

DEFENSIVE DRIVING BASICS

CAN YOU SOBER UP SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DRINKING?

Let's say you or someone you're with has had a little too much to drink. What's the best way to sober up?

- Strong black coffee
- A walk in the fresh air
- Vigorous exercise
- A cold shower
- A dip in the pool
- Eating something nutritious

None of the above! While all of these techniques can make drunks think they are more sober, the only thing that can actually sober up a drunk is time—at least one hour's time for every drink, regardless of whether the drink was beer, wine, bourbon, tequila or peppermint schnapps.

How Your Body Gets Rid of Alcohol

When you drink alcohol, it stays in your blood until it is oxidized by your liver. At its very best, the liver can only handle about one drink per hour. If you have three drinks in an hour, your liver will take about three hours to reduce your blood alcohol to what's considered a safe driving level in most states. It may take another three hours to completely eliminate the alcohol from your body.

Alcohol and the Law

Anyone who has had three drinks in an hour is legally drunk. Some have a blood alcohol level over the legal limit after only two drinks. Any alcohol at all impairs your judgment and reflexes enough to increase your risk of a collision.

What You Can Do

Giving a party? With a little planning, your guests can enjoy themselves and still get home safely. Plan on serving food. While food can't sober up a drunk, if eaten before or during the drinking, it slows down the effects of the alcohol. Always make nonalcoholic drinks available and stop serving alcohol an hour or two before the party is to end. Finally, if any of your guests have had too much to drink, don't let them drive home. Call a cab, drive them yourself, or let them stay overnight.

Remember, sobering up is a matter of time—at least one hour for every drink taken.