

If the phrase “evening routine” makes you picture a colour-coded planner, a 5am influencer and a row of matching jars, you are not alone. Plenty of people want their evenings to feel better without turning them into another project to manage.

The good news: an alcohol-free evening does not need a strict schedule. It needs a few deliberate choices that do the jobs a drink might have been doing for you: marking the end of work, offering a reward, giving you permission to stop, or providing something enjoyable to taste and hold.

Think of it as a **minimum viable routine**: a small, repeatable set of cues that helps you shift out of work mode and into your own time. It can change from day to day. There is **no perfection needed**, and you do not have to replace a drink with a complicated wellness ritual.

Start by asking: what job is the drink doing?

Alcohol can become attached to a particular moment: the laptop shuts, dinner starts, the first episode goes on, or the house finally gets quiet. Before choosing a replacement, work out what you want to keep about that moment. This is not about judging yourself or diagnosing your habits. It is about making a better design choice.



The drink may be providing A possible alcohol-free cue The job it can do Transition Close the laptop, change clothes, or step outside for five minutes Separates work from personal time Reward A favourite snack, a good meal, or a drink you genuinely enjoy Makes the evening feel like something to look forward to Permission Put a “finished for today” note beside your laptop Signals that work can wait Sensory pleasure A cold, fizzy, bitter, herbal or citrusy alcohol-free drink Offers flavour, texture and a satisfying serving ritual

One drink might be doing several jobs at once. If you have a drink because work has felt relentless, a replacement that only tastes similar may miss the point. You may also need a clear end-of-work cue and an activity that feels rewarding.

Ritual is not the same as drink substitution

It is tempting to think the answer is simply to pour something else into the same glass. Sometimes that works: a sparkling water with lime might be exactly what you want. But ritual and beverage are separate parts of the experience.

A drink substitution changes what is in your glass. **A ritual** changes what happens around the moment: when you stop working, how you change pace, and what tells you the evening has begun. You can have one without the other.

- If you miss the flavour or fizz, choose a drink that meets that sensory preference.
- If you miss the pause, sit down and take five minutes before you start the next task.
- If you miss the reward, plan something enjoyable rather than making the whole evening about “being good”.
- If you need permission to stop, decide on a finish time and make the boundary visible.

The aim is not to reproduce every part of drinking. It is to keep the parts that help and find healthier, more flexible ways to meet the underlying need.

Why remote work can make evenings harder

In an office-based day, the journey home can act as a transition, even if it is just a walk to the station. Remote work often removes that natural boundary. The desk may be steps from the sofa; messages can continue after dinner; and a change of location never happens unless you create one.

That can make the end of work feel vague. If the day has no clear finish, an evening drink may become the quickest available signal that you are off duty. Rather than relying on willpower at the end of a tiring day, give yourself a visible closing cue.

A simple remote-work closing ritual

1. **Choose a finish time.** Pick a realistic time for most days, with room for genuine exceptions.
2. **Write down the next step.** Note the first task for tomorrow, so you do not have to keep rehearsing it in your head.
3. **Close the work loop.** Save your work, shut the laptop, and put it away if practical.
4. **Change your setting.** Change clothes, wash your face, move to another room, or take a short walk around the block.
5. **Choose the next thing on purpose.** Make a drink, start dinner, call someone, or sit down without adding another task.

This is not a productivity trick. It is a way to make the end of the workday more legible. If you cannot do every step, keep one: for example, closing the laptop at 6pm. A small cue you repeat is usually more useful than an elaborate routine you abandon.

Build a minimum viable routine, not a perfect evening

Your **minimum viable routine** is the smallest version that still helps. It should be easy enough to use on a low-energy day and adaptable enough to fit a late meeting, childcare, social plans or an unexpected wobble.

Try this three-part structure:

- **Close:** one action that ends work or responsibility for the day.
- **Choose:** one enjoyable, alcohol-free way to mark the shift.

- **Continue:** move into something you actually want to do, including rest.

For example: close the laptop, pour a chilled drink with ice and citrus, then make dinner while listening to a podcast. Or: put tomorrow's work list away, take a ten-minute walk, then have a hot shower. The details matter less than the function. Ask: *what job is this habit doing?* If it does not help you transition, feel rewarded, give yourself permission to stop, or enjoy your senses, it may not belong in the routine.

