9 Ways to Cut Back on Drinking

Maybe you've found yourself drinking more alcohol than you'd prefer. If you want to cut back, here are some ideas to try.

Think before you drink. Do you really want a drink, or is it just a habit? If you're used to having a drink at a certain time, try doing something else then.

Look for substitutes. Find some no-alcohol drinks that you enjoy, like flavored seltzer water, tea with honey, or tonic with a slice of lime. Or try alcohol-free beer or "virgin" cocktails (without the alcohol).
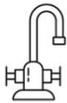
Drink more water. Use water to quench your thirst. Drink a glass of water before you have any alcohol. Have another glass along with every drink or between drinks.

Shrink your drink. For example, have a bottle of beer instead of a pint. Use a smaller glass for wine. Choose drinks with lower alcohol content (ABV%). Or use less liquor and more mixer in cocktails.

Slow down. It's easy to drink quickly and without thinking about it. Pay attention, and make each drink last longer.

Do the math. Total up how much you spend on alcohol each month. How much is that a year? If you cut back, what could you do with the money you save?

Take a break. Choose a day or two each week when you won't drink at all. Notice how you feel on those days, physically and emotionally. How did you sleep? Do you feel better? Over time, add more break days.

Count calories. Would you like to lose some weight? That can be a good motivator for cutting back. Figure out how many calories are in each drink. How many does that add up to in a day? In a week? In a month?

Practice saying no. Be ready when someone offers you a drink. Try: "Thanks, I've had enough." Or "Thanks, but I'm cutting back." Or "No, thanks. I feel better when I drink less."