



# How to taper venlafaxine safely

A clear, practical walk-through of how people reduce venlafaxine gradually — written to read alongside the advice your prescriber gives you, never instead of it. About a 7-minute read.



**This is a dose conversion calculator, not a tapering plan.** Get a safe tapering plan from your healthcare team before starting any reduction. The [Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines](#) and the [RELEASE Toolkit](#) are good resources to discuss with your doctor, or [book a telehealth appointment with the TaperMate Clinic](#) to get a personalised tapering plan.

## Why come off slowly

Stopping venlafaxine is usually harder than starting it. The relationship between the dose you take and its effect on the brain isn't a straight line — at lower doses, even a small reduction in milligrams can be a large change in effect. This is why prescribers increasingly recommend **hyperbolic tapering**: smaller and smaller reductions as the dose gets lower, rather than fixed steps.

In practice that means the standard strengths — designed for the treatment range, not for coming off — often can't give you the small doses the end of a taper needs. That's where a method like the one below, so you can measure a precise fraction, comes in.

# Combining capsule strengths, step by step

1. Check which capsule strengths your pharmacy can dispense or compound.
2. Use the calculator below to find a combination of whole capsules that reaches your target dose.
3. Take the combination together as a single daily dose.
4. Re-check the combination with your prescriber at each reduction step.

## Work out your dose as you read

This is the same venlafaxine calculator – change any number and watch it recalculate.

VENLAFAXINE · COMBINE CAPSULES

### Single dose calculator

#### Capsule strengths available

75

mg

Dispensed or compounded – comma-separated, e.g. 150, 75, 37.5.

#### Target dose

37.5

mg

What you want to take today.

#### NO EXACT MATCH – NEAREST COMBINATIONS

–

0 mg – closest to your 37.5 mg target. The difference is shown so you can verify it (item 14L).

#### ROUND UP · SAFER ON WITHDRAWAL

1 × 75 mg

≈ 75 mg – slightly higher, generally safer.

#### ROUND TO NEAREST

–

≈ 0 mg – closest to your target.

**Formula** combination dose = sum of the capsules you take

**Target** 37.5 mg can't be made exactly from 75 mg

Open the full calculator for venlafaxine:

Combine caps →

Count beads →

Weigh →

# Your step-by-step taper schedule

This is the Venlafaxine schedule from the RELEASE Toolkit, reproduced with permission. It's a starting point to **discuss with your prescriber** — you can pause, slow down or speed up depending on how you feel. Aim to reduce roughly every 2–4 weeks.

STEP	DAILY DOSE	DAILY CAPSULES
1	150mg	1 × 150mg capsule
2	75mg	2 × 37.5mg capsules
3	57.5mg	1 × 37.5mg & 2 × 10mg capsules
4	37.5mg	1 × 37.5mg capsule
5	25mg	2 × 10mg & 1 × 5mg capsules
6	20mg	2 × 10mg capsules
7	15mg	1 × 10mg & 1 × 5mg capsules
8	12mg	1 × 10mg & 2 × 1mg capsules
9	10.5mg	1 × 10mg & 1 × 0.5mg capsules
10	8mg	1 × 5mg & 3 × 1mg capsules
11	6.5mg	1 × 5mg & 3 × 0.5mg capsules
12	5mg	1 × 5mg capsule
13	4mg	4 × 1mg capsules
14	3mg	3 × 1mg capsules
15	2.5mg	2 × 1mg & 1 × 0.5mg capsules
16	2mg	2 × 1mg capsules
17	1.5mg	1 × 1mg & 1 × 0.5mg capsules
18	1mg	1 × 1mg capsule
19	0.75mg	3 × 0.25mg capsules
20	0.5mg	1 × 0.5mg capsule
21	0.25mg	1 × 0.25mg capsule
22	Stop	You've completed the taper 🎉

Highlighted steps are the most important — do not skip them.

- Do **not** skip the final small-dose steps — they're the most important for preventing withdrawal.
- Don't skip days, alternate days, or suddenly stop.
- If withdrawal symptoms appear, you can return to your previous dose; when ready, reduce more slowly.

Schedule © The University of Queensland (RELEASE Toolkit), reproduced with permission. Dosing guidance: Dr Mark Horowitz.

## Measuring smaller doses accurately

Venlafaxine comes as **modified-release microbeads** (in capsules) or **modified-release mini-tablets** — the mini-tablets can't be cut or crushed because they're modified release. As an alternative to compounded doses, some people **weigh or count the beads** to measure smaller doses.

- Measure slowly and double-check before you take your dose.
- Count or weigh on a clean, flat, draught-free surface.
- Keep to the same method each day so doses stay consistent.

Calculators for these methods:

[Count beads →](#)

[Weighing →](#)

## What withdrawal can feel like

Withdrawal effects vary a lot between people. They often come in **waves** — harder days followed by **windows** of feeling more like yourself. Common, usually-manageable effects include dizziness, "brain zaps", nausea, vivid dreams, irritability and low mood. They tend to ease if you hold at your current dose for a while before reducing again.

The RELEASE Toolkit has [an overview of antidepressant withdrawal symptoms](#), and [how to tell withdrawal apart from relapse](#).

**Seek advice promptly** if you have thoughts of harming yourself, severe or worsening mood, or symptoms that don't settle. Contact your prescriber, or in an emergency call **000**. In Australia you can also call **Lifeline on 13 11 14**.

# Questions for your appointment

- How quickly is it safe for me to reduce, and by how much each step?
- How long should I hold at each dose before the next reduction?
- What should I do on a bad day – pause or slow down?
- Which symptoms mean I should contact you sooner?
- Would a compounded product be more accurate for my lowest doses?

NEXT STEP

## Plan your full taper in TaperMate

This calculator handles one dose. The TaperMate app calculates a full reduction schedule with hold periods, microtapering and symptom monitoring – so each new dose is one tap away, not a daily maths problem.



Download on the  
App Store



Get it on  
Google Play

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## Sources to discuss with your prescriber

- Horowitz MA, Taylor D. *The Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines: Antidepressants, Benzodiazepines, Gabapentinoids and Z-drugs*. Wiley, 2024.
- Sørensen A. *Crossing Zero: The Art and Science of Coming Off – and Staying Off – Psychiatric Drugs*.
- RELEASE Toolkit – Reducing & Eliminating LongtErm AntidepreSsant usE. [releasetoolkit.com.au](https://releasetoolkit.com.au)