Make it flexible enough to survive real life

People who hate routines often imagine they have to repeat the same sequence at the same time every night. That is a recipe for feeling as if you have failed whenever life changes. Instead, create a few **flexible rituals** and choose one or two according to the evening you are having.

Use a menu, not a timetable

Write down three options for each kind of evening:

- **Low energy:** change into comfortable clothes, make a simple drink, and watch one episode.
- **Restless:** take a brisk walk, put on music, or do a small hands-on task.
- **Social:** suggest a café, dinner, a film, or a walk with a friend; decide in advance what you would like to drink.

You are not trying to achieve the perfect evening. You are giving yourself a few ready-made choices when decision-making feels hard. A flexible ritual can also be very small: one song after work, a particular <https://thecoachspace.com/p/cbd-alcohol-free-evening/> mug for tea, or stepping outside before you start cooking.

Keep the cue, change the routine

If you usually pour a drink as soon as you finish work, keep the timing but change what you do next. Put a glass of something alcohol-free in the fridge before the end of the day, or plan a different transition that is easy to start. You can also move the cue: for instance, take a short walk before sitting down rather than waiting until you feel restless later.

Notice what works without turning it into a pass-or-fail test. If a chosen ritual feels irritating or too effortful, adjust it. The point is to support your evening, not obey a rule.

Choose an alcohol-free drink for what you enjoy

There is no single best alcohol-free drink. Some people want bitterness and complexity; others want bubbles, sweetness, warmth or just water. You could try sparkling water with citrus, a non-alcoholic beer or wine, a chilled herbal infusion, a shrub diluted with soda, or a familiar soft drink served in a glass you like.

Pay attention to the part you enjoy: flavour, temperature, glassware, the sound of opening a bottle, or having something in your hand. This can make a drink feel considered without pretending it has the same effects as alcohol. It is also fine if a drink is simply a drink. It does not need to be functional, therapeutic or a "better version" of anything.

If you are looking at CBD products, treat them as a separate choice rather than an alcohol replacement or a guaranteed way to unwind. For example, a company such as Joy Organics may provide product information and lab results; check the details for the specific product rather than relying on general claims. Look for a **QR code linking to lab results** and clear, product-specific **lab results or certificates** in an implied COA-style format. Review what was tested, when it was tested, and whether the report matches the product and batch.

CBD products can have side effects and may interact with medicines. Ask a pharmacist or clinician before using them if you take medication, have a health condition, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or are unsure whether a product is appropriate. Do not treat a supplement as a substitute for medical advice, and do not assume that a lab report guarantees a product is suitable for you. Check current UK rules and product information before buying.



When you want support, make it practical

Some people are experimenting with alcohol-free evenings; others are trying to change a pattern that feels difficult to control. Those are different situations, and the right level of support will differ too. If you are concerned about your drinking, speak with a GP or an alcohol support service. If you drink heavily or experience withdrawal symptoms when you stop, seek medical advice before making a sudden change. Withdrawal can be dangerous and should not be managed alone.

Coaching can help with planning and accountability, but it is not a replacement for medical care. The Coach Space, for instance, can be a place to explore coaching support and find an approach that suits your circumstances. When looking for help, check what a service offers, who provides it, and whether it is appropriate for the support you need.

A sample evening you can adapt

Here is one possible routine—not a template you have to copy. The aim is to show how a few small actions can cover several habit jobs.

1. **6.00pm: Close.** Write tomorrow's first task, close the laptop and put it out of sight.
2. **6.05pm: Transition.** Change clothes and step outside for a short walk, or stretch beside an open window.
3. **6.20pm: Reward and sensory cue.** Make a drink you enjoy and prepare something easy to eat.
4. **After dinner: Permission.** Choose one activity and let that be enough for the evening—reading, a show, a call or an early night.

If you get home late or have a demanding day, shrink it: shut the laptop, change rooms and make a drink. That still counts. On a social evening, the walk and drink may not fit; choose another cue that marks the end of work or helps you feel present.

No perfection needed

A useful alcohol-free evening routine is not a streak to protect. It is a set of options that helps you meet real needs with a little more intention. Keep the bits that work, drop the bits that feel like homework, and expect the routine to change with your life.

Start with one question tonight: **what job would I like an evening habit to do?** Then choose one small action to meet that need. Close the laptop at a set time. Step outside. Pick a drink you enjoy. Give yourself permission to stop. That is enough of a beginning.