



# OnTrack to Cutting Down and Feeling Good Newsletter

Hi, I'm Hugh.

I'll be with you on your OnTrack trip.

You'll see me here every week with ideas and tips for staying OnTrack.

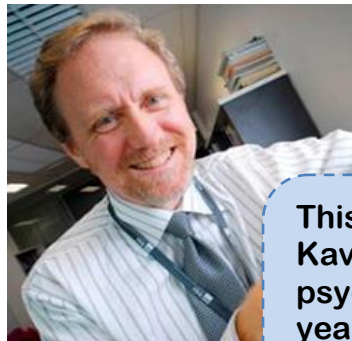


Just like fixing your car, you'll need tools to help you.

You'll find the tools to get healthy and feel good in this newsletter.

## In this week's newsletter:

- About OnTrack Alcohol
- Rating Your Days
- Being Healthy and Drinking Less
- Walking is good for you
- Why you should eat your greens
- The Walk the Walk Blog (part 1)



This is Professor David Kavanagh. He is a psychologist with over 40 years' experience.

He'll be helping out.

**Thanks for joining us!**

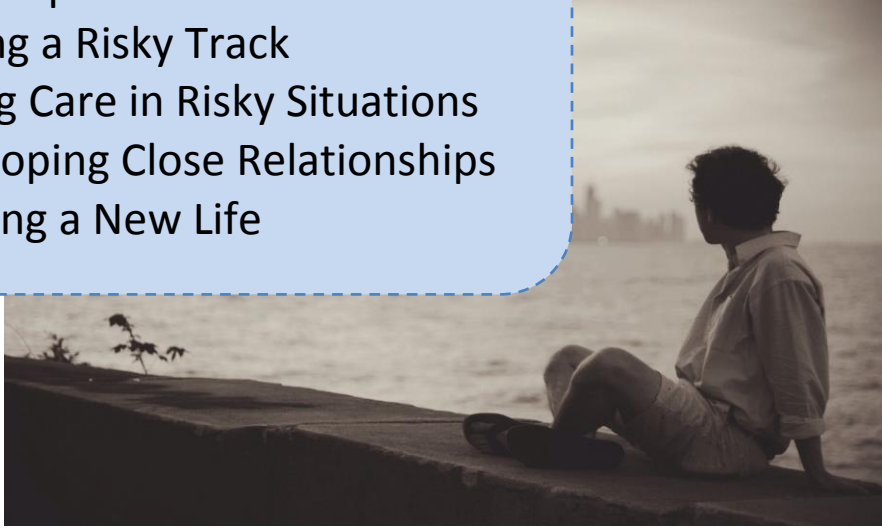
This newsletter is sent to participants of the OnTrack alcohol treatment program. It is designed to be an extra resource to help keep you On Track!



- **About OnTrack Alcohol**

OnTrack has 6 signposts to help you drink less:

1. Making Plans
2. First Steps
3. Closing a Risky Track
4. Taking Care in Risky Situations
5. Developing Close Relationships
6. Building a New Life



You will come across a lot of useful information and tools in each of these signposts in these newsletters. Explore them, use them, and come back to them at any time.

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- **Rating Your Days**



Think about the days you are having in your life right now. Are you having good days or are you having bad days? Think about yesterday, for example, and ask yourself the question, “Is yesterday a day I would like to live again?”

You could rate your answers to this question on a scale from:



- 1= Definitely No
- 2 = No
- 3 = Maybe
- 4 = Yes
- 5 = Definitely Yes



Are you having days that you would give a 4 or a 5? Or are you having days that you would give a 1 or 2?



## On Track to Cutting Down and Feeling Good



**Would you like to live your life again?** Your life is an accumulation of days lived, one after another. Do you want to have a life that you would live again? If you do, then you have to make sure that the days you are having are days that you would want to live again.



**What makes a day a good day?** Being sick, like when you've got a cold or flu would make it hard to give your days a rating better than 1 or 2. Those days when you're feeling sick are days that you struggle to get through. Those days are hard. It's awful when you have things to do and all you feel like doing is staying in bed.



**Do you get enough sleep?** Sleep is important in having a good day. Not getting enough sleep can make it really hard to get through the day, especially when your brain feels foggy, and you don't have the energy to do the things you want to do.



**How's your hangover?** Being hungover can also make it really hard to have days you would want to live again. When your head is throbbing and you need water and your body aches it makes it so much harder to be happy and to enjoy the world around you.



**How well do you get on with others?** The way you relate to the people in your life is going to depend on how you are feeling. If you are happy and healthy then those relationships will reflect that. Conversely, if you are feeling sick, or sad, then little things will be more likely to upset you. You will react to things; you'll be more likely to be grumpy if you are unhealthy, overtired, or hungover.

