

At 6pm, you close a spreadsheet, walk three steps to the kitchen and pour a drink. It may feel automatic: the day is over, you have earned a reward, and now you can switch off. But if you work from home, the line between “at work” and “at home” can be so faint that the drink ends up doing several jobs at once.

The useful question is not simply, “What should I drink instead?” It is: **what job is this habit doing?** Is it marking the end of work, giving you permission to stop, offering a pleasant taste, or helping you manage stress? Once you know, you can build an evening routine that meets the same need more deliberately.

Why 6pm can become a cue

In an office, the end of the day may be marked by packing up, leaving the building and travelling home. That commute creates a boundary, even when it is inconvenient. At home, you might finish a call, close one tab and immediately find yourself in the kitchen. There is no journey in between, and the workday can seem to spill into the evening.

Over time, a particular time, place or feeling can become a cue: it is 6pm, you are tired, the laptop is still open, and a drink is within easy reach. The sequence gets repeated because it offers an immediate change in state. This is not a character flaw. It is a routine that has become efficient at meeting a need.

Identify the habit’s job before choosing a replacement

A replacement is more likely to stick when it does the same job as the old habit. A glass of alcohol might provide more than one kind of payoff, so it can help to separate them.

The habit may be providing... Ask yourself... A possible routine element Transition How do I know work is finished? A short walk, a change of clothes or a clear laptop-closing ritual Reward What feels like a satisfying end to a demanding day? A favourite meal, a planned episode or a small treat you genuinely enjoy Permission What tells me I am allowed to stop being productive? A written “tomorrow list” and a set finish time Sensory pleasure What do I like about the glass itself? A cold, fizzy or bitter non-alcoholic drink in a glass you like

You do not have to find one perfect substitute. You might need a boundary, a reward and a sensory cue. That is why “just have a soft drink instead” can feel unsatisfying: it may address the taste but not the permission to stop.

Build a close laptop routine

A close laptop routine is a small, repeatable sequence that makes the end of work visible. It does not need to be elaborate or take more than a few minutes. The aim is to finish the workday intentionally, rather than drift out of it while checking one more message.



1. **Choose a finish time.** Set a realistic time for most workdays, such as 5.45pm, rather than waiting for the mythical moment when everything is done.
2. **Capture the open loops.** Write down unfinished tasks and the next action for each. For example: "Send draft to Sam — first thing tomorrow." This gives your brain a place to put the work.
3. **Close the work signals.** Shut down or put away the laptop, close work apps and silence notifications that do not need to reach you.
4. **Change location or clothes.** Step outside for five minutes, move to another room or change out of work clothes. A physical cue helps create the boundary your commute used to provide.
5. **Start your chosen evening activity.** Make dinner, put on music, call someone or prepare a non-alcoholic drink. Begin it straight after closing the laptop, before heading to the usual drink-pouring spot.

Try the routine for a week before judging it. It may feel a little staged at first. That is normal: you are giving the day a new ending, not trying to manufacture instant calm.



End of day ritual ideas that meet different needs

If you need a transition

Recreate the useful part of a commute without turning it into another task. Walk around the block, take the bins out, water the plants or listen to one particular song while you leave your workspace. Keep the cue simple enough to repeat on a tired Tuesday.

If you need a reward

Plan something pleasant that is not dependent on finishing every task. It could be a favourite dinner, a chapter of a novel or a call with a friend. A reward works best when it feels like a genuine choice, rather than a consolation prize for not drinking.

If you need permission to stop

Write one sentence at the end of work: "Today is finished; tomorrow I will start with..." Then close the laptop. If you often keep working because the list feels endless, agree with yourself which tasks count as urgent and which can wait. If your workload makes a finish time impossible, the routine alone will not solve that; you may need a conversation about priorities or capacity.

If you miss the sensory part

Try a drink that has some of the qualities you enjoy: cold, bitter, aromatic, fizzy or served in a favourite glass. Options might include sparkling water with citrus, a grown-up non-alcoholic aperitif or a carefully chosen alcohol-free alternative. Check labels if you are avoiding alcohol entirely, as some products can contain trace amounts or be labelled in ways that do not match your personal needs.

Keep the ritual, not necessarily the exact object. You can still pour something, use ice and take a moment to enjoy it. The aim is to make a deliberate choice rather than let 6pm make it for you.

Make the new routine easier than the old one

Habits are strongly affected by what is close at hand. If the bottle is visible and the ingredients for your chosen alternative are not, the familiar option has a head start. You could put a chilled alternative at the front of the fridge, keep a glass near the kettle, or move alcohol out of sight. These are not tests of willpower; they are small changes to the setup.

- **Decide in advance:** choose your first after-work action before the afternoon gets busy.
- **Use a specific cue:** "When I close the laptop, I put on my shoes and walk to the end of the road."
- **Keep it short:** start with five minutes, not a complicated evening overhaul.
- **Track what matters:** note whether you completed the close laptop routine, not just whether you drank.
- **Plan for difficult days:** choose a minimum version, such as writing tomorrow's first task and moving away from your desk.

A simple plan might look like this:

At 5.45pm: write tomorrow's first task, close the laptop, put it away, then walk outside for five <https://thecoachspace.com/p/cbd-alcohol-free-evening/> minutes. When you return, make a cold, alcohol-free drink

and start dinner. If the day runs late, do the two-minute version: write the next action, shut the laptop and change rooms.

What if you are considering CBD?

Some people look at CBD products as part of a wind-down routine. Treat that as a separate decision from building an end-of-day boundary: CBD should not be presented as a guaranteed way to relax, improve sleep or replace alcohol. Product quality and individual responses vary, and CBD can interact with medicines. Speak with a GP or pharmacist before using it, particularly if you take prescription or over-the-counter medicines, have a health condition, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or are unsure whether it is suitable for you.

If you are researching a brand such as Joy Organics, look for clear product information and independent testing rather than relying on broad wellness claims. A QR code linking to lab results can make a report easier to access, and lab results or certificates in a COA-style format may show what was tested and the reported levels of cannabinoids and contaminants. Check that the report is for the specific product and batch you are considering, and that the testing details are understandable. A certificate is useful information, not proof that a product is right for you or a substitute for medical advice.

UK rules for CBD products can be complex and product-specific. Check current official guidance and the product's legal status before buying; do not assume that availability online means every product is suitable or compliant. You can ask a pharmacist or clinician about possible interactions and your circumstances.

When to seek more support

If you find it hard to cut down, feel worried about how much you are drinking, or experience symptoms when you stop, speak with a GP or an alcohol support service. Do not try to manage possible withdrawal symptoms alone; stopping suddenly can be dangerous for some people who drink heavily or regularly. A clinician can help you work out a safe next step without judgement.

Coaching can also help with the routine and work-boundary side of the pattern. The Coach Space, for example, is a place to explore practical behaviour changes with support. Coaching is not a substitute for medical or alcohol treatment, but it may help you turn a vague wish to "switch off better" into a plan you can test and adjust.

Start with one deliberate evening

You do not need to redesign your whole life tonight. Choose one job your 6pm drink is doing and add one small action that meets that need. If it is marking the end of work, try a close laptop routine. If it is the taste and feel of a drink, choose a satisfying alternative and serve it with the same care. If it is permission to stop, write tomorrow's first task and practise leaving the rest until tomorrow.

The goal is not to make evenings perfect. It is to create a boundary between work and home that you can repeat, even when the day has been stressful. Start with a cue you can see, a ritual you can manage, and a finish time you can keep.