**Weapons of Mass Distraction? 4 ways to reduce your social media usage**

Let’s admit it. A lot of us are addicted to social media. We use it to post our life stories, showcase our talents, stay in touch with friends, and promote our businesses. But the reality is that social media comes with a lot of negative effects as well. Social media can sometimes promote competition, comparison, and anxiety. It can also reduce sleep, self-esteem, mental health, and your attention span.

According to a [study](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S174014451730517X#!) done by York University, women in particular suffer from this constant comparison that social media allows. It damages self-esteem harshly. Additionally, according to another [study](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/11/181108164316.htm) done by the University of Pennsylvania, using less social media than you normally would actually leads to a decrease in depression and loneliness. BUT, completely eliminating social media is a pretty unrealistic goal in this day and age. So the following tips will give you ways to limit your social media use.

**Sometimes you don’t need a notification tell you it’s your third cousin’s birthday**

Luckily, your phone has settings that allow you to turn off notifications on social media apps. When your phone lights up on your desk, it is stealing time that you could use in a more productive way.

As [Tristan Harris](https://qz.com/quartzy/1416069/turn-off-push-notifications-for-better-mental-health/), a tech ethicist said, “a notification is a moment that takes your brain from a place that it was to another one entirely. And it does it without consent.” Turning off your social media notifications allows you to only check the apps when your brain actually feels inclined to, and you will no longer be robbed of time.

**Your phone isn’t your significant other, you don’t need to sleep with it**

Sleeping with your phone right next to you opens up many more opportunities to scroll through your social media accounts before bed. The [blue light](https://www.health.com/mind-body/3-reasons-not-to-sleep-with-your-phone-in-your-bed) of a phone screen is known to inhibit the production of melatonin which makes us sleepy. That means that social media is also taking our sleep away from us! To avoid this, try putting your phone on a table across the room from your bed before heading to sleep.

**Check in with yourself. Is your social media adding something to your life?**

Sometimes we forget to sit down and think about why we even choose to use social media. If you do a mental check-in and create a pros and cons list about each of your social media apps, you may find that you can delete a few of them altogether.

**Change your FOMO to FOMTP**

FOMO or “fear of missing out” is a serious negative effect on social media. Social media allows us to see what our friends and peers are doing constantly. This gives space for jealousy and comparison. According to a [study](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/ritual-and-the-brain/201804/the-science-fomo-and-what-we-re-really-missing-out) done by McGill University, those who experience FOMO are more likely to miss out on sleep. FOMTP stands for “fear of missing the present.” If you can reframe the way you think about FOMO and switch to FOMTP, then you may start living more in the moment and stop thinking about what others are doing. Consider incorporating some of these tips in your everyday life. They just might help you increase your overall level of happiness.