

Alcohol Is a Social Lubricant, Study Confirms

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You've seen those commercials with fun-loving people sharing a laugh over a cold brew. Now, a new study lends scientific support to the notion of alcohol as a social icebreaker.

Researchers found that drinking moderate amounts of alcohol in a group setting boosts people's emotions and enhances social bonding.

The study also found that moderate consumption of alcohol can minimize negative emotions — or at least reduce displays such as being silent in a group or making faces with wrinkled noses or pursed lips.

In the study, published recently in the journal *Psychological Science*, researchers randomly assigned 720 men and women to groups of three people who didn't know one another. They said previous studies have focused on alcohol's effect on individuals.

“We felt that many of the most significant effects of alcohol would more likely be revealed in an experiment using a social setting,” study author Michael Sayette, a professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, said in a journal news release.

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