

Digital Wellbeing

a guide to stepping away from the barrage of online interactions

Now that most of us use smartphones or tablets as everyday items, social media is accessible at almost every time and place during your day. Because of the way our brains work, we struggle to control the impulses to check for updates, to scroll, and to respond to notifications. This can affect our focus, concentration, sleep patterns and even our relationships.

Social media platforms rely on our psychological cravings for interaction such as likes, shares, comments or updates, if they can keep our attention for longer, they make more money.

Top Tips

1 - Stop scrolling

This one is difficult but if you think about what you want to see before you pick up your phone you can direct your attention more carefully. Do you want to check up on a specific friend? Search for them without scrolling. Want to catch up with a group? Search for them directly. Scrolling is how we get caught in an attention trap.

2 - Reduce your time online

Turn off your phone or put it in another room in the evenings. Try to do this a couple of hours before your bed-time and don't check your phone before bed or during the night.

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3 - Turn off the notifications

This will take a bit of time but you will be glad when it is done. Find the notifications settings in your phone and tablet and turn off as many as you can. You will find it easier to use apps on your own terms if you don't have a constant barrage of beeps, pings, flags and banners to distract you.

4 - Limit your platforms

Stick to one or two useful social media platforms and ignore the rest. You don't need to post the same photograph on facebook, instagram, twitter and tiktok and you don't need to see the same content in multiple platforms either.

5 - Take a break

Try removing social media apps completely over the weekend, you don't have to deactivate your account, just remove the app and reinstall it when you want to use it again. You might find that you don't miss them as much as you thought you would.

Adapted from helpguide.org - Lawrence Robinson and Melinda Smith, M.A. October 2021

For more tips and suggestions, check also:

- <https://wellbeing.google/>
- <https://wellbeingonline.wsu.edu/>