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Overstimulation: The Root Cause of Lacking Focus

<https://paradigmpeptides.com/2021/03/26/overstimulation-the-root-cause-of-lacking-focus/>

Video 1: TED Talk - How to Get Your Brain to Focus

- After realizing that his day was spent looking at screens, Chris Bailey experimented on himself if he could do something about it. He wanted to get rid of over-using his phone for a month. He lived on a max of 30 minutes daily for everything he wanted and needed to do on his phone.
 - It took about a week to get down to a lower level of stimulation.
 - After this week, he realized three significant things:
 - His attention span had grown, and he felt like he could focus on things easily.
 - He had more ideas as his mind started to wander.
 - He made more plans for what would happen in the future.
 - After tons of research on attention span, Bailey finds out that when we work in front of our computer, especially when our phone is nearby, we focus on one thing for 40 seconds before we get distracted and do something else.
 - We believe that the problem with this lowered attention span is that “our brains are distracted.” But rather than our brains being distracted, it’s that our brains crave distraction.
 - There is a mechanism called the “novelty bias” where our mind rewards us with some dopamine, one of the pleasure chemicals, to seek out something nice and exciting like checking Facebook for example.
 - *“We not only crave distraction, but our minds reward us for seeking out and finding distraction in the first place.”*
 - *“This feeling that we experience when we go from being in a state of high stimulation into a state of low stimulation, it has a name. That name is called ‘boredom.’”*
 - He later did a second experiment in which he did random tasks for an hour a day, such as watch a clock, he saw the same results. It took about a week for his mind to adjust downward to a lower level of stimulation. It’s similar to research that states it takes about 8 days for our minds to fully calm down and rest.
- Novelty Bias is the natural preference to choose the newest option in a set of choices. The “newest choice” isn’t necessarily chronologically new; it’s simply an option we have not perceived as a choice before. We often think newer is better because things 'only get better' over time. [Resource](#).

- The results of the two experiments were that he ended up being able to focus even more effortlessly because his mind was so much less stimulated that it did not seek out distraction in the first place
- *“Not all those who wander are lost”* — J. R. R. Tolkien (Letting your mind wander isn’t a bad thing for your focus. Wandering gives you ideas never thought of before) (A wandering mind isn’t a bad one) [meaning: just because someone likes to explore that doesn’t mean they’re lost]
- You are rarely focused on something when you have your best ideas.
- When we deliberately let our minds wander, our mind goes to a mode he calls “scatter focus.” Scatter focus lets your mind make ideas & plan because of where the mind wanders off to.
- When your mind is in scatter focus it goes to three main places:
 - Past: 12% of the time
 - Present: 28% of the time
 - Future: 48% of the time
- The rest of the time your mind is dull, blank, or it doesn’t have an idea inside of it.
- We like to think that, Distraction is the enemy of focus. It’s not. It is a symptom of why we find it hard to focus, which is the fact that our mind is overstimulated.

Call to Action!

For two weeks:

- Limit screen time
- Have a Disconnection Ritual Day
- Rediscover Boredom
- Scatterfocus
- The state of our attention determines the state of our lives. If we’re distracted in each moment, those moments build up to create a life that feels more distracted and overwhelming like there is no clear direction.
- When we have our minds less stimulated, we get the benefits of more productivity, focus, ideas, and creativity but we also live a better life because of it.

Technology & Information Overload: How Digital Overstimulation from Your Gadgets Harms Your Well-being

<https://www.healthiertech.co/technology-information-overload/>

- 'Our internet-connected gadgets like cell phones, computers, laptops, and tablets expose our brains to overwhelming amounts of information. And this is one of the reasons why problems like sleep disorders, digital dementia, and poor attention spans are rising at an alarming rate.'

- Information overload happens when your brain consumes more information than it can handle. This causes it to function poorly, leading to numerous problems.
- Statistics say that people worldwide use their screens for an average of 6 hours and 58 minutes daily. And the daily screen time has increased by nearly 50 minutes per day since 2013.
- An article in Exploding Topics says that Gen Z averages around 9 hours of screen time per day.
- Scientists found that an average person today receives as much as 74 GB (gigabytes) of information per day through cell phones, TVs, computers, billboards, and more. Per Agarwal, our conscious brains can handle no more than 0.51 GB of information per 24 hours. All this extra information we receive daily causes a processing overload in our brains.
- Effects of Technology-Induced Information Overload:
 - Problems With Sleep
 - Constant State of Anxiety
 - Reduced Focus & Memory
 - Mental Health Problems

Sleep

- Your brain transfers all the information you've collected throughout the day from your conscious (short-term) memory to the unconscious (long-term) memory during sleep. And for that to happen properly, your brain needs to be sure there's no more incoming information. Sleep is also when your brain works on background tasks like tissue healing and detoxifying your body through your liver.
- Using internet-connected gadgets at night forces your brain to keep its conscious part active and receive more information. This prevents your brain from resting, which makes it harder to sleep. Soon, if it becomes a habit of nighttime gadget use, it starts costing you hours of sleep, leading to sleep deprivation.
- You also expose your eyes to blue light that reduces melatonin production in your body, forcing your brain to stay active.

