

SAMPLE PLANS

Sample Plan One -- Female

I want to outline my plan, so that I can be accountable, especially to myself.

I abstain on work nights; I am not a morning person, and I have to get up at 5 am for work. Even the dregs of a hangover would be counterproductive. I usually feel a bit woozy and dizzy in the mornings without alcohol in my system.

My goal is harm reduction, without limiting myself to where I feel deprived of something I want to do (drink, and get a buzz). I don't want to black out. I don't want to be mean to anyone (my husband, or possibly, an online friend). I certainly don't want to get sick, puke, or piss myself, or, God forbid, drive or walk somewhere.

And I have done well! Friday I had veggie juice and vodka. I had "two" drinks. My size drinks. I don't measure the alcohol. I'd planned on measuring as part of my plan previously, but somehow, I'd rather drink to taste. I limit myself to two. I eat first. And I have a small snack (sometimes just a diet beverage) before bed, when I am finished drinking. I wake up feeling fine, I remember my evening. Did the same on Sunday night, only with Diet Pepsi. I am good with it.

Saturday, I had finished my final paper for my class. I am working on my Master's degree in nursing. I put in a full day on Saturday, my kids were out, and my husband had his Budweiser. I had intended to drink. But, the hour became late, and I just didn't get around to that first drink. I absolutely need to know, always, that my drinking is my CHOICE. Saturday showed me that it is something I am able to control.

I am just me folks. I don't drink wine or expensive booze. I feel no social pressure to drink. My children are important to me. I am struggling continually to find a path of faith that will feed my spiritual hunger. My education has a great deal of bearing on how I define myself; I will be the first in my family to graduate college (I already am, with only a bachelor's). I have chosen a path that I am not that thrilled about (my marriage), but at the same time, I see the many blessings, and the beautiful things in my life. For those things, I rejoice.

I'd like to blame my faulty choices and the negative things that have happened to me as being the reasons that I drink, but why blame anything?

Truth be told, I drink because I like to drink. I like the time before that first drink. There is a small sense of excitement knowing that soon, I will feel a buzz and be in a slightly different place. My world will be colored a bit. It won't bother me that my father abandoned me twice, that my mother thinks I am a loser, that I have never made my sisters feel loved enough, that I am living with someone I don't like or love anymore. Any kid issue (most are so minor, thank goodness!) is placed on the back burner. With my buzz, my life is on the back burner. I am there, barely there, for the moment. Sweet escape, unless I overdo...

The escape I don't want to give up. Man has fed his head since the beginning of time, and I chalk the desire up to human nature; I do not believe it to be morally wrong. A badge of sobriety isn't something I need to own.

I am still not sure if I will drink tonight or not. I have my 1.75 L of vodka, and rum. I have a pint of Jagermeister, maybe some Kahlua. It's in the cupboard. It's there if I want it; I might want it, since after tonight I have an unusually long stretch of working.

I sound pretty in control, rereading this. HAMS is here, for me, to remind me of the problems that I can get into if I don't check my consumption within a drinking episode. I am here because I have caused destruction in the past. I'm leaving it behind, folks, and thanks for the support.

Sample Plan Two-- Male

I like to get intoxicated when I drink. I will drink a fifth of hard liquor when I choose to drink. But I always drink safely at home alone when I drink. And I never drink on a work night.

I never keep alcohol in the house; I only buy it when I choose to drink.

For me it is best to abstain five to six days a week and drink just one or two. If I do not have lots of abs days I wind up getting nothing done.

I work Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, so my designated drinking day is Sunday night and sometimes Monday.

I do sometimes have a mods day when I have just one drink in a social situation.

But this is almost the same as an abs day for me.

I am doing much better now than in the old days when I would get loaded four nights a week and go into work hungover.

Sample Plan Three-- Female

A while back, I went from drinking straight whiskey (no mixer, no glass, straight from the bottle) to drinking beer.

The reason is, I had a horrible experience after drinking way too much whiskey, way more than normal, and the next morning, my world went crazy...I couldn't hold my hands still, and my head started bobbing around uncontrollably.

I don't measure my drinks, but I know I was drinking a ton of whiskey every day, and now I'm drinking probably 3-8 small cans (12 oz) of bud light every day. It's all I need for now.

I have no idea how much alcohol content this equals to. But I think it's a success so far, because I don't get hangovers anymore, and I don't get falling down drunk, but at the same time, I do get buzzed adequately.

So far, I haven't been able to commit to any abs days, or mods days. But I am keeping it to a manageable level right now. Sometimes I start drinking about noon....depending on my 'triggers'.. ..but most often, I wait until bedtime, which usually ends up being 3-4 beers.

At first, I was bound and determined to keep some whiskey around 'just in case' I 'needed' some, and to 'prove' that I could 'handle' having it here and not drinking it. But I've been able to avoid it for the most part.

I don't have any idea how much harm reduction is taking place, but I feel a lot better staying with the beer.

Sample Plan Four -- Male

I was not drinking until I was drunk all the time, but I was drinking every night and I wanted to change that. I thought that was a bad idea.

So I decided that for the first month I would have one night of abstinence every week.

For the second month I went for two nights of abstinence every week.

Three for the third and four for the fourth.

Once I was at four nights of abstinence every week I felt satisfied with my progress.

I am not perfect now--but most of the time I manage to keep to four days of abs a week.

Sample Plan Five -- Female

My Plan for the Coming Month:

- 1) No hard alcohol Sun-Thursday; no more than 3 drinks on those days.
- 2) Wait until 5:30 or 6 PM to drink; furthermore wait until dinner to drink.
- 3) Have a large glass of sparkling water with lemon before my first drink. Fill it up every time I make a drink to drink alongside the alcohol drink.
- 4) Buy a 375 ML of whiskey (8.5 standard drinks) on Friday, I can either drink it all on Friday or drink part of it on Friday and part on sat, either way. NO going back to get more on Saturday if I drink it all on Friday. Wait until the next Friday before you buy another bottle of whiskey.
- 5) Stick to one type of alcohol a day. Either drink beer OR wine OR whiskey.
- 6) Have at least one abs stretch a month which lasts from 3-10 consecutive days to make sure that all the alcohol is cleared out of my system at least once a month.

7) No more than 25 drinks a week.

Sample Plan Six - Female

1. One or zero drinks per day, except on days that call for more (to be determined by me).
2. Focus on not drinking out of habit, boredom or hunger.
3. Never more than 4 drinks in one day.
4. Measure and count every drink and log it in either Abstar or my spreadsheet.
5. Try not to fear falling asleep sober. Take a sleep aid, if needed, and don't beat myself up for it.