

# Reduce Alcohol Intake

## By Applying The Principles of Atomic Habits

By James Clear

### Workbook / Journal

*The goal of this journal / workbook is not to change all your habits overnight. Instead, the goal is to develop one small habit that will have a big impact on your life. When that habit starts becoming automatic, you can print a new copy of this workbook and work on your next habit. These small changes will accumulate and eventually change your life!*

# Reduce Alcohol Consumption

## Applying The Principles of Atomic Habits to Cut Down on Drinking



The principles outlined in James Clear's "Atomic Habits" can be powerful tools to help you cut down on drinking.

**The 1% Rule: Small Changes, Big Impact:** The 1% rule encourages gradual progress by making small, manageable changes to your habits. When applied to reducing your alcohol consumption, it means decreasing your daily intake by a mere one percent. This will help you pave the way for a sustainable and transformative shift in your drinking habits. This incremental approach not only makes the process less daunting but also ensures that each small step you take adds up to significant, long-lasting change, ultimately leading to a healthier and more balanced relationship with alcohol.

**The key to building lasting habits is to focus on creating a new identity first.** Shift your focus from "What do I want to achieve?" to "Who do I want to become?" Embracing a new identity is pivotal; envision yourself as a non-drinker rather than merely someone trying to drink less. Define the person you want to be, and continually reinforce this identity throughout your journey to reduce your alcohol intake.

## The 4 Rules of Atomic Habits to Cut Down on Drinking

### 1 MAKE IT INVISIBLE

**Remove Temptation:** Make alcohol less visible and accessible to reduce the likelihood of indulging.

**1. Clear Your Space of alcohol:** Remove all alcoholic beverages from your home, creating an environment free of temptation.

**2. Out of Sight:** Store any remaining alcohol in less conspicuous locations, making it less readily available.

**3. Limit Social Triggers:** Choose venues or social gatherings that do not revolve around alcohol to avoid unnecessary exposure.

**4. Inform Friends:** Share your goal of reducing alcohol consumption with friends to receive support and understanding.

2

**MAKE IT  
UNATTRACTIVE**

**Change Your Perspective:** Alter your perception of drinking to see it as less appealing.

- 1. Educate Yourself:** Research and understand the adverse effects of excessive alcohol consumption on health and well-being.
- 2. Visual Reminders:** Create a list of reasons why you want to cut down on drinking, and place it where you can see it daily.
- 3. Social Support:** Connect with friends or support groups who share your goal of reducing alcohol intake for mutual encouragement.
- 4. Mindful Choices:** Choose alternative, alcohol-free beverages during social occasions to minimize the allure of drinking.

3

**MAKE IT  
DIFFICULT**

**Create Barriers:** Introduce obstacles to make alcohol consumption less convenient.



- 1. Limit Access:** Keep fewer alcoholic beverages at home, and if possible, keep them locked away.
- 2. Reconfigure Routines:** Modify your daily schedule to avoid routines or situations that trigger drinking.
- 3. Accountability:** Share your reduction goals with a trusted friend who can help discourage impulsive drinking.
- 4. Mindful Consumption:** When you do choose to drink, consume slowly and consciously, savoring each sip.

4

**MAKE IT  
UNSATISFYING**

**Reprogram Your Mind:** Reframe your perception of alcohol to recognize its diminishing satisfaction and negative consequences.

- 1. Visualize Effects:** Contemplate the adverse outcomes of excessive drinking, including physical health, relationships, and productivity.
- 2. Reflect on Feelings:** Pay attention to how you feel after drinking, focusing on any discomfort or regrets, to counteract the allure of alcohol.
- 3. Celebrate Abstaining:** Recognize the sense of achievement and well-being you experience when you abstain from drinking.
- 4. Positive Substitutes:** Replace drinking with enjoyable, non-alcoholic activities to provide a satisfying alternative.

The principles of "Atomic Habits" offer a structured framework for those aiming to cut down on drinking. Starting with the 1% rule for gradual progress, setting manageable goals to decrease alcohol intake becomes the first step. Changing one's identity to that of a non-drinker reinforces commitment. The principles also involve making alcohol invisible by removing temptations, unattractive by understanding its negative effects, difficult to access, and unsatisfying by focusing on its downsides. By embracing these principles, one can transform their relationship with alcohol, gradually reduce consumption, and work towards a healthier, balanced lifestyle free from excessive drinking.

