

# Healthy Living

## Effective measures to reduce screen time

Constant phone notifications and a tendency to “doom-scroll” for hours in an effort to keep abreast of the latest news has conditioned people to keep their phones in hand at all times.

The Mayo Clinic cautions that excessive screen time threatens physical, social and mental health. Everything from obesity to eye strain to neck and back pain may be linked to spending too much time on phones, tablets and computers. Excessive screen time also has been linked to mental health issues like depression and anxiety.

Limiting daily screen time is recommended to foster better overall well-being. Pulling away from the draw of screens can be challenging, but it's not impossible.

Audit your screen time

Getting a clear picture of daily screen time can help a person make changes for the better. Identify three applications that take up most of your time, and check how many times

each day you reach for your phone or tablet to engage with these apps. Noting each engagement can shed light on how much time you're spending on screens.

Make it less accessible

Technology often is over-used because designers engineered it to be easily accessible. By making things slightly less convenient, a person may be less inclined to use it. Deleting apps that are over-used from a phone or tablet and only gaining access through a computer web browser is a start. Ban the phone from the bedroom and switch to a regular alarm clock. Kondo, a direct messaging management company, suggests turning settings on the device to display in grayscale, which makes things appear dull and less enticing.

Turn off notifications

Govern your notification permissions more strictly, turning off any that aren't of the utmost importance. Disabling news alerts,

sports scores, social media likes, and less vital notifications can greatly reduce the number of times a person looks at screens.

Replace with something else

Kicking a bad

habit can be challenging, but finding something new and healthier to take its place can be effective. Convert to more analog hobbies like journaling, reading, knitting, doing puzzles, or

something else that engages the brain. Another idea is to try to commit to a few hours at least one day a week to put the phone away. Out of sight truly may mean out of mind.

Screens dominate people's time. While it can be uncomfortable at first to take a break, reducing screen time usage for the betterment of your overall health is worth some initial discomfort.

## Tips to stay motivated to exercise

Lack of motivation can be a difficult hurdle to clear when approaching any activity or goal. And that's particularly so with fitness-related goals, as lack of motivation to exercise, which many people find boring and unenjoyable, is an oft-cited reason for living a sedentary lifestyle.

The benefits of exercise, which include decreased risk for chronic disease, weight management, and improved mental health, should be all the motivation anyone needs to get up and go. But some people still need a little help to ensure they stay the course and achieve their fitness goals. People can try these strategies if their motivation to exercise is lacking.

- Embrace a new routine. While millions of people can't imagine a day without breaking a sweat at the gym, others find gym-based workouts a little tedious and lacking in excitement. If that outlook sounds familiar, individuals can embrace new exercise routines that engage them. Sports provide great exercise, so adults can look into activities like pickleball, jogging and cycling to break a sweat and get fit. Each of those activities can greatly improve cardiovascular fitness and help people maintain healthy weights.

- Set small goals along the way to larger ones. Fitness-related progress does not come overnight, so what appears to be a lack

of daily results can make it difficult to stay committed for the long haul. Setting short-term goals along the way to long-term ones can provide all the motivation people need to keep going. For example, if your ultimate goal is to lose 10 pounds, set a one-pound-per-week shorter goal. Being able to measure your progress each week can motivate you to stay the course.

- Remind yourself why you're looking to get more fit. There's no bad reason to get fit. Some people who find they lack the motivation to keep going simply need to remind themselves why they started an exercise regimen in the first place. Did you want to shed weight before a class reunion? Get healthy so you can be more active with your children? Exercise more to reduce your risk for a disease or condition that runs in your family? By routinely reminding yourself why you initially set out to get more fit, you may pro-

vide that little extra spark you need to stay the course. Set up smartphone notifications as reminders if you feel you need a daily refresher regarding your motivation to exercise.

- Make it a family affair. The buddy system is effective in many applications, and it can be particularly good at motivating people to stay the course and achieve their fitness goals. Encourage a spouse, sibling, friend, or even your whole family to join you as you begin your journey to a healthier you. With someone there to get you going each day, you're less likely to skip workouts.

Staying motivated to exercise may not be easy. But there's a number of things people can do to ensure their motivation to get fit does not wane.



## Together, we can protect our children and build a brighter future

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. At the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), we believe every child deserves a safe and healthy life. This month, we're focusing on preventing abuse and supporting families in need.

### What can you do to help?

The CAC offers services like child-friendly interviews, specialized medical care and trauma-informed advocacy and counseling to support children and families. Prevention begins with education and community action. Here are some ways you can help the children in your community:

- Learn to recognize the signs of child abuse.
- Share resources and information with friends, family and neighbors.
- Support organizations like the CAC that are making a critical difference.

Every step counts. Together, we can break the cycle of abuse and build a stronger, safer community for everyone.

### Learn more about how you can help

If you suspect that a child in your family or community is experiencing or has been exposed to, abuse, neglect, crime or violence, contact ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313, available 24/7. Calls can be anonymous, and reporting concerns could make all the difference in a child's life. You can also call 911 to make a report to law enforcement.

Let's stand together this April — and every day — to protect our children.



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# Spring

## INTO BETTER HEARING

Spring is the season of fresh starts, and St Patrick's Day is a reminder that a little luck goes a long way. But when it comes to your hearing, healthy habits matter even more.

One simple way to support your hearing? *Get moving.*

**Try these gentle activities for a positive difference!**

WALKING

SWIMMING

GARDENING

YOGA

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