



Overcome Phone Addiction

How to Overcome Phone Addiction So
You Can Maximize Creativity, Increase
Productivity and Get Back Time





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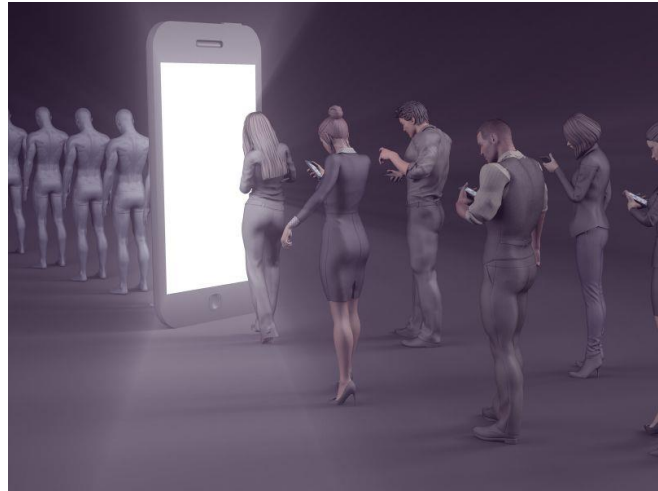
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Introduction

The modern world has introduced many wonderful inventions that have made life more convenient. Household chores that once took all day to complete can be finished within an hour; traveling far distances that once took weeks to cross now take a matter of hours. Letters that may have taken months for a loved one to receive, if they weren't lost in transit, can be substituted for a clear and almost instantaneous text message.



Perhaps most conveniently, the average person can research any question they have in an instant. With computers and smartphones, a person has the entire history and collection of human knowledge at their fingertips. All you have to do is ask Siri or Google, and you can earn yourself a good-old-fashioned "YouTube Degree!"

Yet as spectacular as these technological achievements are, there are of course pitfalls that come with such an amazing ability. No one can have it all, and there must be drawbacks. Nothing is for free, as they say, and this is certainly the case with an increase in technology being a part of everyone's daily life.

As freeing and liberating as having access to a smartphone can be, it is also very confining and damaging. A phone can be addictive, in all honesty. These are more than just concerns and grudges against the new era; these claims are indeed backed by scientists and mental health specialists.

No one could have possibly predicted that this would be an issue. Technological advances are almost always intended to provide a solution to a problem that exists in society. It is doubtful that at the birth of the mobile phone innovation process, inventors intended for such harmful side effects as depression, addiction, poor hygiene, and other conditions that will be discussed below, would spread across an entire generation. Regardless of the original intentions, the inventors of cellphones had in mind, the influence these devices have over people is very apparent.



Again, while people from older generations might be skeptical that such a seemingly trivial thing can create a phobia, this is a real phenomenon. Any parent raising children in the modern age might have an inkling of this feeling, if they have ever taken away their child's tablet or cell phone as a punishment.

And what always happens? The child will throw the fit of all fits, perhaps even escalating into a panic attack because they can't handle not having access to their mobile device. Many parents might view this as simply a child being possessive of a shiny new toy, but this is a much deeper issue than simply wanting to have something. This is a *need* to have something, a need that consumes the individual to the point of obsession. There is a crisis, especially among the young, revolving around phone addiction.



What is Phone Addiction and How it Affects Us

Phone addiction may sound silly to some readers who remember a time before smartphones and 5G internet, but it is a real and serious issue plaguing thousands of people every single day. Consider another term for phone addiction - this term is referred to as "nomophobia," which is the fear of being without a mobile phone.



This type of addiction is a disorder that involves the compulsive overuse of mobile devices. These compulsive habits are typically quantified by the total amount of time that a person is online within an average day, as well as the total number of times a person accesses their phone. However, compulsive overuse is just one facet of phone addiction.

This type of addiction is typically supplemented by concurring internet addiction. This is when a person cannot control their urges and behaviors regarding computer use and the internet. This can lead to someone suffering from psychological distress, as well as mental and physical impairment. Worse yet, it is extremely easy for a modern-day person to become addicted to the internet. At the beginning of the internet revolution in the late twentieth century, the internet was relatively difficult to access - you had to be technologically- savvy to successfully surf the web.

Nowadays, this process has been simplified and color-coded through social media and other apps. Rather than having to understand a computer programming language and perform a series of keystrokes, now with a click of a button and a swipe right you can access any kind of content you could imagine.

Plus, due to factors that will be discussed below, it is extremely easy to endlessly scroll and lost sense of time due to the ease of access.