Constant State of Anxiety

- Since your brain can't catch up to the information it's being fed, it enters a state of stress, increasing its cortisol production.
- Cortisol is a stress hormone your body produces when it perceives a risk to your physical, mental, or social well-being.

Reduced Focus & Memory

- Exceeding the limit of what working memory can accommodate erodes the efficiency and quality of cognitive function. Constantly forcing your brain to process large amounts of information can slowly take a toll on your focus and memory.

Mental Health Problems

- “Information overload can lead to real feelings of anxiety, feeling overwhelmed and powerless, and mental fatigue. It can also lead to cognitive issues such as difficulty making decisions or making hasty (often bad) decisions,” says Dr. Sara Gorman from Psychology Today.
- Besides that, there’s technology-induced FOMO, self-esteem issues, low confidence, and social isolation—all of these seriously affect your mental health

Can You Reverse Digital Overstimulation’s Effects?

- Use Your Phone Less
- Screen Time Limits
- Quit Doomscrolling [unofficial term for the compulsion to scour social media and the internet for negative news]
- Let Your Mind Be Bored Sometimes

Why you should keep your child from overstimulation

<https://us.jei.com/resource-center/why-you-should-keep-your-child-from-overstimulation/>

- No longer are children told to keep themselves busy, but they have various tools already at hand to keep themselves busy. As a result, they grow a lower tolerance for boredom, and they do not know what to do with themselves when nothing is stimulating them externally.
- Children no longer give themselves the time to be bored, yet it is time worth having. That is why it is essential to limit stimulation so their brains can rest. Bored is a great thing for them.
- Here is how boredom can help your child:
 - Fosters Creativity
 - Increases ability to focus
 - Hones observation skills
 - Quiets their mind
 - Improves self-discipline and patience
- All of the advantages mentioned above will lead to many more advantages in your child’s life, and it all stems from removing stimulation and embracing boredom. That is where it starts.

Creativity

- It is natural for children deprived of outside stimuli to occupy themselves with whatever they have at hand—which is their imagination. When the mind feels disengaged, it will wander in order to find engagement, leading to creative thinking. This is an important skill to exercise.
- Sandi Mann, a researcher specializing in boredom, stated, “Once you start daydreaming and allow your mind to really wander, you start thinking a little bit beyond the conscious, a little bit into the subconscious, which allows sort of different connections to take place.” The idea that wandering minds lead to deeper thinking was backed by a study at the University of Central Lancashire. 80 participants in the experimental group performed a boring activity before having to think of as many uses for plastic cups as possible. Those 80 participants came up with many more creative answers than participants within the control group.

Focus

- A brain that is constantly stimulated will lead to shorter and shorter attention spans. Think of all the overwhelming apps and perks a phone has to offer. Dr. Joseph Firth of Western Sydney University said, “[T]he limitless stream of prompts and notifications from the Internet encourages us towards constantly holding a divided attention — which then in turn may decrease our capacity for maintaining concentration on a single task.” This also leads to constantly multi-tasking, and neuroscientist Daniel Levitin says, “[Y]ou’re rapidly shifting from one thing to the next, depleting neural resources as you go.”
- This kind of constant stimulation decreases the efficacy of your child’s brain functions. If you remove things that will distract or overwhelm them, your child will be able to space out, it’ll give their brain a rest until they need it for a specific task, such as studying or solving a problem.

Hones observation skills

- The **practice of meditation and mindfulness**. Removing stimulation allows them to take in what is around them and notice things much more keenly than if they had been distracted by something or many somethings.

Quiets their mind

- Once they remove all the stimulants, your child will be able to actually listen to their thoughts, or even to quiet the mind if the thoughts are unhelpful. This will help them figure things out, trust their voice, and learn to take effective action. Sometimes, it is good to be alone with your thoughts.

Improves self-discipline and patience

- By encouraging your child to take a break from YouTube or Snapchat, you are really encouraging their self-discipline. Once they learn to fight the urge to flood their minds with irrelevant information and all the emotions that come with the Internet, they can redirect that newfound self-discipline to purposeful action. They will stop procrastinating. They will be better at time management. They will actually pay more attention to their surroundings and friends.
- This will also increase their patience. Often games and apps give frequent rewards with fanfare-like music or fun graphics to provide a sense of achievement. That is a lot of stimulants, and also sets up unrealistic expectations for real-life success. Staying away from that may help them work on long-term goals with patience instead of striving for quick gratification.

