

## RESOURCES

Alcoholics Anonymous

Phone: 212-870-3400

<https://www.aa.org>

Department of Veterans Affairs Substance  
Use Disorder Program Locator

Phone: 1-800-273-8255

<https://www.samhsa.gov>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug  
Information

Phone: 1-800-729-6686

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Phone: 301-443-1124

[www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and  
Alcoholism

Phone: 301-443-3860

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

<http://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service  
Administration

Phone: 1-800-662-4357

<https://www.samhsa.gov>



Avoid alcohol if you:

- Plan to drive or operate machinery
- Take medications that interact with alcohol
- Have a medical condition that alcohol can aggravate (such as chronic pain)
- Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant

From the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism



Pain Assessment and  
Management Initiative

## Contact us

For more information on PAMI visit:  
<http://pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu/>

Email: [emresearch@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:emresearch@jax.ufl.edu)  
or scan the QR Code

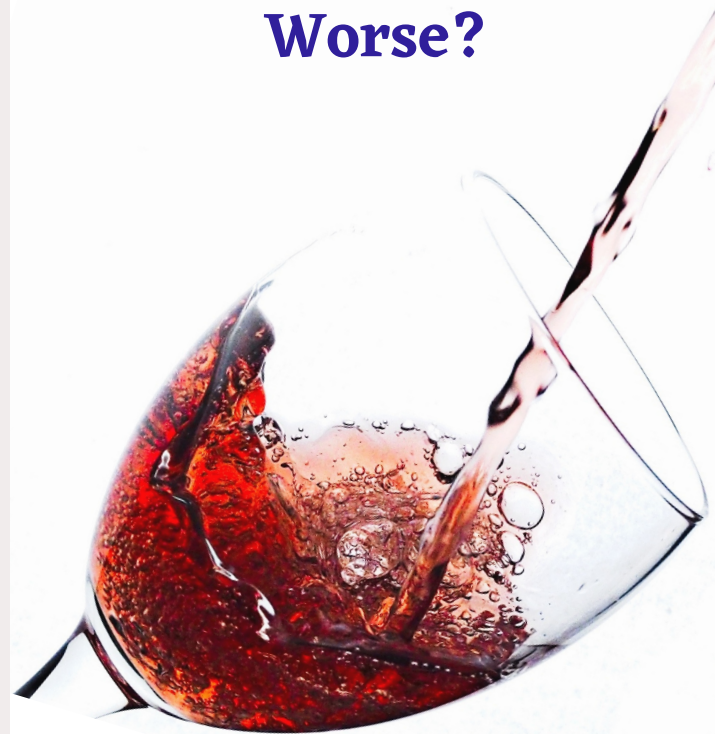


Content adapted from Rethinking Drinking (NIAAA) - Tips to  
Try and Pain Action - Alcohol & Chronic Pain  
<http://painaction.com/members/article.aspx?id=5048>

Rev 6/12/19

# Alcohol & Pain:

## How Can Drinking Alcohol Make Pain Worse?



Discharge Planning Toolkit for Pain

## Alcohol and Managing Pain

Pain can be very uncomfortable. Using alcohol to reduce your pain can be harmful to your health. It is important to find other healthy ways to help reduce your pain.

## Alcohol and Medications

Mixing alcohol with over-the-counter and prescription medications, especially with medications for pain, mood, and sleep, can cause many serious health issues, such as:

- Liver damage
- Stomach ulcers
- Decreased heart rate and breathing
- Overdose
- Death

## Alcohol and Sleep

Drinking alcohol, especially one hour before going to bed, can disrupt your sleep by causing you to:

- Wake up in the middle of the night
- Not get deep sleep, making it more likely you will wake up groggy
- Snore and have sleep apnea
- Get up to use the bathroom

Poor sleep has been linked to chronic pain, depression, irritability, and over-tiredness.

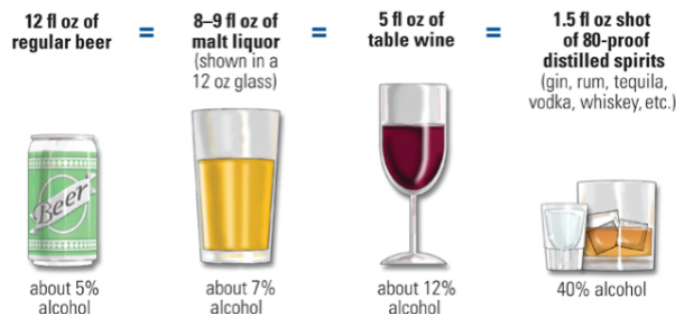
## Alcohol Dependence and Pain

Alcohol should not be used to reduce pain. Routine alcohol use may result in what is called **alcohol dependence**, where you want to drink alcohol all of the time.

Withdrawal from drinking alcohol can increase your desire to consume unsafe amounts of alcohol in attempt to relieve your pain.

Always talk to your doctor about possible reactions you may be experiencing from mixing alcohol and over-the-counter or prescription medications.

## Standard Drink Size



The percent of "pure" alcohol, expressed here as alcohol by volume (alc/vol), varies by beverage.

Moderate alcohol consumption is defined as having up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men.

## How to Reduce Drinking

**1. Write down your reasons:** Keep a list of the reasons you want to stop drinking or drink less.

**2. Set Goals:** Decide on how many drinks you will have and stick to that number. Try to gradually decrease that amount.

**3. Keep a diary:** To help you reach your goal, keep a diary of how much you drink by writing down every time you have a drink.

**4. Watch it at home:** Keep only a small amount or no alcohol at home to reduce your temptation.

**5. Drink slowly:** If you do drink, sip it slowly and take a break between drinks. Drink a non-alcoholic drink in between drinks and make sure you eat food while you drink.

**6. Take a break:** Pick one or two days of the week when you will not drink, and over time try to stop drinking for longer periods of time.

**7. Learn how to say no:** Practice a polite way to say no, and remember you don't have to drink just because other people are drinking.

**8. Stay active:** Use the time and money spent on drinking to do something fun with friends and family.

**9. Get support:** Get the help you need to help reach your goal, whether it is support from your family and friends or your doctor.

**10. Avoid temptations:** Try to avoid contact with people and places that make you want to drink.