Short Term Memory Problems

Short-term memory loss is when someone forgets something that was experienced recently.

This is something normal that happens as people age, but it can also be a sign of a deeper problem. Incidents involving short-term memory loss seem to be occurring much more frequently among people from the younger generations. Sometimes this happens due to brain damage, illness, or a mental health issue.



Overuse of phones has been linked to short-term memory problems. There is a known term for this unfortunate phenomenon. This is known as “digital amnesia.” The researches at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute have revealed that increasing exposure to devices does in fact negatively affect the memory of adolescents.

The type of memory that is damaged is called “figural memory.” This form of memory helps a human make sense of patterns, shapes, and images. This process happens in the right hemisphere of the brain.

It has been suggested for some time that smartphones may reduce the cognitive capacity of a person. Cognitive capacity refers to the total amount of information the brain is capable of retaining at any particular moment in time. Phones can drain the cognitive capacity of a person, thus limiting the ability for a person to successfully complete a task even if they are not using a device at the time of the task!



Getting Your Time Back

Humans are adaptive. Civilization has existed for many centuries without relying on phones. For the younger generations, this may seem impossible to imagine, but it is true.

Human minds were not intended to and not evolved for excessive device usage. There is simply too much stimulus for a person to handle nowadays. There is nothing to be ashamed of if you are experiencing phone addiction, or if someone you love is.



This information may seem unsettling, but there is a bright side.

While addictions are tough to overcome and those amid such a struggle may feel hopeless, addictions can be defeated. Addictions are created and maintained by a series of toxic, repetitive habits and behaviors. Through actively understanding the nature of phone addiction, one can break their addictive phone-use cycle and increase their mental health.

If you take the time to learn about what unconscious habits are creating addictive behavior, then you can change your habits, and thus change your behavior. This may seem very challenging at first, as it can seem for any addiction. Change is frightening and the first few days will be extremely difficult if someone is severely addicted to their phone.

It is something that has become so ingrained in society that it feels hard to fathom how you can function in society without checking your phone every minute of the day. However, it is possible, and so many people have broken free from the hold of addictive devices. Proper research and intentional precautions can help a person heal from such compulsion.

Set aside one day a week to put your phone away

One way to start easing your way into the de-toxification process is by setting aside one day a week to put your phone away. This may seem hard initially, but the old saying is true - "out of sight, out of mind." You have to become comfortable with not being around and not having



access to your phone. You have to sit with the feeling of being uncomfortable that this distance from your device may make you feel.

You have to acknowledge how anxious you are without your device. In fact, this anxiety is more than likely exactly why you feel the need to continuously and compulsively be on your phone. What is more ironic about this truth is that your dependence on your device is exactly why you feel so anxious!

It is a dangerous feedback loop of feeling uncomfortable, turning to a certain behavior for relief, relying on the temporary relief through repetitive action, and then losing the ability to regulate without said behavior. It is possible! Start small. Put your phone in a drawer, somewhere out of sight.

Maybe do this on a day where you don't need to check work emails or other activities that you would be required to perform for others. Let your friends, family, and colleagues know that you will not be answering them for non-emergencies on that specific day. Find other ways to distract yourself than just using your phone all day.

Your phone might be useful for socializing, but you will not miss out on anything for just one single day. Perhaps even schedule an event or a get-together on this day so that you will have more support and not feel lonely without your phone. It will be difficult to feel like you are missing out on something if you are already in the middle of enjoying the company of people you love.

Focus on a hobby that interests you, or that you have not done in a while. Read a book, rest your eyes, cook a familiar meal, and live your life differently, even if for one day.

Turn on “do not disturb” while working, spending time with loved ones, or going to sleep

Another simple way to being working on decreasing your phone time is by utilizing the “do not disturb” function on your phone. This is a great option for people who





are too uncomfortable with the idea of completely setting aside their devices but still want to address their nomophobia.

Consider the number of times you might check your phone unnecessarily while you are in the middle of something, all because you received a notification. The sound triggers you to check what activity has just happened, and then you are drawn into the rabbit hole of all the other options available on your phone. Maybe someone tags you on a Facebook post, or sends you a funny picture on WhatsApp - these are not urgent, time-sensitive messages; these are not notifications of an emergency event, or a weather disaster, or anything of the like. However, when you hear the notification sound, your addicted brain perceives every single notification as an emergency and puts your body on high alert. To ease the feeling, you compulsively check the phone.

