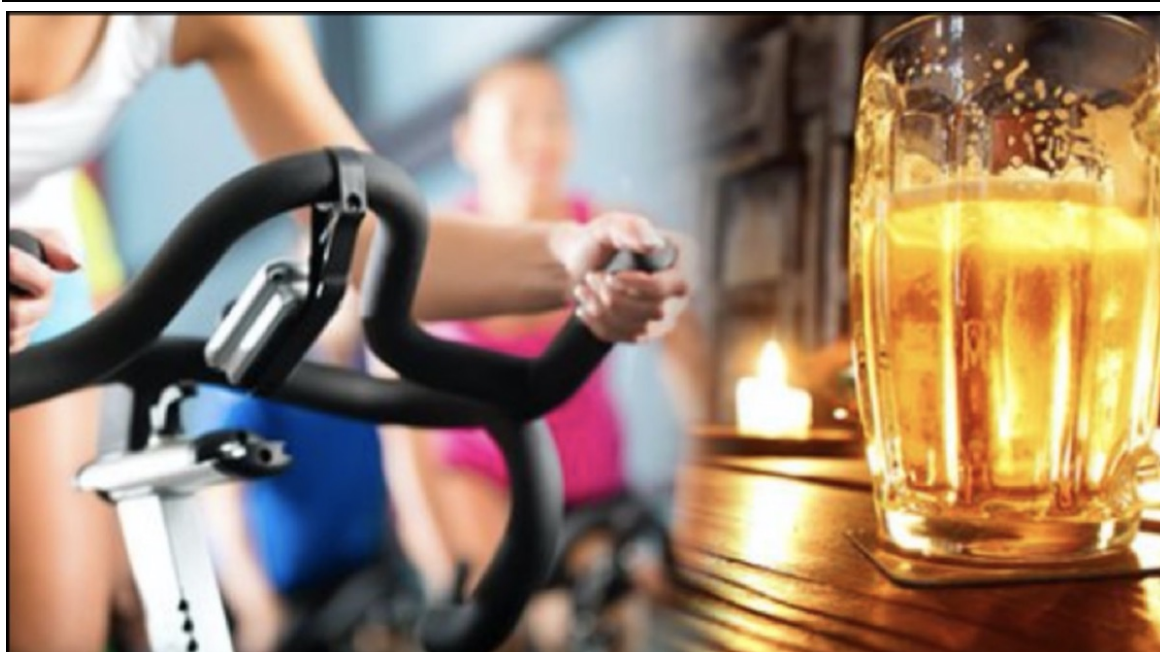


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Media Release – The Impact of Alcohol on Physical Activity and Exercise

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



## The Impact of Alcohol on Physical Activity and Exercise

While the short-term impact on physical activity levels of having a few drinks may be reduced energy levels, there is likely to be a negative effect on physical activity gains and overall health in the medium to long term.

The worst-case long-term impacts from regular and excessive drinking can include varying degrees of muscle damage and weakness, and increases in lifestyle diseases, and early death.

New Zealand's drinking statistics from the Ministry of Health (2017-1018 survey) include:

- One in five (20%) of adults have a potentially hazardous drinking pattern.
- Hazardous drinking rates were higher in men (27%), than women (13%)

There has been research to indicate a low intake of alcohol may have some health benefits, specifically related to potentially lowering the risk of developing heart disease, stroke or type 2 diabetes. But before you refill your glass, it's worth noting that these health benefits are gained with low consumption levels, and with the overall impact still being small, or nil in some cases. If it's health benefits you are after, other interventions have a higher success rate, with exercise and physical activity high on the list.

The acute effects of alcohol on exercise performance mean that not too many people try and combine the two. You will find that you are less coordinated, your power decreases, and your eye hand coordination is compromised. Not great for those trying to reach exercise and health goals.

For most drinkers, the impact is felt the following day. A late night out may mean that an early exercise session is cancelled. Too much alcohol can slow down the absorption of water and increase urine output which will both lead to dehydration, and reduction in coordination and overall performance. But, while a hangover will reduce your output and exercise performance, the impact wears off as your hangover does.

The current health recommendations are to limit consumption to 2 standard drinks a day for women, and 3 standard drinks for men, with at least 2 alcohol free nights a week.

If maintaining a healthy weight is one of your goals, then alcohol consumption will have to be counted as part of your energy intake. And while it has a low nutritional value, a gram of alcohol contains 7 calories, second only to fat (at 9 calories). Most drinkers also report additional calories are consumed along with their alcohol consumption.

Overall, a low to moderate intake of alcohol can still be part of a balanced lifestyle, making sure at the same time it doesn't get in the way of keeping physically active.

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**NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)** - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - [www.icreps.org](http://www.icreps.org)

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**Exercise Association of New Zealand** - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

