

PHONE USAGE

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Researchers have discovered that excessive phone usage can lead to anxiety, depression, stress, sleep disturbances, and productivity or the inability to focus properly. Basically phones often have negative effects, but there are some methods and other tips that you can use to reduce these negative effects and improve your mental health. Now you don't need to implement all of these methods or tips in order to gain a healthier relationship with your phone. Although the more you use these methods, the more you will notice the positive effects it has on your mental health and overall wellbeing.



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WHAT'S THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU SPEND ON YOUR PHONE?



For most teens the average amount of hours they spend on their phone is 8-10 hours! Now I know some people like to listen to music all the time and I do that myself but you should be conscious about what apps you are spending your time on and if it's actually helping you. Here are some tips that might help you reduce your screen time:

TIP #1 ADD A SCREEN TIME WIDGET

For android users you are going to want to touch and hold the Home screen. Then tap widgets. Touch and hold the screen time widget. You'll get images of your Home screens. Finally pull the widget where you want it and lift your finger.

For apple users go to the Home Screen page where you want to add the widget, then touch and hold the Home Screen background until the apps begin to jiggle. Tap the plus at the top left of the screen to open the widget gallery, scroll or search to find the widget you want, tap it, then swipe left and right through the size options.

TIP #2 TURN ON GRAYSCALE

The main focus of this is to prevent you from going on tiktok or other social media platforms because once you open the app everything is gray, lame, and not so fun. This will keep you away from your phone as you probably won't want to use social media as much because it's all grayed out.

For apple users go to settings -> Accessibility -> Display & Text Size -> Color Filters -> Grayscale

For android users go to settings -> digital wellbeing and parental controls -> tap bedtime mode or customize -> Grayscale

TIP #3 MAKE GOALS

Now I am not telling you that you need to set a huge goal like running a marathon, but I invite you to focus on something that you can improve at. Maybe it's riding a bike, painting, writing, or even creating music. You will have so much time to work on these goals if you don't use your phone and the more you focus on your goals the less you will use your phone unproductively, because of your desires to achieve those goals you set for yourself

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Anxiety,
Depression, and
Stress

TIP #1 VENTURE OUTDOORS

It is important to keep physically active. By going outside for just 10 minutes that could help you relax and calm down. You can go for a walk around the neighborhood or if you want something more challenging you could go for a jog or even lift weights if you want something more intense. Although not everybody needs to do that because it can be beneficial to just go for a walk to the park and hangout there on the swing. Being physically active does not just help you mentally but it could help you physically, it will reduce the risk of diseases, strengthen muscles and bones, plus improve your ability to do everyday activities that you may find more difficult.

TIP #2 CUT BACK ON CAFFEINE

Caffeine is known for causing the jitters along with anxiety, this is especially present with higher doses. In addition people who already have underlying mental health issues are more susceptible, as a review of eight studies found that caffeine aggravated symptoms of anxiety and panic disorder. To help you reduce this amount avoid drinking caffeine for at least an hour after you wake up in the morning, don't habitually drink caffeine, and try to not consume caffeine six hours before you go to bed in order to aid your sleep.

TIP #3 USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Meditation is referenced later in the brochure, but in short it will allow you to have a deep relaxation process reducing stress and anxiety. There are also apps that you can use for meditation and relaxation (these apps are listed in the apps section).



Ability to Focus

Many students including myself will have problems with brain fog or procrastination. A common form of procrastination is scrolling through social media or your phone in general. In order to counter this try these tips:



TIP #1 PLAN OUT YOUR DAY

By making plans for the rest of your day you will be able to be more productive by knowing what homework assignment you need to work on, or maybe its the meal that you have been wanting to cook for a while. Its important to try this out because you will be more in control over your day.

TIP #2 JOURNAL

The more time that is gained because you didn't scroll through your phone will ultimately leave you feeling much healthier and joyful throughout your day. Journaling is a way to self reflect about your day or note down things that can be used to help you progress in the future.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

- Most people check their phones right before going to sleep. Whether it's scrolling through TikTok, listening to music, or watching YouTube. This may be causing a problem in your sleep. Why? Well our phones and even some tablets let off blue light rays from the screen that restrain the production of melatonin. Melatonin is the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle or sleep rhythm. Using your phone before you sleep will decrease the flow of melatonin resulting in poor sleep. Try to implement some of these methods to help your sleep.



Method #1 Charge your phone across the room.

This method will increase your overall mood and help your productivity for the day to come. Also if you have trouble waking up in the morning charging your phone across the room will help you get out of bed in order to turn your alarm off. Therefore, you will be up and awake after some good sleep and you're not as likely to fall asleep again or hit snooze.



Method #2 Read a book

Reading a book is one of the healthier methods to do before bed. This is because you are not receiving any blue light from a digital device and will be able to wind down after a long day's work.



Method #3 Map out your next day

Before you go to bed do you ever start worrying too much about the next day and you feel like you need to plan it out in your head and remember all of this stuff? Well that might be stressing you out, making it difficult to fall asleep. So get a notebook, whiteboard, or paper DO NOT use a digital device as you will receive the blue ray lights from your phone. Some of you might be saying but I want it on my phone so I can look at it throughout the day. That's fine you can take a picture of it in the morning the day after. Basically plan your day ahead of time and prepare everything that is necessary for your success. However, make a rough outline of what you need to do for the next day. This way you will not have to worry about anything, so you can finally relax and have a good night's rest.



Method #4 Meditate

Similar to reading a book, meditation can also have a relaxing effect, slowing down the rhythm of the body in order to relieve stress and calm down. There are different types of mediation but you can find some apps that will help you out. For instance if you use medito it has a whole section dedicated to help you fall asleep!

Instant Gratification

1. Social media is a strong example of instant gratification. Instant gratification is the temptation to forego a future benefit in order to obtain a less rewarding but more immediate benefit. For instance, you log onto your favorite social media website and start scrolling, clicking, and chatting with friends. You are having fun and enjoying the moment but it only lasts a few minutes, maybe seconds, then it's over. This does not serve a definite purpose other than liking a post or just watching one. Doing things like this that have instant gratification can create behavioral problems by distracting you from other meaningful activities. Say that painting you were going to make, or the hike you wanted to conquer.
2. Try practicing delayed gratification. Instead of using social media so much, try setting a goal for the day like exercising or meditating. Write it down on paper/notebook, a whiteboard, or possibly digitally, and keep track of some daily goals that will provide benefits in the long run. An example is exercising, it may start out difficult and show little benefits but gradually over time if you stick with it the benefits will be far greater than liking some posts on social media.

Try some of these apps out! Some may work better than others based on your needs but the most important thing is to try and use one consistently. That is what will make it most effective.

- Medito
- Calm
- Headspace
- Breathe
- Meditopia

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