

Yes. A ritual can help you cut back without making every evening feel like a test of willpower. The important thing is to understand what drinking is doing for you, then build a deliberate routine that meets some of those needs without automatically involving alcohol.

That is different from simply swapping a glass of wine for another drink. Sometimes a substitute helps; sometimes the real need is to mark the end of work, claim a bit of pleasure, or give yourself permission to stop being productive. If that job goes unmet, the replacement drink may feel like a poor imitation—and the usual pour can quickly return.

This guide is for people who want to change their pattern, not necessarily give up alcohol altogether. It focuses on practical **cutting back strategies**, especially for remote workers, and on building an **intentional routine** that makes weekday drinking reduction more achievable.

Start with the question: what job is the drink doing?

Habits tend to stick when they reliably do something for us. An evening drink may be less about the drink itself than the moment it creates. Before planning a replacement or a rule, notice what happens before your first sip and what you get from it.

The habit's job What it might feel like A routine to experiment with Transition "I need to stop being at work." Close the laptop, change clothes and take a short walk. Reward "I've earned something enjoyable." Set aside time for a favourite meal, programme or hobby. Permission "Now I'm allowed to switch off." Write down tomorrow's first task, then call work finished. Sensory pleasure "I want the flavour, temperature, glass or fizz." Choose a satisfying alcohol-free drink and serve it with care.

These jobs can overlap. You might want the taste and the signal that the workday is over. Identifying even one job gives you a more useful starting point than telling yourself to "relax".

Ritual versus drink substitution

A **drink substitution** changes what is in the glass. A **ritual** changes the sequence and meaning around the moment. They can work together, but they are not the same thing.

For example, sparkling water in a wine glass may satisfy a sensory preference. But if you are still answering emails, sitting in your work clothes and feeling that the day has no end, the drink may not create the transition you need. Conversely, a five-minute walk and a clear laptop shut-down can make an alcohol-free drink feel like a proper evening choice rather than a consolation prize.

Try asking two questions:

- **What do I want from this moment?** A flavour, a reward, a boundary, company, or relief from tension?
- **What part of the routine could provide it?** The drink, the setting, the action, or the permission to stop?

You do not have to remove every familiar pleasure. The aim is to make drinking a more deliberate choice, rather than the only available way to start the evening.



Why remote work can make weekday drinking reduction harder

For many office workers, the journey home used to create a buffer between work and home. A commute tends to be tiring, but it also provided a boundary: laptop closed, office left behind, evening beginning. Remote work can erase that change of scene. You may move from a video call to the kitchen without ever feeling that the workday has properly ended.

When work spills into the evening, a drink can become a quick, dependable “off switch”. The problem is not a lack of discipline. It is that the usual transition has gone missing, while the drink still performs a clear job.

Build a substitute boundary that is small enough to repeat. It need not be elaborate. Try closing the laptop at a set time, putting it out of sight, changing your top, stepping outside for ten minutes, or making a brief note of what can wait until tomorrow. Pick one action that clearly says: *work is finished for today*.



Design a deliberate evening routine

A useful routine is specific, repeatable and realistic on an ordinary Tuesday. It does not have to make you feel blissful. Its job is to help you move from work mode into personal time and create a pause before you decide whether to drink.

A 15-minute work-to-evening ritual

1. **Close work.** Choose a regular finish time where possible. Shut down the laptop and put it away rather than leaving it open on the table.
2. **Mark the boundary.** Change clothes, wash your face or take a short walk. Use the same simple cue most weekdays.
3. **Choose your first drink intentionally.** Pour an alcohol-free option, make tea, or choose another drink you genuinely enjoy. Use a proper glass if the ritual of serving matters to you.
4. **Give yourself permission.** Write one line about tomorrow's first task, then say, "That's enough for today." This is a cue, not a promise that every work worry will disappear.
5. **Decide about alcohol after the pause.** If you still want a drink, choose it consciously and follow the limit you set in advance.

