

## Dealing with a stuck ferment

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A fermentation may stick (cease fermenting) for a number of reasons. Cold, too high an alcohol content, lack of sugar, lack of acid or nutrient.

### Dealing with a stuck Ferment

The first thing to do is to check the specific gravity with a hydrometer, or taste the wine. This will tell you whether the sugar has fermented out.

If it has some more sugar solution can be added, or you can consider the fermentation as complete.

### Stuck Ferments and temperature

Yeast will only work within a certain temperature range, and it is important to realise that the very process of fermentation can raise the temperature of the vessel by as much as 5c. As the temperature creeps about 26c, yeast will still continue to survive, but will cease to produce the enzymes needed for fermentation, but if the temperature hits 38c/100f the yeast will be killed.

Cold is more likely to be the cause of a stuck ferment though, and you should endeavour to keep your fermentation above 16c. In the case of both heat and cold, a 1 gallon vessel will be more vulnerable to fluctuations in room temperature, than a 5 gallon vessel.

### Stuck Ferment Alcohol Content

If there is still sugar to ferment, then you have to consider whether the alcohol content is too high or whether there is another problem. This will be hard to judge unless you have been scientific about taking specific gravity readings when you started.

### Stuck Ferment Nutrients and Oxygen

If you believe the alcohol content is still low, say below 10% or so, then possibly the ferment lacks acid and yeast nutrient. Add the juice of half a lemon per gallon and some yeast nutrient, it may also pay to add a vitimim B1 tablet.

Allow 24 hours for a sign of renewed action. If none is forthcoming you will need to rack the wine add another yeast starter. Racking the wine will introduce oxygen which may have been lacking. The yeast starter you choose should depend on what alcohol content you think the wine has at this stage. If you think the alcohol level is high, then an alcotec 20% kit, may be just the kick your ferment needs.