



# PERSONALISED HELP LIST

Everyone is different. Things that work for one person may not work for another. Decide which of the below may work for you, put them in priority order and create your own personalised list.

## Limit Drinking

Try to have at least 2 or 3 alcohol **free** days each week, or limit your drinking to special occasions. Avoid drinking when you are **alone**.

## Drink Diary

Record how much you are drinking in a drink diary along with when and why you are drinking. This can help you **break habits** and routines. It will also make you more aware of how much you are consuming, it may be far more than you realised.

## Measures

When at home, drinks aren't usually measured the same way that they are at bars. This often results in pouring much larger drinks than standard pub measures and drinking far more than realised. Using proper measuring tools and buying smaller wine glasses can help to more accurately **keep track of units**.

## Open Bottles

Once opened, a bottle of **wine does not need to be finished**. If you find it difficult to leave wine in the bottle you can freeze it for use in cooking. Freeze in small containers or ice cube trays for up to six months to use in sauces and stews.

## Rounds

Try to avoid getting into rounds. **Buying your own drinks** allows you to keep better track of how much you are drinking and allows you to drink at your own pace without trying to keep up with others.

## Staying Hydrated

Try to order water or **a soft drink with each alcoholic drink**, this will keep your body hydrated and slow down your drinking of alcohol.

## Keeping Track

It may not be convenient to take your drink diary with you to a pub or restaurant, but you can download a **drinks tracker app** from the NHS for iOS and Android devices, enabling you to keep track and to calculate the units in your drinks. Be aware that cocktails may contain several measures of alcohol each drink.

## Cope with Stress

Find healthy ways to cope with stress - Finding coping methods such as **exercise** or meditation can eliminate the urge to try drugs.

## Seek Therapy

Seek therapy or counselling - It is not at all uncommon to experience feelings of depression. Many people experience highs and lows that can be difficult to cope with. Drug users often are people who are attempting to self-medicate for their psychological issues. The problem is that drugs do not treat mental issues themselves. They simply treat the symptoms. Working through problems with a mental health professional is a much more effective and **long-lasting way of treating a psychological or emotional problem**.

## Stay Happy

**Maintain a lifestyle that makes you happy** - Low self-esteem and depression are major triggers for drug abuse. It is easy to let one aspect of your life, such as work, become overwhelming, to the point that you do not enjoy or partake in other important aspects of your life. Maintaining strong relationships and a healthy balance between physical and mental activity can help you maintain the stability that is needed to stay drug free.

## Care Deeply

Have things in your life that you care deeply about - Whether it's a sport, artistic endeavour, or personal relationships, having something that you are passionate about motivates you to **stay healthy** and mentally and emotionally in shape. If you care deeply enough about the people and activities in your life, you are less likely to jeopardize them by experimenting with drugs.

## Family History

Be aware of your family's history with substance abuse - The tendency toward addiction is linked to genetics, so be familiar with any parents or other family members who have struggled with addiction. If you know that **you have a higher chance of becoming addicted**, take extra precautions to avoid drugs and alcohol. It is much easier to avoid substances altogether than it is to recover from addiction. If you were around a parent who abused drugs as a child, you may also want to seek counselling to help you resolve any issues you may have around alcohol or other addictive drugs.

## Getting Help

If you are concerned that you or someone you know is misusing drugs or alcohol, **there is lots of help available**. The best place to start if you have a problem with drugs or alcohol is with your GP who may refer you a local community alcohol service or drug treatment service. Many drug treatment services accept self-referrals so, if you're not comfortable talking to your GP, you might be able to approach your local drug treatment service directly. Outside the NHS, there are many voluntary sector and private drug and alcohol treatment organisations that can help you. As well as residential rehab centres, community services of various types are provided by voluntary organisations. These include structured day programmes, outreach and harm reduction services, counselling services, aftercare and housing support services.