Finding fun without alcohol

Try things, notice what you enjoy, and give yourself time

You do not need to love everything straight away

If drinking used to fill your evenings, it can take time to work out what you enjoy now. You do not need a busy social calendar or an impressive hobby. Start with something affordable and manageable.

For a quiet day at home

Try a puzzle, sketching, music, reading, caring for a plant, cooking a simple recipe or a film you feel comfortable watching. Rest is allowed too. Choose an activity because it interests you, not because you think you should enjoy it.

For company or a change of scene

Suggest a coffee, board games, a library visit, a picnic, mini-golf or a gallery. If movement suits you, try a gentle walk, swim or community activity. Check the setting: an activity can still involve alcohol even when drinking is not its main focus.

Make a small experiment

Choose one thing, decide when you will try it and give yourself permission to leave or stop. Afterwards ask: Did I enjoy it? Did I feel connected? Would I change anything? If feeling flat or low persists, talk with a health professional rather than pushing yourself harder.

Before you change your drinking

If you drink heavily or regularly, need alcohol to feel steady, or have had withdrawal before, speak with a doctor before stopping or sharply reducing. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Shaking, sweating or feeling unwell after cutting down needs prompt medical advice. Call 000 for seizures, severe confusion or hallucinations.

Australia: Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline 1800 250 015 (free, confidential advice). Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support). Call 000 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.

Make it personal

Write a few words. You can leave questions blank or talk them through with someone.

Three things I used to enjoy or would like to try...

One free or low-cost option that fits my energy...

Who I might invite, or how I will enjoy it alone...

When I will try it and what I need...

Afterwards: what helped, and what would I change?

You do not have to do this alone.

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Adapted from The Freedom Room article: How to Have Fun Sober and Build a Rewarding Alcohol-Free Life (supplied text). Safety and support sources: healthdirect.gov.au/alcoholism; adf.org.au/insights/safely-withdrawing-alcohol/; lifeline.org.au/131114; medicarementalhealth.gov.au/provider/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline-16469. Checked 1 October 2026.