

This is my guide on how to stop scrolling.

As an overview, first I'm going to explain why scrolling addiction is bad. I'll go beyond the obvious reasons like "it distracts me from work" and so on. Instead, I'll talk about the more scientific and esoteric reasons—how scrolling messes with your brain chemistry, motivation, and mindset.

Then I'll tell you how to overcome this. I'll start with a cheat method. For those of you lucky enough to use it, you'll have an easy way out of scrolling. For those who aren't, I'll give you an alternative method so you can still break free.

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<https://www.skool.com/med-launch-4672/about?ref=b9d6fa40edd845a0a21b1bb662142c74>

## Why Scrolling Is So Damaging

The first reason scrolling is so harmful is that it replaces your natural urges to work and improve yourself with an easy but ineffective alternative. Instead of making progress, you end up stuck in a cycle of scrolling, which only strengthens the urge and creates what I call an *infinite doom spiral*.

Let's take studying as an example. Your goal is to study, but instead you find yourself scrolling. When you put off studying, negative emotions start to build: fear of failing the exam and disappointing others, shame at your inability to resist distraction, and frustration with yourself. These feelings are uncomfortable, and your brain wants relief.

There are two ways out. The first—the hard way—is to face the problem directly by doing the work. Once you start studying, those negative feelings begin to ease because you've addressed the root cause. The second—the easy way—is to ignore the problem. But ignoring emotions on its own is difficult, so your brain looks for something external to latch onto.

That's where scrolling comes in. The algorithms behind social media feeds are designed to capture your attention effortlessly, giving your brain the perfect escape. Hours can slip by as you jump between apps, distracting yourself from the discomfort.

The problem is that this only makes things worse. By the end of a scrolling session, your negative emotions have intensified. You're even further behind on your goals, and the deadline is closer. The next day, those feelings are stronger, and once again, scrolling seems like the easiest way out. This is how the doom spiral perpetuates itself.

## Hedonic Adaptation and the Second Doom Spiral

The second reason scrolling is so damaging is something called **hedonic adaptation**. When you spend hours scrolling every day for months or even years, your brain adapts to a high level of constant stimulation. Over time, activities that once felt tolerable—or even enjoyable—such as studying, become comparatively dull. Studying starts to feel boring and difficult, while scrolling feels normal and effortless.

This creates a second doom spiral. The less engaging work becomes, the more you avoid it, and the more you turn to scrolling instead.

There's also a corollary that makes things worse. Once studying feels harder, the moment you actually sit down to do it, you'll be flooded with distracting thoughts urging you to scroll. These

thoughts constantly tug at your attention, pulling you out of a flow state and making it even harder to focus.

One symptom of this cycle is being easily distracted every time you try to work. It's worth noting: this can *feel* a lot like ADHD. But in many cases, it isn't ADHD at all—it's a byproduct of scrolling addiction.

## The Relaxation Trap

The third reason scrolling is so damaging is that, for many people, it creates a **relaxation trap**. When you work or study, there's a natural limit to how long you can focus before your brain needs a break. For most people, this cap is around 90 minutes. If years of scrolling have already weakened your focus, your upper limit might be closer to 45 minutes. (Later in this guide, I'll cover ways to rebuild and extend that limit.)

Once you hit that cognitive wall, you naturally want a break. The trap comes when you spend that break scrolling. Many people see scrolling as a way to "relax" and assume it will recharge them. But scrolling isn't relaxing—it's the opposite. It's overstimulating.

You can test this yourself. Scroll for an hour, or even just follow your usual routine, and then check how motivated you feel compared to before. Chances are, you'll feel *less* motivated. That's because scrolling drains your mental resources instead of restoring them.

So, how do you actually rest? Here are a few things that have worked well for me:

1. **Do something social.** Call a friend, chat with a roommate, or grab lunch with someone. Even a short interaction can be surprisingly restorative.
2. **Do something mildly physical.** For me, this has included going on a walk, absentmindedly cleaning dishes, or taking a shower. These autopilot physical tasks let my mind unwind while my body moves.
3. **Do nothing at all.** Sometimes the best reset has been to simply close my eyes, lean back, and let my thoughts wander for a few minutes.

