



# DRY JANUARY®

*“Dry January is the UK's one-month alcohol-free challenge. It isn't about giving anything up. It's about getting something back. Get your fun back. Get your energy back. Get your calm back. Get your YOU back.” Alcohol Change UK 2022*

## WEEK THREE

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ALCOHOL AND FITNESS  
January 2022

ALCOHOL  
CHANGE<sup>UK</sup>

# ALCOHOL AND FITNESS

Whether you're a fitness fanatic or an occasional gym-goer, it is important to understand how alcohol can impact your physical performance. Whilst regular exercise is a key component of a healthy lifestyle, drinking too much can affect our physical and athletic performance in the short-term, and increase the risk of developing alcohol-related health problems, such as liver problems and cancer, in the longer-term.

**“SWEATING IT OUT”**- If we've had a big drinking session, for many of us our knee-jerk reaction is to hit the gym the following morning to 'sweat off' the excesses of the night before. However, no amount of exercise can reduce the effects of a hangover; it's much better to rest and drink plenty of water rather than engaging in vigorous activity.

**“DRINKING AFTER EXERCISE”** - Reaching for a can of beer or a bottle of wine post-workout can feel like a well-earned reward for a hard session, and there's lots of research that suggests that good habits, like exercise, are more likely to be a regular fixture in our lives if we create a reward plan to help us to stick to our fitness goals. But using alcohol as a reward is the wrong approach. In the first place, alcohol can be high in calories and also stimulates our appetite, meaning that if we're exercising to lose weight or stay trim, drinking post-exercise may be counterproductive. Secondly, and particularly within the first hour or two after exercise, our muscles will be in repair mode, yet research shows that alcohol can interfere with that vital process, thereby increasing the risk of injury. Having an occasional alcoholic drink after a workout is unlikely to have a negative health impact, but the best advice is to drink plenty of water to reduce fatigue and muscle cramping. If you plan to drink, choose one with a lower ABV or, better still, try out some of the growing alcohol-free options available.

**“HOW MANY CALORIES ARE THERE IN ALCOHOL DRINKS?”** The recommended daily calorie intake for a man is around 2,500 calories (kcal) and around 2000 for a woman.

The table below provides an estimate of the total calories found in different alcoholic beverages;

TYPE OF DRINK	SIZE	ALCOHOL VOLUME	UNITS	CALORIES
STANDARD GLASS OF WINE	175ML	12%	2.1	158
LARGE GLASS OF WINE	250ML	12%	3.0	225
BEER, LAGER, CIDER	PINT / 568ML	5.2%	3.0	222
SPIRITS (NEAT)	25ML	40%	1.0	50

## TIPS FOR REDUCING CALORIE INTAKE FROM ALCOHOL:

If you cut back your consumption levels, then obviously you will also reduce your intake of calories from alcohol. A good way of achieving this is to switch to lower strength drinks: for example, if you enjoy drinking wine, try switching from a relatively strong wine (typically 13% ABV) to a mid-strength wine (5.5% ABV). There are also some good alcohol-free choices available.