

WHY YOU SHOULD TAKE A DIGITAL DETOX OVER THE FESTIVE BREAK

Nowadays, it's considered perfectly normal to wake up to an alarm ringing on your phone and to check your notifications before you even wipe the remains of sleep from your eyes. Our levels of screen time and digital connectedness are currently at an all-time high.

But is this level of hyper-connectedness doing us any good? Do we really need to know what's going on and be able to take part at every moment of the day, or night, for that matter?

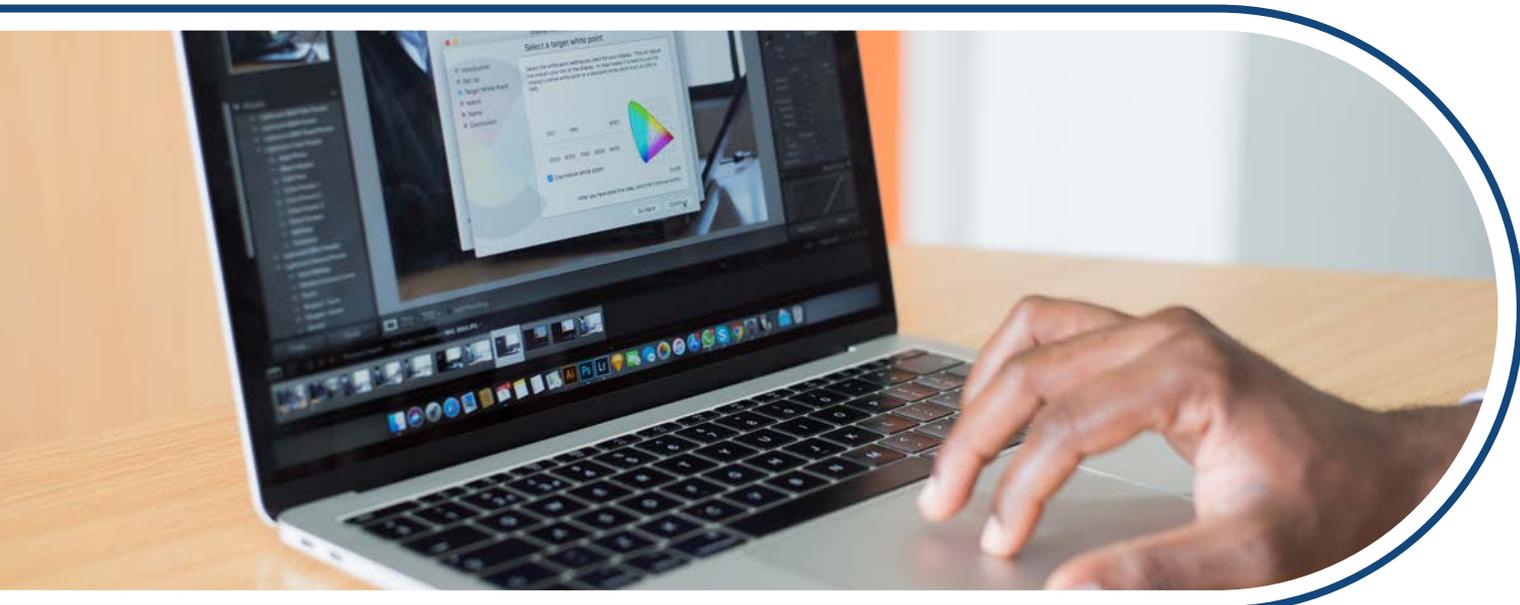
Research shows that we are increasingly engaged online at all hours of the day, and that younger people routinely give up sleep in order to read comments on their Instagram posts or respond to interaction from others. Not only that, but addiction to social media and screen time can be traced to an actual dopamine release that results from getting a high number of likes or positive comments. Conversely it can also depress us.

What does this mean?

We're losing out on mindfulness, on meaningful moments, and on good quality productivity. We are also getting more stressed by what we read and the expectations created by social media. Not only is this causing unnecessary anxiety and disrupting our sleep patterns - due to the high level of blue light we're constantly exposed to - it's also shortening our attention spans.

If you've been feeling like your mind is struggling to shut down or you feel you cannot live without checking your phone, then perhaps it's time to undergo a little digital detox. Naturally, it's not always possible to abandon all forms of screen time. However, there are myriad ways to practice healthier device habits.

With the festive break approaching, it's the perfect time to disconnect, take some time for yourself and come back to a healthy mindset.



