



What is an alternative to drinking?

Using an alternative to drinking is a survival skill which can help someone delay, prevent or even stop their usual impulse to drink,. The purpose is to distract yourself from one behaviour you are wanting to change by doing something else instead. For some, finding the right mixture of alternatives, coupled with supportive counseling, can help reinforce the commitment to a goal and lead eventually to maintaining lengthier periods of behaviour change.

A particularly strong desire or craving to drink alcohol (which is a mood-altering drug) usually only lasts for a short while. During a craving it feels as if the feelings will go on building up until they become unbearable. This is not true. The intense craving can pass after as little as 15 minutes to up to one hour. In the meantime you are 'at risk' from giving into your habit. This is the time when using a number of alternatives

- can become a vital life-line,
- could prevent an episode of unwanted drinking, and
- will help you learn how to break the cycle of drinking in the long-term.

Alternatives need to be realistic, achievable, cheap, enjoyable and easy to do, and most importantly they must work for **you**. The alternatives that you use may or may not totally get rid of that feeling of wanting to drink, but they may help you to cope well enough until the craving passes, and with less damaging consequences to your self and others.

List below your short term alternatives to drinking:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.