

DIGITAL WITHDRAWAL

DIGITAL DEVICES

30% of users feel anxious if they haven't checked Facebook in the last two hours.

the average person checking their email 74 times a day

72% of people stay within 5 feet of their phone at all times

New data strongly suggests social media causes mental health issues.

AROUND 2012, MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES BOOMED.

This is when smartphones and social media became ubiquitous among young people

.57% of girls and 29% of boys reported experiencing “persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness during the past year” in 2021. A 58% and 38% increase over just one decade.

30% of girls and 22% of boys “seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year.” A 200% and 69% increase.

The issues began growing around 2012, although it’s likely that COVID was an accelerant.

WITHDRAWAL

**The youth in your program will go through withdrawal.
Recognizing it will help you manage it.**

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS FROM SMARTPHONE ADDICTION

A common warning sign of smartphone or internet addiction is experiencing withdrawal symptoms when you try to cut back on your smartphone use. These may include:

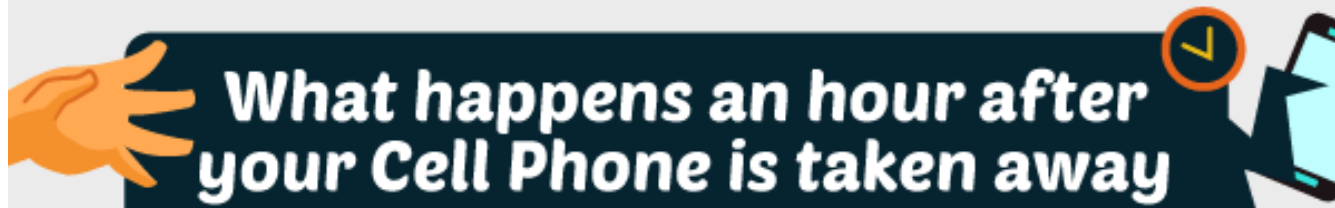
- **Restlessness**
- **Anger or irritability**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Craving access to your smartphone or other device**

THE “ALWAYS-ON” DIGITAL WORLD

While we often use technology because it connects, informs and entertains, there’s clear evidence that it also has serious, negative side effects. These include:

- **Increased anxiety**
- **Higher rates of depression**
- **More loneliness**
- **Lower self-esteem**
- **Decreased attention span**
- **Less quality sleep**

<https://www.humanetech.com/attention-mental-health>



What happens an hour after your Cell Phone is taken away

THE PANIC! THE MAYHEM! THE UNTHINKABLE REALITY OF BEING WITHOUT YOUR PHONE!!



OUR PHONES ARE INTERTWINED IN OUR LIVES,

our habits and our identities. The stats below give a snapshot of just how intertwined they are and what may happen if they are taken away!

THREE-QUARTERS OF PHONE OWNERS USE THEIR PHONE AT LEAST ONCE EVERY HOUR.



every few minutes



a few times an hour



once an hour



stay within 5 feet of their phone

[150: Number of times people check their phone in a day. **]**

CELL PHONE USE HAS BEEN COMPARED TO DRUG OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION.

Compiling information from several scientific studies, here's a look at what the first 60 minutes of withdrawal may look like:



"Extreme tech anxiety" from being separated from your phone (51% of people).



An acute stress response, similar to fight or flight, when you're not able to answer your ringing phone (increased heart rate and blood pressure).



Drop in cognitive performance during tests and meetings.

MORE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:



Feelings of isolation and disconnectedness from the lack of access to friends, family and social media audiences.



Feeling sad, awkward, fidgety and negative.



Phantom-phone syndrome, thinking your phone is ringing when it's not (90% of people).

02 AFTER 30 MINUTES:



Anxiety continues to increase for heavy phone users but plateaus after 15 minutes for moderate and light phone users.

MORE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:



Boredom from being without media, music and other apps (22% of people).

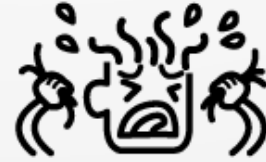


Confusion and disorientation without GPS or Google.



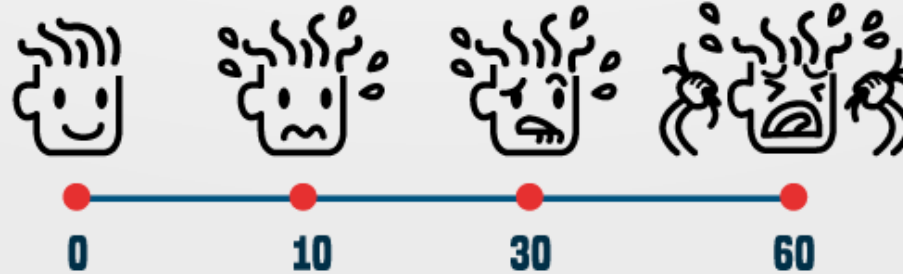
Heightened tech cravings when seeing others check their phones (also seen with cigarette smokers, caused by "mirror neurons").

03 AFTER 60 MINUTES:



Acknowledgement of addiction after experiencing the breadth of psychological and physical withdrawal symptoms.

IN JUST AN HOUR, A DRAMATIC RANGE OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS ARE DEMONSTRATED.



While human evolution has shown that it is valuable to have a strong biological response to seeing a tiger, for example, the response to cell phone withdrawal does not hold the same life-preserving function.



