



the facts:
tips for a healthy headspace



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

cut back on alcohol and other drugs

Cutting back on alcohol and other drugs can help clear your mind, improve your energy, and boost your motivation. This can also help keep a healthy headspace.

Alcohol and other drugs can seem like a normal part of life for many people. We totally get it – it can be fun, lift your mood and boost your confidence. In the longer term though, the after-effects can leave you feeling worse than before.

Some of the unexpected results of alcohol and other drugs can be:

- changes to anxiety and thoughts
- changes to mood
- impacts on relationships
- doing stuff can feel harder.



If you're experiencing this, it's a good idea to think about whether your alcohol or other drug use is playing a part.



How does cutting back on alcohol and other drugs help?

Cutting back on alcohol and other drugs can be one of the most important things you can do for your headspace – however, it isn't always easy. It can help to think about the positives reducing your use can have.

These are things like:

- keeping your mind alert
- having more energy
- improving your sleep
- improving your relationships
- improving your engagement with work or study.

How can I reduce my alcohol and other drug use?

Start by working out how alcohol or other drugs are impacting your life.

Ask yourself

'Have I been anxious or upset more than usual? Have I been losing motivation? Could this be related to my alcohol or other drug use?'

Start slow

Set yourself a goal you think is achievable. You might want to start with a short break (try a few days, then a week, then a month).

Be patient

It might take a while before you start to see positive changes.

Stay healthy

When you cut back it's normal to feel a little off, so look after yourself – try to eat well, stay active, spend some time with people you care about and do things you enjoy.

- When an urge comes up try to sit with it. Recognise: 'OK, this usually happens before I drink or use other drugs, however this time I'm not going to act on it'. The more you do this, the easier it becomes.
- Let trusted family or friends know your plans so they can support you.
- It can be tough when your friends are using alcohol or other drugs when you're trying to cut back. Have a plan including things you could try if that situation comes up – have a non-alcoholic drink, go for a walk, don't go with them, let them know that you're cutting back.
- Don't be too hard on yourself. Whether you're cutting back or quitting, it's normal to have ups and downs. Remember it's a process and you learn something every time you try.

If you have been using alcohol and other drugs for a period of time, or you need advice or support, it's a good idea to involve a doctor or professional service such as headspace.



Healthy habits

When you're feeling low or stressed, it's important to put healthy habits in place – to give yourself a better chance of coping with life's challenges.

Limiting your alcohol and other drug use is an important healthy habit, but it's not the only one. Things like staying active, eating well, and spending time on your relationships are also important for good mental health.

Getting support

There are lots of ways to look after your headspace.

Check out headtohealth.gov.au, or if you're 12-25 the headspace website, for tips on how to look after your mental health.

If you've tried some of these strategies for some time without improving despite your efforts, it's time to reach out to a trusted friend, colleague, family member, Elder, teacher, counsellor, or a health service.

If you or someone you know is going through a tough time, support is available.

Check out headtohealth.gov.au to help find the right service for you. If you're aged 12-25, headspace can support you through our online and phone services or centre support services. For more information visit headspace.org.au.



If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can also call 13YARN.

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