

# Study Skills: Managing Screen Time (General Tips)

**Category: Health and Wellness | Academic Preparedness and Success Tools | - Organization and Study Tools | Wellness Related to Studying | - Non-Screen Time**

## Location

Study Habits: Managing Screen Time

## Description

**WHAT IS SCREEN TIME?** Screen time is the amount of time users spend looking at an electronic device with a screen such as a smartphone, tablet, computer, television, or video game console.

**WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED DAILY SCREEN TIME?** The Mayo Clinic recommends that teens and adults limit their daily screen time to two hours per day. For children between the ages of 2 to 12, 1 hour per day is the suggested limit and no screen time for children under 2 years old.

**WHAT IS THE CURRENT AVERAGE DAILY SCREEN TIME?** According to multiple sources, the average American can spend between 7 to 12 hours per day in front of a screen, between personal devices, computers and televisions.

**WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME?** Excessive screen time impacts health negatively in multiple ways:

### PHYSICALLY:

• Sedentary life-style can lead to weight gain/obesity

• Digital eye strain (According to the [American Optometric Association \(AOA\)](#), "computer vision syndrome" describes several vision-related problems (e.g., eye strain, dry eyes, blurred vision, etc.) that result from prolonged computer, smartphone, tablet and e-reader use.)

• Headaches

• Neck and shoulder pain from poor posture

### SOCIALLY:

• Lack of interactions with other people in the household can lead to strained relationships

### NEUROLOGICALLY

• Reduced attention span

• Anxiety

• Depression

• Sleep disturbance (For sleeping tips, visit "[Study Skills: Sleep Habits \(General Tips\)](#)")

**AT WHAT POINT DOES AN EXCESSIVE ACTIVITY BECOME DISORDER?** According to the [Clinic for Interactive Media and Internet Disorders \(CIMAID\)](#), an excessive activity becomes a disorder when the behavior causes problems with sleep, school, social functioning and various aspects of physical and mental health. Today electronic devices with screens, such as smartphones and laptops, are a big part of everyday life, especially for college students' academic and social lives. It can become difficult to determine if an individual is simply using electronic devices to get numerous daily tasks finished (e.g., writing an essay, communicating with professors, classmates, friends, family, etc.) or if an individual may have a disorder.

**HOW CAN STUDENTS MANAGE THEIR SCREEN TIME?** Students can manage their screen time by:

• Increasing self-awareness of screen time by tracking quantity of screen time across all personal devices

• Setting reminders to take periodic breaks from screen time

• Reducing apps and websites on personal devices that may be less productive (e.g., use assistive technology to block apps and websites for certain amount of time each day, etc.)

• Setting non-screen zones, either time blocks or zones in the home (e.g., dinner time, bedtime, bedroom, etc.)

With a heavy course schedule, reducing screen time to recommended time limits may be nearly impossible. To help maintain health while exceeding daily recommended screen times, students can do the following:

• Follow the [20-20-20](#) rule, take a 20 second break to view something 20 feet away every 20 minutes.

• Use screen filters (e.g., reduce glare, reduce "blue light" that impacts the production of the [melatonin](#) hormone that regulates sleep cycles, etc.)

• Take daily vitamins to support good eye health.

• Get regular eye exams and monitor the need for new glasses.

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