If you simply put your phone on “do not disturb” mode while you are at work, you will be less tempted to spend your downtime scrolling through social media. If you are spending time with loved ones, putting your phone on “do not disturb” is actually a display of love - love for yourself, and also love for them, because you are demonstrating that their company is more important than a quick thrill from a useless meme.

You may have also noticed the “do not disturb” button is also sometimes referred to as “sleep mode.” This is not for no reason! If you are trying to go to sleep, it will be much easier to rest your mind if you are not receiving notifications. This will prevent you from being tempted into staring at a bright screen and catching up on celebrity drama until three in the morning (because let’s face it, many people are guilty of doing this before bed at least once in their lives!)



Why Are Phones So Addictive



One thing that is important to understand, especially for someone with phone addiction, is that the internet and social media have been designed to be addictive. This is hard to swallow for some at first because there are many positive aspects to social media.

Connecting with friends and distant family members, keeping up to date with societal and current life events, finding entertaining content, discovering communities for people who share similar interests - these are all wonderful benefits to using social media. However, the drawbacks are very serious and in the worst-case scenarios and to the most extreme extent, they can even be deadly.

Regular, compulsive usage of social media has been proven to be detrimental to a person's mental health. This can sadly be observed in the suicide trend among adolescent girls, which drastically and exponentially increased during the time social media became a regularly utilized platform. Social scientists and other experts agree that this rise in suicidal behavior can be attributed to the need to be validated by people online, as well as many other factors regarding the presentation of self- image and the over-exposure of people's personal lives.

Consider the fact that most of the innovative minds who participated in the creation of many social media applications do not even allow their children to use social media. You read that correctly. The people who invented these platforms, who know the most about the systems, understand that they would cause their own children harm.

This sole fact alone should be enough to convince a person of the dangers of social media, if not make a parent wary of allowing their child unlimited access to a smartphone. Many of these people who were involved with famous social media apps will speak frankly about the intentions of the platforms.



At the end of the day, even if these apps are useful for keeping people connected, an app is still a product that a company wants you to use. These companies are paid through the ads that you see while you are using the apps, which are personalized because they are also selling your data.



The social media giants are incentivized to get you to use their apps as frequently as possible, and it is even better for them when you provide as much information about yourself as possible too. It is imperative that a social media user begins to consider these apps not only as services provided but as products to be consumed.

Just like how dessert companies want children to buy more candy bars and so they put excessive amounts of sugar in their products, these social media companies use a bunch of tricks and design features to keep their audience coming back again and again.

Regardless of what happens to your mental health, these social media companies make more money the more frequently you use them. They even encourage people to spend as much time as possible on their apps, so that they can harvest more data to sell to a third-party source.

Social media engineers have explained that there are many subconscious psychological tricks designed to keep people addicted to their devices. Another way designers engage younger generations on their apps is by using bright colors, simplistic shapes, and animations (such as stickers.)

Content-based media apps have developed something experts refer to as “the endless scroll.” This means that the user does not have to put essentially any effort into discovering new content. New material is constantly being presented to the social media user, so they are encouraged to remain on the site for as long as possible.

Many people using social media will have to admit this has happened to them at least once in their life - they may have been intending to check their social media, just to keep on top



of new events, and somehow through endlessly scrolling then the sun is setting and they have magically “lost” a few hours out of their day.

One more popular tactic many social media apps have employed to keep people addicted to their product is the humble “like” button. People want to be liked, and on social media, there was a point where likes and shares meant everything to a person. People find themselves obsessively checking the likes on their posts, driven by a desire to be validated by others. This has made the internet more of a popularity contest than a communal educational endeavor.

The well-being of the consumer is not considered holistically at all, which is truly the most detrimental aspect of social media.



Phone Addiction in the Digital Age



While internet addiction must have existed to some extent during the late twentieth century when these technologies were first emerging, phone and internet addiction is now an epidemic to an extent in this digital age. Not only are social media companies intentionally baiting consumers to become addicted to their products, but the device manufacturers themselves are playing a hand in this issue as well.

Cell phones and other mobile devices have become more and more addictive as they evolve. This is mainly due to the ease of access. With longer battery life, teens can stare at their screens for hours at a time without having to leave their beds. Larger screens make it more appealing to watch content on your devices.

Advanced design in the technical aspects of the phone itself, like button placement, makes it so that a simple finger twitch can allow for complete control over the device - even if it seems more and more like the device has complete control over you. Now, mobile devices can link with each other, so people are encouraged to interact with their technology more often.

You can watch something on your phone, open your laptop and continue a text message conversation, and then project whatever you were watching onto your television screen, there are now even some refrigerators that you can text on!

