

HOW TO BE A SMART CONSUMER OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology can be a powerful tool for learning, communication, increasing accessibility, and collaboration, but it can also have a large impact on users' mental and physical health. It is important to understand technology and learn to maneuver the positives and negatives.

What is screen time?

Screen time is the amount of time that you spend using smartphones, laptops, television, gaming consoles, tablets, and mobile video games.

What is active time?

Active time is the time spent moving around and interacting with others in person.

Stress Management and Technology

Using technology can be a stress ridden activity due to information and news inundation, addiction to technology, altered sleep, and delayed relaxation. Manage daily stress by evaluating and seeking change in your technology habits and behaviors.

Make a list of screen time versus active time, and find which is greater. Try to limit your screen time to 2 hours or less per day.



Tactics for Limiting Screen Time

1. Turn off the television while eating meals.
2. Make bedrooms "screen-free" zones
3. Avoid using shows and games as rewards.
4. Add physical activity during commercials.
5. Track screen time versus active time

Alternatives to Screen Time

1. Spending time with family and friends.
2. Physical activity like running, hiking, playing sports, or bike rides
3. Learning and cooking new recipes
4. Coloring, drawing, or painting



Positive screen time

Not all screen time is created equal and sometimes screen time can be a positive experience.

Virtual Interactions: instant messaging, video chatting, and sharing photos.

Finding communities for health: support forums, health content



Safety When Using Technology

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), prolonged use of technology can lead to digital eye strain due to screen glare, bad lighting, and improper viewing distance.

Symptoms of eye strain include:

- blurred vision
- dry eyes
- headaches
- neck and shoulder pain

The AOA recommends the 20-20-20 rule, try to take a 20-second break every 20 minutes to look at something that is 20 feet away.

When using technology, chances are that you are holding your head in an unnatural forward-leaning position. This position puts a lot of stress on your neck, shoulders, and spine.

If you are feeling the pain of technology, take frequent breaks to stretch, create an ergonomic workspace, and maintain proper posture while using devices.

