

by Alan J. Pierce, EdD

BACtrack[®] Breathalyzer

When you are at a wedding, house party, social gathering after work, backyard barbecue, or just watching the Super Bowl with your friends, do you drink a number of beers or have a few alcoholic beverages? When these gatherings are over do you drive home?

If you did drive intoxicated in the past you probably thought enough time or strong coffee reduced the alcohol in your bloodstream. When it comes to getting sober strong coffee only makes a person a wide awake drunk. If you are wrong about how sober you are the next time you leave a party you could kill yourself, friends in your car, occupants in other cars, pedestrians on the street, or get yourself arrested.

In the US a traffic stop that leads to a breathalyzer test that finds a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of 0.08 will earn you a Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) arrest. In NYS a BAC of 0.05 will earn you a Driving While Ability Impaired (DWAI) ticket. **"If you are under 21 years old, you can expect that being caught with ANY alcohol in your blood while driving will result in arrest."**

(<http://www.drinkinganddriving.org/Articles/blood-alcohol-content.html>)

BACtrack[®] Mobile is a small (2 ¾ H by 2"W by ½ D) personal breathalyzer that works with your smartphone. It probably could be fun sharing the Backtrack at the end of a party to determine who amongst your friends is least or most intoxicated. You should wait at least 15 minutes after your last drink before testing to avoid getting a false reading. You want your mouth to be clear of alcohol and you want to give the alcohol in your stomach time to be absorbed into your bloodstream. At the end of the simple test the smartphone app will tell you how much time it will take the BAC reading to drop to a normal level.



To use the device for the first time:

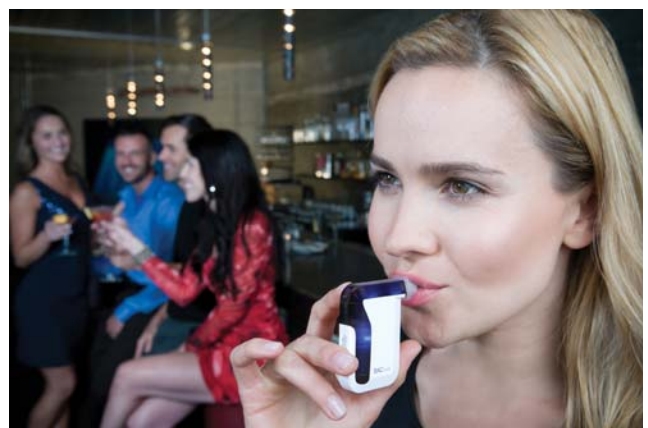
1. Charge the BACtrack and download the BACtrack app from the Apple App store or Google Play.
2. Turn on the BACtrack breathalyzer and your Smartphone's Bluetooth.
3. Start the BACtrack app. Pairing takes place automatically when the app is running.
4. Press the test button on your Smartphone screen and follow the app's directions.

Reason to Drool

The unit is a safe way to determine if the amount of alcohol you consumed is enough to leave you fully or partially impaired. It comes with 3 separate tips so out of the box you can share it with 2 of your friends without sharing the mouth piece. You can purchase extra tips at your local Walgreens. If you have been drinking, using it at the end of a party could save your life.

Not So Cool

This device will not work with all old smartphones. Before purchasing it you should check the company's website to make certain this breathalyzer will work with your phone or tablet. (<http://support.bactrack.com>). This device is not as accurate as the breathalyzer that a police officer will use in a traffic stop. If used as a party toy this device could put more, rather than fewer, drunks on the road. Remember the best designated driver is one who has abstained from consuming any alcohol to safely drive everyone home.



Alan is co-author of *Introduction to Technology Glencoe McGraw-Hill 2010* and a *TechDirections Magazine* Columnist . Visit www.technologytoday.us for past columns, reviews, and resources.