

It is extremely difficult for a dependent alcohol drinker to just stop drinking unassisted, or 'cold turkey'.

This may seem a dramatic statement at face value, but once you consider the facts related to alcohol withdrawal, the problem becomes apparent.

Alcohol is an addictive psycho-active drug, in fact the most commonly abused recreational drug. In essence, a dependent or addicted drinker is a drug addict, although in this case to a legally obtainable drug.

Depending on the level of dependency the drinker has built up, withdrawal symptoms range from mild, through severe, to life threatening. It is for this reason that those wishing to break their addiction to alcohol are best advised to seek assistance, if not from specialist at least family and friends.

A heavy, regular drinker who has reached the point where he or she is determined to give up drinking will inevitably face a difficult psychological withdrawal but coupled to this is a very practical physical withdrawal.

When the drinker stops consuming alcohol, within a few hours the body starts to demand alcohol just to feel normal, this will cause irresistible cravings to drink alcohol. If the person is able to resist, or forced to resist, worse will possibly follow which may even become life threatening. Just taking another drink will almost certainly be considered easier than carrying on suffering such symptoms.

The Symptoms

Mild Symptoms

For those who are less physically dependent on alcohol, withdrawal symptoms will be relatively mild, They will include:

Shakes	Headache
Sweats	Anxiety
Nausea	Increased Heart Rate
	Increased Blood Pressure

These symptoms will be uncomfortable and coupled to cravings for alcohol, which at times will seem irresistible. These symptoms are in themselves not life threatening, but it is advisable to have support.

Serious Symptoms

For heavier drinkers who are more alcoholic dependent withdrawal symptoms can be more worrying and require specialist medical assistance. They will include:

Hallucinations
Convulsions
Seizures

After 4-5 days of abstinence the symptoms may progress to delirium tremens (The DT's) symptoms of which are:

Profound confusion	Hallucinations
Disorientation	Hyperactivity
	Heart Irregularities

Once The DT's begin, there is no known medical treatment to stop them. In extreme cases Grand mal seizures, heart attacks and stroke can occur during the DT's, all of which can be fatal.

The Good News

There is professional help available, much of which is free of charge. All of the symptoms can be managed and cravings brought to a bearable level. No one is going force you to do anything, they are merely there to provide you with skilled assistance in your battle to quit. You do not have to fight that battle on your own, help is available so take advantage of it.

Once successfully through withdrawal you can look forward to a life without alcohol and begin to enjoy the benefits of improving health, longevity and social interaction. These will include:

Health

2% of all coronary heart disease is alcohol related. 90% of all heavy drinkers develop a fatty liver, this will lead in turn to more serious liver disease. Heavy drinkers have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes and or alcoholic lung disease. Mental health issues have been associated with alcohol, people who abuse alcohol can develop clinical depression and other types of mental illness. Alcohol use is strongly linked with suicide.

Social

There is a move towards drinking becoming unfashionable, much like smokers are now. Heavy drinkers are the exception not the norm.

Dangers

If you give up you negate the danger of slowly but surely moving from dependence, through addiction and into alcoholism with all that entails. If you quit none of that can happen.