

# Dealing with stress without alcohol

**drinkaware**  
at work



**Have you ever reached for a beer or glass of wine after a stressful day at work? Turning to alcohol when stressed might seem like an easy way to relax, but it won't help in the long run.**

Regularly drinking more than the UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) low risk drinking guidelines of 14 units a week could make feelings of stress harder to deal with.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

If you choose to drink, to keep health risks from alcohol low, it is safest for both men and women to drink no more than 14 units a week, spread over three or more days with several drink-free days, and no bingeing.<sup>4</sup>

## Did you know?

Alcohol is a chemical depressant, it disrupts the delicate balance of chemicals and process in your brain, affecting your thoughts, feelings and actions – and sometimes your long-term mental health.



## What are your triggers?

Spotting your triggers can be a great way to work out when you typically drink alcohol.

**“Work out when you drink, or what your triggers are, and break the association by doing something different”**

**Joan Harvey,**  
Clinical Psychologist  
based at Newcastle University



## Tips to reduce stress without alcohol:

Drinking alcohol to relieve stress doesn't work in the long-term. These are some effective ways of dealing with stress.

### Try doing some exercise

Going for a brisk walk at lunch or playing your favourite sport can help clear your head of the day's worries.



### Relaxation methods

Trying yoga, meditation or a warm bath can all be helpful when you feel worried or anxious.



### Doing something that you enjoy

Have a go-to list of activities that make you happy. Such as playing your favourite music or watching some comedy.



### Sharing your feelings

Talking to somebody you know about how you're feeling is often a positive thing to do.



It can be difficult to work out the number of units in your drinks, to make it easier, try our unit/calorie calculator in the link below.



<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/tools/unit-and-calorie-calculator>

# References



- <sup>[1]</sup> Becker, H.C. (2017). Influence of stress associated with chronic alcohol exposure on drinking. *Neuropharmacology*, 122, 115-126.
- <sup>[2]</sup> Windle, M. and Windle, R.C. (2015). A prospective study of stressful events, coping motives for drinking, and alcohol use among middle-aged adults. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 76(3),465-473.
- <sup>[3]</sup> Kushner, M.G., Abrams, K. and Borchardt, C. (2000). The relationship between anxiety disorders and alcohol use disorders: a review of major perspectives and findings. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 20(2), 149-171.
- <sup>[4]</sup> Anthenelli, R.M. (2012). Overview: stress and alcohol use disorders revisited. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 34(4), 386.