



# PAUSE TOOL

FOR PROFESSIONALS

## OVER 50 IDEAS TO REGAIN CONTROL OVER SCREENS

Adopting good digital habits allows us to use screens in a more balanced and conscious way. Technology should be at our service, not the other way around. It's up to us to decide what's worth our time and attention when we go online. We also need to prioritize what's important to us and what makes a positive impact on our lives (staying informed, communicating with loved ones, finding sources of entertainment, getting work done, etc.). Of course, it's not always easy to change our habits – so here are a few ideas that you can apply to your own life and pass on to the young people in your care.

That being said, there's no magic formula, and it's best to try out different strategies in line with your own habits and reality. And it may involve some trial and error. The important thing is to persevere, despite the discomfort you or the young people you're helping may feel at first.



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## CHANGING YOUR SCREEN HABITS

1. **Schedule tech-free time:** Wait 1 hour after waking up, turn off 1 hour before bed, set aside during meals (at home or at the restaurant), etc.
2. **Identify tech-free zones:** Not in the bedroom, the car, the bathroom, etc.
3. **Focus on 1 screen at a time:** Cell OR tablet OR television... you'll be more relaxed and able to fully enjoy the online activity!
4. **Focus on 1 application at a time:** Try using just one app at a time instead of switching between Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat. Yes, it's possible!
5. **Turn off your screens when they're not in use,** including the TV, to prevent them from becoming a source of visual and audio distraction. It may seem trivial, but it can take a few minutes to get back into a task that has been interrupted by a notification.
6. **Try to keep a viewing distance of more than 40 cm from your screens and take regular breaks to look into the distance** in order to protect your eyes. Whenever possible, adjust ambient lighting and try to avoid looking at your devices in the dark.
7. **Stop answering immediately.** By constantly responding to your various messages, you lose your concentration and, moreover, you get into the habit of constantly checking your device.
8. **Define your hours of availability.** If possible, let your colleagues know during what windows of time you will be online, emphasizing that you will not reply to messages outside these hours. If you receive messages after these defined periods, wait until the next day to check them.
9. **Put your phone away:** Either by leaving it in a different room at home, or by deliberately forgetting it when you leave the house.
10. **Reprogram your brain:** Set your timer to 15 minutes and don't touch your cell before it rings. This will train you to be near your phone without constantly checking it and reduce the fear of missing out. Then try 20 minutes, then 30 minutes, etc.
11. **Only check messages once per hour:** Check your messages and texts once every hour at the most to start. Then every 2 hours... then only twice a day?! Don't worry, the world won't stop turning!
12. **Take a break:** Put your phone on airplane mode, set an alarm for the duration of the break you want to take (15 min, 30 min, 45 min, etc.), and put your cell away in a drawer.
13. **Dare to turn off your device!** Consider just completely turning off your cell or tablet for a few minutes, a few hours or even the whole day.



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14. **Buy an alarm clock** to keep your phone out of the bedroom. Charge your cell in another room like such as the kitchen or living room.
15. **Game in small doses** for fun and not to be the champion of the leaderboard. It's normal to enjoy competition and to want to be the best but try putting energy into other areas of your life.
16. **Distinguish between you and your avatar.** The avatar can battle all night without being tired the next day. You can't.
17. **Choose paper alternatives.** For example, use a paper planner instead of a digital one, or printed books for reading (when possible). This helps limit the amount of time spent looking at a screen.
18. **Record your impressions after a moment of unplugging.** Take note of how you feel after some time away from screens. This reflective practice can help you realize the benefits of unplugging and encourage you to adjust your habits.

## MAKING THE MOST OF THOSE AROUND YOU

1. **Explain why.** When you pick up your cell while you're around other people, explain why you're doing it. But also, is it an automatic reflex or for an important reason? What message are you sending others?
2. **Talk to your family and friends:** Ask them what they think of your screen use. Do they feel like you're really available when you're with them?
3. **Set screen-free challenges between friends:** At the restaurant, coffee shop, or corner bar, place all cells face down – the first person to pick up their device has to pay the bill.
4. **Give 100% of your attention:** Whether you're talking to someone, attending a meeting, or sharing a meal, be fully present by turning off your cell.
5. **Distinguish real-life friends from online friends** you've probably never met and can't necessarily count on.
6. **Be where you really want to be!** Rather than logging on out of habit to play online games or check your social networks, ask yourself: "Is this really what I want to be doing?" This allows you to practise being fully present.



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## PAYING ATTENTION TO YOUR MOOD

1. **Ask yourself questions before** checking your cell, tablet or computer. Is it for a specific reason? Is it because you're bored or to calm your anxiety? Is it really important? Can it wait?
2. **Ask yourself questions after** using your cell, tablet or computer. How does it feel? Do you feel satisfied, relaxed, anxious, depressed?
3. **Aim for connections that feel good.** Whether it's through your choice of applications, websites, influencers or trends you follow, social networks, etc.
4. **Avoid retouching** your photos and applying filters to your face because this habit can drive you to compare yourself with a modified version of what you look like. This can lead to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the way you really look.

## CONFIGURING YOUR SCREENS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

1. **Prioritize your notifications.** For example, keep notifications and alerts on only for your schedule, texts and calls so you can be reached in case of an emergency. Turn off all other audio or visual notifications.
2. **Disable autoplay** on your Netflix or YouTube accounts, for example, so that they stop playing after a single episode or video.
3. **Assess the time you spend on your cell every day** using your phone's built-in application or another application. Then set a daily goal for more balanced, conscious use.
4. **Put some space** between you and certain applications. Discover the Space app, which imposes a 10-second delay before opening the applications you're a little too into.
5. **Avoid bingeing:** Adjust the settings of some social networks so they turn off after a predetermined amount of viewing time (e.g. YouTube after 15 minutes of viewing).
6. **Clean up your home screen - 101.** How? Place your frequently used apps in folders so they are kind of "hidden," as a way to slow you down when you want to check them.
7. **Clean up your home screen - 201.** To go a step further, remove these same apps from your cell. If you still want to access them, you'll have to use a search engine.



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## GIVING YOURSELF SOME SCREEN-FREE TIME

1. **Take advantage of lines:** While you're waiting in line at the grocery store, restaurant, or bus stop, try to resist taking out your cell. Instead, use the time to breathe, relax, observe, listen and let your imagination entertain you a bit...
2. **Enjoy the experience:** A beautiful meal? Something funny? A gorgeous rainbow? Resist the temptation to take out your cell and share it. Fully appreciate the present moment.
3. **Shop more in stores** rather than online: it's a great way to support the local economy, meet people, be more eco-friendly... and spend less time sitting!
4. **Carry a book or a magazine in your bag** so you have an alternative form of entertainment.
5. **Plan screen-free activities:** Go outside, spend time with a friend or enjoy a moment free of technology. *See the list below.*

## LESS SCREEN TIME MEANS MORE TIME TO...

1. Hang out with friends, spend time with family, talk to neighbours, etc.
2. Be active: From biking and climbing to CrossFit and hiking, everyone has their own way to get moving.
3. Cook instead of buying premade meals.
4. Sleep... yes, please!
5. Really "be there" and attentive to those around you, ready to listen and support them.
6. Really be present and focused so you can do better in school or at work.
7. Have meaningful conversations with people... and maybe find the love of your life?
8. Read, draw, write, knit, play music... take time for yourself to relax, with no comparisons or competition.
9. Play chess, cards, or a board game.
10. Go on short outings or plan a getaway.
11. Take advantage of your city's free facilities: parks, libraries, etc.
12. Travel and explore while being 100% present.
13. Get involved in the community, volunteer, etc.

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