Many teenagers and young adults will admit that they usually are consistently using more than one form of technology at once; some people keep a show playing in the background while they use their computer to do work, and sneak breaks in between by checking their phone.

These developments have created an environment in which people are now completely over-saturated and over-stimulated by their devices. Accessibility, which was once praised



as one of the greatest achievements of these technologies, is become one of the most unfortunate distractions the human mind has ever had to face.

Why Cell Phones are Distracting

It is no secret that distracted workers and students are not productive. Studies show that the more dependent people become upon their devices, the stronger the distraction effect is. This is because when people use their devices, an area of the brain labeled the “privileged attentional space” is activated. This area of the brain is usually activated in situations where someone is calling our name. This means that people are developing into closely associating their phones with their identity, their idea of existing.



As seems apparent from the way of the world now, being apart from your device can seem like you have been separated from a part of yourself. Cell phones are more than just tools to a person with a smartphone addiction - even though that is ultimately what they are, tools to be used. Cell phones represent much more than that to an avid and compulsive user, now.

These devices represent their friends and access to them. They represent accessibility and validation. Almost everyone now has a supercomputer in their back pocket, with the ability to know relatively anything that anyone has ever known in a matter of seconds - or minutes, depending on your internet provider and proximity to a cell tower. They represent power.

And what seems most interesting, these devices represent an opportunity. With a cellphone you can know virtually anything, contact virtually anyone, discover virtually anything - heck, you can use a GPS and travel nearly anywhere! Cellphones seem to represent the opportunity for something to happen, and humans love the opportunity.

What seems like a freeing tool is actually contorting a person's ability to act without it.



How Much Time You Spend on Your Phone

Imagine the following scenarios. You are out with your partner on a date, and they go to the restroom so you check your phone. You are in class and the instructor is speaking unengagingly on a topic you are already familiar with, so you check your phone. You just put your new-born child to sleep and even though you are exhausted from no sleep, you check your phone.



You feel sad and you want an escape from reality, you reach for your phone. You feel happy and you want to share your success with your friends, you reach for your phone. You wake up in the morning and before you get out of bed, you check the news. Before you go to bed you catch up on the day's events - before checking your phone.

How many people currently reading can resonate with the described daily events?

Some people live their entire lives like this. Excessive phone usage is such a well-known problem that software engineers have even created an app to track how often you use apps!

As of now, nearly over two hundred and seventy-million Americans own or use a smartphone. The average screen time for Americans averages out to about ten and a half hours collectively every single day. The recommended amount of screen time for anyone should be around two hours, nearly 80% less than the current recorded number.

Typically, the average person spends about two and half hours of that time on social media, but this amount of time can be much more, up to even five hours. Imagine that - almost 50% of a person's day consumed by some form of digital media.

Unfortunately, in the modern world, many adults have jobs that require them to use a screen to complete their work duties.



Nevertheless, almost half of an entire day spent burning your eyes out looking at a screen is not good for anyone. Some experts have calculated that a person might spend seven hundred and sixty thousand hours looking at a screen in their lifetime. In other words, this rounds out to nearly a decade of your life spent looking at a screen, collectively.

Studies have discovered that people pick up their phones about ninety-six times a day, which calculates out to look at your phone once every ten minutes. Any parents of a teenager would surely not be surprised by that statistic.

This has so many adverse health effects, not only for the mind and mental health but also regarding eye strain and back pain resulting from poor posture and not moving often enough. As you can see, compulsive phone usage has increased greatly and screen time numbers look out of control.

The amount of time the average American spends on their phone is absurd and unhealthy. Phones and mobile devices are becoming less like the tools they were designed to be and more like mental bear traps. The reality of phone usage is extremely far from that which is recommended by specialists. The time people spend on their phones absolutely must be limited if there is to be a wide-scale change in how people approach phone addiction. Due to the nature of modern work tasks and how businesses must operate, it is understandable if not unfortunate that workers have to use screens during the workday.

However, this translates into people needing to cut their screen time outside of work and truly only using these devices when it is necessary, not only when it is convenient.



Gaining Control Over Your Addiction



There is hope! You most definitely can gain control over your addiction. The related information above was not meant to disturb you or cause you to look at the world in a pessimistic way. You should be optimistic about your outlook. Humans got themselves into this position, and with some discipline, can get themselves out!

The information has merely been provided to urge the seriousness of the issue and provide societal context so the reader can understand exactly how insidious and wide-spread phone addiction truly is.