Attention Spans in the Age of Technology

<https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/August-2017/Attention-Spans-in-the-Age-of-Technology>

- Electronic usage has greatly contributed to various difficulties for adolescents. These include problems with executive function, such as concentration and focus, as well as insomnia, mood swings, and anxiety.
- Children living with ADHD need mental stimulation and arousal, which is why they are given stimulants to help them focus in the classroom.
- Children who simply spend lots of time with their electronics have trained their brains to receive heightened stimulation and the accompanying dopamine boosts. Therefore are susceptible to similar symptoms as a child with ADHD—as he or she may also begin to have trouble focusing on classroom instruction or chores.
- ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed behavioral disorder for kids in the U.S., with at least 4.5 million diagnoses among children under age 18. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the prevalence of ADHD in children ages 4 to 17 years was 11%. These findings represent a dramatic increase from more than 30 years ago, when the rate of ADHD was estimated at between 3% and 5%. What is more concerning is that the prevalence of ADHD increased by about 35% from 2003 to 2011 alone.
- Before putting your child on any medications, try these few simple modifications to your child's environment:
 - Monitor "Screen Time"
 - Relax The Mind
 - Make The Bedroom A Stimulus-Free Zone
 - Teach Delayed Gratification
- Nowadays, kids want immediate satisfaction, and when they don't get it, they lose focus and attention and grow impatient. Delayed gratification is a life skill that will help your

child persevere and remain focused on goals for which the returns are not immediately experienced. It is an essential ability that will help your child gain success in life.

How to Use Social Media Without Harming Your Brain

<https://brainmd.com/blog/how-to-use-social-media-without-harming-your-brain/>

- The average amount of time spent on social media worldwide is 147 minutes a day
- A decade ago, half of Americans were using some form of social media, but today, that figure has ballooned to 72%, according to Pew Research.
- Mental health experts have raised concerns about how social media use can overstimulate the brain's reward centers, lead to sleeplessness, negatively impact memory, and increase distractibility.
- Social media platforms make their money by having access to you.
- Your attention is the product social media sells to brands wanting to advertise to you. Each platform is designed to grab your attention and hold it for as long as possible by being designed to take advantage of your brain's built-in reward system.
- Dopamine is a neurotransmitter produced by the brain that plays a central role in motivating behavior. It motivates us to repeat these behaviors and experiences.
- Social media exploits this reward system for its benefit. Each social media platform provides you with many ways to receive rewards in the form of attention, and it requires very little of you to get them.
- Your brain rewires itself through all this positive feedback so that you desire likes, reactions, comments, and retweets.
- Spending too much time on social media can make your mood feel flat or deadened. Your pleasure centers can get worn out, and you're more likely to suffer from low mood.
- Blue light from your device stimulates parts of the brain that make us feel more awake and alert. When checking social media before bedtime, as many people do, it keeps you from winding down, which is needed for sleep.
- Social media competes for our attention with the promise of endless amounts of enticing content, those who use it frequently become less able to ignore distractions in general which leads to poorer cognitive performance and shrinks parts of the brain associated with maintaining concentration.
- Researchers believe that using social media platforms to document experiences may impact your memory. When you log information and images recorded on social media about a particular event, you may not store as many details about that experience internally in your memory.

7 Healthy Social Media Habits to Help Protect Your Brain

1. Consider a social media detox of several days to a week to "reset" your brain.

2. Delete distracting social media apps from your phone for the day when you need to concentrate on other things.
3. Limit your screen time on social apps: Allow yourself a specified amount of time per day.
4. Disable notifications for all your social media apps.
5. Keep your display black and white.
6. When you notice that you want to check your phone, take a 15-minute walk or practice meditation in a quiet area instead.
7. Instead of scrolling before you go to sleep, make a new habit before bed that you enjoy. Read a book. Write in your journal. Look at social media earlier in the evening or day.

How Social Media Affects Attention Span

<https://www.baptisthealth.com/blog/family-health/how-social-media-affects-attention-span>

- **A study by Microsoft revealed that the average person now starts to lose attention after a mere eight seconds.**
- Not only are attention spans dwindling, but many users multitask while consuming social media, leading to further decreased attention on each task.
- Facebook: Users on Facebook's desktop version spend about 2.5 seconds on a piece of content, whereas mobile users only spend 1.7 seconds. This number is even lower in younger audiences.
- Instagram: Users are spending most of their social media time. A shocking 60% of users reported they are constantly connected to Instagram. The constant notifications and mindless scrolling interrupt our off-screen activities and create a habit of quickly consuming and discarding information.
- To help avoid this, try learning delayed gratification.