# YOUR IDENTITY

## Become a Non Drinker

Your current behaviors are simply a reflection of your current identity. The way you behave is a mirror image of the type of person you believe that you are (either consciously or subconsciously). If you want to change your behavior you need to first change your identity (i.e. change the things you believe about yourself).

**The most effective way to change your habits is to focus on who you wish to become, not on what you want to achieve. Make the habit part of your new identity.**

"It is a simple two-step process: Decide the type of person you want to be. Prove it to yourself with small wins." "Ask yourself, "Who is the type of person that could get the outcome I want?" Then be that person.

Describe the person you are now in the table below. Categorize your descriptions into positive beliefs and negative beliefs.

	Who am I today?	Who do I want to be?
Positive Beliefs		
Negative Beliefs		

List the habits you need to develop or break in order to be the person who you described that you want to be and then prioritize these habits.

Select the habit that you want to work on first. Ideally, this habit should be one that won't take much effort but will create the greatest impact over time.

The habits I need to develop in order to be the person I want to be	Order of Priority

# THE HABIT YOU ARE GOING TO CHANGE

Think of a new habit that you find difficult to develop or an old habit that you cannot get rid of but one that will result in a change in your life. Ideally this should be the habit that you ranked top priority on the previous page.

This workbook will help you develop or change that habit.

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Describe the change you want to make.

How will your life improve if you are successful?

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List the challenges that you have experienced in the past when you tried to develop this habit.

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Why will it be different this time? How can you overcome obstacles you encountered in the past?

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# BREAK THE HABIT INTO SMALL COMPONENTS

James Clear's concept of breaking habits into smaller components is rooted in the idea that by dissecting a larger, more complex behavior into smaller, more manageable parts, you can more effectively address and modify each component. This approach can be applied to reducing alcohol intake by identifying and addressing the different stages and components of the drinking habit.

## 1. Cue Identification:

**Triggers:** Recognize situations, emotions, or people that prompt the desire to drink. For example, stress, peer pressure, or specific environments might be triggers.

**Action Step:** Avoid known triggers where possible or develop alternative responses, such as practicing stress-reduction techniques or choosing non-alcoholic beverages in social settings.

## 2. Craving Management:

**Desire:** Understand the underlying desires that drinking fulfills, such as relaxation, social connection, or escape.

**Action Step:** Find healthier alternatives that fulfill these desires, such as exercise for stress relief or engaging in hobbies for relaxation.

## 3. Reward Substitution:

**Satisfaction:** Consider the rewards obtained from drinking, like pleasure or stress relief.

**Action Step:** Substitute the rewards with healthier ones, such as the satisfaction from achieving goals or the enjoyment derived from a new hobby.

## 4. Environment Design:

**Surroundings:** The environment can significantly influence habits.

**Action Step:** Remove alcohol from the home or alter social activities so that they are not centered around drinking. This reduces the visibility and availability of alcohol, which can decrease consumption.

## 5. Social and Community Support:

**Peer Influence:** The people around us significantly influence our behavior and choices. Surrounding oneself with supportive individuals who respect one's choice to reduce alcohol intake can be crucial.

**Action Step:** Seek out friends or support groups that encourage healthy lifestyle choices and understand the importance of reducing alcohol intake. Avoid social settings where heavy drinking is the norm until a stronger resistance to drinking cues is built.

## 6. Small and Incremental Changes:

**Baby Steps:** Start with small, manageable changes, gradually building up to more significant adjustments.

**Action Step:** Begin by reducing intake slightly and gradually decrease it further over time, allowing the body and mind to adjust to the new norm.

## 7. Reward and Reinforcement:

**Positive Reinforcement:** Rewarding oneself for successful reduction in alcohol intake can reinforce the behavior change.

**Action Step:** Set up a system of rewards for reaching milestones in reduced alcohol consumption, such as treating oneself to a desired item or experience after a week of adhering to the limit.

# BREAK THE HABIT INTO SMALL COMPONENTS

Choose the components that resonate from the page before or create your own.

For each component, identify small changes you need to make to ensure success.

Habit:	COMPONENTS	CHANGES YOU NEED TO MAKE

# HOW TO BREAK BAD HABITS

## DRINK LESS

There are four laws of behavior change:

1

**MAKE IT  
INVISIBLE**

**Remove Temptation:** Make alcohol less visible and accessible to reduce the likelihood of indulging.

**1. Clear Your Space of alcohol:** Remove all alcoholic beverages from your home, creating an environment free of temptation.

