

# Reducing Screen Time: A Guide to Healthier App Use

Too much screen time can affect your health and daily life—from disrupted sleep patterns to reduced in-person social interactions. Both iOS and Android devices offer easy-to-use tools to help you set limits and take control of your app usage. This handout explains how to use these tools and highlights the benefits of reducing screen time.

## Why Reduce Screen Time?

### 1. Better Sleep

- Blue light from screens can interfere with the quality and duration of your sleep.
- Reducing late-night screen use can help you fall asleep faster and improve overall rest.

### 2. Improved Mental Well-Being

- Excessive screen time can contribute to stress, anxiety, and low mood.
- Cutting back allows more time for mindful activities and relaxation.

### 3. More Productivity

- Fewer distractions mean you can focus on tasks at work or school and get things done more efficiently.

### 4. Enhanced Relationships

- Spending less time on devices frees up time for family and friends, improving in-person communication.

### 5. Better Physical Health

- Excessive screen use is linked to poor posture, eye strain, and reduced physical activity.
- Cutting down promotes regular movement and better overall health.

## Tools to Manage App Usage

### For iOS Users: Using Screen Time

#### 1. Open Settings

- Tap the **Settings** app.

#### 2. Turn On Screen Time

- Scroll down and select **Screen Time**.
- Tap **Turn On Screen Time**, choose **This is My iPhone**, and follow the prompts if it's not already enabled.

### 3. Set App Limits

- Tap **App Limits** → **Add Limit**.
- Choose the app or category (e.g., Social, Games).
- Set a daily time limit (e.g., 1 hour).
- Tap **Add** to save.

### 4. Schedule Downtime (Optional)

- Go back to **Screen Time** → **Downtime**.
- Turn it on and set hours when you want most apps blocked (e.g., 9 PM to 7 AM).

### 5. Set a Passcode (Optional)

- Select **Use Screen Time Passcode** and create a passcode to prevent yourself from easily bypassing limits.

### 6. Customize Allowed Apps

- Tap **Always Allowed** to ensure essential apps (e.g., Phone, Messages) remain accessible.

## What Happens Next?

- When you reach the time limit, you'll see a notification that says, "Time Limit Reached," and the app will be blocked until the next day (or unless you override the setting).

## For Android Users: Using Digital Wellbeing

### 1. Open Settings

- Go to the **Settings** app on your Android device.

### 2. Access Digital Wellbeing

- Scroll down and tap **Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls**.
- If it's not visible, type "Digital Wellbeing" in the Settings search bar.

### 3. Set App Timers

- Tap **Dashboard** (within Digital Wellbeing).
- Find the app you want to limit.
- Tap the hourglass icon next to it.
- Set a daily limit and tap **OK**.

### 4. Enable Focus Mode (Optional)

- Go back to **Digital Wellbeing** → **Focus Mode**.
- Choose which apps to block during specific times (e.g., work hours, bedtime).
- Set a schedule or enable it manually.

### 5. Use Parental Controls (Optional)

- For stricter blocking, activate **Parental Controls** to lock settings behind a PIN.

## What Happens Next?

- Once the time limit is reached, the app will be locked for the rest of the day unless you change the timer settings.

## Additional Tips for Success

- **Start Small**
- Set modest limits at first, such as 30 minutes less per day, and gradually reduce further.
- **Create a Routine**
- Pair app limits with bedtime or work schedules to build consistent habits.
- **Reflect on Progress**
- Check your usage data in **Screen Time** (iOS) or **Digital Wellbeing** (Android) regularly to see improvements.
- **Disable Non-Essential Notifications**
- Fewer notifications mean fewer temptations to open apps.
- **Involve Friends & Family**
- Make reducing screen time a group goal to stay motivated and accountable.

## Need More Control? Try These Apps

- **Stay Focused:** Offers custom app blocking and flexible schedules.
- **Freedom:** Blocks apps and websites across multiple devices.
- **AppBlock:** Blocks apps based on time or location.
- **Forest:** Encourages focus by letting you “grow a tree” when you avoid certain apps.

## Take Charge of Your Screen Time

By setting and following app limits, you can reclaim your time, boost your health, and improve your well-being. If you need extra support or have concerns, don't hesitate to contact your healthcare provider.

## Questions?

We're here to help. Reach out to our office or your healthcare provider for more information and support in building healthier digital habits.