

- Drinking of alcoholic beverages

HUMANS // ALCOHOL

5 MYTHS ABOUT ALCOHOL

Can a brisk walk sober you up? Does a morning beer help with a hangover? We tested five often-heard myths about alcohol - and found that some of these common beliefs just don't hold water....

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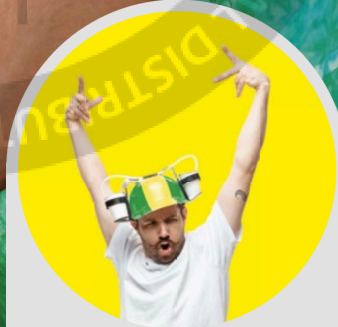
EXERCISE:

Myth: "Physical activity sobers you up faster"

➔ Many people think that a brisk walk or run after a night of drinking will help them get the alcohol out of their system faster. But this is not true. There is really nothing you can do to reduce the alcohol level in your blood - other than wait. In fact, you should be careful about exercising under the influence. Your lack of coordination increases the risk of injury, you are more prone to dehydration, and you have a higher risk of irregular cardiac rhythm. On the other hand, exercise can seem to help with a hangover, as it increases the release of endorphins, reducing pain and providing a feeling of well-being.

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The myth is **false**



BRAIN:

Myth: "One night out will not harm the brain"

➔ You may think that one night of heavy drinking can't cause much harm. But experiments involving young people who got drunk on their 21st birthdays showed that the callosal body which connects the two brain hemispheres had shrunk slightly after the party -and had not grown back to normal five weeks later. Whether the change has longterm consequences for brain function is unknown, but changes accumulate with repeated drinking, and ultimately the brain could be severely damaged, consequences including mental disorders, impaired memory, and lack of impulse control.

MARTIN JOE/SHUTTERSTOCK

The myth is **false**



TOLERANCE:

Myth: "Frequent drinking makes you immune"

➔ Some people are less sensitive to alcohol than others: they get less drunk even when they drink the same quantity. This is partly due to genetics and body type differences, but tolerance is also determined by how often alcohol is consumed. People who drink frequently are less influenced by alcohol, and the reason appears to be that repeated alcohol consumption reduces the activity of some of the genes in the brain that otherwise cooperate with alcohol to impair coordination and so on. On the other hand, some studies show that frequent drinkers have worse hangovers than other people.

MARTIN JOE/SHUTTERSTOCK

The myth is **partly true**



ENERGY:

Myth: "Drinking makes you feel animated"

→ Alcoholic beverages can have an invigorating effect. They can increase your heart rate and cause the release of the happiness hormone dopamine in the brain. But alcohol primarily dulls the senses, and even at a blood alcohol level of around 0.05%, when drunkenness begins to be noticeable, sedative effects start to outweigh stimulating ones. Alcohol inhibits nerve activity in several brain areas, making you react more slowly, and think less clearly. At a blood alcohol level above 0.1%, many people become visibly tired and dozy, and if the level rises above 0.2 or 0.3%, you could become unconscious or even die.

The myth is **false**

HANGOVER:

Myth: "Alcohol helps with hangovers"

→ One of the most common pieces of hangover treatment advice is to drink a beer. And according to researchers, the method could have an effect. The alcohol in beer can, at least for a short while, make your body release endorphins, reducing pain and improving your general well-being. Beer may even slow the formation of some of the toxins that contribute to hangovers. Unfortunately, the positive effects are short-lived, and the advice does little more than postpone the problem. Furthermore, the method increases the risk of developing real alcohol addiction – and frequent drinking brings worse hangovers.

The myth is **partly true**