

# Could hypnosis HELP ME DRINK LESS?

After years of enjoying wine, writer Julia Crouch tells what happened when she sought help from a hypnotherapist

**I like a glass of wine. Or two. I admit I often used to like the whole bottle, and I'd drink it anywhere: out with friends, or at home alone in the evenings, curled up with a book. Lovely.**

But I'd often greet the mornings with a pounding head. I was also overweight from all those alcohol calories. Most days I was putting away at least six units of alcohol. NHS guidelines for women are not more than two to three units daily. And, as I got older, alcohol had begun to affect me more – I felt tipsy more quickly and the hangovers were worse.

A few months ago, I was looking at two weeks full of nights out. All 14 events involved alcohol. That fortnight scared me. My liver quivered at the thought.

A few weeks before the social onslaught began, I was at a party when I noticed my friend Bella – one of the few women I know who surpassed me in the boozing stakes. It was midnight, but she looked bright, was talking sense and... sipping water.

"Whassup?" I slurred.

"Hypnosis," she said. "I only ever drink two glasses now."

It was a Eureka moment. If Bella could do it, couldn't I? And so it was that I found myself in the Hove practice room

of fully accredited Hypnotherapy Association member Julie James, wondering if someone like me – who doesn't like being told what to do – could really be hypnotised.

Julie explained that hypnosis wouldn't make me do or say anything that I didn't want to, and I could wake myself up at any time. Then she put on some ambient music and took me through a series of relaxation exercises.

I was enjoying it, but I wasn't hypnotised – whatever that meant. Then Julie counted to five and my body suddenly felt like it was floating off the chair. It seemed I was not un-hypnotisable...

During this first session, Julie helped me visualise the part of me that wanted to get drunk. I saw her as a tiny, fierce Tinkerbell. At first I was angry at her, but Julie helped me see that she was just protecting me from my insecurities: instead, I should perhaps be thankful. This was the prompt I needed. I should stop beating myself



## Julia's tips for drinking less

- ✦ Before you go out, decide how many glasses you'll have, then stick to it.
- ✦ Track your alcohol units. You may be surprised. Try the NHS Change4Life drinks checker at [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk).
- ✦ Every week, try to have two to three alcohol-free days.
- ✦ When you've reached your limit, refill your wine glass with water.
- ✦ Cultivate a tea habit. Equally staining on the teeth as red wine, but far healthier.

up, accept the situation, and calmly take control. I could drink sensibly.

That evening, I took my daughter Nel out for a meal and, instead of ordering my usual bottle of red, I got us one glass of Prosecco each.

After one more session, it was scary party fortnight. But guess what? It was easy! Two glasses? No problem. And I stopped drinking at home alone altogether.

A few months on, Tinkerbell and I are good friends. Once or twice, I have let out her leash a bit, but I never drink in the way I used to. And I'm still not drinking alone. And it's still easy. Now, I wake up feeling in control; I am also about £30 better off a week, and I have effortlessly lost over half a stone. Result! Tarnished by Julia Crouch (*Headline*) is out on 14 March **w&h**

## Hypnotherapist Julie James explains how hypnosis can help

✦ Your subconscious mind is the seat of all your emotions and therefore directs nearly all of your behaviour. Most importantly, it is also responsible for maintaining your body in good health and it controls your autonomic processes (breathing, blood

circulation, tissue regeneration, repair and so on).

✦ Hypnosis is a safe way of accessing this natural intelligence and issuing new instructions to create seemingly miraculous changes in you, your behaviour and your body.

✦ You already know what hypnosis feels like as you have experienced natural hypnotic states every day of your life, when daydreaming or "drifting off" while watching TV. See [jhhypnotherapy.com](https://jhhypnotherapy.com) or find a therapist at [hypnotherapyassociation.co.uk](https://hypnotherapyassociation.co.uk).