

Tips for digital wellbeing during the pandemic

During this time of economic lockdown and physical distancing, your smartphone is your conduit to friends, family, work, entertainment and more. But as most of us shelter at home in the effort to combat Covid-19, there is also the danger of spending too much time in front of our screens.



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For that reason, digital wellbeing is more important than ever. We need to be able to use digital technology to improve lives and enhance our sense of connectedness and happiness, not to distract from it.

Here are ways that people can better manage their digital wellbeing at this challenging time:

- **Use the Google Digital Wellbeing tools and app**

You can use Google's Digital Wellbeing tools to get a daily view of how often you check your phone and how frequently you use different apps. You can also set limits with daily app timers and unplug at night with features like Wind Down. Wind Down reminds you to switch off at night by setting a bedtime schedule for your phone.

And if you want to limit the time you spend using certain apps or websites, you can set daily timers. When the timer runs out, the app or website is paused for the rest of the day. Digital Wellbeing is available by default on all Android devices running Pie (Android 9) and up. The app is also available to download on the Google Play store.

- **Set boundaries for yourself**

The lockdown has upset most of our routines, meaning that we are not able to socialise, exercise and get out and about as before. And whether you are working from home or unable to work right now, you may be spending more time with computers, TV, and mobile devices than ever before.

It can help to set a routine for yourself, including specific times that you use your smartphone as well as apps like Facebook and YouTube. With Google Digital Wellbeing, you can set daily timers to limit the use of apps, so that you don't feel bad for frittering time away looking at social media updates when you'd prefer to read or play a board game with the family.

- **One screen at a time**

Many of us have become accustomed to juggling apps on multiple devices, rather than focusing on one at a time. For example, one might be replying to WhatsApp messages on a smartphone, running online banking on a PC, and leaving the TV on in the background. Reducing the noise and screens can help you focus on the task at hand.

- **Optimise your home screen and notifications**

Turning off notifications for non-essential apps and removing them from your home screen can help you to focus on the things that really matter. You can move the apps that distract you – yet are not critical to day-to-day life or work – to a folder on the second page of your display.

- **Use voice commands**

If you find that you get pulled into a social or media app when you pick up your phone to reply to a message, consider using Google Assistant voice commands instead. You can place calls, send text messages, play music, set an alarm, check your calendar, do a basic search and more without engaging with the screen.

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