The pause is not a trick to make you dislike alcohol. It creates a small gap between the urge and the action, giving you more room to choose. On some days you may still drink; on others, the ritual may be enough. Both outcomes give you information about what helps.

Set a plan you can measure

"I'll drink less" is a good intention, but it is difficult to review. A measurable plan helps you see whether your routine is changing your pattern. Choose a starting measure that feels manageable and track it without turning the exercise into a judgement of your character.

You might decide to:

- Choose two or three alcohol-free weekdays each week.
- Set a maximum number of drinking occasions for the week.
- Decide in advance how many drinks you will have on an occasion, and avoid topping up automatically.
- Delay the first drink until after your work-to-evening ritual.
- Record the day, the number of drinks and what was happening before you wanted one.

Keep the first experiment modest. For example: "For the next two weeks, I'll have alcohol-free drinks on Monday and Tuesday, close my laptop by 6.30 pm, and record what happens." This is clearer than trying to redesign every evening at once.

Use a simple weekly review. Ask: Which days were easier? What job was the drink doing on the harder days? Did the ritual happen before the usual drinking cue? What would make the next week more workable? Adjust one part at a time.

Make the alcohol-free option feel chosen, not imposed

If sensory pleasure is part of the habit, a replacement needs to be appealing to you—not merely labelled "healthy". Try different flavours, temperatures and serving styles. You may prefer a bitter drink over a sweet one, a hot mug after a cold walk, or something fizzy with dinner. The point is not to find a perfect alcohol replica; it is to make the alternative satisfying in its own right.

You can also build pleasure into the routine around the drink: use a favourite glass, put music on, sit somewhere comfortable, or pair it with a meal you enjoy. That may sound small, but rituals often work through repeated cues. The same glass, place or action can become a reliable marker that the evening has begun.

What about CBD products?

Some people consider CBD as part of an evening routine. It is worth keeping expectations grounded: CBD should not be treated as a proven way to reduce alcohol use, as a substitute for support, or as a guaranteed route to calm. Products vary, and evidence and regulation matter. CBD may also have side effects or interact with medicines, so speak to a pharmacist or GP before using it, particularly if you take medication or have thecoachspace.com a health condition. Do not combine products with alcohol on the assumption that the combination is safe.

If you are researching products from companies such as Joy Organics, check what the product is, where it can legally be sold, and what independent testing is available. A **QR code linking to lab results** can make a report easier to find, but the code itself does not prove quality. Look for accessible lab results or certificates—often presented in a COA-style format—that identify the product or batch and show what was tested. Make sure you can open and understand the report rather than relying on a general marketing statement. For UK consumers, also check current UK rules and product status; do not assume that a product sold elsewhere is automatically appropriate or authorised here.

These checks are about informed purchasing, not a recommendation to use CBD. A straightforward evening ritual does not require a supplement. If you are unsure, prioritise advice from a qualified health professional.

When a self-guided plan may not be enough

Cutting back can be a reasonable goal, but it is important to notice when a plan is not working or when stopping suddenly could be unsafe. If you drink heavily or daily, have withdrawal symptoms when you cut down, or feel unable to control your drinking despite repeated attempts, speak with your GP or an alcohol support service before making a major change. Seek urgent medical help for severe withdrawal symptoms. Medical advice is especially important if you are pregnant, have a health condition, or take medicines that may interact with alcohol.

Support can also help even when you do not want to quit. A coach or counsellor can help you map triggers, set realistic boundaries and review what is changing. The Coach Space, for example, can be a place to explore coaching support; check that any coach's approach suits your needs and remember that coaching is not a substitute for medical or specialist alcohol treatment.

A small ritual can make room for a choice

So, can a ritual help if you want to cut back but not quit? Yes—when it addresses the job the drink is doing. Create a clear end to work, build in a moment of reward or sensory pleasure, and decide about alcohol after that transition rather than on autopilot.

Start with one repeatable action, one measurable weekday goal and a brief weekly review. Keep what works; change what does not. The aim is not to perform a perfect evening routine. It is to make your evenings a little more intentional, so drinking becomes one choice among several rather than the only signal that the day is over.