



Help to get and stay sober

If you are a habitual drinker, you are probably telling yourself that you like the taste and experience drinking gives you. But no one is born a drinker of alcohol, it's a learned behaviour. We are born with an inherent need to drink water and stay hydrated. Historically when water quality was poor and fresh water "on tap" was unheard of, weak beer was used to maintain hydration. That's not the case now. If you have learned how to become a drinker, you can learn how to become a non-drinker. No exceptions. Its all about choice.

You may think it's a big decision or commitment, to become sober, but you have made big decisions before. Maybe you got married? went to college? took an exam that you had to study for? took a loan to buy a car or a mortgage to buy a house? changed job? You make big decisions all the time. This is just one of the very best big decisions possible. And the only person who can make it, is you.

The reality is that you are always free to choose what to put in your mouth, whether its food or drink. But you are never free from the consequences of your choices. It's a bit like "buy one get one free". It's the same for people wanting to lose weight, cake and pasties will always be available, but every single one has a consequence once its in your body.

Ask yourself two questions,

You are free to choose....

But you are never free from the consequence of that choice.....

1. "Do I you want to stop drinking now, or do I just wish I wanted to stop?"

Honesty is important. If you are just doing this because you think you should, this programme might not work as well as it will, if you can honestly say right now, "I want to stop drinking" and mean it.



Even if you only wish you wanted to stop, knowing how to change how you think and feel about alcohol is a useful tool and that may be the first step in the process of changing your mind.

If you genuinely want to get and stay sober, here's how you can. Ask yourself this question;

2. "If I become a non-drinker now, how many drinks am I going to have to give up?"

Stop and think about that for a moment.

Maybe you are doing the maths, multiplying how many drinks you have a day by 7 and then multiplying the number of weeks, months and years. Its probably quite a big number if you look at it like that.

The good news is the answer is much simpler than that.



You only have to give up one drink. That's the one that would have been the next one. If you don't have that, then there are no others, they don't exist, so you only need to give up one drink. What would have been the next one.

Now Answer this question honestly:

Can you not have just one drink?

Yes / No

And how will you feel if you don't have that one drink? The reality is that if you don't have that one, you will probably still get a desire to reach for a drink, for a few days at least, maybe even a few weeks. If or when you experience that, take it as a GOOD SIGN, because it's your body reminding you that you are sober now, and that's what you want, to go back to being a non-drinker. To get your power back. Isn't it?

You already have the neurology to be a non-drinker, because as you were not born with a desire to drink alcohol. In fact, you were born with a desire to avoid anything that's detrimental to your health. That means you can't tell yourself you can't be a non-drinker, because you already have been. That's

your true human default setting. To love and respect your body. And that starts with what you put in it.

The process of adapting to not drinking is not unlike people who overeat and finally take control of their portion sizes and eat less. They can experience hunger for a few weeks whilst the body recalibrates how much it needs to feel satisfied. If they fear feeling hungry then they are likely to go back to overeating, but if they take it as a sign their body is recalibrating neurologically and physically, they find the process much easier. When you get hungry and you don't need the calories, it's really "fake hunger". A conditioned response to a trigger, not a genuine physiological desire.

A desire to drink is also a fake signal telling you to do something that you have conditioned yourself to believe is a reward or that makes you feel good. As Janey might say, that's the "wine witch" talking, not you. Overeating, smoking and drinking triggers have much in common. For all three in order to satisfy the (fake) urge, you must delete what is true and replace it with false information. In all three cases, the habit causes emotional distress to you, maybe those close to you, pain, disease and often death. That's not a reward for anything, so if that's the phrase you have been using to justify drinking, you have been lying to yourself. Stop listening to the wine witch, she is not your friend.



So let's re-cap; the first step to becoming a non-drinker is to realise you only have to give up one drink, and that you already know how to be a non-drinker, and now you also know that if or when you feel a (fake) desire to drink, as you probably will in the first few weeks, then that's a GOOD SIGN because your mind is reminding you that you do not drink anymore. It's how you respond to that signal that really determines your success. If you expect those desires not to be there you are not being realistic (like our failed dieters). But when you expect, it you are not shocked or controlled by it. When you stop responding to the old signals to drink, sometimes the signal or urge gets louder or feels stronger if you don't obey it, like someone shouting because they think they are not being heard; but the more you stop responding, the weaker the neurological process that drives you to drink becomes, until the signals just stop, and that particular neurological map is reconfigured into something else. The great thing about your brain is that it's a bit like real estate, if a piece of land isn't being used it's purchased or claimed by someone else and redeveloped into something more current. YOU are the architect of your brain. That means you get to choose what that alternative development is. You can find new ways of feeling good that enhances your health, not rob you of it. Do you like the sound of that?

