

Too tired to stay out past 11:00 p.m. ^[1]

Hi Alice,

Recently (the last six months or so) I've been getting really tired after a couple of drinks (let's say three or four). By eleven at night, I'm ready to call it quits. My friends and boyfriend poke fun at me because I usually head home before they do. How can I last longer in a healthy way? I definitely try to drink water throughout the night, but is there anything else?

Thanks!

Asleep before midnight

Answer

Dear Asleep before midnight,

Feeling drowsy after three or four drinks close to midnight is completely normal for a lot of people — alcohol is a depressant that reduces alertness and increases sleepiness. Many factors help contribute to sleepiness when drinking, including (but not limited to) fatigue, illness, and the use of other drugs or medications. Fortunately, there are ways to maximize the fun of drinking (or staying sober) while also maintaining a good night's sleep and avoiding a hangover.

As you anticipate your next foray into night life, there are ways to address and minimize sleepiness before you head out the door, while you're hanging out, and when you're ready to go home for the night. You could consider the following strategies when pondering potential plans:

- Try to clock in plenty of hours of sleep throughout the week to prevent the effects of sleep deprivation — regularly getting the amount of sleep that is right for you can help you make the most of your waking hours!
- Take an afternoon or evening nap before you go out to refresh your mind and body.
- Eat before and during drinking. Snacks with complex carbohydrates and fats (whole grains, fruits, veggies, cheese, and beans) can help to keep your energy up.
- Have a check-in with yourself and determine whether you really want to go or not. Not into it tonight? Consider staying in (did someone say movies, popcorn, or a good book?) or suggesting an alternative plan for a fun night.

Once you're out and about, some options to think about include:

- Move around or hit the dance floor! Keeping your blood pumping can help you feel awake. It's helpful to make sure to hydrate with water when engaging in physical activity, especially if the environment is warm.
- Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the night.
- Though caffeine beforehand may be initially helpful, it can be helpful to steer clear of caffeinated alcoholic drinks, which can mask the effects of intoxication until the caffeine wears off.
- Want to go out, but don't want to drink? You could nix the alcohol and stick with the drinks such as water, club soda, juice, or soft drinks while you spend time with your crew.

When you decide you want to call it a night:

- Make a smooth, but resolute exit once you're ready to leave. Say goodnight to your friends and boyfriend and be firm in your decision to head home.
- Better yet, have a friend leave with you — there's power in numbers, and you'll have a travel partner!

Beyond these strategies, it's also good to think about whether the pressure coming from your friends and boyfriend is an acceptable reason to stay out later than you'd like. If your friends and boyfriend are just teasing you in a playful way, they might respond well to a quirky response, such as "All right kiddos, it's bedtime for us elderly folk!" or "I'm too tired to hit the bars — I'd rather hit the hay." However, if the pressure is more serious, you might try making a simple, honest, and straightforward statement, such as "I'm really exhausted, and I won't be much fun if I don't get to bed soon." If that doesn't work, you might reevaluate your social circle and seek out friends who are more supportive of your needs and sleep habits.

If you're concerned about your recent difficulty in staying up late, you might also consider scheduling an appointment with your health care provider. They can help determine the cause of your recent sleepiness and what remedies may exist to help. To learn more about the topics at hand, take a look at some Q&As in the [Go Ask Alice! Sleep](#) [2] and [Alcohol](#) [3] archives.

Alice!

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