

# A HANGOVER-F

**A bit of booze doesn't have to turn into a full-blown binge. Arm yourself with these tactics and say goodbye to sore heads**

**T**he social season is ramping up, but are you wary of having a splitting headache ruin your whole weekend? Or worried about how all that rosé will affect your weight or wellbeing? These are common concerns: three in 10 Brits want to do more socialising this summer, but in ways that don't centre around alcohol\*.

If you don't want to stop completely, mindful drinking is an increasingly popular solution. 'It's about being actively involved in the moment when you're consuming alcohol,' says Angela Calcan from [drinkcoach.org.uk](http://drinkcoach.org.uk). You'll become more aware of your drinking habits and, if you want to, can change your behaviour. Here's how to avoid unwanted binges – you may find it saves you money, too!

## CRUNCH TIME FOR BINGEING

It's all too easy for one glass of Prosecco to lead to an entire bottle. The tendency to binge drink in social situations is often driven by peer pressure, no matter how old you are. 'If you are surrounded by heavy drinkers, it's normalised,' says Ray Sadoun from OK Rehab. 'Others binge drink as it gives them confidence they don't possess when sober.'

'However, we are lucky to live in a time where there is more acceptance of different drinking preferences,' says Angela. We also have a greater



**41%**

**THAT'S HOW MANY SAY DRINKING NO-OR LOW-ALCOHOL DRINKS LED TO THEM STOPPING DRINKING OR REDUCING THEIR INTAKE\*\*.**

understanding of how alcohol damages our health,

increasing our risk of cancer, liver disease and mental health problems like depression. Reducing how much we drink – or how often we binge – is the best way to lower this risk.

'Stay within NHS guidelines by having no more than 14 units of alcohol per week,' says Dr Richard Piper, chief executive of Alcohol Change UK. 'That means about six pints of lager, or six standard glasses of wine (175ml, 12% ABV), spread out over three or more days, with a few days off.'

## Savour each sip

Try following these steps to stop mindlessly slurping. Caffeine fiends could try using similar techniques to curb coffee consumption.

### SET GOALS

'Work out how many units you're regularly drinking and how many you'd like to be drinking,' says Dr Piper. Visit [alcoholchange.org.uk](http://alcoholchange.org.uk) to take their drinking quiz or use the unit calculator. You can also introduce other, simple boundaries, such as only drinking what you enjoy.

### MONITOR YOUR DRINKING

This will help you identify patterns, such as when (and why) you slip up. Do you

# REE SUMMMER?

**YES PLEASE!**



## SOBER CURIOUS?

Choosing total abstinence can force some people into an all-or-nothing struggle when it comes to their drinking. Plus, 'There are many people who have the capacity to change their drinking before it gets to the stage where abstinence may be the better option,' says Angela. 'If you feel like you're missing an off switch, mindful drinking can put you back in the driver's seat.'

Finally, 'If you find you are regularly drinking 20-plus units of alcohol a week and want to stop, suddenly going abstinent can be dangerous,' warns Angela. Visit [humankindcharity.org.uk](http://humankindcharity.org.uk) or [nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk) for more information and support.



drink more when you're alone or with certain groups of people? Do you drink faster or slower than others? Track things like where you drink, when, how much, with who and how you feel during and afterwards. Try the free DrinkCoach app (App Store, Google Play).

### PLAN AHEAD

'When you aren't prepared your brain defaults to the easiest, most well-trodden path,' says Angela. Decide what you will drink, including low-alcohol or alcohol-free spacers (see the suggestions, right).

### MAKE MINDFUL CHOICES

Notice exactly how you feel when you pick up and put down your

alcoholic drink. Does it feel like a safety blanket?

Are you drinking because you want to or just because everyone else is? When faced with the option of having another drink, ask yourself, 'Will this drink add anything extra to the evening?' advises Angela.

### EXPERIMENT WITH SMALL CHANGES

'Mindful drinking is not necessarily an end goal, but more of a process towards discovering what sort of relationship you have, and want to have, with alcohol,' says Angela. You might find that you can do without that midweek glass of wine (or three!) in front of the TV.

## Say no (or low)



No- and low-alcohol options are easy to find these days:

❖ **i heart Zero Sparkling Rosé** (£3.50, [slurp.co.uk](http://slurp.co.uk)) contains just 24 calories and no units per glass, compared with the 133 calories and 2.1 units in a standard 175ml glass of 12% wine.

❖ **Beer and lager** are a thirst-quenching go-to, but exceed 4% ABV and the

alcohol's dehydrating properties outweigh the benefits, says Michael Alcock, CEO of HonestBrew. Choose something like Old

**Speckled Hen Low Alcohol** (£1.50, Sainsbury's) at 0.5% ABV.



❖ **Pair Feragaia** (£24.95, [feragaia.com](http://feragaia.com)), a new low-calorie, Scottish-made 0% ABV spirit, with ginger ale for a fruity, alcohol-free alternative to your usual G&T.

### 3 SIMPLE WAYS TO CUT BACK

- 1 **Keep cold drinks out of the sun so you're not forced to knock it back before the ice melts.**
- 2 **Drink alcohol with food so it enters your system more slowly.**
- 3 **Don't get involved in rounds so you only buy drinks as and when you need them.**