drinking rules; when, where and how to drink
- Pace yourself
- Take smaller sips
- Put your glass down between sips
- Change your drink
- Drink for the taste
- If you drink spirits, dilute them and have a soft drink between alcoholic drinks
- Learn to refuse drinks
- Avoid rounds. If you are in company, buy the first round and your own after that
- Reward yourself for success
- Have a cut off point that is realistic, yet represents a meaningful reduction in your drinking
- Have days of rest from alcohol



It helps to remember that alcohol is a sedative drug that will impair judgement. 3 to 5 units over two hours is enough for most men to lose self-control. For women it's less.

Keeping to limits can take more than willpower. Determination, a plan and support are as important.

A period of abstinence What happens if I slip?

Sometimes you may go over your personal limit. It helps not to view this as failure, but an opportunity to learn what puts you at risk. If you keep finding yourself drinking more than you intended to and it is causing you difficulties you may need to rethink your goal. Talk this over with your GP or support worker.

Staying within your goal

To help you reach your goal, keep a 'diary' of your drinking. A form is enclosed that you can photocopy. Write down every time you drink, how much, where and with whom. This will give you a view on how well you are progressing with your goal.



Day	Time	Where & Why?	With Whom?	What?	Units	Cost
Mon						
Tues						
Wed						
Thurs						
Fri						
Sat						
Sun						
Totals						

Your high risk situations

Stopping or cutting down your drinking takes commitment and continuous effort.

Knowing your high risk spots helps you prepare how you are going to deal with the pressure to turn back from the goal you set.

What would put you under more pressure?

People have more success changing when they have a plan.



	Almost never	Sometimes	Often
When I'm with other people who are drinking			
When I feel tense			
When I have to meet people			
When I think that just one would cause no harm			
When I feel depressed			
When I'm not at work or school that day			
When I feel happy			
When I have money to spend			
When I feel frustrated with my life			
When I feel tired			
When I feel disappointed that other people have let me down			
When I remember the good times drinking			
When I am bored			
Other			

My main high risk points are?

How can I avoid or cope with these situations?

1 1

2 2

3 3

4 4

Dealing with pressure

Some people find they get stuck thinking about drinking or get pressure from friends.

These are a few tips if you feel under pressure.

Think about the good things about sticking to your goal

Look back over the things you have identified in this booklet. Pay attention to these positive things rather than focusing on what you feel you are giving up. Add more items of your own to the list of benefits.

Think about the bad side of excessive drinking

Make a list of unpleasant experiences associated with getting drunk. Think of an image of a specific thing or time that tells you, "I just don't want that."

Distractions

Doing something you enjoy or you want to get done will get your mind off drinking.

Self-reinforcement

Remind yourself of your success so far. Do you want to give that up?

Leave or change the situation

If it is putting you under too much pressure, get up and leave.

Call someone

Who has been helpful before? Keep in mind that it is ok to ask for help.

Which of these would work for you?

**To reach any goal, it is important to
ask for help if you need it**

Depression

Some people drink because they feel down. Depression is characterised by feelings of sadness, loss of interest and decreased energy. If you feel depressed for two weeks or more see your GP.

Withdrawal

If you have been drinking heavily for a time, your body may react to being alcohol free. This is withdrawal. It can be dangerous. If you scored over 20 on page 7, you should see your GP. If you experience shakes, sweats or other signs of withdrawal see your GP immediately.

When to see your doctor.



Help and support

Have you ever heard "A problem shared is a problem solved". Telling someone about your goal can help you.

Who are you going to tell?

Who might be helpful to you, practically, emotionally or physically?

.....



Your Notes



Low and risky drinking: what you don't know can harm you

This section is to provide some basic alcohol information. After you had a look at it, is there anything you found interesting or surprising?

What's all
the fuss
made about
drinking?



What's all the fuss made about drinking?

When many people think of drug abuse, they don't connect it with alcohol. The reason is partly cultural. In Northern Ireland many adults drink alcohol. It is legal and socially acceptable.

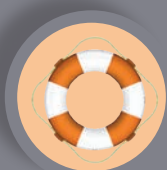
Think of the ads and media images of alcohol. They portray fun, excitement and humour.

*Yet there is another side... In Northern Ireland in 2018 there were **284 alcohol related deaths** and almost **13,000 admissions to hospital due to alcohol.***

Before we go on any further,
let's consider a **definition**:

Drugs

A drug is a chemical which causes changes in the way the human body functions, either mentally, physically or emotionally.



Taking this definition then:

Alcohol is a drug. It is more than just a drug. It is a toxic, addictive, sedative drug. Let's take a closer look.



Alcohol and the body:

It is a NARCOTIC DRUG that blunts the senses. The word narcotic comes from the Greek word 'narcosis' to numb or to stupefy.

Any chemical that alters the mood, feelings, co-ordination, perception or behaviour, alters brain cells and disrupts their normal chemical behaviour.

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant which slows down the body's functions. Its effects are similar to those of a general anaesthetic. If you take away the ingredients that give taste and colour to any alcohol beverage you get ethyl alcohol.

