



## Managing Urges

*This activity sheet contains a number of exercises and tips for you to use when ready. You are welcome to save and print these as a collection or simply print individual exercises as needed.*

### My Triggers

**What kind of triggers exist for you at the moment?**

#### **Pattern Trigger**

- After work
- On the weekends
- In the evenings after dinner
- At a long lunch
- At a birthday party
- At Christmas
- At work events
- At the airport
- At a nice restaurant

#### **Social Trigger**

- Friends
- Partner
- Work Colleagues
- Family
- Strangers

#### **Emotional Trigger**

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Boredom
- Sadness
- Anger
- Frustration

- Grief
- Helplessness
- Flatness/Depression
- Fear
- Loneliness

**Withdrawal Trigger** (does not apply to everyone)

- Agitation
- Trembling
- Anxiety/Urges
- Nausea

Thinking about the triggers you selected, take a moment now to jot down some thoughts on what 'risk' situations look like for you - these are the situations that contain a lot of triggers, which generally result in an urge to drink alcohol (these could be situations in the past, or stuff you are dealing with at the moment). Describe one of your 'risk' situations here:

Working out a safety plan to deal with risk situations is one of the most useful ways to stay on track - these are covered in the **Understanding Relapses** topic so make sure you check this out too if you haven't already

# Techniques for Surfing your Urges

## Time it

One way to surf the urge is by breaking it down into 1 or 5 minute intervals – set a timer, and when the timer goes off – reassess your urge. In this way, you can make the time riding out the urge more manageable and break the connection between the urge and behavior. You'll notice that the urge to drink starts to fade.

## Get Mindful

What can you do while you wait for the urge to pass?

Some ideas for mindfulness are:

1. **Mindful eating** - find something in your kitchen cupboard that you can eat mindfully - this might be a single raisin, a small piece of chocolate, a piece of apple or dried fruit. It doesn't have to be a large amount of food - just enough for a mouthful.

Hold this piece of food in your hand - pay attention to the colour and shape of this object. Hold it close to your eyes and see if you can pick out the textures and patterns on it - zoom in extra close so you can see it down to the millimeter.

Once you've had a good look at the piece of food, slowly put it in your mouth and pay attention to the sensations you experience. You might notice your mouth starting to produce saliva, or a sensation on your tongue responding to the flavour of the piece of food. Pay attention to this as you keep the piece of food on your tongue. Then, when you are ready, bite into the food and notice what happens then - whether there is more flavour, and what the muscles in your mouth and throat are doing. Notice an instinct to swallow or chew more, and when you are ready, swallow the piece of food. Then notice the feelings in your mouth and, slowly, expanding out to the rest of your body.

2. **Five senses** - Wherever you are, take a moment to tune in to your senses - firstly, notice the noises around you - taking a few seconds to really listen in to any sounds that are around you. Then, breathing in deeply, notice what kinds of things you can smell. Then look around you at what you can see, focusing on the things that stand out to you the most. Then paying attention to anything you can taste in your mouth. Then, the sensations you have on your skin and what you can currently feel. Then, do a quick sweep of your body and notice the sensations and feelings there - noticing if there is a part of your body that feels tense or tight, and taking a moment to take a deep breath in order to relax into this.

In general, finding things that distract, relax, and/or change your physiology are helpful in riding the wave. Below are some ideas:

- Hold ice in your hand, or against your face/forehead/neck
- Take a warm shower
- Take a few minutes to focus on your breathing – slow and steady
- Call a friend or family member
- Play a playlist of your favorite songs
- Watch funny YouTube videos
- Light a scented candle or use some scented lotion or oils
- Imagine a very relaxing scene or re-pay a joyful memory in your mind
- Say encouraging statements to yourself as though you are talking to your best friend

## Types of Replacement Behaviours

Choose five replacement behaviors from the list below that will be helpful for you this week. Make sure these are things that are accessible and realistic, and things that are readily available to you.

- Exercise
- Shower
- Calling a friend
- Reading a book
- Listening to a podcast
- Going for a walk
- Cooking something nice
- Journaling
- Relaxing on the couch
- Having a nap
- Listening to upbeat music
- Mindful eating
- Checking or posting on the Daybreak app

Choose five replacement drinks or food that you might like to try this week in your difficult trigger times.

- Kombucha & Soda
- Soda & Lime
- AF Beer
- AF Wine
- Herbal tea
- Lemon lime & bitters
- Flavoured mineral water
- Dip
- Olives
- Cheese plate
- Dark chocolate
- Fruit

If doing any of these exercises brings up tough stuff for you, please talk to a trusted family member, friend, GP or one of the services there to support you. You can find some of these contacts on our Get Help page. For additional support, we encourage you to follow the recommendations provided to you in your Personal Snapshot Report.