

Develop Your Action Plan

Making a written “Action Plan” will help you to develop your goals, clarify why you want to reach them, and identify strategies on how to reach them. Even small changes can make a big difference in reducing your chances of having alcohol-related problems. Whatever ideas you choose, give them a fair trial. But if you haven’t made progress in cutting down after 2 to 3 months, consider quitting drinking altogether, seeking professional help, or both.

Set a Goal: (select one)

____ I want to drink no more than ____ drink(s) on any day.

____ I want to drink no more than ____ drink(s) per week.

____ I want to stop drinking.

Timing: I will start my action plan on this date: _____

Reasons: My most important reasons to make these changes are:

Strategies: I will use these strategies: _____

People: The people who can help me are (names and how they can help):

Signs of success: I will know my plan is working if:

Possible roadblocks: Some things that might interfere:

How I’ll handle them: _____

Tips to Try

Pace and space. When you do drink, pace yourself. Sip slowly. Have no more than one standard drink per hour. Have “drink spacers”—make every other drink a non-alcoholic one, such as water, soda, or juice. Eat some food so the alcohol will be absorbed into your system more slowly.

Keep track. Keep track of how much you drink. Carry a 4-week drinking tracker card in your wallet, make check marks on a kitchen calendar, or enter notes in a mobile phone notepad or personal digital assistant. Making note of each drink before you drink it may help you slow down when needed.

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GOAL: No more than ____ drinks on any day and ____ per week.

Week starting	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Total
___/___								
___/___								
___/___								
___/___								

You may even consider tracking each time you feel the urge to drink, to become more aware of what causes these urges and how to avoid or control them. [Download sample tracking form](#)

Avoid “triggers.” In many cases, your best strategy will be to avoid taking the chance that you’ll have an urge, slip, and drink. Avoid people, places, and activities that encourage you to drink. If drinking at home is a problem, keep little or no alcohol there.

Find alternatives. If drinking has occupied a lot of your time, develop new, healthy activities, hobbies, and relationships, or renew ones you’ve missed. Stay connected with friends by inviting them to non-drinking activities.

Plan to handle urges. Urges to drink are short-lived, predictable, and controllable. [Develop coping strategies.](#) With time and practice, you’ll find that your urges to drink will lose strength, and you’ll gain confidence in your ability to dismiss them. If you are having a very difficult time with urges, or do not make progress after a few weeks, then consult your doctor or therapist for support. If necessary, non-habit forming medications can reduce the desire to drink or lessen the rewarding effect of drinking so it is easier to stop.

Ask for support. Ask friends and family to help you cope with temptation. You might ask that they refrain from pressuring you or drinking in your presence (this can be hard).

Remember, it’s your choice. Many people who decide to cut back or quit drinking think, “I am not allowed to drink” as if some outside authority were imposing rules on them. Thoughts like this can breed resentment and make it easier to give in. Remind yourself that you are in charge, that you know how you want your life to be, and that you have decided to make a change. You may worry about how others will react or view you if you make a change. Again, challenge these thoughts by remembering that it’s your life and your choice, and that your decision should be respected.

If you feel you or a loved one may need professional counseling regarding alcohol consumption, please contact [Twin County Recovery Services.](#)