(C₂H₅OH). Remove the water and you get ether. (HOH₅C₂)



Ether is an anaesthetic that numbs the brain and puts it to sleep.

Alcohol and ether are basically the same drugs.

Within 4 to 5 minutes, after drinking, alcohol is present in the blood stream and is distributed to all parts of the body. 10% is eliminated through breath, urine and sweat. The liver deals with the rest.



The liver is the organ that disposes of most of the alcohol the body consumes at no more than one unit per hour. This is why units are so important. Drink more than one unit in an hour and the excess alcohol goes into the blood stream and then throughout the whole body.



Your Notes



Where alcohol takes its toll

Heavy drinking effects



- Alcohol impacts on virtually every cell and organ system in the body.
- The more consumed, the more damage done. The damage is often gradual and you don't see it until it hits you.
- It is a powerful drug known to change personality.
- Alcohol can damage an unborn baby. Avoid drinking alcohol when pregnant or breastfeeding.
- If you are trying to have a baby, alcohol can reduce fertility and ability to conceive.
- Drinking excessively can cause a range of family and emotional problems.
- It is the cause of many accident and hospital admissions.

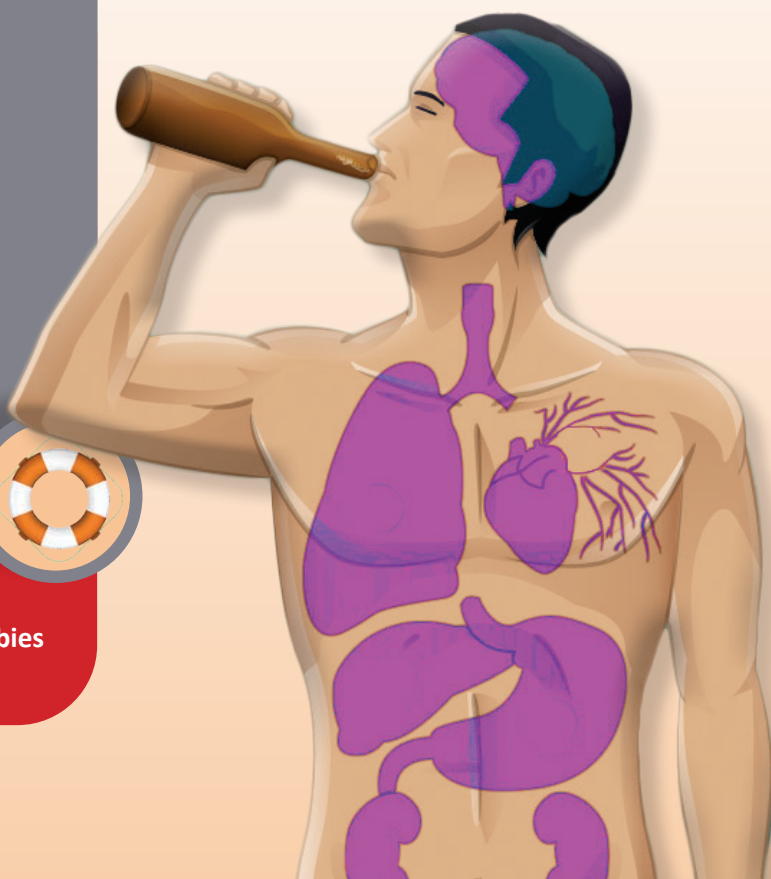
Effects of heavy excessive drinking

- Alcohol dependency
- Memory loss
- Premature ageing
- Drinker's nose
- Weakness of the heart muscle
- Heart failure
- Anaemia
- Impaired blood clotting
- Breast cancer
- Vitamin deficiency
- Bleeding
- Inflammation of the stomach
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea, malnutrition
- Inflammation of the pancreas



In men: Impaired sexual function

In women: Risk of harm to unborn babies



Would you know a unit of alcohol if you saw one?

Measuring alcohol units can be a challenge. It gives a way to keep a check on how much we are drinking. One unit is 8 grams of alcohol. Because alcohol comes in many strengths and sizes of containers, it is useful to know how many units each drink contains.

Some drinks now have units on the label.

Size and Beverage	Strength	Units
A standard glass of wine (175ml)	12%	2.1
A glass of red or white wine (175ml)	13%	2.3
A large glass of wine (250ml)	13%	3.3
A measure of spirit (35ml)	40%	1.4
A bottle of ordinary strength alcopops (275ml)	5%	1.4
A bottle of ordinary strength alcopops (700ml)	5%	3.5
A pint of low strength beer	3.5-4%	2-2.3
A pint of stronger beer	5%	2.8
A can of strong cider / lager (440ml)	9%	4
A quarter bottle of spirits - gin, vodka, whiskey (200ml)	40%	8
A half bottle of vodka (350ml)	40%	14
Buckfast (75cl)	15%	11.5
A bottle of strong cider (3000ml)	7.5%	22.5

Here is an example...

This is **1** unit of alcohol...



