

Identifying Your Alcohol Triggers

Understanding what triggers your urge to drink is a crucial step toward managing alcohol consumption effectively. An alcohol trigger is any situation, event, or thought that increases the desire to drink. These triggers can be external, such as certain places, people, or social situations, or internal, like specific emotions, memories, or stressors.

Identifying your alcohol triggers involves paying close attention to the situations that make you want to drink, as well as the physical and emotional responses that accompany these moments. By becoming aware of your triggers, you can anticipate and prepare for them, reducing their impact on your choices. **This worksheet will guide you through the process of identifying and analyzing your alcohol triggers and help you develop strategies to manage them effectively.**

PART 1: Identify Triggers

List a situation where you commonly feel the urge to drink and describe the associated physical symptoms, thoughts, and emotions.

Situation Description

Attending a social event where alcohol is served (e.g., a party, dinner, or after-work gathering).

Location

A bar, restaurant, someone's home, or a work-related happy hour event.

People Involved

Friends, coworkers, family members, or people who may encourage or participate in drinking.

Before

1 What were you feeling physically?

Tense, a knot in the stomach, and a general sense of restlessness. Heart racing, shallow breathing, and feeling jittery.

2 What were you thinking about?

- "I need a drink to relax after such a stressful day."*
- "Everyone else will be drinking; I don't want to feel left out."*

3 How did you feel emotionally?

Overwhelmed, stressed, and anxious. FOMO (fear of missing out) about not joining the social drinking.

After

1 What were you feeling physically?

Fatigued, slightly dizzy, and sluggish.

2 What thoughts did you have?

- "Now I feel guilty for drinking when I said I wouldn't."*
- "I don't feel better, just more drained."*

3 How did you feel emotionally?

Regretful and frustrated with myself for giving in. Slightly anxious about how much I drank and how it might impact me tomorrow.



Scan or [click here](#) to learn more about why people drink alcohol.

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Situation Description	Location	People Involved			
<div>Before</div> <div> <div>1 What were you feeling physically?</div> <div>2 What were you thinking about?</div> <div>3 How did you feel emotionally?</div> </div>			<div>After</div> <div> <div>1 What were you feeling physically?</div> <div>2 What thoughts did you have?</div> <div>3 How did you feel emotionally?</div> </div>		

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PART 2: Identify Patterns & Exploring the Impact

Look for patterns in the situations, people, or emotions that trigger your urge to drink. Recognizing these patterns will help you anticipate when you might feel the desire to drink and prepare strategies to manage or avoid those triggers more effectively.

Are there common themes, people or situations that often trigger your urge to drink?

Are there any early warning signs or cues that help you recognize when you're being triggered?

What does your inner dialogue sound like when you feel triggered?

How do your alcohol triggers affect your behavior or decision-making?



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What changes or adjustments could you make in your daily routine to reduce exposure to common triggers?

How can you reframe or challenge negative thoughts associated with your alcohol triggers?

PART 3: Develop Mindful Drinking Strategies

Learn coping strategies that can help you manage alcohol triggers in challenging situations.

- Set an intention before drinking, like enjoying one drink and savoring the experience.
- Sip slowly and pause between sips to stay present with how you're feeling.
- Alternate between alcoholic drinks and water to stay hydrated and aware of your consumption.
- Check in with yourself before and during drinking—ask if you're still enjoying it or just drinking out of habit.
- Limit alcohol in environments where you tend to overindulge, like stressful situations or social pressure.
- Keep track of how much you drink in a journal to build awareness of your habits.
- Plan alcohol-free days during the week to maintain balance and give your body a break.



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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



300+
Companies Reviewed



2,350+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,150+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