Digital Overstimulation And Stress

<https://medium.com/@vinayahouse/digital-overstimulation-and-stress-68a03695917e>

- From our excessive use of technology, we are starting to decrease our level of patience, reduced levels of empathy, dwindling conversational skills, challenges with real human connection, and our inability to be alone with our thoughts.
- **Continuous over-stimulation and hyper-arousal raise the level of background activity in the brain, limiting our ability to think clearly.** Thinking becomes less clear, less resourceful, and less efficient. **We feel dull or flat, and our body becomes less responsive and less effective.**
- Digital habits have become so ingrained in our daily behaviors from our craving for dopamine

- Fortunately, the effect can be reversed. Given the opportunity, the body will automatically dissolve accumulated physical tensions and return to the optimum homeostatic balance. All we have to do is make time to allow the body to fall into a state of deep rest.
- Being conscious as to why we are checking is an important exercise in self-awareness; are we craving human connection, or attention?
- As humans, our most ingenious ideas often occur during what is called a 'flow state'; this is when our attention is directed towards one task at a time, executing it to the best of our ability before moving on to the next.
- Interestingly, studies in The Netherlands have shown that school children who practice meditation have significantly higher 'intelligence growth rates' compared to children who do not practice meditation.

The Effects of Overstimulation and How to Regain Control

<https://healyournervoussystem.com/effects-of-overstimulation/>

- With the emergence of technology, media, and modern lifestyles, it is increasingly common in today's world to experience overstimulation.
- Overstimulation, or sensory overstimulation, is a term used to describe the process of being exposed to too much sensory input at once.
- Whenever there is an excessive amount of sensory input, the brain can become overwhelmed and unable to process all the data, resulting in being overstimulated. Sensory overload is another term used to describe these occurrences.
- This phenomenon can occur in anyone but is often associated with conditions such as a dysregulated nervous system, autism, ADHD, anxiety, depression, PTSD, or Tourette syndrome. This can eventually lead to neuromuscular and neurological diseases.
- The symptoms of overstimulation vary depending on the individual and the situation. Some of the most common symptoms include:
 - Difficulties focusing
 - Restlessness and agitation
 - Excessive irritability
 - Mental fatigue or "brain fog"
 - An aversion to sensory input
 - The feeling of discomfort in environments with many people or bright lights
 - Heightened sensitivity to loud noises or bright lights
 - Textures and fabrics that are uncomfortable to touch

Causes

- A dysregulated nervous system is one of the primary causes of overstimulation and often the culprit

- psycho-spiritual, lifestyle-behavioral, and biochemical origins
 - mental health issues
 - Excessive stress or environmental triggers
 - Over-exposure to loud noises or bright lights
 - A busy workspace or home environment
 - High levels of physical or mental stimulation
 - Poor sleep habits or inadequate rest
 - Substance abuse, such as alcohol and drugs
 - Inadequate nutrition
- Highly Sensitive People (HSPs) are more prone to overstimulation as their nervous systems are wired differently than others. This type of processing leads HSPs to become easily overwhelmed and exhausted after prolonged exposure to stimuli, strong emotions, or a crowded environment.
 - Sensory overload and overstimulation are closely related, in that both involve the senses responding to external stimuli. However, while overstimulation is the process of information being taken in by the senses, sensory overload is the result of too much input – when your brain can't keep up with all the information directed at it.
 - Sensory Overload Symptoms may come in a range of forms, including physical and mental exhaustion, feeling overwhelmed, or disoriented. Experiencing sensory overload is a part of life though, and it is important to understand how sensory processing works so you can better deal with the effects of overstimulation.
 - Overstimulation can cause stress, anxiety, and/or burnout. When our brains are constantly being thrown information or have to process too much complex information, we can become overwhelmed and exhausted. If left unchecked, this can lead to more severe issues such as burnout or anxiety disorders.

Finding Relief

- Relief can be found with this step-by-step approach:
 - Awareness
 - Regulation
 - Restoration
- In the short term, this can help:
 - Unplug from your devices – take a break from technology and turn off all notifications on your phone.
 - Take deep breaths – make sure each exhale is longer than your inhale.
 - Ground yourself in the present moment – become aware of your senses in the current environment and focus on how they make you feel. Emotional regulation helps.
 - Get physical movement – take a few minutes to stretch or go for a walk.
 - Connect with nature – spend time outdoors surrounded by natural elements like trees and water.

- Talk to someone – find an understanding ear if you need to talk about what’s going on.

Novelty Bias Is the Hidden Reason for Your Low Attention Span

<https://medium.com/illumination-curated/novelty-bias-is-the-hidden-reason-for-your-low-attention-span-462f21cd0392>

- It takes around 25 minutes for your brain to regain concentration because of task-switching. Our mind wanders all the time even when we’re immersed in an important task.
- Novelty bias is the nature of the brain doesn’t let us work on a single task for more than half an hour or make it harder to continue grinding with the same motivation.
- Novelty bias means anything new and interesting will pique your curiosity. As long as it's not dangerous, you'll definitely want to explore it. The desire to explore is a big enough distraction.
- FOMO sensation that triggers you to check social media all the time.
- The more you give in to these attention magnets, the harder it becomes to channel your focus where it matters most.
- Concentration shortens the time needed to finish a mentally expensive task. To experience being “in the zone”, do the important work when the only stimulus you receive is from the task at hand and not the environment.