The information is intended to bring the jarring reality to the surface so that you can be motivated to bring more conscious awareness to your every-day actions and change your habits.

Too often, because of the way the world is now set up, people brush aside these concerns because it has become such a main-stream way to live life. As described above, it is considered “the norm” to spend almost half of the day looking at some type of screen. People don’t consider this to be a serious issue, but that is because the issue itself has taken root in so many people that it is hard to see the forest through the trees.

Now that it has been established that not only is phone addiction a very real and extremely detrimental phenomenon but that it is something that needs immediate attention and a communal effort to solve, the real work can be. Becoming informed is the first step in addressing the issue of phone addiction and starting the healing process.

Starting New Hobbies



So, you have gotten this far into the material - this is no easy feat, and you should be proud of yourself for committing to increasing the wellness level of your life. You have come a long way from what you may have arrived at this reading originally. You have learned a lot. Now to address the question that must be on your mind: "What am I supposed to do next?"



The short answer is this - **get to know yourself!**

Discover the things that make you happy, or that can take your mind off of feelings of anxiety and depression. Re-visit hobbies that you once used to have the time for but somehow previously couldn't find enough hours in the day to pursue fully. You will find that once you commit to overcoming your phone addiction, you will be trying not to use your devices as much as you used to.

This will leave you with plenty of free time to develop hobbies!

Hobbies are a wonderful way to relieve stress, free your mind from overwhelming thoughts, and hone in on a skill that can enhance your life. Hobbies can become very healthy habits that you can enjoy practicing throughout your life.

Hobbies will become a healthy habit. This habit will gradually replace the toxic habit of constantly being on your devices. Habits are behaviors that become ingrained into your daily practices by repeating them consistently. Some habits are developed unconsciously - this is exactly how something like phone addiction develops.

Healthy habits, such as hobbies, can be developed consciously and intentionally. These are the best type of habits to develop, as they stimulate your mind and have the ability to rebuild your confidence and sense of trust in yourself. You can change your life, if only by starting with something as carefree as picking up an engaging hobby.



even baking can be wonderful options.

There are so many different types of hobbies you can discover! Some people who are more academically minded would rather spend time reading or perhaps writing, to keep the mind busy and the intellect sharp. Other people who are more artistically inclined enjoy activities such as sketching, painting, or interior designing. Different types of crafts such as crocheting, knitting, wood-working, making collages and vision boards, or

It is especially soothing to work with your hands to create something. Experts agree that working with physical materials to create something can be very relaxing to the mind. These actions can not only be conducive to a more relaxed lifestyle, but they can also benefit you in secondary ways.

Picking up a dedicated hobby and creating something can lead to a promising career in the future. You are not only passing time, as you would be scrolling on your phone or watching a movie, but you are building a skill set. When you are using a device and absorbing content created by other people, you are engaging in passively interacting with the world. This lulls you into a state of mind that is parallel with sleeping.

However, when you are putting effort into doing something that is changing constantly, you are engaging in actively interacting with the world. This kind of interaction is like when you are focused on writing something, or making something. This level of concentration fosters something that is referred to as a “flow state.” This is when you are completely immersed in the experience and don’t even notice the time passing.

When you are actively interacting with the world, not noticing time passing is a good thing. When you are passively interacting with the world, you may not notice time pass either but this is more negative because you are not doing anything - it is almost like you are asleep with your eyes open.

Developing a hobby can endow you with the necessary life skills and revitalize your energy. These hobbies can provide you with an option to create an income for yourself and create



a business. You will feel like a new person after you start to develop these kinds of habits because you will find a new sense of power and be proud of your abilities and talents.

Deleting Addictive Apps



It would be very out of touch to say that you will never touch your phone again. Of course, some people live off-grid and have no connection with the modern world. It is possible, but it is not likely that this is a viable option for everyone in the modern world.

You will have to interact with your phone at some point. Due to the nature of the way the world is set up, your phone is a tool that you will have to use throughout the day. The goal however is to ensure that you have a healthy relationship with this tool and do not become dependent upon it to cope and get through the day.

After reading all of the ominous statistics about phone use and addiction, you may be worried. This is not a cause for panic! In truth, you are aiming to integrate yourself in a way where you can use your phone for the task at hand that you need to use it for without becoming a slave to your impulses.

You have the information - now you need to put that knowledge into action. After reading this information, you should have a general understanding of what type of social media applications are addictive and what makes something easy to become addicted to. You have to learn discipline and how to police your phone activity.