The brain only keeps what is useful and what it thinks it needs and what you are responding too. So, to sum up, the longer you go without doing something, the less the desire to do it. Until soon you have no desire whatsoever, and all this change starts in the brain.

In the past when you associated pleasure with the old desire to drink, that you are not responding to anymore, knowing in a way that your brain understands that those old feelings or thoughts are now simply a signal that by becoming a non-drinker you are doing the right thing, and now the whole process is easier and stress free. Confused? Good. It's time you did get confused about why you do something that makes no sense at all. Then your brain will start to make sense of how to create a new mind map. Now.

There are some practical techniques to help you become a non -drinker and collapse cravings.

Visualisation is a form of self-hypnosis, but in reality, now you know you hypnotised yourself to start drinking, then you know this is a process of un-hypnotising yourself.

Imagination is the most powerful tool you have when it comes to changing your mind. These techniques work because when you imagine something, your neurology is exactly the same as if it's really happening. This is exactly why a scary movie can terrify you; you know consciously it's all special effects, yet your imagination takes over and your heart rate increases pupils dilate and your breathing increases, just as if it were really happening. This is good news because it means rather than having to physically say "No" to drink enough times to create a new habit, you can fast track the process by imagining you have already done it as many times as you want to, and each time the neurological map for saying "No" gets stronger. You can use your imagination to exercise your brain just as if you were doing a biceps girl to strengthen your arms. Only its better because you don't actually have to do anything other than imagine. This is called "positive hallucination" and numerous clinical studies have proven it's highly effective. When you mentally rehears your response many times, when are then in the situation "for real", for example when someone offers you a drink, your brain already has a new way of responding. You have created a new neurological pattern.



Here's an exercise to help you do exactly that;

The more you do this exercise the easier and faster the process of becoming sober becomes. For some people one session of repeating this exercise 5-6 times is enough so that you can genuinely never want a drink again. Those are the ones who are the most vivid in their imagination, the ones who totally immerse themselves in the process mind and body. The more you “play full out” with this exercise the more effective it is.

n.b. you can also adapt this technique for overeating, smoking or generally making bad food choices

The Swish

The SWISH pattern is a really useful technique to learn and is really easy to do. It can be used to change any behaviour from drinking, to not reacting in a certain way when something happens.

It can be done anytime anywhere and the more you do it the better you get at it. Remember the brain learns QUICKLY so the swish must be rapid and strong and you have to MEAN IT. Use your imagination so that you can create really vivid pictures.

There are two ways of creating pictures in your mind’s eye, and for this technique you will need to use both.

1. Be ASSOCIATED which means seeing things through your eyes as if you are in the situation; literally imagining what you would be seeing. It’s your internal representation of what you see.
2. Be DISSOCIATED which means creating an image of yourself that you can look at from an observers perspective. Just like looking at a picture or a movie of you.

Before you begin, think about the most common triggers for drinking. For example. as a “reward” after a busy day. It doesn’t have to be a negative thought, it might also be when you are happy and socialising. Choose the most powerful trigger for drinking that you can think of. Next you will need to make 2 pictures in your mind’s eye, 1 of how you see things as they are just before you reached for the drink , and the 2nd an image of you without any desire to drink at all, how you will look if you genuinely have no desire for a drink and the most natural thing to do is say no. **Read through the following steps from start to finish before you begin, then do the exercise.**

1. Create the first picture, which is your “cue” picture. That means what do you see through your eyes, just before you drink. BE ASSOCIATED



– see it through your eyes. It's the sight of the drink just *before* it reaches your mouth. Spend some time looking at this picture and understanding “how” you see it. Is it dark, bright, large, small? Its important to notice exactly how you see it. Remove the image for a moment but remember how to recreate or re-access it.

2. Now create an image of how you want to look and feel instead, perhaps looking at a drink with the absence of any desire, just like you might look at a food you dislike intensely that you don't want to put in your mouth because you know it's going to be horrible. With this image be DISSACOCIATED, see you how you would like to be and feel as a non -drinker. Make sure the image is so powerful that it creates within you a real desire to experience this for yourself. Maybe imagine there is another “you” in a parallel universe out there somewhere, who has already stopped drinking and they look and feel great. You can look at them with a healthy envy, and really wish that was you now. Look at how you see this picture, is it brighter, bigger, more colourful? How exactly is this picture different? Make sure you can really see it so clearly that you WANT TO BE this version of you. Remove the image for a moment but remember how to recreate or re-access it.
3. This time you are going to look back at image 1, that is the moment before you drink, but in the bottom left hand corner of your internal visual screen, place a small box which is the collapsed view of the 2nd desired picture (you as a non-drinker with no desire to drink), much like you would see if you had minimised a file on your PC.
4. Now *SWISH* really fast – in less than a second literally *swish* the desired picture onto your visual screen so that it explodes into vision completely annihilating the 1st picture. Make the swishing sound in your mind as you do this and imagine feeling the different feelings you will have as a non-drinker, let that feeling of control sweep through your body in an instant. Imagine feeling so good as you see this image of you as you want to be a non-drinker. Imagine that's your reality now, how that will feel? Maybe empowering? Maybe free? Maybe in control? You decide.