**2. Out of Sight:** Store any remaining alcohol in less conspicuous locations, making it less readily available.

**3. Limit Social Triggers:** Choose venues or social gatherings that do not revolve around alcohol to avoid unnecessary exposure.

**4. Inform Friends:** Share your goal of reducing alcohol consumption with friends to receive support and understanding.

What can you do to make it invisible:

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In the weekly planner on page 12, allocate time for some of these activities to be done in the upcoming week.



## MAKE IT UNATTRACTIVE

**Change Your Perspective:** Alter your perception of drinking to see it as less appealing.

**1. Educate Yourself:** Research and understand the adverse effects of excessive alcohol consumption on health and well-being.

**2. Visual Reminders:** Create a list of reasons why you want to cut down on drinking, and place it where you can see it daily.

**3.Social Support:** Connect with friends or support groups who share your goal of reducing alcohol intake for mutual encouragement.

**4. Mindful Choices:** Choose alternative, alcohol-free beverages during social occasions to minimize the allure of drinking.

What can you do to make it unattractive:

[illegible]

In the weekly planner on page 12, allocate time for some of these activities to be done in the upcoming week.

3

**MAKE IT  
DIFFICULT**

**Create Barriers:** Introduce obstacles to make alcohol consumption less convenient.



**1.Limit Access:** Keep fewer alcoholic beverages at home, and if possible, keep them locked away.

**2.Reconfigure Routines:** Modify your daily schedule to avoid routines or situations that trigger drinking.

**3.Accountability:** Share your reduction goals with a trusted friend who can help discourage impulsive drinking.

**4.Mindful Consumption:** When you do choose to drink, consume slowly and consciously, savoring each sip.

What can you do to make it difficult:

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In the weekly planner on page 12, allocate time for some of these activities to be done in the upcoming week.

## 4

MAKE IT  
UNSATISFYING

**Reprogram Your Mind:** Reframe your perception of alcohol to recognize its diminishing satisfaction and negative consequences.

**1. Visualize Effects:** Contemplate the adverse outcomes of excessive drinking, including physical health, relationships, and productivity.

**2. Reflect on Feelings:** Pay attention to how you feel after drinking, focusing on any discomfort or regrets, to counteract the allure of alcohol.

**3. Celebrate Abstaining:** Recognize the sense of achievement and well-being you experience when you abstain from drinking.

**4. Positive Substitutes:** Replace drinking with enjoyable, non-alcoholic activities to provide a satisfying alternative.

What can you do to make it unsatisfying:

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In the weekly planner on page 12, allocate time for some of these activities to be done in the upcoming week.



In the weekly planner below, designate time slots for some of the tasks mentioned in the preceding pages, or any other tasks you prefer, that will aid in breaking this habit.

WEEK OF:

MONTH:

YEAR:

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5:00 AM							
5:30 AM							
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# MINDFULNESS

## Autopilot

Sometime we react to certain things automatically without giving them much thought. Automatic responses or habits often happen because our brains create shortcuts to save energy. When a behavior is repeated often enough, it becomes automatic, or “hardwired,” and we perform it without conscious thought. This can be particularly challenging with habits like alcohol consumption, where social, environmental, and emotional cues can trigger automatic responses to drink.

## How Automatic Responses Occur with Alcohol:

**1.Cues and Triggers:** Exposure to specific environments, emotions, or social situations can act as triggers, prompting an automatic desire to consume alcohol, often without conscious thought.

**2.Routine and Repetition:** Regular and repeated exposure to these triggers reinforces the habit loop, making the response to drink alcohol increasingly automatic over time.

## Mindfulness Strategies to Prevent Automatic Drinking:

**1.Increase Awareness:** Being more mindful and aware of one's triggers and automatic responses is the first step to breaking the autopilot cycle. Regular reflection and mindful observation of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions can help identify patterns and triggers.

**2.Pause and Reflect:** When the urge to drink arises, instead of reacting automatically, pause and reflect on the urge. Ask whether the desire is coming from a conscious choice or an automatic response to a trigger.

**3.Develop Alternatives:** Identify and practice alternative responses to identified triggers. For example, if stress is a trigger, learning stress-reduction techniques like deep breathing or meditation can provide an alternative response.

**4.Set Clear Intentions:** Before entering situations where drinking might occur, set clear, conscious intentions about alcohol consumption, like deciding in advance the number of drinks to have.