By treating breaks as a chance to genuinely rest rather than overstimulate, you return to studying with more clarity and focus—something scrolling will never give you.

## Method Zero: Cheating Through Social and Environmental Change

The first approach to overcoming scrolling addiction is what I call **Method Zero**—cheating through social and environmental change. I call it “cheating” because for the small group of people who can use it, this method is basically an overnight cure. But it’s also the least accessible. Only people in very specific life stages or financial positions can pull it off. If you’re one of them, great—you should take advantage of it. If not, don’t worry; there are plenty of other methods later in this guide.

So why does social and environmental change work? Let me start with an analogy from the Vietnam War. During the war, a large percentage of American soldiers regularly used heroin. But when they returned home, more than 95% of them were able to quit almost immediately. That’s staggering, especially compared to the long, difficult recovery most addicts face.

Researchers have proposed a few explanations:

1. Their **social environment** completely shifted—family, community, and national pride created pressure not to use.
2. Their **triggers** disappeared—many were tied to the context of Vietnam and weren’t present back home.
3. Their **access** to heroin dropped sharply.
4. They were able to **mentally compartmentalize** their Vietnam experience from their life in the U.S., helping them break the cycle.

The point is, environment and social context matter enormously when it comes to addiction. And we can apply those same principles to scrolling.

### When Environment Change Is Possible

There are really only two times you can do this:

- **When you’re moving for school.** If you’re heading off to college, medical school, or some other major life transition, use it as a reset. It’s one of the best opportunities you’ll ever get to optimize your environment.

- **When you're financially able to relocate.** If you can afford to move to a new city, country, or community of like-minded people, you can leverage that new setting to break old habits.

Of course, most people won't be able to do either—and that's fine. Skip ahead if this doesn't apply to you.

### **How to Optimize a New Environment**

If you *are* in a position to reset, there are two main goals:

1. **Reduce your triggers.** Don't bring the remnants of your old scrolling habits into your new environment. If gaming setups or specific furniture feed the habit, leave them behind. Even small changes—like not bringing that extra-long charging cable you always used to scroll in bed—can help.
2. **Optimize your social environment.** This is even more powerful. Surround yourself with people who share your goals. Ideally, live with someone you're in friendly competition with—someone who also wants to study hard and cut out distractions. When your roommate is just as disciplined, you can't fake it. The constant social reinforcement makes it much harder to slip back into old habits.

### **Bonus: Leverage It for a Dopamine Detox**

One extra advantage of changing your environment is that it finally makes a **dopamine detox** feasible. In most contexts, detoxes are extremely difficult as you're surrounded by triggers and a lack of support. But with the right social and environmental scaffolding, detoxing becomes not only possible but incredibly effective. It can help reset your dopamine baseline and give you a fresh start with your attention and motivation.

## The Value Equation: Changing How Your Brain Weighs Scrolling vs. Studying

If you're not able to use the "cheat method" of environment change, the next two concepts will be your most effective tools for overcoming scrolling. To explain the first, let's talk about your brain's **value equation**.

Every time you pick up your phone, your brain is making a subconscious calculation: it's comparing the value of scrolling against the value of studying. Right now, scrolling often "wins" because your brain has been tricked into seeing it as more rewarding.

The solution is simple in theory:

- Realize that scrolling isn't actually that good.
- Realize that studying isn't actually that bad.

Both sides of the equation need to shift for lasting change.

### Why Self-Reflection Is Essential

You can't just know this cognitively. You already know scrolling wastes time. This isn't a knowledge problem, it's an **emotional problem**. You scroll because you *feel* like scrolling, not because you logically decided it was the best choice.

That's why self-reflection is so important. Journaling is how you transform an intellectual understanding ("scrolling is bad") into an emotional one ("I actually feel worse after scrolling"). When I did this consistently, it became one of the only methods that actually shifted my behavior.

For me, the process was simple. Every night, I'd open the Notes app on my phone and voice-dictate short reflections. These included how scrolling made me feel, how studying compared, what discomforts or frustrations I noticed. I didn't use a saved template at first, just a mental list of prompts I cycled through.

It's also crucial that you don't become complacent in this practice. Journaling is similar to going to the gym - if you hit a certain weight on bench press and then just stop, you will lose your muscle. It's the same with these realizations. You need to reinforce these realizations constantly or you'll end up losing the benefits and realizations you've come to.

## Concept 1: Realizing Scrolling Isn't a True Pleasure

Step one is to revisit the earlier parts of this guide and remind yourself why scrolling is harmful.

Step two is emotional: reflect on your own experience until it really sinks in that scrolling doesn't provide fulfillment. Notice how you feel while scrolling (usually checked out/depressed) and afterward (much worse than before). For me, recognizing how *negative* scrolling actually felt was probably the most important realization in overcoming my scrolling addiction.

Step three is reinforcement: build reminders and systems to help you hold onto those realizations. Here are a few ways I did this:

- **Save your reflections.** When I had a particularly powerful insight, I'd revisit my notes app the following day and clean up the grammar/expand on my realizations. Then inevitably, I would end up in a situation where despite knowing that I needed to study, I would still have a deep emotional desire to scroll. I'd then read that text, which almost served as evidence that my brain was creating false thoughts/memories about the "enjoyment" of scrolling, allowing me to resist that urge.
- **Add friction.** I keep my phone in another room while studying, this seems to work well for me. I also looked into apps that lock distracting apps or add extra steps before you can open them, but that didn't help as much.
- **Use reminders.** If you're finding yourself scrolling almost as if you're on autopilot, you might want to try setting reminders in your phone to stop scrolling.

There are endless small techniques you can use. For me, the combination of revisiting past reflections and keeping my phone physically out of reach worked best. Your mileage may vary, but I strongly recommend starting with reflection—it's the foundation that makes the other strategies actually stick.

## **Concept 2: Realizing Studying isn't That Bad**

So now that we've covered part one of the equation, which is realizing how bad scrolling actually makes you feel emotionally, we are now going to talk about how to realize that studying isn't as bad as your brain says it is.

I'll preface this with an experience of mine that I've found is very common. Before I was disciplined and consistent with studying, I studied in a very erratic way. Maybe a few days here and there out of a week, just a few hours sprinkled in whenever I got a sudden burst of motivation or whenever a deadline was quickly approaching. Upon reflection, and again reflection is very important, I noticed that I would always feel good at the end of a study session. I never felt depressed or dysregulated. I felt as if I had accomplished something. I felt a little proud of myself, and I felt happy that I had done something I should do.

That is the first technique we're going to cover in this section: understanding through reflection that studying actually makes you feel better. The end goal here is to be in a position where you fix your negative emotions by solving the problem that is generating them, and a key step toward that is this realization. Once you understand this, you'll be able to leverage that knowledge and study much more consistently.

### **Key Realizations**

There are a few realizations you'll need to discover for yourself. Your exact process may vary, but these are the ones I found most important.

The first one, like I mentioned before, is realizing that you feel significantly better after a study session. That to me was very important. Another really important realization for me was changing my relationship with discomfort. A lot of us think of discomfort as something inherently negative, and that seems obvious and logical. But it doesn't actually have to be that way. In reality, many people end up finding some level of joy or stimulation in discomfort by shifting their mental focus to certain aspects of the activity. For example, a lot of people enjoy the thrill of horror movies, even though that's supposed to be a negative experience. Many people also like the serotonin release that comes from heavy exercise.

With studying, the first thing I focused on, like I said earlier, was the sense of accomplishment, self-satisfaction, and pride. Shifting my attention to that instead of the discomfort helped me a lot.



The second thing to look at is not just the feeling after studying but the feeling during studying. If that feeling can be positive, then everything becomes much easier because it's more immediate. And this isn't something genetic or confined to a certain group of people. It is possible to make studying more enjoyable. Honestly, for me this realization and process was just as important as realizing that studying made me feel better at the end of a session.

### **Making Studying More Enjoyable**

So how do we make studying more enjoyable? To begin with, we need to use study techniques that are appropriately engaging. I have an entire section in [this](#) attached document talking about that. And then again, we need to reflect on these experiences once we've mastered enjoyable study techniques.

## **Improving Your Baseline**

Okay, so we've covered the major aspects of avoiding scrolling and studying instead. This last section is about improving your baseline ability to supplement the realizations you had earlier.

To recap, we first spoke about how scrolling has several negative effects, and then how it becomes a self-perpetuating trap. We talked about the brain's value equation and how, because it is seeking easy pleasure, it makes scrolling appear more appealing than it is and makes studying appear more painful than it truly is. Finally, we talked about how self-reflection and supplementary techniques can break that equation by recognizing the pain in scrolling and the pleasure and reward in studying.

These realizations are important, which is why I mentioned them first. They are the main attack you are going to use against your urge to scroll. But you also need to understand that in this battle, you are never going to have a perfect cure. You can only shift the difficulty of resisting your urge to scroll. The sections above are the main ways to make it easier to resist scrolling and study instead. The following techniques are things you can incorporate in parallel to further increase your ability to resist scrolling and other negative urges.

## **Meditation**

The first technique is meditation. It helps in two ways. First, it makes you more mentally present and mindful. When you are more mindful, you can better remember and apply the realizations we talked about earlier. That alone is extremely important, which is why meditation is the first technique I mention here. The second benefit is that meditation trains your ability to focus. If you meditate frequently, you'll have fewer distracting thoughts while studying, meaning you can stay in the zone longer—which is itself a pleasurable state.

So how do we meditate? I do a very basic breath meditation. I sit down, close my eyes, and focus on my breath coming into my lungs and leaving through my nose. You want to aim for at least 10 minutes a day and build it into your schedule. Actually, let me correct myself: the best way to start is to pick a minimum you think you could do every day for the rest of your life. For me, I started with three breaths—inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. That's less than 10 seconds. The point of this minimum isn't to say, "I only need 10 seconds a day." In reality, you want to work up to 10 minutes or more. The point is that starting is always the hardest step. If you commit to a very small minimum, you'll almost always end up doing more once you've begun.

When you meditate, you will get distracted. That isn't failure—it's the point. Every time you notice a distraction and bring your attention back to the breath, that's like doing a rep at the gym. Each rep builds your cognitive ability to focus.

## **Exercise**

The second technique is exercise. Ideally, you want something cardiovascular that also has a social component. For me, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and weightlifting with friends are the most fun. If I don't have access to those, I also like swimming. Even if you don't have something enjoyable or social available, at the very least you should get some light cardio in every day, even if it's just a walk.

## **Diet**

Diet also plays a big role in your ability to focus. There are two common issues that interfere with focus:

1. Poorly regulated blood sugar. When you spike your blood sugar with processed carbs and sugars, your ability to focus drops. The fix is to avoid those foods, or at least save them for after studying or after dinner.
2. Postprandial somnolence. After a large meal, your body sends more blood to the digestive system, leaving you sluggish and sleepy. To prevent this, try to stay light during the day. You don't want to starve yourself, but you don't want to weigh yourself down either.

For me, that looks like skipping breakfast, eating a very light lunch—usually pure protein and maybe a little vegetable, like a shake, a few meatballs, or a piece of chicken—just enough to avoid hunger. Then I save my carbs for dinner.

## **Sleep**

The final piece is sleep. You need to sleep as long as your body actually wants, which for many people is more than they typically give it. Optimizing your sleep is crucial. I have a full section dedicated to sleep in this guide, so I recommend checking that out