Rate Your Days helps me think about what I do that makes my life good or bad.

Having a good sleep really helps me have a good day. When I'm tired ... watch out!



Every time I think about rating my day, it makes me think about what I am doing, right now. That's called 'reflecting' and is part of 'Mindfulness'.

**Mindfulness is explored in the OnTrack program.** To find out more about mindfulness go to the Resources section where you can watch Mindfulness videos or listen to Mindfulness audio files.

## • Being Healthy and Drinking Less



Research suggests that drinking alcohol can often lead to biochemical imbalances in the brain as well as nutritional deficiencies and digestion problems.

Imbalances like these can alter your mood and behavior and set up more cravings for drugs, alcohol, and other substances like refined sugar for a temporary fix.

**Restoring balance by eating well and increasing your physical activity will help you overcome your cravings for alcohol.**

In other words, think of drinking less alcohol as a part of being healthier.

**Alcohol can be bad for your healthy eating in 2 ways:**

**1. You forget to eat and don't feel hungry.** However, calories from alcohol are considered "empty" as they lack nutritional value.

**2. Alcohol damages your intestines.** This means that even if you do eat, it is harder for the body to absorb nutrients from food.

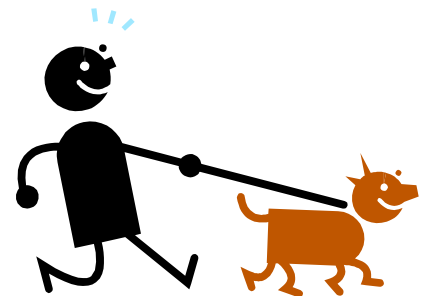
Being healthy will make it easier to cut down on your drinking and there are **two simple things** that you can do that can make a big difference:

- **Do more walking each day.**
- **Eat more vegetables every day.**

## • Walking is good for you

Being physically active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle but inactivity among Australians is a major health problem. More than half of Australian adults are not sufficiently active to gain health benefits.

**Walking can reduce the risk of preventable diseases, including heart disease, stroke, and obesity. It can also improve your mood and mental health.**





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### Regular walking will:

- improve your long-term health
- give you more energy
- make you feel more confident, happy, and relaxed
- help you sleep better
- help reduce your cravings for alcohol

And finally, the time you spend being active, such as going for a walk, is time you won't spend drinking (as long as you aren't walking to the bottle shop or the pub!)

### More Information:



The exercise and diet information provided in these newsletters has come from government websites such as:

· [www.gofor2and5.com.au](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au)  
· [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

· [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)  
· [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)

· [www.anpha.gov.au](http://www.anpha.gov.au)  
· [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### • Health Advice about walking

- Don't walk immediately after eating or after drinking
- Don't walk if you are ill, e.g. have a cold.
- If you are in pain, feel unusual chest pain, breathlessness, or if your heart beat is too rapid or irregular during walking, stop immediately and go to hospital.

## • Why you should eat your greens



The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend that adults eat at least **5 serves of vegetables each day**.

The scientific evidence of the health benefits of eating vegetables (including beans) has been reported for decades and continues to strengthen, particularly for heart disease. For better health and to reduce the risk of disease make it a habit to eat vegetables every day.

### Eat your veggies to:

- Reduce risk of heart disease and some forms of cancer
- help you manage your weight
- reduce blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels
- improve or prevent diabetes

By eating a more nutritious diet, you can help restore your body to good health, which means you will have less desire to drink. Drinking less alcohol is, of course, a part of being healthier.

## • The Walk the Walk Blog (part 1)



### Hugh's day: Thursday - 9.53pm

*How many hours have I been sitting today? I rode my motorcycle to work - that was 20 minutes. I spent all day driving the courtesy bus at the RSL. That was probably four hours of sitting time, and I've been on the computer for at least 3 hours since I've been home.*

*As I sit here at my computer writing up these OnTrack to Cutting Down and Feeling Good Newsletters I'm also watching my way through season 3 of Breaking Bad on DVD. So, all in all I'll spend at least 9 hours a day sitting down.*

*I think about trying to motivate people to get up and do some walking in their day, with all the things they have going in their lives... but I'm not making a dedicated effort to go for a walk myself. I need to draw up my own tracking and monitoring chart. I need to walk the walk, not just write the write.*

Part 2 of my blog in the next newsletter describes how I draw up a chart to keep track of my daily walking and vegetable eating, as well as some other things I am trying to change in my life...

Thanks for reading,

*Hugh.*