

Read part of an article from The New York Times about digital technology addiction and complete the activities in the worksheet.

Hooked on Our Smartphones By Jane E. Brody Jan. 9, 2017



[...] The near-universal access to digital technology, starting at ever younger ages, is transforming modern society in ways that can have negative effects on physical and mental health, neurological development and personal relationships, not to mention safety on our roads and sidewalks.

As with so much else in life, moderation in our digital world should be the **hallmark** of a healthy relationship with technology. Too many of us have become slaves to the devices that were supposed to free us, giving us more time to experience life and the people we love. Instead, we're constantly bombarded by bells, buzzes and **chimes** that alert us to messages we feel **compelled** to view and respond to immediately.

"Most people now check their smartphones 150 times per day, or every six minutes," Ms. Colier wrote. "And young adults are now sending an average of 110 texts per day." Furthermore, she added, "46 percent of smartphone users now say that their devices are something they 'couldn't live without.'"

In "The World Unplugged Project," investigators at the University of Maryland reported that "a clear **majority**" of students in the 10 countries studied experienced **distress** when they tried to go without their devices for 24 hours. One in three people admitted they'd rather give up sex than their smartphones.

I fear we are turning into digital robots. Will future generations know how to **converse** with one another face to face? Will they notice the birds, trees, sunrise and the people with whom they share the planet?

[...] Why, you may ask, is it so important to limit our digital lives? “Without open spaces and **downtime**, the nervous system never shuts down — it’s in constant **fight-or-flight** mode,” Ms. Colier said in an interview. “We’re **wired** and tired all the time. Even computers reboot, but we’re not doing it.”

She continued, “It’s connections to other human beings — real-life connections, not digital ones — that **nourish** us and make us feel like we count. Our presence, our full attention is the most important thing we can give each other. Digital communications don’t result in deeper connections, in feeling loved and supported.”

How often is your real work interrupted by signals from your smartphone that you find impossible to ignore? Is endlessly snapping selfies and posting your every action and thought on social media creating an unhealthy self-centeredness?

As for physical well-being, every hour spent on a device is likely to be an indoor, **sedentary** one. Screens are stealing time that children and **adolescents** should be spending on physical activity and sports, reading, or creating and engaging directly with other children, all of which are critical to healthy physical and social development.

“Children who overuse online media are at risk of problematic internet use, and heavy users of video games are at risk of internet gaming disorder” (translation: addiction), the American Academy of Pediatrics wrote in its latest policy statement on media use.

Ms. Colier, a licensed clinical social worker, said, “The only difference between digital addiction and other addictions is that this is a socially **condoned** behavior.” While her book contains a 30-day digital detox program, in our interview she offered three steps to help **curb** one’s digital dependence.

1. Start by recognizing how much digital use is really needed, say, for work or **navigation** or letting family members know you’re O.K., and what is merely a habit of responding, posting and self-distraction.
2. Make little changes. **Refrain** from using your device while eating or spending time with friends, and add one thing a day that’s done without the phone.
3. Become very **conscious** of what is important to you, what really nourishes you, and devote more time and attention to it.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/09/well/live/hooked-on-our-smartphones.html>