



How to taper duloxetine safely

A clear, practical walk-through of how people reduce duloxetine 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 duloxetine 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.

[Open the duloxetine calculator to work out your dose →](#)

Your step-by-step taper schedule

This is the Duloxetine 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	60mg	2 × 30mg capsules
2	40mg	1 × 30mg & 1 × 10mg capsules
3	30mg	1 × 30mg capsule
4	20mg	2 × 10mg capsules
5	15mg	1 × 10mg & 1 × 5mg capsules
6	12mg	1 × 10mg & 2 × 1mg capsules
7	10mg	1 × 10mg capsule
8	8mg	1 × 5mg & 3 × 1mg capsules
9	7mg	1 × 5mg & 2 × 1mg capsules
10	6mg	1 × 5mg & 1 × 1mg capsule
11	5mg	1 × 5mg capsule
12	4mg	4 × 1mg capsules
13	3mg	3 × 1mg capsules
14	2.5mg	2 × 1mg & 1 × 0.5mg capsules
15	2mg	2 × 1mg capsules
16	1.5mg	3 × 0.5mg capsules
17	1mg	1 × 1mg capsule
18	0.5mg	1 × 0.5mg capsule
19	0.25mg	1 × 0.25mg capsule
20	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

Use the right tool for your method — an **oral syringe** for liquids (your pharmacist can supply 1 mL, 5 mL and 10 mL sizes), or a **milligram scale** for weighing. Choose the smallest measuring tool that fits your dose: it's far more accurate for tiny amounts.

- Measure slowly and double-check before you take your dose.
- Read at eye level, against the syringe plunger's flat edge.
- Keep the concentration or method the same each day so doses stay consistent.

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.

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 — hold, slow down, or pause?
- Which symptoms mean I should contact you sooner?
- Would a compounded oral liquid 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

Sources to discuss with your prescriber

- Horowitz MA, Taylor D. *The Maudsley Deprescribing Guidelines: Antidepressants, Benzodiazepines, Gabapentinoids and Z-drugs*. Wiley, 2024.
- **RELEASE Toolkit** – Reducing & Eliminating LongtErm AntidepreSsant usE. releasetoolkit.com.au
- **Therapeutic Goods Administration**. Therapeutic Goods (Excluded Goods) Determination 2018, item 14L.