

# Unplug

Technology and internet has become a part of our daily lives. We check our phones all the time and this constant connectedness is incredibly draining. We may think that social media makes us more connected, but it doesn't. It fulfills our need for social interaction, but deep, meaningful relationships are formed by scrolling through your Facebook feed. In fact this scrolling is only showing your friends' highlight reel and you're comparing it to your behind-the-scenes, which makes it very easy to feel jealous or lonely. Social Media and the need to check for anything new in our feeds also fuels our Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which leads to dissatisfaction and restlessness. Technology is also linked to sleep disorders as well as stress and depression.

Unplugging from technology gives us the opportunity for peace, quiet, and time to recharge.

One study took 35 participants and 5 undercover neuroscientists on a retreat into the Moroccan desert and took away their smartphones for a tech detox. The first thing the scientists noticed was improved posture; participants were no longer hunched over their phones, but looking at the other participants in their eyes. Their improved posture made them look more open and approachable. They also noticed that without Google to answer all of their questions, the participants had longer conversations when a trivia question came up. This led to storytelling, guessing games, and inside jokes, which increased the bond between the participants. The scientists also noticed that participants had better memory because of the reduction of distractions brought on by technology. This was shown by the participants' ability to remember obscure details about one another. The participants also noted that while they didn't sleep as long as they did before the trip, they felt more rested and rejuvenated by the sleep on the retreat. Finally, the scientists observed that the lack of distractions allowed the participants to think about larger issues in their individual lives (such as relationships, career, health, etc.) and some participants decided to make big changes in these areas.

- If this sounds appealing to you, here are some tips to reduce the amount of technology in your life.
- Try not to use technology for the first hour of your day (or choose another specific period of your day to intentionally unplug)
- Use internet tools to help cut down on time wasters (such as internet browser extensions/add-ons that cut your internet off entirely for a period of time or limit access to certain websites)
- Take a break from tech for several days, such as while on vacation
- Unplug with other people, this shared struggle will help keep all of you accountable
- Set specific goals for your technology use and check back to make sure you're meeting/working toward those goals
- Plan different activities to be doing instead of using technology, such as healthy habits or hobbies
- Have technology physically out of reach, so it is less tempting to check

Sources: <http://www.becomingminimalist.com/unplug-please/>

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