**9 Ways to Start and Stick to a Digital Detox**

1. Make a gadget list

"Before you commit to a detox, try making two lists," advises Dr Sally-Ann Law (http://www.sallyannlaw-lifecoach.co.uk/index.html), a psychologist and personal life coach.

"Firstly, list all of your gadgets. This will show you how dependent you are on technology. Secondly, make a list of all the things that you enjoy doing in life, but aren't doing presently."

2. Give yourself an allowance

"If you establish a maximum daily time allowance for your devices then you will be more likely to stick to your detox," suggests Dr Richard Graham (http://www.nightingalehospital.co.uk/specialist/dr-richard-graham/), a Technology Addiction Specialist at Nightingale Hospital.

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Dr Richard Graham

"By restricting the time you spend using technology, you can focus on the 'real world' much more, and will be encouraged to enjoy social interactions in person rather than through a screen."

3. Don't set unachievable targets

Although an allowance is important, London-based life coach Carole Ann Rice (http://www.realcoachingco.com/) believes that digital detoxes are something one needs to ease into.

"In order to completely sever your dependency, it would be a good idea to first simply set small limits for each day. Be this during exercise time, your lunch break, or when out shopping, if you slowly eliminate technology from various parts of your day, your detox will be easier to stick at. Habitual rituals help us achieve our targets, but only if they are achievable themselves."

4. Commit to changing one habit at a time

"Choose one technology habit to change at a time," advises Dr Law. "Maybe this would be banning all devices from the dining table, or from the bedroom, or only checking emails every two hours."

“Choose one technology habit to change at a time, and make sure that you stick to it for at least a week no matter what, and then move onto tackling another.”

Dr Sally Ann Law

But whatever it is, make sure that you stick to it for at least a week no matter what - and then move onto tackling another habit." Keep going like this, eliminating your dependencies incrementally, until you feel more in control," says Dr Law.

5. Ensure you get enough sleep

**HOW TO | Break your addiction to your phone**

By Martin Talks of travel and consultancy business Digital Detoxing

Try ‘phone stacking’ in a meeting or at a family meal. Everyone puts their device in the middle of the table and the first to reach for theirs has to do a forfeit, such as to make tea for everyone, buy the next round or wash up.

Keep tech out of the bedroom: light from screens stops production of the hormone melatonin, which is vital for getting to sleep, so leave them to charge in a different room when you go to bed.

Keep your phone out of sight and reach when you’re driving. Even hands-free phone systems slow reaction times as people don’t concentrate on the road. Don’t eat at your desk. Go outside at lunchtime instead. Not only does it get you away from your screen, it stops you from sitting down too long – also very bad for you.

Go on a digital detox holiday. Take a break from social media, work emails and texts. And if you lack the self-control, try a specifically designed break, such as the ones we run at digitaldetoxing.com.

    

"Try storing devices in a different room to your bedroom overnight," suggests Dr Graham. "This will stop yourself using them straight before sleep, and first thing in the morning - which is important as sleep issues can sometimes coexist with technology addiction."

Make sure you turn all screens off at least two hours before bed - that means no phone, no laptop, no iPad. "Your bedroom is for sleeping - so don't turn it into a cinema, a shopping centre, a bank or a casino."

6. Make an effort to give others your attention

"You should make the effort to give people your undivided attention," says Rice. "Focus on how rude people will think you are if you're constantly checking your phone or texting away - and this will make your more likely to give them 100 per cent of your attention."

Don't spend social time with others on your smartphone

If you're still struggling, take away temptation. "Try timing your emails so they only download to your smartphone every two or three hours. This will mean that your time and energy isn't dissipated by constant distractions, and you can then deal with your day's emails and notifications in a concentrated period of allotted time per day."

7. Find a detox buddy

"Things are always easier when you team up with someone," says Dr Law, "So why not pair up with a 'detox buddy'? With this support, you can discuss your progress, encourage each other to keep going and spend time together face-to-face rather than messaging through a screen. A detox buddy will keep you honest."

8. Leave your gadgets at home

"We are ever-curious about what others are up to then we compare and despair," says Rice. "So try leaving your gadgets at home, or just going out without your headphones once in a while.

“You may find that you miss very little, and will have more time to do more with your life than spending it watching other people's worlds through a screen.”

Carole Ann Rice

"Rather than thinking life without your iPod is boring, get used to listening to birdsong when out on a run.

"You may find that you miss very little, and will have more time to do more with your life than spending it watching other people's worlds through a screen."

9. Tell everyone what you're doing

"The more people you tell about your detox, the more people will be watching you - and the less you will want to fail," Dr Graham explains.

By banning devices from various spaces around the house, such as the dining table, it will be easier to kick your technology dependency CREDIT: ALAMY

"Setting an example to friends or family is a great way to motivate yourself. Try leaving phones on silent or switched off during meal times - something which is particularly important for children and young people who learn behavior from their parents."