

Now that you've stopped:

# 15 Points



Helpline 0800 917 7650

Now that you have stopped drinking, your main problem is not to start again. Here are a few practical tips, based on the experience of others, that should help make this easier for you:

1. Try to understand that you have a choice - between unhappy drunken drinking and a happy, sober life by staying away from the first drink, one day at a time.
2. Try to be really grateful that:
  - you have been fortunate to discover what was wrong before it was too late. So much can be yours for so small a price
  - you can swap just one drink for all the happiness sobriety gives you
  - AA exists, and you found out about it in time
  - you now know you are not a bad or wicked person but you have been in the grip of a compulsion
3. Try to eat healthily and regularly. You will feel less likely to want a drink on a full stomach.
  - accept that you will experience, perhaps for a long time, *the nagging craving for a drink*: this may simply be due to the body's demand for liquid and/or sugar, which is often very strong. So drink plenty - provided it's not alcoholic. Fruit juices with glucose, tea or coffee with plenty of sugar will best satisfy your body's need
  - accept, too, that you may feel
    - the sudden impulse just to take a drink
    - the craving, not for a drink as such, but for the

soothing glow and warmth a drink or two once gave you

4. Easy does it. Alcoholics tend to try and do too much too quickly. One day at a time, remember that the times when you don't want a drink are the times when you can build up the strength not to take one when you do want it.
5. Have a plan for each day, a plan where you live that day without taking a drink, regardless of what may upset you or how hard the old urge for a drink may hit you. You may not be able to carry it out but do your best - don't just muddle through. Never sit gazing into space with your mind a complete blank.

Do something, anything positive:

- go for a walk
  - take a bath
  - do a bit of gardening
  - clean your shoes
  - make a phone call
  - send an e-mail
  - go to a meeting
6. Don't for a split second allow yourself to think: 'It's just not fair! Isn't it a pity that I can't take a drink like so-called normal people?' Remember, resentment is the number one offender and losing your temper is a luxury you can't afford. It could be that the other person could be right, so be tolerant and avoid emotional disturbance.
  7. Don't think about or talk about any real or imagined pleasure you once got from drinking.

8. Don't allow yourself to think a drink or two would make some bad situation better, or at least easier to live with. There is no problem which a drink will not make bigger, so keep all yours down to their true size by staying sober.
9. First things first. Try to get a clear idea of your priorities. You may believe your job, or your home life, or one of many other things come first. But always remember - sobriety is without exception the most important thing in your life. If you do not get sober, and stay sober, chances are you won't have a job, your family, your sanity or even your life: if you are convinced that everything in life depends on your sobriety, you are much more likely to get sober and stay sober.
10. Try to put your situation in perspective. Many people have worse problems than you.

Think how happy they would be if their problems could be solved just by not taking one drink today. Think how fortunate you are to have so simple and small a problem.

11. Try to enjoy being sober. Think all the time:
  - how good it is to be free of shame and guilt
  - how good it is to be free of the consequences of a drunk just ended, or of a coming drunk you have never before been able to prevent
  - how good it is to be free of what people have been thinking and whispering about you, and of their mingled pity and contempt
  - how good it is to be free of fear
  - how good it is to eat and sleep normally, and to wake up glad you are alive; glad you were sober yesterday,

and glad you have the privilege of staying sober today

- how good it feels to be able to face whatever life may dish out, with peace of mind, self-respect, and full possession of all your faculties

12. Link in your mind these two ideas:

- a drink was the single cause of all the misery, shame and fear you have ever known
- a drink would destroy your newfound happiness, and take from you your self-respect and peace of mind

13. Seek out ways to help other alcoholics - and remember the first way to help others is to stay sober yourself.

14. Don't forget that when you're feeling down, your resistance to a drink is low. If you feel troubled and confused, the phone is your surest link with AA help. There is much comfort in a true and understanding friend standing by. The person you contact may need your call as much as you do. So never hesitate to ring at any time. And remember, in times of difficulty when you can't get the help, the Serenity Prayer said to your God *as you understand Him* will bring you sufficient confidence to cope. He is always available.

15. Take comfort from others in AA who have found sobriety. Their example and their experience can give you hope that in time, you too will no longer need to drink.



Approved by  
The AA General Service Conference in Great Britain

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