Screen Time and the Brain

<https://hms.harvard.edu/news/screen-time-brain>

- “It’s not how long we’re using screens that really matters; it’s how we’re using them and what’s happening in our brains in response,” says Pediatrician Michael Rich
- Much of the stimulation that our screens provide us with is “impoverished” (not good quality) to the developing brain. This isn’t healthy because children especially need a diverse menu of online and offline experiences, including the chance to let their brains wander.
- “Boredom is the space in which creativity and imagination happen,” says Rich.
- A good night’s sleep is key to brain development. However, using blue light-emitting screen devices like smartphones too close before bedtime can disrupt sleep patterns by suppressing the secretion of the hormone melatonin.
- Seductive digital pursuits appear to activate the brain's reward system.

- “Virtually all games and social media work on what’s called a variable reward system, which is exactly what you get when you go to Mohegan Sun and pull a lever on a slot machine. It balances the hope that you’re going to make it big with a little bit of frustration, and unlike the slot machine, a sense of skill needed to improve.” - Rich
- A young person’s brain lacks a fully developed self-control system to help them stop this kind of obsessive behavior.
- **Rich urges a balanced approach to screen use.**
- “We don’t want to be in a moral panic because kids are staring at smartphones. We need to be asking, what’s happening when they’re staring at their smartphone in terms of their cognitive, social, and emotional development? As with most things, it will probably be a mix of positive and negative. Going forward with our eyes open, how can we enhance the positive and mitigate the negative?” - Rich.

Digital Media Tips for Parents and Their Children

- Beware of digital media distraction. Half of all kids and three-quarters of parents feel the other is distracted when talking to each other.
- Have regular sit-downs, and screen-free meals with your children.
- Put down your device. Be present with others. Observe the world around you. Let your mind wander.
- Avoid blue light-emitting screen use before bedtime.
- Play online games with your children rather than forbidding them. Learn how to play from them and, as you play, help them think about what they’re seeing and doing on screen.
- Help your children plan how to spend their time, focusing on important and favorite activities to avoid sliding into the screen abyss.

Why the modern world is bad for your brain

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/18/modern-world-bad-for-brain-daniel-j-levitin-organized-mind-information-overload>

- **Earl Miller, a neuroscientist at MIT and one of the world experts on divided attention, says that our brains are “not wired to multitask well... When people think they’re multitasking, they’re actually just switching from one task to another very rapidly. And every time they do, there’s a cognitive cost in doing so.”**
- Even though we think we’re getting a lot done, ironically, multitasking makes us demonstrably less efficient. Rather than multitasking, you are just switching between tasks very rapidly.
- **Multitasking has been found to increase the production of the stress hormone cortisol as well as the fight-or-flight hormone adrenaline, which can overstimulate your brain and cause mental fog or scrambled thinking.**

- Multitasking creates a dopamine-addiction feedback loop, rewarding the brain for losing focus and constantly searching for external stimulation. To make matters worse, the prefrontal cortex has a novelty bias, meaning that its attention can be easily hijacked by something new. The same brain region we need to rely on for staying on task is easily distracted.
- Russ Poldrack, a neuroscientist at Stanford, found that learning information while multitasking causes the new information to go to the wrong part of the brain. If students study and watch TV at the same time, for example, the information from their schoolwork goes into the striatum, a region specialized for storing new procedures and skills, not facts and ideas. Without the distraction of TV, the information goes into the hippocampus, where it is organized and categorized in a variety of ways, making it easier to retrieve.
- MIT's Earl Miller adds, "People can't do [multitasking] very well, and when they say they can, they're deluding themselves."
- Asking the brain to shift attention from one activity to another causes the prefrontal cortex and striatum to burn up oxygenated glucose, the same fuel they need to stay on task. And the rapid, continual shifting we do with multitasking causes the brain to burn through fuel so quickly that we feel exhausted and disoriented after even a short time.
- Staying in that one task-at-a-time state uses less energy than multitasking and reduces the brain's need for glucose.
- Lots of multitasking requires lots of decision-making, one of the first things we lose is impulse control. This rapidly spirals into a depleted state in which, after lots of insignificant decisions, we can end up making truly bad decisions about something important.
- When discussing information overload, email comes up. It's too easy to send and fast to receive which changes the whole manner of receiving mail. If the receiver answers this abundance of emails, they might have a sense of getting things done but, they'll be sacrificing efficiency and deep concentration when they interrupt our priority activities with email.
- Texting has similar problems as well as hyperimmediacy. They magically appear on the screen of your phone and demand immediate attention from you. Add to that the social expectation that an unanswered text feels insulting to the sender, and you've got a recipe for addiction: you receive a text, and that activates your novelty centers. You respond and feel rewarded for having completed a task (even though that task was entirely unknown to you 15 seconds earlier). Each of those delivers a shot of dopamine.
- Each time we dispatch an email in one way or another, we feel a sense of accomplishment, and our brain gets a dollop of reward hormones telling us we accomplished something. Each time we check a Twitter feed or Facebook update, we encounter something novel and feel more connected socially (in a kind of weird, impersonal cyber way) and get another dollop of reward hormones.

