

Healthy Living

Effective measures to reduce screen time

Constant phone notifications and a tendency to “doomscroll” 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. Con-

vert 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.

Shining light on sunscreen use

The sun is vital for life on Earth. But the sun also poses a threat to human beings, particularly when they don't prioritize sun protection. Ultraviolet rays of the sun can cause damage to the skin, eyes and more, leading to premature aging, sunburn and even cancer.

Wearing sunglasses while in the sun and routinely applying sunscreen are some simple ways people can protect themselves from sun damage. Johns Hopkins Medicine says proper sunscreen use helps prevent most of the poor effects of sun exposure. Sunscreen needs to become a part of one's daily routine rather than just something to apply before a visit to the beach. The American Academy of Dermatology Association offers these

tips from board-certified dermatologists regarding the proper use of sunscreen.

- Use SPF 30 or higher. Choose a sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, and look for one that is water-resistant and provides broad-spectrum coverage, which handles UVA and UVB rays.

- Try tinted iron oxide. Sunscreens that are tinted with iron oxide offer better protection for the skin against the development of dark spots. Iron oxide protects the skin from the sun's visible light.

- Apply ahead of time. It takes approximately 15 minutes for the skin to absorb sunscreen and provide protection. Therefore, it's best to apply it well before heading outdoors.

- Don't be stingy. It's important to use enough sunscreen. Most adults need about one ounce, at a minimum, of sunscreen. That's about enough to fill a shot glass. This will help fully cover skin that is not protected by clothing. When applying sunscreen to the face, at least one teaspoon is needed. Always rub sunscreen thoroughly into the skin to ensure it is absorbed and evenly distributed.

- Recognize order doesn't matter. As long as the sunscreen is at least SPF 30, water-resistant and broad-spectrum, the order it is applied does not matter. It can be applied before or after other skin care products and makeup. It's best for a person to figure out what works for their routine.

- Know that most ingredients work. Sunscreens are often grouped into two categories: chemical and mineral. Chemical sunscreens use ingredients like octisalate or homosalate to work, while mineral sunscreens use either zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. Both

chemical and mineral sunscreens are effective, but people with sensitive skin may want to go with mineral sunscreens, which often leave a noticeable white cast on the skin.

- Reapply frequently. It's important to reapply sunscreen every two hours, and immediately after swimming or sweating. People who get sunburned often use too little sunscreen or didn't reapply the product enough.

- Check the expiration date. Sunscreen expires and can become ineffective. If the sunscreen has been sitting around for awhile, it's probably best to toss it and buy a new bottle.

Skin is exposed to harmful UV rays every time a person goes outside — even on cloudy days and in winter. It is essential to make sunscreen application part of a daily wellness routine.

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