

withyou

Donate (<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/support-our-work/donate/>)

How to safely detox from alcohol at home

Normally, we would recommend getting professional support before you try to cut down your drinking.

Our free and confidential services are open as usual and can help you detox safely.

Use our service finder to [find a service near you](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/find-service/) (<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/find-service/>) or [talk to us online](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/about-our-online-chat#open-webchat) (<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/about-our-online-chat#open-webchat>) for advice.

[Alcohol detox: what to expect](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/what-we-do/alcohol-detox-what-expect/) (<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/what-we-do/alcohol-detox-what-expect/>).

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If attending a service isn't possible, perhaps because you are isolating, you can use this advice on safely detoxing from alcohol at home.

Make sure you read and follow the advice carefully, and always be prepared to call an ambulance in an emergency.

If you're dependent on alcohol, it can be dangerous to stop drinking suddenly.

Instead, you should try to reduce the amount you drink slowly, over a few weeks.

This takes a bit of preparation, but it's much safer than stopping suddenly.

And after cutting down slowly, you'll find it much easier to stop drinking when you're ready.

Here's a process we recommend:

1. Keep a drinking diary

Before you cut down your drinking, it's important to find out exactly how much you drink each day.

Without changing your drinking habits, try keeping a drinking diary for one week.

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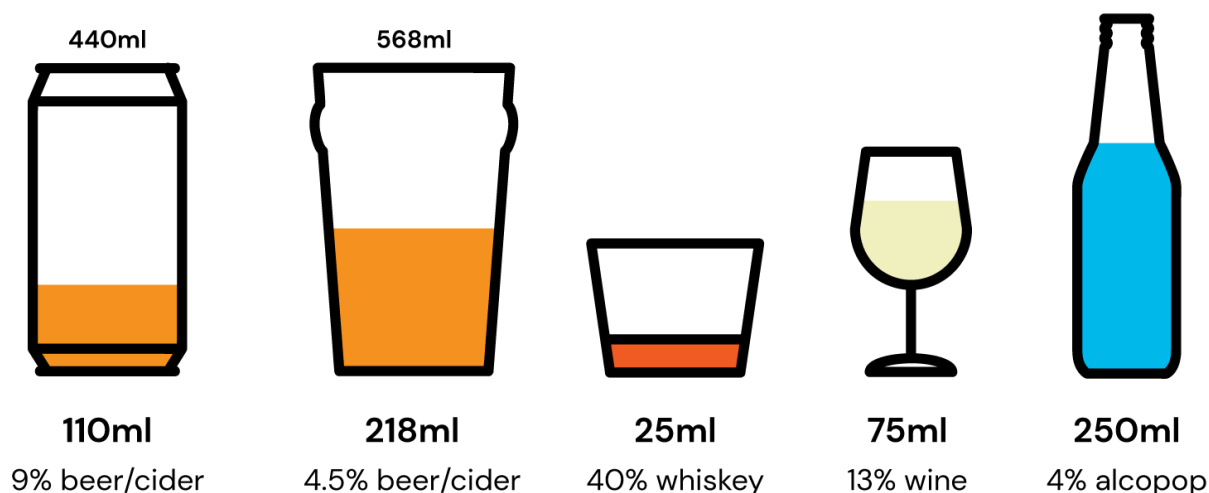
Start by writing down:

- each drink you have
- when you have it
- how many units of alcohol it contained

If you're not sure how many units are in your drinks:

- the number of units in a bottle or can should be printed on the side
- if you drink from a bottle of spirits or wine, measure each drink so you know how much you're having
- [try this units calculator from Alcohol Change UK](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/unit-calculator)
(<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/unit-calculator>)

This diagram shows what one unit looks like for some common drinks:



2. Start to reduce

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When you've stabilised your drinking level for one week, you can start slowly cutting down the amount you drink.

Start by reducing your drinking by 10% a day.

For example, if you normally drink 20 units a day, try reducing this to 18 units a day.

Keep drinking at this reduced level for four days, then try to cut down by another 10%.

If you start to have any withdrawal symptoms, it means you're cutting down too fast. Keep drinking at your most recent safe level for another week, then start cutting down again. Consider cutting down by 5% instead of 10% each week.

When you are drinking less than 10 units a day, you can try to stop drinking altogether.

See [Alcohol withdrawal: the symptoms and what to do about it](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/advice-you/alcohol-withdrawal-symptoms-and-what-do-about-it/) (<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/advice-you/alcohol-withdrawal-symptoms-and-what-do-about-it/>).

Tips to help you cut down

1. Ask a loved one for help. They could help you measure your drinks, record your intake or look after your alcohol for you.
2. Gradually switch to a lower-strength drink. For example, replace a can of super-strength lager with a s

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strength can.

3. Add water or a mixer to your drinks. Also consider alternating, so that you drink one non-alcoholic drink for every alcoholic drink you have.
4. Try to eat healthily: avoid sugar, and try to eat plenty of brown rice and wholemeal bread. These are good for your vitamin B1 (thiamine) levels.
5. Take a vitamin B1 (thiamine) supplement. Ideally you should have 100mg of thiamine, three times a day. You can buy it from health stores online if you don't already have it.
6. Keep hydrated with plenty of non-alcoholic drinks – but avoid coffee and energy drinks as these can cause sleep problems.
7. Look for further support online or over the phone. [See our list of places to go for support, community and advice online \(https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/where-go-online-support/\)](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/where-go-online-support/).

3. Ready to stop

When you're drinking less than 10 units a day, you can try to stop drinking altogether.

But you may still need support in an emergency.

Tell the people you live with to call an ambulance if y

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- have a seizure (fit)
- become confused
- develop double vision
- become unsteady on your feet
- experience hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)

Symptoms of alcohol withdrawal can be dangerous

Do not stop drinking entirely if you have previously experienced seizures (fits) or hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there) when you stop drinking.

