

# CONQUER CHRONIC STRESS WITHOUT ALCOHOL

## WHAT IS CHRONIC STRESS?



Stress that continues for weeks or months. If left unmanaged, it can put people at risk for serious physical and psychological health concerns.

Some may misuse alcohol to cope with chronic stress. Here's why this is an unhealthy choice for Service members:



### DRINKING MORE?

Using alcohol to unwind is common for some people, but drinking more than usual may be a sign you're using alcohol for unhealthy reasons.



### ANGRIER THAN USUAL?

Alcohol may briefly diffuse steam, but it could also heighten negative feelings, create more anxiety and lead to emotional distress.



### TROUBLE SLEEPING?

One or two drinks before bed may make you fall asleep faster, but it can disrupt your sleep.



### ISOLATING YOURSELF?

Reaching for a drink to numb emotions like sadness or loneliness may feel easier than reaching to a buddy. However, drinking can have the opposite effect and make you feel lonelier.



### DIFFICULTY FOCUSING?

Alcohol stays in the body longer than you might think. On average, it takes one hour to break down one standard drink. If alcohol is in your body the day after drinking, it can affect your focus while on duty or when hanging out with others.

## NEXT STEPS

If you're misusing alcohol to cope with chronic stress, learn about healthy alternatives with these resources:

- Own Your Limits' [Safe Ways to Chill the \[Bleep\] Out](#)
- MilitaryOneSource.mil resources on [emotional wellness and distress](#) and [non-medical counseling](#)

If you're concerned about your alcohol use, visit the "[Get Help](#)" section at [ownyourlimits.org](http://ownyourlimits.org) for support before drinking becomes a concern in your life. If you're experiencing signs of crisis, call the [Military Crisis Line](#) at 800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255.