

Alcohol and the Athlete

Alcohol impairs athletic performance mentally and physically, extending beyond the night of drinking. Understanding the consequences of excessive drinking and being mindful of your alcohol consumption can help keep you and your teammates healthy, happy, and safe!

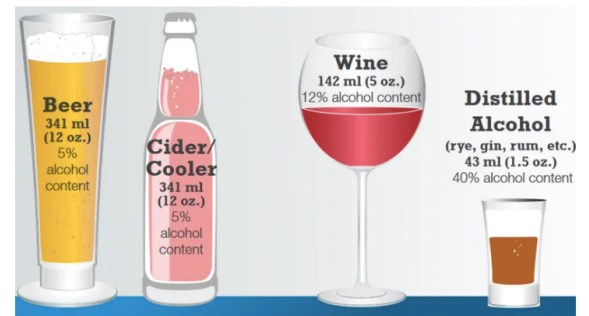
How much is too much?

Women: > 2 drinks per day

Men: > 3 drinks per day

Excessive or "binge" drinking: > 4 drinks for women or > 5 drinks for men on one occasion

There is NO BENEFICIAL EFFECT of alcohol on sport performance. It's best to avoid alcohol within 48 hours of training or competition.



What is one drink?

How does it affect performance?

Small amounts of alcohol may be safe, however research has shown that "binge" drinking alcohol can decrease performance by as much as 11.4% the day after drinking and this can last for up to 72 hours! Alcohol, even in small amounts, have the following effects:

- ▶ **Acts as a diuretic**, leading to dehydration
- ▶ **In the brain**, it impairs motor skills like balance, coordination, and reaction time.
- ▶ **In muscle**, it impairs blood flow, reducing muscle strength. The prevalence of musculoskeletal injury is 30% higher in athletes who drink versus those who do not.
- ▶ **In the liver**, all other processes shut down to prioritize alcohol metabolism. This causes low blood sugar and impairs the use of fat as fuel, reducing training capacity.
- ▶ **In the heart**, it disturbs cardiovascular function (especially during a hangover), increasing heart rate, perceived exertion, and blood pressure while decreasing the ability of the heart to pump blood to other parts of the body.
- ▶ **Hormonally**, testosterone decreases and estrogen increases, causing fluid retention and fat deposition that can lead to weight gain. Low testosterone also impairs the ability to increase muscle mass and strength.
- ▶ **Sleep** quality is compromised. Alcohol disturbs deep sleep cycles, which inhibits muscular repair and synthesis in addition to new skill acquisition.

Be Smart and Sensible IF You Decide to Drink

- **Plan in advance:** Think about where you're going, who you're with, and training schedule tomorrow.
- **Eat before or while you are drinking:** Eating slows alcohol absorption and the rate of drinking. It is also essential for recovery and replenishment of muscle energy stores after training or competition.
- **Pace yourself:** Space out alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks in between; this slows consumption and assists with hydration status (especially post training or competition same day).
- **Select low alcohol drinks:** Choose lower alcohol beers such as pilsner or light beer; have spirits mixed with juice or soda water and ask for it in a "tall glass" with just one shot.
- **Keep yourself busy:** If you're occupied, you tend to drink less. Dance, play pool or other games; try not to just sit around and drink.
- **NEVER, EVER, EVER DRINK AND DRIVE!!!** Do not wait until the end of the night; designate a non-drinking driver before leaving the house, or take a taxi or rideshare service.
- **Remember all alcoholic beverages contain calories:** Limit to avoid consuming empty calories.

COMMON DRINKS

CALORIES

Margarita (8 oz)	280
Vodka Cranberry (5 oz)	260
Mojito (8 oz)	220
Red Bull & Vodka (10 oz)	210
Jager Bomb (5 oz)	210
Vodka Tonic (8 oz)	200
India Pale Ale, 6.5% alcohol (12 oz)	200
Hard Cider (12 oz)	190
Rum & Coke (8 oz)	185
Whiskey Sour (3 oz)	178
Mimosa (8 oz)	160
Old Fashioned (2 oz)	155
Regular Beer, 5% alcohol (12 oz)	140
Red Wine (5 oz)	125
White Wine (5 oz)	120
Light Beer, 4.2% alcohol (12 oz)	110
Sugar Free Red Bull & Vodka (10 oz)	105
Vodka Soda (8 oz)	105
Spiked Seltzer (12 oz)	100
1 Shot of 80 Proof Alcohol (1.5 oz)	100

If I drink alcohol, I usually have:

of drinks per night: _____

of nights per week/month: _____

Estimated calories: _____

Athlete Recommendations:

*Serving sizes, and therefore calorie counts, may vary based on establishment