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.

My sober weekend plan

Make space for support, enjoyment and rest

Plan the time that feels hardest

Notice when the urge to drink tends to show up: after work, a quiet evening, a celebration or Sunday afternoon. Plan one helpful action for that time before the weekend begins.

Choose a mix that fits you

Include something enjoyable, some rest and a supportive connection. You might arrange a meeting, call a friend or plan a simple meal. Leave breathing room; a full timetable is not a requirement for recovery.

Make event plans practical

Check the venue, decide what you will drink and arrange transport you can use when you want to leave. Have a backup plan. You can decline an event or leave early. Never drive after drinking.

Prepare a plan for urges

If an urge shows up, move to a safer setting if possible, pause and contact support. Try: "I am tempted to drink and need someone to talk to." Keep a backup contact. If plans fall through, return to one manageable action and one supportive connection.

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Make it personal

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Friday: my difficult time and what I will do...

Saturday: something enjoyable, some rest and support...

Sunday: what will help me feel ready for next week?

For an event: drink choice, transport and leaving plan...

If I feel tempted: first action and two support contacts...

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Socialising sober

Simple words, clear boundaries and room to enjoy yourself

Suggest something you want to do

Try: "Fancy breakfast instead?" or "I would love to catch up. How about a walk or a film?" Choose a setting that feels comfortable for you. You can spend time with friends in different ways.

Keep your drink response simple

Try: "No thanks, I am not drinking," "Sparkling water for me, please," or "I feel better without it." You can share more if you want to, but you do not owe anyone your recovery story.

Respond to pressure with a clear boundary

Try: "I have said no. Please stop offering," or "I want to spend time with you, but I need you to respect this." You do not have to win a debate. If the pressure continues, move away, contact support or leave.

Leave when you need to

Try: "Thanks for tonight. I am heading home now." Arrange your own safe way home and tell a trusted person your plan if helpful. If alcohol-free drinks that resemble alcohol bring up cravings, choose something else. A good evening can be short and quiet.

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Make it personal

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

A social activity and setting I would feel comfortable with...

The invitation I could send...

My words when someone offers me alcohol...

My boundary if someone keeps pushing...

My leaving words, safe transport and support contact...

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