With an increasing number of recommendations for digital detoxes and technology sabbaticals, spending an hour without a cell phone can offer insight into your own relationship with technology.

KEEP THEM BUSY

It's more important the ever to have a camping plan

Youth will often say they just want to “chill” but they have very little experience with what that is.

Prepare for boredom - bring frisbees, balls, arts and crafts to every scouting event; especially the “chill” events.



DESIGNS DELIBERATELY LEVERAGE OUR DEEPEST VULNERABILITIES

Social media presents a special case of persuasive technology where psychological levers are poked and prodded again and again, often without our conscious awareness.

Social media reinforces certain negative patterns by triggering the release of dopamine, a chemical in the brain that makes you feel good. The constant novelty and endless scrolling content create an addictive cycle of refreshing, much like someone in Las Vegas playing a slot machine.¹ The unpredictability, coupled with social validation features, keeps you coming back.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA HACKS OUR BRAINS

#1 - MAKING THE TRIVIAL SEEM URGENT

#2 - ENCOURAGING SEEKING WITHOUT FULFILLMENT

#3 - FORCING US TO MULTITASK

#4 - Weaponizing Fear and Anxiety

#5 - ENCOURAGING CONSTANT SOCIAL COMPARISON

#6 - TELLING US WHATEVER WE WANT TO BELIEVE

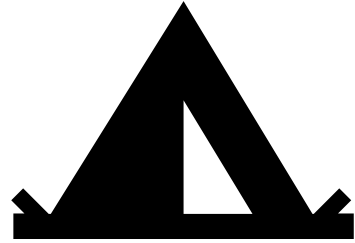
HOW TO TAKE CONTROL

Turn Off Notifications & Alerts - Notifications, alerts, and badges are designed to draw your attention back to your phone. Reclaim your time by diminishing their effect. You may also try enabling “Focus Mode” and changing your screen to grayscale

Reduce (or Remove) Harmful Apps - Many apps and platforms profit off of addiction, distraction, and misinformation. Consistent use of these can negatively affect our mental health.

Eliminate Outrage & Clickbait - We vote with our attention and clicks. Don't support sites that pollute our cultural environment with vitriol via clickbait and outrage.

CREATE TECH-FREE SPACES - CAMPING!



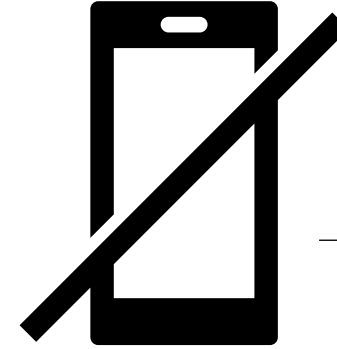
We use our tech from the moment we wake up until we fall asleep at night. Designating certain areas in your home as tech-free can open up more time for other things, and allow your brain to decompress from all the stimulation throughout the day.

Device-free dinners → Play a game where the first person to check their device does the dishes, or make them pay for the whole meal if you're out to dinner

Charge devices outside of bedrooms → Charge your phone out of sight and out of the bedroom, or turn on Sleep Mode and/or Do Not Disturb.

Note: in Do Not Disturb mode, you can allow certain callers to get through, such as family.


DO A DIGITAL DETOX - CAMPING!



Disconnecting can be a powerful way to reconnect with yourself and your loved ones. Plus, taking a break from technology can benefit you in the long run by reducing its harmful effects.

Cub Scout Families - you can pitch your next camping trip as a digital detox for the family.

Scouts BSA - the youth will likely disagree, but parents usually rally around the idea of a device free weekend where kids can be kids.



BE COMPASSIONATE & CULTIVATE POSITIVE FEELINGS

Many platforms prioritize outrage because it generates more engagement. Resist being manipulated by countering with compassion.

If you receive 99 positive comments on a post and 1 negative comment, which do you focus on? Our survival-biased brains tend to focus on the negative, even after we turn away from our tech.

REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

- **Distraction-Free YouTube (Chrome)** → Removes recommended videos from the sidebar of YouTube, making you less likely to get sucked into unintentional content-holes.
- **Facebook Newsfeed Eradicator (Chrome)** → Removes the Facebook newsfeed and blurs the sidebars and notifications, allowing you to use some of the more utilitarian features of Facebook without getting sucked into the newsfeed.
- **uBlock Origin (Chrome, Safari, Firefox)** → Reclaim your attention with every article you read by blocking content, ads and tracking.
- **InboxWhenReady (Gmail)** → Focus your inbox by only showing messages when you click “Show Inbox” instead of getting distracted as new emails arrive.
- **NoMoRoBo (iOS, Android)** → Blocks robocalls and decreases the time you spend dealing with spam and telemarketers.
- **Focus (iOS)** → A website blocking app for Mac which includes a Pomodoro timer to stay focused.
- **Centered** → Designed to keep you in flow with a clean task list, co-working spaces, coaches, and productivity-enhancing music.
- **LeechBlock (Chrome)** → A simple productivity tool designed to block those time-wasting sites that can suck the life out of your working day.
- **Screen Time Genie** → Try a system designed by Stanford University researchers to match you with ideal behaviors for taking control of your screen time. People who take 5 minutes to try a solution from the Genie self-report an average of 49 minutes less wasted screen time per day.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.humanetech.com/take-control>

<https://www.humanetech.com/insights/how-social-media-hacks-our-brains>

<https://www.humanetech.com/take-control>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/05/opinion/digital-technology-brain.html>