🍺 Stuck Fermentation Checklist

Use this checklist to troubleshoot stalled fermentation in your homebrew.

✅ 1. Check Fermentation Temperature

- Ensure your fermentation is within the yeast's optimal temperature range.
- Most ale yeasts perform best between 18–22°C (64–72°F).
- If it's too cold, yeast can go dormant and fermentation may stop.

✅ 2. Check Yeast Viability & Pitch Rate

- Old or improperly stored yeast may be inactive or sluggish.
- Always check the expiration date and viability of dry or liquid yeast.
- Use a yeast pitching calculator to ensure you're adding enough cells, especially for high-gravity beers.

✅ 3. Oxygenation at Pitching

- Oxygen is critical during the lag phase (before fermentation starts).
- Lack of oxygen at pitch can limit yeast reproduction and lead to a stalled fermentation.
- Aerate your wort well before pitching — shake the fermenter or use an aeration system.

✅ 4. Yeast Nutrients (Especially in High-Gravity Brews)

- Worts lacking in free amino nitrogen (FAN) or other micronutrients can cause fermentation to stall.
- Add yeast nutrient during the boil, and consider a staggered nutrient addition for high-alcohol brews.

✅ 5. Temperature Swings

- Sudden changes in temperature can shock yeast and slow fermentation.
- Maintain a steady temp — avoid moving fermenters between environments.
- Use a fermentation chamber or wrap for temperature control.

✅ 6. Don't Rely on Airlock Activity

- Airlock bubbling can be misleading — it might be CO_2 escape, not fermentation.
- The only reliable way to track fermentation is by taking gravity readings.

✅ 7. Take Gravity Readings

- Use a hydrometer or refractometer to check if gravity has stalled.
- If your gravity is unchanged over 2–3 days and far above your target FG, fermentation may be stuck.

✅ 8. Gently Rouse the Yeast

- Yeast can fall out of suspension early, especially in cooler temps or high-flocculation strains.
- Gently swirl the fermenter (don’t splash) to stir up the yeast and encourage reactivity.

✅ 9. Raise the Temperature Slightly

- Increase fermentation temp by 2–3°C (3–5°F) if things seem sluggish.
- This can re-activate yeast and help clean up off-flavors like diacetyl.
- Do this gradually over a day or two if possible.

✅ 10. Repitch Active Yeast

- If none of the above works and gravity is still far from target, consider repitching a healthy, active yeast starter.

- Use the same strain or a more attenuative backup strain to finish the job.

💡 Bonus Tips

- Always sanitize equipment before opening your fermenter.
- Track original and final gravity to know when fermentation is truly complete.
- Consider using yeast energizers or staggered nutrient additions in future batches to avoid stuck ferments.