There will not be someone who can help you better than you can help yourself. Take responsibility for yourself and your addiction, and put matters in your own hands - literally, put your phone in your hands. Now, find the strength and the willpower to delete all your addictive apps!

You can always re-download these apps if you feel better about your problem further down the line in your recovery process, so don't be alarmed. You will not be losing anything, although it may seem that way at first. You will only be gaining more control over your mind



and your impulses. It is necessary, especially at the early stages of your healing and behavior modification routine, that you immediately delete any addictive social media apps.

The more often you interact with these apps, the more likely you will cave in and use them. When you use your phone for simple tasks, even just knowing and being aware that the apps are easily accessible on your home screen, will tempt you. Plus, while the apps are still downloaded to your devices, they can potentially send you alerts and notifications, which will tempt you even more. You may swear off social media on the first day, adamant that you will never return to be controlled by that out-of-control impulse. And yet somehow by lunchtime the next day you might consider taking a peek at your direct messages. Just for a second, you may say to yourself, a tiny peek wouldn't hurt.

However, giving in to this impulse will become the beginning of the end of your success.

Don't do this to yourself! Cut out the excess, trim the fat, and delete these addictive apps! You are much better off, and you will feel a load off your shoulders once you do. Your digital space will also be less cluttered, which means so will your mind. You will be impressed by your dedication, and it will propel you down the path to overcoming addiction.

Putting the Phone Away

As stated earlier in the text, one of the major keys to tamping down your excessive device usage is by simply putting it away. This honestly the action that will take you the least effort to do.

If you are not around your phone, you will not be tempted to use it as frequently. If you are truly committed to beating cell phone addiction, then you have to substitute the time you normally would be looking at a screen with something else. This "something else" can be anything else that does not involve a digital device. It is recommended that you commit seriously and be honest with yourself. This is the only way you can overcome nomophobia.

Keep your phone in your purse or your bag instead of in your pocket. Not only will you





have a decreased chance of damaging or losing your precious device, but now you will not be constantly distracted by its presence.

Similarly, when you are at work, turn your phone on “do not disturb” and keep it in your locker or cubby. The same advice can be applied to studying or when you are in class. You will increase your productivity, and have a clear head for a day at work or task at hand. You may argue that you need to be available in case something randomly happens to your loved ones. In the case of emergencies, this silencing feature ensures phone calls will be received if you receive more than one from the same caller.

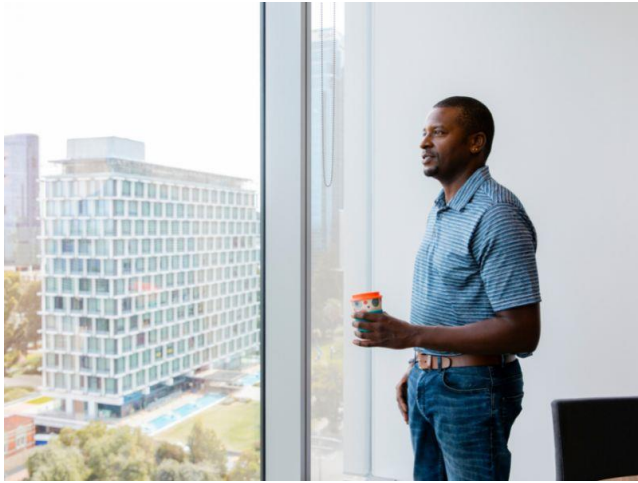
A very important point of advice is also to keep your phone in a completely different room than the one you are sleeping in. Very successful entrepreneurs and celebrities follow this practice sternly. This is key to getting a good night’s sleep and resetting your mentality. Many healthy residual side effects are produced by leaving your phone in another room.

One reason to keep your phone out of the bedroom is so that when your alarm goes off in the morning, you will be forced to get out of bed. This is a good motivational trick “early birds” use to get ready for the day. You are more likely to stay awake and start your morning routine if you force yourself to leave the comfort of being under your covers and walk the distance to your alarm.

Another great reason for leaving your phone in another room before you go to bed is so that you are not tempted to use it before you go to sleep or in the middle of the night. Scientists have shown that the blue light that is emitted from device screens can delay the brain’s ability to produce melatonin, which is a hormone that helps you fall asleep. Specialists recommend that you stop using devices an hour or two before you are ready to sleep.



Taking a Break



You have to learn how to effectively take breaks. If you are at a point where you feel you cannot delete your addictive apps, start to be at least staying off social media once a week. This is similar to keeping your phone away from you and can be scheduled on the same day when you are first starting out managing your issue.

