



Alcohol and Your Goals

How drinking affects your weight, training and recovery

Alcohol is part of social life for many people, and it does not have to derail your goals. But it is worth understanding what it does, so you can make informed choices. Here is the honest picture.

The basics

- Alcohol provides 7 kcal per gram, almost as much as fat, with no useful nutrients.
- UK guidance: keep to under 14 units a week, spread over at least 3 days, with drink-free days.
- Drinks are often mixed with sugary, calorie-dense mixers that add up fast.

Alcohol and weight

Alcohol is not stored as fat directly, but your body burns it first, so the calories from your food are more likely to be stored while it does. It also lowers your inhibitions around food, so late-night eating creeps in. It is an easy and often-forgotten source of calories.

In numbers: a pint is around 180 kcal and a large glass of wine around 190 kcal. Cutting roughly 4 drinks a week saves about 750 kcal, which could add up to around 5 kg over a year if those were surplus calories. There are about 7,700 kcal in 1 kg of body fat, so small, consistent changes add up. Try our Alcohol Units and Calories tool to see your own numbers.

Alcohol and training

- It is a diuretic, so it worsens hydration and slows recovery.
- It reduces muscle repair (protein synthesis), even when you eat enough protein.
- Even small amounts before exercise can reduce endurance, coordination and judgement.
- It disrupts sleep quality, which hits recovery and your energy the next day.

You can drink and still hit your goals, with a plan. Set a limit before you go out, alternate with water, choose lower-calorie drinks, and avoid drinking straight after a hard session or before an event. Moderation, not perfection.

Where to learn more: the NHS, Drinkaware, and the British Nutrition Foundation. If you are worried about your drinking, please speak to your GP.

This leaflet is general nutritional guidance for education only. It is not medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, and it does not replace advice from your GP or a registered dietitian. Always check with a qualified professional before making significant changes, particularly if you have a health condition, are pregnant, or take medication.

Ready to take the next step? Book a free call or start your food diary analysis at performancenutritionlondon.co.uk