



Reduce Screen Time

CHALLENGE

Cut back on media this month

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Reduce Screen Time.”
2. Limit your screen time for 30 days.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Rhode Island resident Michael Pollock was stressed out about his career, personal matters, and building an online business, he needed an escape.

So he looked for different ways to beat stress. And eventually, he

thought he found a harmless and low-cost way to deal with the ups and downs...watch TV.

How do you relax, unwind, and destress?

At first, it seemed like an easy way to take his mind off the challenges of the day.

But pretty soon, he was watching six hours of TV a day. In a year, that’s...

- 2,190 hours
- 91 days
- 3 months of watching TV 24-hours a day.

“I was sitting in front of a television, hypnotized, tuned in, but zoned out,” says Michael. “I was living in a make-believe world while the real world passed me by.”

Quiz: Screen-Time Habits

Find out if you spend too much time in front of a screen



Y N

1. Do you watch TV or use digital devices before going to bed?
2. Do you ever experience headaches, eye strain, neck or back pain?
3. Do you use a computer at work most of the time?
4. Do you need to lose at least a few pounds?
5. Do you want to reduce your risk for chronic diseases?

How did you do? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you could benefit from learning more about managing your screen time. Too much screen time can have a negative impact on your health. Fortunately, there are many things you can do about it, even if you work at a computer most of the time.

- How much screen time do you spend on watching TV or binge-watching shows and movies?
- What about screen time and social media, texting, or gaming?

When Michael finally reached a tipping point, he realized his screen-time habit was a problem.

“Instead of using my time and energy to deal with my problems and improve my life, I was wasting it on television,” says Michael.

Have any idea how much time you actually spend in front of a screen? Probably a lot more than you realize. And it can have an impact on your health and happiness. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Take the month-long challenge to Reduce Screen Time.





6 Ways to Unplug to Protect Your Health

Looking for some easy ways to reduce screen time? The average adult spends 70-plus hours a week in front of

a screen. For a lot of people, that's just part of a day at the office, smartphone use and some TV time at home. Here are six ways to unplug to manage screen time and protect your health.

1 Beware of blue light at bedtime

The blue light from a digital device can make your brain think it's still daytime.³ Reading a frantic email from your boss at 10 p.m. can stress you out. And watching funny cat videos at 2 a.m. won't help you get sleepy.

2 Read it, old-school style

That's right. Instead of downloading the digital version, pick up an old-school book or magazine. It's easier on the eyes, and you won't have to worry about charging the battery.

3 Get a hobby, seriously

You're probably not going to be able to change the amount of time you spend in front of a screen at work by much. But when you're not working, forget about tapping, swiping, texting, or surfing. Take up a hobby like painting, gardening, fishing, or your favorite form of exercise.

4 Avoid the food/ screen-time combo

When your brain is focused on videos of funny cat videos, an action-packed movie, or even a work-related webinar, avoid the combo of food and screen time. Why? You're more likely to overeat when you're plugged in.⁴

5 Set limits on screen time

You might not be able to change the amount of time you spend in front of a screen at work. But you can limit your screen time after work.

When Michael took a closer look at his screen-time habits, he quickly cut 4 hours of TV time out, went to bed earlier, and got a better night's sleep.

6 Take a break every 30 minutes

When you are in front of a screen, take a break every 30 minutes. Stand up and look away from the screen. Stretch, go for a short walk, or do both.

In today's digital world, you probably won't be able to eliminate screen time entirely. But you can make smart choices to reduce screen time, improve your health, and feel better.



The Dark Side of Too Much Screen Time



Most adults stare into a screen to check email, watch a movie, buy stuff, read a book, pay bills, or send messages. And a lot of people spend their entire workday staring into a screen.

- 8 to 11 hours a day. On average, that's how much time most adults spend in front of a screen (computer, smartphone, tablet, and other digital devices).

Maybe it's convenient. But there's a darkside to too much screen time. In a recent study, researchers found that too much screen time raises the risk for early death by up to 47 percent from:¹

- Certain types of cancer
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Influenza
- Parkinson's disease
- Liver disease

10 Reasons to Pay Attention to Screen Time

Other studies suggest that when screen time goes up, unhealthy lifestyle habits and health problems may increase.² Too much screen time may lead to:

1. Poor eating habits
2. Lack of sleep
3. Higher levels of stress
4. Lack of exercise
5. Weight gain
6. Neck and shoulder pain
7. Headaches
8. Eye strain
9. Depression
10. Social & behavioral problems

Heavy users spend 17.5 hours in front of a screen per day. But even moderate users in front of a screen just 7 hours a day may be negatively impacted.

References

1. Keadle, S., et al. (2015). Causes of death associated with prolonged TV viewing. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. From: <https://tinyurl.com/s8vwzc2k>
2. Vizcaino, M., et al. (2020). From TVs to tablets: the relation between device-specific screen time and health-related behaviors and characteristics. BMC Public Health, 20:1295. From: <https://tinyurl.com/ryn3vt32>
3. Nash, T., et al. (2019). From: Daily blue-light exposure shortens lifespan and causes brain neurodegeneration in Drosophila. NPJ Aging and Mechanisms of Disease, From: <https://tinyurl.com/2sjhmf36>
4. Nagata, J., et al. (2021). Contemporary screen time modalities among children 9-10 years old and binge-eating disorder at one-year follow-up: A prospective cohort study. International Journal of Eating Disorders, 54(5): 887-892. From: <https://tinyurl.com/56mwcpgz>



Reduce Screen Time

CHALLENGE

Cut back on media this month

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Track your screen-time habits and look for ways to limit screen time for 30 days.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions to reduce screen time.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I limited screen time
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

 Name _____ Date _____