Staying off social media will do wonders for your sense of self-trust. You will be proud of the level of self-control you will be exerting. You may even decide to do a “social media cleanse.” This is similar to diet-related behaviors, except this term is regarding “brain food.” What you feed your mind is what will shape your thoughts, and social media is like junk food.

Imagine if you only ate chocolate bars and extra-cheese pizza all day, every day. You might enjoy the original dopamine rush at first, but by the end of the week your body would be destroyed and you would hardly be able to move your body comfortably.

This is exactly what it is like to engage with social media too often. Social media is like a sugary dessert. You are healthiest when you restrain and only enjoy it once in a while, and reasonable portions.

Remember the statistic discussed earlier regarding the amount of time the average American spends on their phone? Up to half of the day can be spent screen-gazing. Now, imagine if you are strict with yourself about the time you spend on your phone - you can potentially get nearly nine years of your life back!

What will you do with all of this time you will suddenly have? You want to ensure that you are participating in actively engaging habits so that you will feel good about the time you spend away from your phone. This will encourage you to stick with your plan and maintain a healthier lifestyle.



Spend this time doing things that provide you with a sense of fulfillment. Not every moment of your life can be filled with joy and wonder, but you can spend a lot of it with loved ones. Spending time with people who give your life a purpose is very rewarding.

Likewise, if you fill your time with being in the company of the people you love, you will foster a sense of community. This is very important to your healing from an addiction, as the root is most likely coming from a feeling of being lonely and detached. If you feel detached from your community, you will be more likely to use social media to fill the void. This will not solve the problem. This kind of thought mentality is like the snake that eats its own head. You will be creating more of a void and more of a sense of disconnect by doing this because you will be spending less time with people who care about you.

Sending a message is not as sincere as spending time making dinner together. Posting about a fundraiser is great, but volunteering your time to assist your community with a friend is even better.



Making Better Phone Habits

You have not only discovered the negative aspects of the overuse of devices but you have also found ways that you can fill your time that will benefit you even more. However, you will have to use your phone at some point.

You may finally have arrived at a point where you feel you can successfully control your behaviors, and not one where you allow your behaviors to command you against your better judgment. The next and final step is where you begin to cultivate better phone habits.



There are ways to interact with your phone healthily. You have to be strict with yourself if you know that you have addictive tendencies and have a habit of rescinding your word. Make yourself a promise that you will continue to take phone addiction seriously, even if you feel you have “mastered” the problem.

Truly, you will never be able to master addiction. No person can if they are speaking honestly with themselves. You can only become conscious of your triggers and become familiar with ways that will keep you on the right track. This conscious awareness will allow you to notice when you start to slip back into your old ways and prompt you to find alternate solutions.

Ultimately, this last step is the most important because it will guide your habits and behaviors long beyond your initial undertaking of this process. These are the habits you will employ from your mental tool belt for the rest of your life in regards to healthy phone use.

Keep yourself on a schedule for when you can and cannot access your devices. Refer to these periods as you designated “Phone Time.” During this period, you can do what you like. Similar to the example of a proper diet, consider this like portion control. You can still



have something you enjoy even if it is not exactly healthy for you, so long as you have it in small doses.

During these scheduled periods where you allot time on a device, you can do whatever you want. This will decrease the likelihood that you will “binge” and reverse all of the efforts you originally dedicated to maintaining discipline. If you are a parent implementing this for your child, they will know when to expect to use their phone and find themselves craving less and less time on a device.

Also, consider having “no phone zones” in your home. The bedroom is most definitely one of them, or it should be at least! However, it is encouraged that you have more than one “no phone zone” to increase the likelihood of success. Make the dinner table a zone, as well as the living room. It is easier to not use a phone when you are not allowed to use it in a specified area.

Turn off notifications from your phone and keep them off. You should already be aware at this point that notifications are simply temptations to keep you hooked. This is a quick and easy way to remove the temptation from your life. Not only that, but it will declutter your mind as you will not have to sift through meaningless notifications throughout the day anymore.

Whatever you do, do not rely on an app to get you to stop using apps. This is a very common thing that people try to do, and it is done in good faith but it is very rarely successful. This is not a successful technique because first and foremost, you are still using your phone! In a worst-case scenario, you may even become addicted to checking your phone usage levels. This will most likely only depress you further and you will just try to distance yourself by switching to another app.



Helping Someone with Phone Addiction

Maybe you have successfully purged the obsessive impulse to constantly be on your phone. Now you are looking around at the people you are usually with, as you are not looking at your phone anymore, and see that they might have a problem too! Perhaps you have children or teenagers and see that they spend nearly all their free time on a device instead of developing themselves.