**5.Mindful Drinking:** If choosing to drink, do so mindfully. Savor each sip, pay attention to the taste, and be aware of the effects on your body and mind. This can help in being more conscious of the amount being consumed and can prevent over-drinking.

**6.Stay Present:** Remaining present and fully experiencing the moment can reduce the likelihood of slipping into autopilot and mindlessly reaching for a drink. Mindfulness techniques, such as focused breathing or grounding exercises, can help stay present.

# MINDFULNESS

**7.Change the Environment:** Altering the environment to minimize triggers, such as avoiding places where drinking is the primary activity or removing alcohol from easy reach at home, can help in reducing automatic responses to drink.

**8. Use Positive Affirmations:** Regularly affirming one's commitment to reducing alcohol intake can reinforce conscious, intentional behavior and can help counteract automatic, unconscious urges to drink.

## **Reinforce Conscious Decisions:**

Regularly practicing these mindfulness strategies can reinforce conscious, intentional decisions over automatic, habitual reactions, gradually rewiring the brain to reduce the reliance on autopilot when confronted with alcohol-related triggers. Making the process of decision-making more conscious and intentional can ultimately lead to a successful reduction in alcohol intake.

When do you drink on autopilot?

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Describe how this makes you feel.

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What can you do to avoid acting on autopilot? I will:

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List ways on how you can keep yourself mindful and aware of your habits.

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# YOUR ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

One of the factors that influence our behavior and our habits is our environment.

In “Atomic Habits”, James Clear illustrates how our environment profoundly influences our behavior and is often the invisible hand that shapes our habits.

## **1. Recognize Environmental Cues:**

Identifying and modifying the environmental cues that trigger the desire to drink is crucial. This could include avoiding places where you usually drink or changing your route to bypass the liquor store.

## **2. Alter Your Surroundings:**

Changing your immediate environment can help in reducing the accessibility and visibility of alcohol. For instance:

- Keep alcoholic beverages out of sight or don't keep them at home at all.
- Have non-alcoholic alternatives readily available.

## **3. Social Environment:**

The people around us also constitute our environment. Surrounding oneself with people who support the goal to reduce alcohol intake can significantly influence behavior.

- Spend time with friends who respect your choice and don't pressure you to drink.
- Seek supportive communities or groups where healthier lifestyles are promoted.

## **4. Establish Alcohol-Free Zones:**

Create environments where alcohol consumption is not the norm, like opting for activities and social gatherings where drinking is not the central focus.

## **5. Re-engineer Social Situations:**

Reevaluate and modify social situations and routines to reduce exposure to alcohol-centric settings.

- Propose alternative activities that do not involve drinking.
- Set clear boundaries and communicate your decision not to drink with peers.

## **6. Substitution with Positive Environmental Cues:**

Replace cues associated with drinking with positive reinforcements that support the new habit of reducing alcohol intake.

- Place visual reminders of your commitment in prominent places.
- Surround yourself with positive reinforcements that encourage your commitment to reduce alcohol, such as motivational quotes or images representing your goals and the benefits of reducing alcohol intake.

# YOUR ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

## 7. Mindful Structuring of Environment:

Carefully curating an environment that is conducive to mindfulness and reflection can help in combating automatic responses and impulses to drink.

- Create spaces that are calming and free of alcohol-related stimuli, aiding in relaxation and stress management without the need for alcohol.

## 8. Constructive Habit Stacking:

Integrate positive habits into your existing routine in places where you might usually drink. For example, replacing the after-work drink with a workout or a hobby can help in building healthier habits.

## 9. Reevaluate Entertainment and Leisure:

Modify your leisure and entertainment choices to incorporate activities that do not encourage drinking.

- Opt for activities, hobbies, or entertainment that are engaging and enjoyable without the need for alcohol.

## 10. Reinforce New Norms:

Regularly exposing yourself to environments where reduced or no alcohol intake is the norm can help in establishing new behavioral norms and expectations.

- Seek out and participate in social circles and communities where healthier lifestyle choices are valued and respected.

By applying these principles and proactively shaping the environment, individuals can significantly reduce the unconscious influence that the environment has on the habit of alcohol consumption, making the journey to reduced alcohol intake more manageable and sustainable. This conscious structuring and curating of one's environment, as suggested by James Clear, can play a pivotal role in successfully modifying one's drinking habits.

Describe the changes you can make.

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# FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The social environment, including friends and family, is paramount in shaping our habits, as outlined by James Clear in "Atomic Habits".

