

January 2024

As the New Year arrives, many of us start to think about New Year's resolutions, the most popular resolutions are usually concerning health and diet, to do more exercise or lose weight. Financial orientated ones are also popular, with many of us wanting to spend less or save more money.

One of the most popular campaigns is Dry January and if you achieve it, it should help improve your overall wellbeing by improving your physical and mental health and by reducing the amount you spend.

Dry January is the annual movement where millions of people give up alcohol for the month of January. It is run by the charity [alcohol change UK](#), a leading UK alcohol charity. The campaign was first introduced in 2013 and grows larger and larger each year. In 2022, around 8 million people took part in the wellbeing event.

By agreeing to Dry January you are committing to not drink alcohol from when you wake up on New Year's Day until 1 February. However, it doesn't have to end there. Dry January is about behaviour change. It helps people to break habits they've fallen into and make long-term changes for the better. It helps us remember that we don't need alcohol to have fun, relax, celebrate, unwind or anything else. It puts you back in control of your drinking. According to Alcohol Change UK, research shows that 70% of people who take part in Dry January have significantly improved wellbeing and lower alcohol health risks six months later.

Alcohol plays a significant role in our lives and culture, with many of us drinking to celebrate, socialise and relax. However, there is a significant proportion of the UK population who have an unhealthy relationship with alcohol. Alcohol is linked to more than 60 health conditions, including liver disease, high blood pressure, depression and cancer.



There are many health benefits of not drinking alcohol or reducing the amount you drink and these include:

Financial savings -

put aside the amount you would have spent on alcohol each week and see how much you save during the month.

If you continue to not drink or reduce the amount you are drinking over the rest of the year, this saving you make could buy you a treat or help to pay off any debts you have.



Mental health -

regular alcohol consumption decreases the levels of the brain chemical serotonin - a key chemical in depression. By avoiding alcohol, your serotonin levels will increase and help regulate your mood.



Improve your skin -

alcohol can cause puffiness and acne. By cutting out alcohol your skin will improve over time.



Sleeping -

alcohol can intensify certain sleep conditions like snoring. If you have improved quality of sleep, you will have more energy.



Weight loss -

a pint of a 5% strength beer contains 239 calories, with a standard glass of wine consisting of around 133 calories. So giving up alcohol for 4 weeks or longer can make a noticeable impact on your weight.

A month alcohol free has a lot of benefits, research published in 2018 in the British medical journal found that a month off lowers blood pressure, reduces diabetes risk, lowers cholesterol and reduces levels of certain cancer related proteins in the blood.

In order to track Dry January, use the [alcohol change UK App](#)

To check how many units you have drunk, use the alcohol change UK's unit calculator [here](#).

Your New Year's resolutions may include other lifestyle improvements instead of or as well as stopping or reducing drinking alcohol. These may include to eat more healthy, increase the amount of exercise you do or to stop smoking.

Read our various wellbeing guides to help:

- To read our healthy eating guide click [here](#).
- To look after your mental wellbeing read our guide [here](#).
- If you want to stop smoking read our guide [here](#).



Know your units - how much alcohol is too much?

To keep health risks of alcohol at a low level, the recommended safety limits for alcohol consumption is for men and women not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.

It's also advised that at least 2 days a week should be alcohol free.

Regularly drinking above recommended daily limits risks damaging your health.

Your weekly units should not be saved up for the weekend and then binge drinking.



Top tips for alcohol reduction:

- Alternate an alcoholic drink with a non-alcoholic one.
- Have at least two alcohol free days a week.
- Find alternative ways to relax when you are stressed.
- Avoid drinking on an empty stomach.
- Sip your drink slowly so it lasts.
- Don't top up your glass before you have finished a drink so you can keep an eye on exactly how much you are drinking.

After the month you may consider giving up alcohol for longer or reducing the amount you drink to improve your wellbeing.

If you do start drinking again remember that your tolerance to the effects of alcohol will likely be much lower, so be careful not to overdo it the first time you choose to drink again.



Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions. Police Mutual are here to help. We want to break down the stigma surrounding debt and get people talking about money.

We've teamed up with **PayPlan***, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan*** on **0800 197 8433**.

Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support. Take a look at the e-portal or download the APP.

Health & Wellbeing e-portal

<https://healthassured.co.uk>

Username: policemutual Password: careline



Download the **Health Assured App** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**



To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our **Wellbeing Hub** [here](#).

Call us 0151 242 7640 Visit policemutual.co.uk
We're open from 9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

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