Blank the screen totally, break your thought by thinking about green elephants, or blue cows, something really bizarre that makes you smile, and then repeat stages 1-4 at least 5-10 times or until 1st pic becomes so weak that when you try and see it, it automatically disappears to be replaced by the positive image of you as a non-drinker. Perhaps you can no longer see yourself as a drinker and have already replaced it with the new image of you

now as a sober non-drinker. Once you have done this successfully, hold that new image and **anchor** that feeling to that new image.

Anchoring: Use a word or a colour or squeeze your finger and thumb together as you imagine this new feeling flowing with great energy through your body, make sure you are focusing on the benefits and how good it feels to be a sober non-drinker. Every time you get offered a drink you can squeeze your finger and thumb together and use this new trigger to remind yourself how good it feels to say no. You have created your own trigger to stop drinking and feel good.

Tapping (Thought Field Therapy)

Of all of the techniques used to change how you think and feel about anything (past or present) this one can have the most dramatic effect when it comes to collapsing negative thoughts, including cravings, and stopping self-sabotage.

Every cell in your body has a polarity, just like a battery has a positive end and a negative end. If you put your battery in the TV remote wrong way up it simply won't work. One of the main causes of any craving (or anxiety) is when the body is in a state of negative polarity. In reality we all experience changing polarity and the body is always aiming to achieve the right balance. That's what homeostasis means – being in balance. However, when our polarity is negative we are more prone to self-sabotage and negative feelings including cravings for alcohol or any anxiety. TFT or tapping is one of the quickest and most effective ways to collapse these feelings. You don't need to understand how it works to be able to use the technique as its totally non-invasive and has absolutely no side effects whatsoever, except perhaps feeling better and more in control.

The following exercise can be very empowering and make real changes in how you think and feel.

Triangle

Tap each of the following points and as you tap each one take a good long breath (stomach breathing) , exhaling for longer than you inhale, then move to the next tapping point.



Side of hand Index finger
(Karate point)



Do this exercise every morning and night; get into the habit of doing it whenever you shower or clean your teeth, or anything else that you do everyday morning and night and make it part of your routine. Throughout the day every time you wash your hands get into the habit of tapping the side of your hand, this is the single most important point when it comes to correcting reversals.

The following **tapping sequence is specifically for individual cravings** as they occur, and it can be very effective at reprogramming how you think and feel about drink generally and collapse the desire to drink altogether, so read this through and then do the exercise. Look at a drink (either for real or in your minds eye) and rate your desire 1 – 10. First do the Triangle sequence described above and then as you continue to see the drink tap each point with the breath as described:





Under eye Collar bone



Then tap the gamut point on the back of your hand (as shown below: between the 2 knuckles) and as you do so look straight ahead visualising the bottle and blink as fast as you can, continuing the same breathing sequence for 3-4 breaths. Continue tapping and circle your eyes round one way (keeping your head still) then the other way. Then (still tapping) hum out loud, then count to 5 out loud, then hum again. All this will balance right and left hemispheres of your brain and scramble the original craving signal.



Gamut spot (either hand is fine)

Now repeat the tapping sequence i.e. side hand, collar bone, under eye, collar bone. Rate your desire now, chances are it has or is going down. Repeat the process until the desire is negligible or gone based on your initial score.

Anytime you get an old signal or (fake) craving for a drink just tap the side of your hand and take 3-5 deep breaths focusing on feeling liberated, free and strong. If you do the visualisation exercise then you may not experience many, or even any cravings, but is good to know you have a reliable tool that you can use at any time.

Associating pleasure with not drinking is such a key part of becoming a non-drinker. Your unconscious mind is programmed to keep you alive, and to keep you happy. If you don't tell it that drinking will shorten your life and in reality, does not bring you happiness, then it will continue with the lie it believes.

So, there's the solution. Be honest, un-hypnotise yourself and wake up to the truth. You were born to be a non-drinker, it's what your body and your mind want, and deserves, to be. And now you can. Your future is in your hands.