Applying these principles in the context of reducing alcohol intake can be broken down into the following strategies:

## 1. Align with Supportive Communities:

**Principle:** Joining a culture where your desired behavior is the normal behavior, and where you share common values with the group, can significantly foster habit formation and change.

**Application:** Seek out and engage with supportive communities, friends, or groups that promote a lifestyle of reduced or no alcohol consumption, where your goals are understood and respected.

## 2. Leverage the Influence of Close Contacts:

**Principle:** We tend to imitate the habits of our close contacts—our family and friends.

**Application:** Surround yourself with close contacts who support your goal of reducing alcohol intake and preferably, those who practice healthy drinking habits themselves.

## 3. Find Role Models:

**Principle:** Observing and learning from those who have successfully developed the habits we desire can inspire and guide our journey.

**Application:** Identify and connect with individuals who have successfully reduced their alcohol intake and learn from their experiences, strategies, and coping mechanisms.

## 4. Shape Behavior through Peer Pressure:

**Principle:** The desire for approval and acceptance from our social groups can significantly influence our habits.

**Application:** Positioning oneself in environments where moderate to no drinking is the accepted norm can naturally encourage similar behavior, leveraging positive peer pressure to shape habits.

Describe the changes you can make.

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# MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

A habit tracker is an effective technique to keep your habits on track since one of the most satisfying feelings is the feeling of making progress. "Habit trackers and other visual forms of measurement can make your habits satisfying by providing clear evidence of your progress."

James clear suggests that you never miss twice. If you miss one day, try to get back on track as quickly as possible.

Mark the habit tracker below. Don't break the chain. Try to keep your habit streak going for as long as possible.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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# HABIT CONTRACT

A habit contract is a good framework to keep your habits on track since it imposes negative consequences if you fail to do so.

Use either of the habit contracts below. In the habit contract, you will commit to doing something and you will identify specific habits that will help you reach that goal.

You then set up penalties for not doing those things. Once you have completed it, sign it and get two people you respect to sign it as well. Choose people who you will not want to disappoint or lose face in front of if you don't do what you commit to doing.

There is one version with specific objectives and habits and a blank version that you can fill in with your own objectives and habits.



# Habit Contract to Reduce Alcohol Intake

This contract is a commitment to improve my health, well-being, and quality of life by reducing alcohol intake.

 **Contracting Party:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_

 **Start Date:** Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Reasons to Reduce Alcohol Intake:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Goals:**

1. Limit alcohol intake to \_\_\_\_ drinks per week by (specific date): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have \_\_\_\_ alcohol-free days per week by (specific date): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Action Steps:**

1. **Initial Steps:** a. Identify triggers for alcohol consumption: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Create a list of alternative activities: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Set up a support system: \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Daily/Weekly Tasks:** a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Rewards for Achieving Goals:** a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Rewards:**

1. **Short Term Reward for First Week:**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Mid Term Reward for First Month:**

\_\_\_\_\_

3. **Long Term Reward for Six Months:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Consequences for Non-Compliance:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Support Partner Details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Role of Support Partner:

1. To provide encouragement and support.
2. To help maintain accountability towards the set goals.
3. To offer understanding and motivation during challenging times.
4. To celebrate milestones and achievements in the journey to reduce alcohol intake.

## Review Dates:

1. **First Review:** [Insert Date] \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Second Review:** [Insert Date] \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Final Review:** [Insert Date] \_\_\_\_\_

During each review, progress will be assessed, challenges will be addressed, and adjustments to the action steps, if necessary, will be made.

## Acknowledgement and Commitment:

I, [Name], \_\_\_\_\_ understand the detrimental effects of excessive alcohol intake on my health and well-being and am making a committed decision to reduce my alcohol consumption. I will actively pursue the action steps listed above and will seek support as needed.

Signature of Contracting Party: \_\_\_\_\_

I, [Support Partner's Name], \_\_\_\_\_ commit to supporting [Name] in their journey to reduce alcohol intake. I will offer encouragement, understanding, and accountability to help them achieve their goal.

Signature of Support Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signing: \_\_\_\_\_

# HABIT CONTRACT



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**My goal is**

\_\_\_\_\_

**To reach this goal I will do the following:**

(for each habit, state what you will do, when and where)



1.

\_\_\_\_\_

2.

\_\_\_\_\_

3.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Penalty: If I do not do the things above then**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature