

Digital Detox Checklist: 8 Ways To Balance Constant Checking

By Samantha Durbin

I'm guilty of constant checking. And if you notice people walking in the streets and on public transportation, you would think that more than [43% of Americans are "constant checkers"](#) who can't stay away from social media. Being obsessively plugged in can lead to increased stress because rapidly changing stimuli can trigger unhealthy emotional responses more often than not. The more you tune into that screen, the more you tune out living in the moment. If you find your screen time is feeling more like a bad habit than a fun pastime, there are many things you can do to keep things real. Here's eight.

- 1) Go back to your trusty computer. Deleting social media apps from your phone will ward off temptations to impulsively check Facebook or Instagram while you're on the go. This makes checking social media feel more special and less mindless—and gives you boundaries for checking—allowing you to carve out times with your laptop to see what's happening.
- 2) If you want to replace social media apps, do so with learning or relaxing apps. Listen to a book via Audible, TED talks or a podcast during your commute instead of checking. Find new music through Pandora or Spotify. Explore a meditation app like Calm or Sattva. Look out the window and enjoy the view or smile at your commute neighbor on the train instead of being part of the 43%.
- 3) Wind down from checking when you get home from work. Switching off social media and turning evenings into relaxing, real-life social time with yourself (Me time!), your partner, or your family sets you up for a better nights sleep. Exercising, reading, cooking, socializing and meditating are quality activities that soothe the soul.
- 4) Stop texting, start dating. Eye contact, tangents, good food, and even better conversation, there's nothing like catching up with friends in real life. It's tiring having long-winded text conversations with friends who live near you; take that typing and turn it into planning. As for long distance friendships, use your smartphone for what it was originally intended for and call your friends. Sometimes all authenticity requires is fifteen minutes or a voicemail, and you're left with that warm, fuzzy feeling quality friendships are all about.
- 5) When you're on a date, disinvite your phone. If you're the first to arrive, resist checking while you wait and look around, take in the atmosphere and watch people, notice the sights, sounds and smells surrounding you. If something comes up you want to "Google," resist grabbing for your phone and try to remember by using your good 'ol brain or just let it go and move on to the next conversation thread. No biggie. If you want to show a photo, consider if it's worth interrupting your real face time to share. And doesn't a phone sitting

on the table by your food just feel unhealthy now?

6) Write with your fingers instead of your thumbs. One sign of a constant checker is tightness in the hands (and an achy neck and dry eyes from staring at a lowered small screen). For screen breaks at work, take handwritten notes at meetings. Instead of texting with a friend, take the time to send an email with a juicy update on what's going on with you. And sending a paper card by snail mail is classically charming.

7) Get outside. We've sprung forward and even if you're blanketed in snow, fresh air beckons. Take #4 and plan a walk or hike for your friend date. Take a twenty-minute walk, and leave your phone at work or home, and reflect on your day or week or year, and let your mind wander and your imagination ignite. Compliment a stranger on the sidewalk, try a new cafe for your caffeine fix, take a different way home that gives you more steps and more refreshing air.

8) Vacate when you're on vacation. People have always taken photos while on vacation to help capture the fun. But when did it become customary to interrupt getaways with posting photos right then and there? If you think about it, it's not necessary and forces you to stay plugged in. The benefits of posting photos after a vacation are that you can truly live in the now when you're there and relive the awesome moments and sights when you post them after it's over. #latergram.

What are some ways you've created constant checking balance?