5 Ways to Reduce Blue Light's Effects on Your Sleep

<https://www.healthiertech.co/reduce-blue-lights-effects/>

- The World Health Organization recommends 7-9 hours of quality sleep for optimal health. But 35% of the US population gets less than the recommended amount.
- Research studies say that the blue light from your screen-based gadgets suppresses your melatonin production, preventing you from having a good night's rest.
- Blue light is one of the seven visible lights in the visible light section of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- We get our daily blue light exposure from the sun. And because of that, our circadian rhythm is also based on it. Our brains tell your body it's time to trigger activity mode when exposed to the light from the sun.
- As the sun sets, your brain tells your body to start settling down. You start feeling drowsy, getting prepped for a good night's rest in the absence of the blue light, and triggering rest mode.
- There wouldn't be any problems if our blue light exposure was just from the sun. The problem is that LED screen-based devices and LED and fluorescent lighting also produce a huge amount of blue light and don't stop using these sources after sundown which exposure hampers our brain's ability to activate the rest mode. This causes you to toss and turn in the bed, and even if you finally doze off, your sleep quality won't be optimal.
- To reduce blue light effects:
 - Follow the two-hour rule: Stop using screens at least two hours before bed, so your eyes can adjust to the natural environment.
 - Dim your lights in the evening: LED and fluorescent bulbs also emit blue light. So, dim your lights in the evening. If you can't do it for your whole home, at least turn on the night lamp in your bedroom.
 - Enjoy offline activities after work: Offline activities like reading a book, cooking, or taking a walk help you reduce your screen time, improving your sleep.
 - Activate the blue light filter feature on your gadgets: Most modern devices come equipped with a blue light filter feature. Search online for instructions on your specific device.
 - Use SYB's blue light glasses or SYB Clip Ons: Try using the all-day blue light-blocking glasses from SYB. They're stylish, affordable, and, most importantly, highly effective.

What Is Blue Light? Is Blue Light From Electronic Gadgets Bad for Your Health?

<https://www.shieldyourbody.com/blue-light/>

- All electromagnetic radiations are essentially light. The difference is that you can only see the visible light part of the electromagnetic spectrum with your naked eyes.
- Clear white light from the sun is composed of seven visible colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet – or ROYGBIV.
- Blue light is a type of EMF (electromagnetic field) that sits in the middle of the visible light section of the electromagnetic spectrum. Unlike UV (Ultraviolet) light and infrared, it's visible to the naked eye.
- This light is present everywhere on Earth, as the sun, emits blue light. It's what keeps your body awake, boosts your attention, reaction times, and mood during daylight hours.
- The sun's blue light is extremely beneficial for humans, it has shaped our bodies to trigger an awakened state as soon as we see it. And if our exposure to this light were only from the sun, then there'd be no problems because the sun sets in the evening, ending our exposure.
- But, modern digital screens, LED bulbs, and fluorescent lighting also emit blue light, and we normally don't stop using these things after sundown.
- ROYGBIV lies in the same section of the electromagnetic spectrum as blue light, they're not identical. All these colors operate on different wavelengths, and we measure them in nanometers.

Color	Wavelength	Frequency
Red	620–750 nm	400–484 THz
Orange	590–620 nm	484–508 THz
Yellow	570–590 nm	508–526 THz
Green	495–570 nm	526–606 THz
Blue	450–495 nm	606–668 THz
Violet	380–445 nm	688–789 THz
	nm = Nanometer	THz = Terra Hertz

- Experts say that UV (similar to violet) and blue light are much more harmful than all the colors in visible light.
- Blue light has a shorter wavelength, and it operates at an extremely high frequency. Our eyes are not exactly good at blocking blue light, as they are at blocking lights operating at a lower frequency. Blue light passes through our cornea and reaches the retina, which can lead to weaker vision and premature aging of the eyes.

- Using these blue light-emitting sources when it's time for your body to shift into relaxation mode causes several imbalances in your body, which directly hampers your sleep.