Do not blame your loved ones, because they are suffering just as you have suffered too. It is important that to ensure a healthy discussion about the phone and social media addiction, you approach the conversation kindly and with compassion.

You want to encourage your loved ones to open up to you, not to close them off further by blaming them. Do not immediately approach your loved ones with advice and recommendations before discussing possible underlying problems they may have. Usually, addictions are due to emotions that are difficult to endure and so a person turns to a toxic behavior to distract themselves from those feelings. Make time to sit with your loved ones and ask them how they are feeling that day. This will be a lengthy process as they may not open up right away, or even know the cause for their negative feelings.

Do speak to them with compassion and understanding. When discussing the issue, use the collective first-person “we” and refrain from phrasing things with the secondary-person, the accusatory pronoun “you.” This makes the other person feel included and not singled out for bad behavior. This lifts some of the burdens of shame off of their backs and creates a comfortable space where they can feel safe to share and be honest about their addiction.

An example of how to start the dialogue could be “We have a serious problem with making time for each other,” instead of saying “You don’t make time for others.” Including yourself in the conversation prevents someone from feeling like they are being spoken down to or criticized. This also makes the issue seem like a collective problem that you can all work together to find solutions for as a team.



Do not demonize the devices you use, as they are simply tools at the end of the day. It may seem tempting to look at it in this way. But you cannot blame the phone for doing exactly what it was designed to do. This will only shift all responsibility for their actions onto the phone itself and will prevent them from accepting the truth of the situation.

Use facts to back your claims and speak honestly. You cannot lie and make things up to convince someone to do something. This will backfire in the future when they discover that you were dishonest, and they will revert to their addictive habits with a vengeance! Supplement your conversation with real statistics and health facts. This will be the healthiest way to have these tough discussions with your loved one.

Signs of Phone Addiction in Others

The signs and symptoms of phone addiction in others can manifest in multiple different ways. The clearest and obvious sign is the constant use of a device, but there are secondary and tertiary effects that you might not have realized were signs until now.

Some signs are headaches, blurry vision, sleep problems, an unregulated nervous system resulting in frequent illness, and loss of an accurate sense of time due to desensitization. Other such symptoms of a phone addiction include restlessness, difficulty concentrating, anger or irritability, craving access to devices when not available, anxiety, depression.

Ways to Help

You have to address the problem head-on. Utilize the conversational strategies outlined above to ensure these discussions happen, and continue after more than just one brief admission. Discuss emotions and life events often to foster a safe and trusting environment.



Provide your loved one with resources and a space to vent. Give them this reading material so that they too can learn about the negative influence of excessive device usage, as well as the impact these obsessive behaviors have on the body and the mind. Encourage them to do their part in educating themselves so that they can help themselves. Active engagement with creating a solution will yield the best results.



Encourage your loved ones that they can change their habits for the better. No one wants to be told only what they are doing wrong; this only fosters more anxiety and will not lead to a desire to change. If you let someone know they are strong and competent often enough, they will start to believe it. With increased self-esteem, your loved ones will find the inner strength to commit to healing.

You can help your loved ones by implementing these techniques illustrated throughout the text. What works for you can work for others, but keep an open mind. Not every technique will be successful, but as long as you can decrease exposure to devices and encourage self-control, that is a good step.



Conclusion

You have come far in your efforts to reign in your cellphone addiction if you have made it to this point in the text. You should be proud that you have taken the time to learn about this epidemic and sought help. Not everyone has the confidence to do this, and admitting and researching is the first step.

You've learned about the deleterious effects of excessive cell phone usages. You've learned useful statistics that confirm the existence of phone addiction, which also illustrate how widespread this global issue truly is. You have even gotten an inside look into the sneaky tactics social media engineers impose upon you to assist in their respective client's ulterior motives regarding data collection.

You have developed healthy coping mechanisms and new skills to fill your time. You have regained an understanding of how important a sense of community and spending time with loved ones is to increase mental health fitness. You have been taught self-help tools and techniques which will promote a lifestyle conducive to success and living an addiction-free life.

Know that you are not alone in suffering from this problem and that many people around the world are facing the same issues that you are currently. This is nothing to be ashamed of. You have gained the knowledge and the abilities to ween yourself off of these addictive devices so you can live your best life. As long as you stay committed to improving your condition and stay disciplined in your practices, you can beat your compulsion and keep your behaviors in check.

You can do it!