



EFR EMPLOYEE & FAMILY RESOURCES

The Importance of Unplugging for Your Health

What's the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? If you're like most of the population, you reach for your phone that is conveniently sitting right next to you on your night stand or under your pillow. We tend to see what the world is doing even before we start our own day.

Technology has its many benefits and the majority of us use it each and every day for work, connecting with friends and family, information etc. Technology is ever evolving, and researchers are just starting to understand what role technology plays in our health and wellbeing.

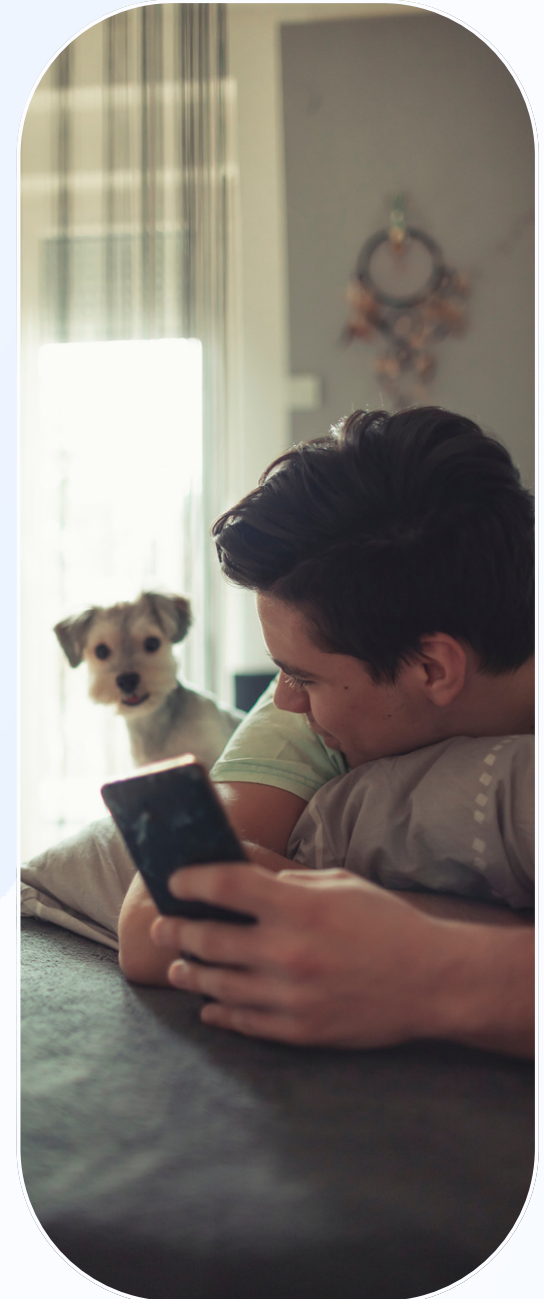


Why Unplug?

Overuse of technology has shown to

- increase your risk for mental illness and sleep problems
- lead to increased eye strain and stress
- can worsen Attention Deficit Disorder symptoms
- contribute to brain fog.

Even if you don't consider yourself a heavy tech user, there are many reasons you may benefit from unplugging from technology once in a while:



FOMO is a real thing

The fear of missing out, otherwise known as FOMO, is a new psychological disorder brought on by recent technology advances. We see our friends and family having fun, going on vacation and enjoying a great meal, and we want to be a part of it! We are continuously being flooded with notifications of things happening all around us. Unplugging can help us live in the present moment.



Increased solitude and self-reflection

We are more connected than ever, and this leaves us less time for meditation, self-reflection and solitude. Sometimes, it's just good to get away and evaluate our lives, where we want to be, or what's important to us, without the constant distraction.



You'll have the chance to see and experience what's going on around you

With our faces constantly buried in our phones, we miss all the wonderful things happening around us. These life experiences come and go, but we end up missing them because we're too focused on what other people are doing.

Unplugging decreases feelings of jealousy, envy and loneliness

Often after visiting Facebook, many people report feeling worse than they did before they got on the site. We are constantly bombarded with what everyone else is doing and accomplishing. We scroll through pages of vacation photos, engagements, parties etc. and before we know it, we're less satisfied with our own lives. Unplugging allows for us to focus and be thankful for what we do have.



Once taken away, you can better understand your reliance on technology

We don't truly understand our addiction until the object is taken away. It's important to understand the true role of technology in your life. Once understood, you can better identify when and if you need a break. All these things can cause toxic stress and a host of physical and mental problems. **So, how do you identify whether your use of technology has gone too far? And what can you do about it?**

Ask yourself:

- Do you constantly check your phone and email even if there's no need to?
- Do you have a panic attack when you can't find your phone?
- Do you have chargers everywhere you go?
- Does technology keep you up at night?

If you've answered yes to some of these, it may be a good idea to unplug from technology and take a break.



How do you go about unplugging?

- Commit to zero technology for the first hour you're awake. Focus on stretching, meditation, and your upcoming day.
- Choose a power down hour during your day. Maybe it is in the morning as suggested above, or maybe you want the break at lunch or before bed.
- Schedule time to take extended breaks. Choose days throughout the year where you only use your phone for texting and calling.
- Take a moment to visit your favorite destination and leave your phone behind. Go outside and enjoy nature without sharing it.



Unplugging can be very tough at first and is a skill that must be developed with continued practice and discipline. Once you make time to unplug and silence the world around you, even if just for a little while, you can start to look forward to the benefits of better sleep, less stress, and an improved mood. Life is all about experiencing new things. Don't let technology limit your experiences, happiness and affect your health!