

Blogpost Outline 1

Title: Why Taking a Break from Social Media is Essential

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In this fast-growing age of information and communication, social media has definitely become our main medium of communication—be it with our friends, co-workers, or the globe. It's not a surprise that our dependence on technology has been constantly growing ever since the invention of the Internet because it has alleviated the majority of our daily lives. Our dependence even skyrocketed right after the start of the pandemic, and it just kept growing until the post-pandemic period. Due to the social distancing protocols implemented worldwide, we were forced to adapt to the online environment of social media platforms to keep communications going in our lives, despite the physical isolation brought by the virus. It definitely helped a lot of us get through, didn't it? Social media platforms work wonders when it comes to the general idea of communication, but too much of everything is always dangerous or comes at a price.

And here's the catch with social media: you're bound to spend too much time on it because that's how its creators designed its algorithm. They designed it in such a way that it should keep you scrolling. At first, there's no harm felt. Eventually, as you grow accustomed to scrolling through it, you might find yourself becoming more stressed than usual. Numerous studies even show that social media is what often causes anxiety, depression, and polarization among people.

Well, why else would Jaron Lanier, a Silicon Valley computer scientist, write a book titled "10 Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now" other than the fact that it's detrimental to our mental health? However, with social media's heavy integration with today's communication, it's sort of impossible to delete our accounts now. Here's what we can do, though, and it's called "Social Media Detox."

What is Social Media Detox?

A social media detox or a social media break is when you go without using social media for a certain period of time. This break can last anywhere from a day to a month—or even longer if you wish to do so. Although social media detoxing is not an ideal solution for long-term changes in social media habits, it can still give you a sort of reset. Social media detox can help you cut out unwanted noise and emotional triggers brought on by social media.

There could be plenty of reasons behind wanting a social media detox. Maybe you are feeling overwhelmed by the events that are appearing in your newsfeed that you decided to take a break, or maybe you're experiencing information overload. It might also be out of your attempt to become more focused as you work on a big project, or maybe you just wish to be more intentional about how you spend your time. Whatever it may be, it's good that you're aware of what you wish to accomplish from your social media detox. However, because social media usage also has the potential to turn into an addiction, some of us might not be aware that we need a break from it. Here are some of the signs you can look out for.

3 Signs Why You Should Take A Break From Social Media

It's not fun anymore. If Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms are no longer a source of joy and connection in your life, then it might be a sign for you to take a break from them. These social media platforms are designed to be a fun and engaging way to communicate with family and friends, and they're supposed to stay that way.

You're comparing yourself to others. If you're feeling like you're not good enough, pretty enough, or successful enough while reading what's in your newsfeed, take a break. If you think that being on social media makes you feel worse about yourself, it's not a resource that will help you feel better emotionally.

It's the last thing you see at night. Browsing on your phone before bed may keep your mind active and awake, interrupting your sleep. The blue light from your phone lowers melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep. Because blue light is an artificial color that mimics daylight, your body will believe it is midday and keep you energized, preventing you from falling asleep.

Benefits of Social Media Detox

a. Improved Relationships: We often treat our smartphones and social media accounts as substitutes for real-life interactions. Because of this, a lot of us spend most of our time scrolling away on our phones when we're with our friends and family, instead of interacting with them in meaningful ways. What's sad is that it even happens even if we're with them physically. Most of us will be surprised at just how much time we can spend on becoming more meaningfully involved with our loved ones once we take a break from social media. We also become less judgmental of others. When we take a break—detox, rather—from social media, it'll be easier for us to realize that each of us is human, and above everything, we're all just trying our best to figure out how to get through life.

b. Lowered FOMO: When we quit using social media, our fear of missing out (FOMO) decreases. One of the main drawbacks of these platforms is their potential to make us feel as if we aren't getting enough exercise, vacations, rest, work, or anything else.

Because of social media, we feel obligated to do everything. Once you take a break from it, you'll give yourself time to focus on the activities that offer you the greatest joy instead of the ones that get you the most clout. Rather than following the current TikTok craze, you can do things that will truly improve your life.

c. Better Self-Worth: We can often feel lacking because social media is people's highlight reel of idealistic success. This is where they publish photographs of their biggest triumphs and most engaging activities. It's not immediately a bad thing, but it becomes one when we start comparing ourselves to it. Whether it's our appearance, our career, our current relationship status, or anything else, social media can have a negative impact on how we see ourselves.

By taking a break from social media, we relieve stress and realize that our lives are already amazing with all of its simplicity. We also have more time to interact with people and do things that make us feel good about ourselves.

d. Increased Productivity: Because social media is renowned for exhausting our time over trivial things, removing it allows us to do more and have more hours to intentionally spend in our day. Surveys have indicated that adults and teenagers spend two to nine hours every day on social media. Just imagine what you could accomplish with that time!

Furthermore, social media is a distraction when we are working or studying. Your flow state will not be disrupted without it, which will help you finish more tasks in less time.

How To Take A Break From Social Media

a. Turn off your notifications from platforms. When you get a notification for a "like" or "comment" on a post, it causes a "positive social stimulation and dopamine inflow," which is also linked to drug use. This dopamine spike can be addictive, making it difficult to stay away from social media. The incessant blaring and buzzing may also cause you to check your phone more frequently. Disabling notifications can help you stay on track with your social media detox.

a. Delete apps. Maybe you're on your phone for something completely different, like checking your account balance on a financial app, but then you notice Facebook's logo and decide to click.

Delete the apps from your phone to avoid "accidentally" popping up on social media. That way, you won't encounter the logos by accident and be enticed to use the platform. This also raises the barrier to entry because you'd have to re-download the app and sign back in to check social media on your phone.

c. Allot time to use social media. You can also determine which stuff makes you feel good and which makes you feel bad. You can then start planning to avoid the things that make you unhappy. Putting restrictions on how much you use based on what the tipping point is from enjoyable to anxiety-provoking or another negative emotion is common. For each person, the tipping point will be different.

a. Replace social media with new activities. What's important in this technique is that you should stay intentional about it. First determine how much time you spend on social media, and once you find out that you spend more than three hours, you can start planning on doing an activity that accounts for that time. The activity can be a range of everything, but it is most preferred that it keeps you away from screen altogether. You might also just consider leaving your phone while indulging yourself in your chosen activity, it can be the best way to focus on the new activity.

a. Prioritize self-care. Replacing your social media use with other mood-boosting activities that don't require your phone can be very beneficial. Instead of checking your phone and browsing through it, try one of these other healthier alternatives:

- Hang out with your friends
- Take a walk around the park, or go for a bike ride around the city
- Cook your favorite meal or learn a new recipe.
- For at least 15 minutes, write in your journal—whether it's about something random or deep.

Although social media has many great aspects, it can also be incredibly harmful when used excessively. While social media addiction is not a new topic, many individuals still struggle with it.

In order for you to not fall victim to social media's addictive cycle, you can begin by taking tiny steps and putting the advice in this article into practice. Slowly, you'll gain more control of your time and actions, and you'll be amazed at how much of an impact it has on your quality of life.