



THINKING OF TAKING A BREAK FROM ALCOHOL, OR MAKING SOME CHANGES TO YOUR HABITS? HERE'S HOW TO TAKE A MORE MINDFUL APPROACH.

**T**hanks to the popular #sobercurious hashtag on social media, many people are taking a fresh look at their relationship with alcohol. Whether it's building alcohol-free days into each week or taking a break from drinking altogether, health coach Kathryn Elliott from The Alcohol Mindset Coach says it's part of a broader conversation about health and wellbeing.

"I see many professional men and women in their 30s, 40s and 50s who are looking to change their relationship with alcohol," she says. "Some of them want to take an extended break from it, just to

see the impact it may have on their life, particularly if they're feeling that their stress levels are a bit high or they're not sleeping well. Many of them have never had much longer than a week or so without alcohol, so there's a curiosity now - they're wondering what their life would feel like without it."

#### **MAKING HEALTH A PRIORITY**

Kathryn says that many of the people she sees are looking for ways to live more healthily and be more productive each day.

"Often they don't feel great when they wake up, or they

miss their morning exercise. It's very much about getting that extra 10 or 20 per cent out of themselves," she says.

This sentiment is echoed by nutritionist Lexi Crouch. She notes that alcohol depletes the body of nutrients such as vitamin B, folate, magnesium and potassium, and affects the chemicals in our brain, such as dopamine and serotonin.

"Alcohol activates the reward centre of the brain, so initially you think that you're going to feel good - but what goes up must come down when it comes to brain chemicals," Lexi says. "When we take a break from drinking, >

we're likely to have a lot more mental clarity, focus and energy."

### TAKING A BREAK


If you're looking to take a break from drinking, Kathryn recommends first spending time preparing.

"It's really a mindset shift because many people come into it feeling like they're going to be missing out on something or that taking alcohol out of their life is going to be really difficult."

She recommends making a list of the benefits you hope to experience by taking a break, as

well as a list of potential challenges you think you might encounter.

A common challenge, she says, is the reaction from friends or family. She suggests preparing a short explanation about your decision and then practising it in front of the mirror before any social events.

"What works for a lot of people is to come back with something that's very simple, positive and strong," she says. "It could be as simple as, 'I'm taking a break from alcohol at the moment'. Make it something that sounds positive, that you're in control and you're happy with the choice you've made." 



## Ready to try MINDFUL DRINKING?

Follow these strategies  
from health coach  
**Kathryn Elliott** to  
bring a more conscious  
approach to drinking.

### Mix it up

Try these non-alcoholic options for all the flavour of your favourite cocktail without the alcohol.



Belvoir Farm  
Non-Alcoholic  
Peach  
Bellini



Naked Life  
Italian Spritz  
Non-Alcoholic  
Cocktail



Naked Life  
Margarita  
Non-Alcoholic  
Cocktail

The Australian government guidelines\* on alcohol consumption recommend adults drink no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day. Anyone under 18 should not drink alcohol. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not drink alcohol to prevent harm to their baby.

- ◆ When you start thinking about your first drink, write down what time of the day it is, and how you're feeling. Make a note of your thoughts and any physical feelings you might be having.
- ◆ Repeat the exercise when you start to pour a drink - what feelings are you experiencing? For example, do you feel a sense of relief or anticipation?
- ◆ Do this again when you take your first sip. Make a note of what the drink tastes like and how you feel when you sip it.
- ◆ Are you already thinking ahead to your second drink? Try to stay in the moment and slow down your consumption.
- ◆ Consider ways you might be able to stretch out the time between your first and second drinks. For example, you could sip on a non-alcoholic drink in-between.