76ml MEASURE OF WINE - LESS THAN A SMALL GLASS OF WINE (125mls)



A 25ml MEASURE OF SPIRITS (NI is 35ml which is 1.4 units)



250ml OF REGULAR BEER - LESS THAN HALF A PINT



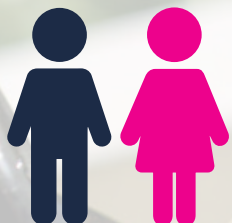
218ml OF REGULAR CIDER - LESS THAN HALF A PINT



you shouldn't
drink more than

14

units (spread
over the week)



For Male & Female

**Any decrease
in drinking is
a positive step
forward.**



If you are pregnant
the safest thing to do
is not drink alcohol.

No Alcohol = No Risk

Aim to have
**SEVERAL
DRINK FREE
DAYS
EACH WEEK**

**Know your weekly limit
in units and measures...**



6X 175ml
GLASSES OF 13% ABV WINE



6X 568ml
PINTS OF 4% ABV BEER



5X 568ml
PINTS OF 4.5% ABV CIDER



10X 35ml
MEASURES OF 40% ABV SPIRITS

Responsible drinking guidelines

There is no completely safe limit of drinking. What would be considered a low risk is up to 14 units per week; this applies to both men and women.

Any decrease in drinking is a positive step forward.

Your body needs several days a week without any alcohol.

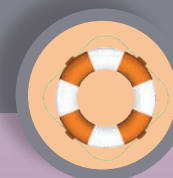
There is some evidence that moderate drinking has some health benefits for women over the age of 55 (especially if drinking around 5 units a week or less). Discuss this with your G.P.

Even drinking a small amount of alcohol begins to impair judgement, control and decision making.

Other effects of alcohol depend on...

Now that you have an idea of how much alcohol harms the body, its effects depend on several factors, not merely how much or how quickly you drink.

- Weight is one factor – alcohol will have greater effect on a lighter person.
- A person's mood, if they have eaten and where they drink are also factors.
- Women react more quickly than men do. They have proportionately less fluid and more fat in body cells. Alcohol is distributed in body fluids. It is therefore more concentrated in a woman's system causing more rapid organ damage. Around the time of a woman's period, they also may get intoxicated faster.
- The amount of alcohol in a drink is important not its type, e.g. beer, spirits.
- Alcohol interacts negatively with many medications. If you are taking antihistamines for a cold, for example, alcohol will increase the drowsiness the medication can cause. Some painkillers along with alcohol cause added liver damage.



Benefits of drinking less:

Which of these could apply to you?

I will sleep better.

I will be happier.

I will save a lot of money.

My relationships will improve.

I will achieve more in my life.

I will be better at my job.

I will be less likely to feel depressed.

Other people will respect me.

I will be less likely to get into trouble with the police.

I will be less likely to develop liver disease (12 times less likely).

I will probably find it easier to maintain a healthy weight.

I will be less likely to develop heart disease or cancer.

I will live longer-probably 5-10 years longer



Your Notes



Some alcohol fairytales

There are a number of myths, which are far from the truth.

Myth - Alcohol is a stimulant. It lifts you when you are depressed.

Fact - Alcohol is a depressant. It removes inhibitions giving the impression it is a stimulant. It is a depressant drug that taken in large amounts "puts the brain to sleep".

Myth - Alcohol warms you up. It can be good for a cold.

Fact - Alcohol cures nothing. The calories released by the burning of alcohol seem to make you feel warmer, but the body actually loses heat. Drinking excessively leaves the body open to more infection.

Myth - Drinking black coffee will help sober you up.

Fact - Nothing speeds the liver up in dealing with alcohol. Remember 1 unit per hour. Coffee is a stimulant, which may make you feel more alert. Instead of being sleepy and drunk, you may just be alert and drunk.

Separate
the facts
from the
fiction



Myth - If I stick to beer, I will never become dependent.

Fact - Alcohol, no matter what package it comes in, is an addictive drug. You can become dependent through drinking any type of alcohol or mixture of alcoholic drinks excessively.

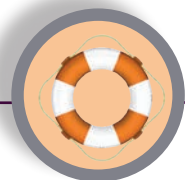
"Habit is habit, and not to be flung out by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time."

Mark Twain



To remind you of the steps you can take:

- Think through your decision to change
- Weigh up the pros and cons
- Set a goal with achievable targets
- Reward yourself for success
- Ask for help if you need it



Your Notes



**WELL
DONE**

ALCOHOL
and you

If you have worked through this book and tried to change your drinking patterns - **WELL DONE!**

- Any reduction can reduce harm
- Think about how you could reward yourself if you make progress towards your goal
- What would give you that reward that keeps your efforts going?

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

3

.....

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Where can I get help ?

Details of local alcohol services
can be found online at:

www.drugsandalcoholni.info

Details of mental health services can
be found online at:

www.mindingyourhead.info



Take it further online.

Information, self help tools and resources.

www.drugsandalcoholni.info



Original booklet developed by

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