Digital Overload: Read This If Your Screen Time Is Out of Hand

<https://www.goodrx.com/health-topic/mental-health/what-is-digital-overload>

- Digital overload is when using tech devices like smartphones, computers, or TV exposes you to more sensory information than you can process.
- Signs you may be experiencing digital overload include irritability, anxiety, vision problems, difficulty sleeping, and mood swings.
- To lower your risk for digital overload, try limiting your screen time to 2 hours per day outside work. You can also turn off notifications, create tech-free times, and use only one device at a time.
- A [2022 report](#) showed that, on average, adults in the U.S. spend more than 13 hours a day using phones, laptops, tablets, televisions, and gaming devices.
- Digital overload can result from habits such as:
 - **Spending too much time on your devices:** You can face digital burnout if you spend too much time online without taking regular breaks.
 - **Consuming too much information:** The amount of information you absorb online can pose a problem, too. Information is available around the clock from a seemingly infinite number of sources. Your brain needs a break from all that input.
 - **Media multitasking:** Your brain can also become overwhelmed when you use multiple devices at a time. However, media multitasking doesn't do you any favors. Research shows that people who media multitask perform poorly on tasks that require focus.
- Experts recommend less than 2 hours of screen time per day for most children under age 18. For children under age 5, pediatricians recommend even less screen time.
- Generally, adults should aim for less than 2 hours of screen time a day outside of work. This can help you avoid the problems associated with spending too much time online.
- Information overload is when you're faced with more information than you can process, a common result of digital overload. Research reveals that sorting through the immense amount of information online can be overwhelming for people.

How can I better manage my use of informational and digital technology?

- **Set time limits on your use.** For example, set an alarm that reminds you to put your device down after 30 minutes.
- **Use only one device at a time.** If you're on your computer, for instance, turn your phone off and set it aside.
- **Turn off unnecessary notifications.** This includes notifications from social media.
- **Plan your social media and news activities.** Instead of looking at your favorite social media and news sites throughout the day, check them once or twice a day at scheduled times.
- **Prioritize off-screen activities.** Take a walk, play a game with your family, or try cooking a new recipe.
- **Create tech-free times.** Plan to stop using your device at a certain time each night. Using your device's "do not disturb" function will keep your device-free time from getting interrupted.
- **Create tech-free zones.** For example, make the dining table a tech-free zone in your home.

How to Counteract Overstimulation

<https://blog.siegfriedgroup.com/counteract-overstimulation/>

- Overstimulation can come from many different aspects of life, but our reliance on technology and persistent remote work jobs has intensified the problem. These feelings can be seen as excessive mental or psychological stimulation that leaves you tired or overwhelmed. It manifests itself into stress, tension, or restlessness, and can heavily disrupt your daily routine.

Tactics to Counteract

- **Take technology breaks.** Taking a break from technology will do wonders to alleviate overstimulation.
 - You can also use devices to help use them less. For iPhone users, a weekly screen time report is sent every Sunday, and countless similar apps and reports exist to track device time. If the number on your weekly report scares you, you can set up time limits on your most used (or abused) apps. This will help reign in the time spent on your phone and help you get more of your life back.
- **Change your scenery.** Our homes weren't designed to become our main workspace. If you're feeling consistently fatigued, try changing up your environment: move your desk to a new room, shift your furniture to catch some more sun, or invest in a standing desk.

- **Take time to reduce your stress levels.** Take time away from your work to do the things you love. Or, practice mindfulness and holistic methods to be more in touch with your mind and body. Improving your mental health can improve your work environment and your work product as a result.

Reduce Screen Time

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/reduce-screen-time/index.htm>

- "Screen time" means television screens, computer monitors, and even the handheld devices we use for checking email, listening to music, watching TV, and playing video games on the go.
- Health experts say screen time at home should be limited to two hours or less a day. The time we spend in front of the screen unless it's work-related, could be better spent being more physically active (increasing our energy out in IRL).

Stats

- It is very hard for parents to set rules for their kids. In 8- to 18-year-olds:
 - 28% said their parents set TV-watching rules
 - 30% said their parents set rules about video game use
 - 36% said their parents set rules about computer use
- Children ages 8–18 spend the following amount of time in front of the screen each day:
 - Approximately 7.5 hours using entertainment media
 - Approximately 4.5 hours watching TV
 - Approximately 1.5 hours on the computer
 - Over an hour of playing video games
- There is a stark contrast to the 25 minutes per day that children spend reading books.
- Today's youth also have the following media in their bedrooms:
 - More than one in three have a computer and Internet access
 - Half are video game players
 - More than two out of three have TVs
 - Those with bedroom TVs spend an hour more in front of the screen than those without TVs
- (Source: Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, "Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds," January 2010)

Tips for Parents

- **Talk to Your Family.** This may seem too simple to work but explaining thoughts to your kids might help them understand why you want to enforce new healthy habits and might follow these rules in the first place. Try to get their input to understand why they believe what they believe instead of just lecturing them about what to do. Explain to your kids that it's important to sit less and move more to stay at a healthy weight. Tell them they'll also have more energy, and it will help them develop and/or perfect new skills
- **Set a Good Example.** You need to be a good role model and limit your screen time to no more than two hours per day, too. If your kids see you following your own rules, then they'll be more likely to do the same.
- **Log Screen Time vs. Active Time.** Start tracking how much time your family spends in front of a screen. Then take a look at how much physical activity they get. That way you'll get a sense of what changes need to be made.
- **Make Screen Time = Active Time.** When you do spend time in front of the screen, do something active. Challenge the family to see who can do the most push-ups, jumping jacks, or leg lifts during TV commercial breaks.
- **Set Screen Time Limits.** Create a house rule that limits screen time to two hours every day. More importantly, enforce the rule.
- **Create Screen-free Bedrooms.** Try to have spaces that are tech-free.
- **Make Meal Time = Family Time.** Turn off the TV during meals. Family meals are a good time to talk to each other.
- **Provide Other Options.** Give your kids ideas and/or alternatives, such as playing outside, getting a new hobby, or learning a sport.
- **Don't Use TV Time as a Reward or Punishment.** Give your kids ideas and/or alternatives, such as playing outside, getting a new hobby, or learning a sport.

Grayscale mode: Secret to reducing screen time and improving sleep patterns

<https://www.sportskeeda.com/health-and-fitness/grayscale-mode-secret-reducing-screen-time-improving-sleep-patterns>



- Grayscale mode on phones works by removing the color from the display of the device, making it appear in shades of gray. It can be done on both iOS and Android devices to help reduce screen time.
- Grayscale mode on phones can help reduce the visual stimulus that keeps people addicted to their phones. It can also help reduce eye strain and headaches caused by blue light emitted by electronic devices.
- Overall, grayscale mode on phones works by removing color from the display of the device. It can have different benefits, including reducing screen addiction, eye strain, and headaches and saving battery life.
- Your phone will require less power, as the elements of the GPU render only in these two colors.

Benefits

- Reduced screen time
 - Removing the colors from your phone's display makes it less engaging and less appealing. This can help you break the habit of constantly checking your phone and reduce the amount of time you spend on it without it forcing you to stop using it completely.
- Improved sleep
 - Blue light emitted by electronic devices can disrupt your sleep patterns by suppressing the production of melatonin. By using grayscale mode, you can

reduce the amount of blue light emitted by your phone's screen, making it easier for you to fall asleep and stay asleep.

- Reduced eye strain and headaches
 - Staring at a bright, colorful screen for extended periods can cause eye strain and headaches. Grayscale mode reduces the amount of visual stimulation.
- Increased productivity
 - Grayscale mode can help increase productivity by reducing distractions and making it easier to focus on your work.

How to enable grayscale mode to reduce screen time?

iPhone

- Go to Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size.
- Scroll down to the bottom and select "Color Filters."
- Toggle on "Color Filters."
- Select "Grayscale."

Android

The process for enabling grayscale mode on Android varies depending on the device and operating system. Here's a general guide:

- Go to Settings > Accessibility > Vision.
- Toggle on "Color Correction."
- Select "Color Correction Mode."
- Select "Grayscale."



Trapped - the secret ways social media is built to be addictive (and what you can do to fight back)

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/future-technology/trapped-the-secret-ways-social-media-is-built-to-be-addictive-and-what-you-can-do-to-fight-back>



- According toMoment, a time-tracking app with more than 4.8 million users, the average person spends nearly four hours on their phone every day. One-quarter of our waking lives are devoted to social media apps.
- Social media “literally changes your relationship with society, with each other,” said Sean Parker, the founding president of Facebook, at an event in Philadelphia around the same time. “It probably interferes with productivity in weird ways. God only knows what it’s doing to our children’s brains.”
- Apple’s chief executive Tim Cook has said that when it comes to his nephew: “There are some things that I won’t allow. I don’t want them on a social network.”
- The same creators of social media don’t want to participate in their own creations. Do they know something about their product that could be harmful to us?
- Facebook, for example, needs to make money because it’s a business. But you don’t have to pay to use Facebook. It says so right on their home page: “It’s free and always will be.” Those facts might sound contradictory, but they’re not.
- Facebook is free to use because we are not the customers. Instead, advertisers are the customers, and our attention is what’s being sold. Think about it: the more time you spend on a social media platform, the more opportunities there are for the platform to show you ads. Every minute you spend on social media is a minute spent making money for someone else. It’s also a minute spent voluntarily providing data that can be collected and sold.
- It explains why social media companies would want to capture our attention for as long and as frequently as possible: it’s profitable. To help you stay on the platform, they build features into their apps that manipulate our brain chemistry. These tricks are borrowed straight from casinos and slot machines, which are widely considered to be some of the most addictive machines ever invented.