01 Make your bedroom a device-free zone



It might be hard at first, but you need to make this a priority. Your sleep and mindfulness depends on this. As long as your phone is temptingly lying on your bedside table, you're going to have a hard time switching off the way you need to. No laptops, no smartphones. Then make sure you get to bed at a certain time each night and enjoy at least an hour getting ready for bed with some relaxing routines, such as reading a book, journaling or listening to something music.

02 Curate your social media feeds and update your phone settings



For the times when you are going to be online, make sure you're being exposed to positive, healthy content. Unfollow accounts that do not uphold this type of messaging. Then make sure your phone's settings limit you to a certain level of screen time each day. You can also download apps that help you keep track of how much time you spend where, like The Moment (iOS) and Off-Time (Android).

03 Stick to one screen at a time

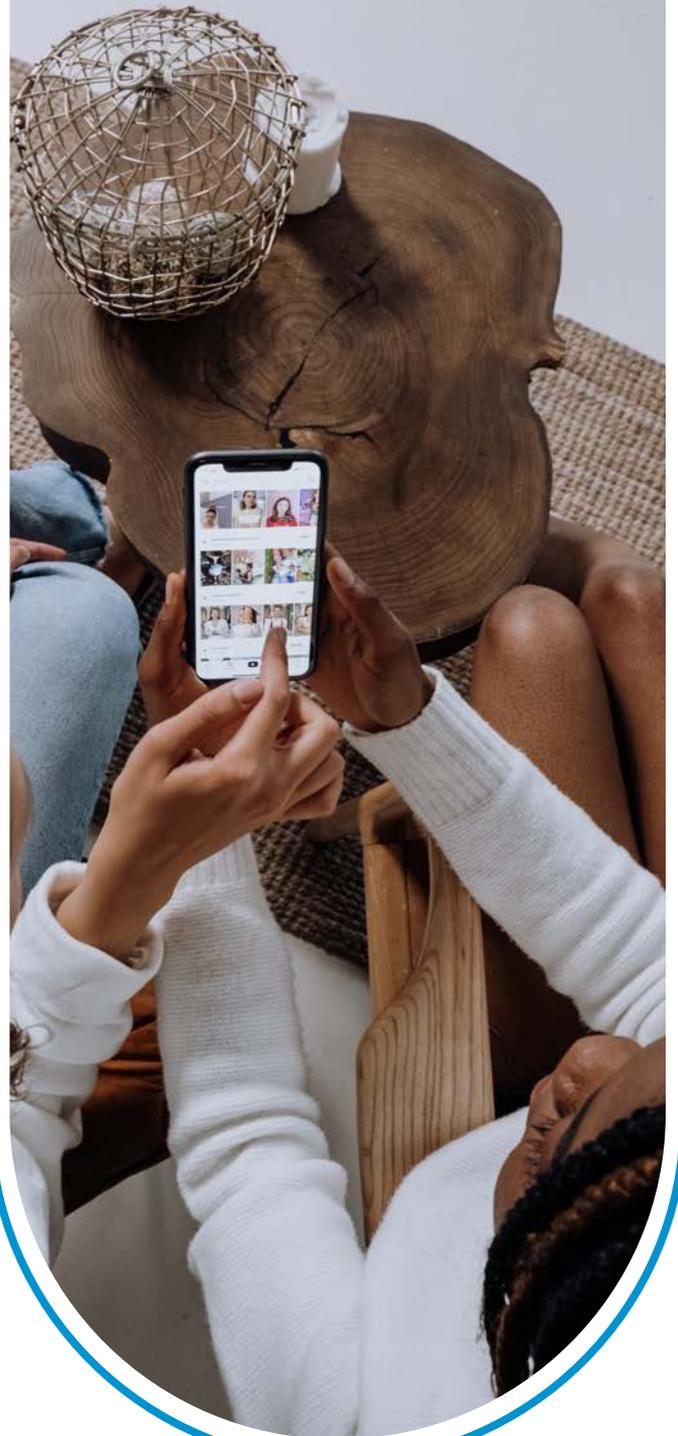


If you're working on your laptop, don't be on your phone periodically, checking notifications in between work. If you're watching a movie or documentary, focus on doing just that. Recent scientific reports show that multiple screens are wreaking havoc on our attention spans and causing us to have trouble with productivity.

04 Turn off your push notifications



Let's be honest. Those beeps, buzzes and alerts we get from our phones are simply irritating. Not only do they distract us from important moments, but they can also steal our focus. Unless you really want to know about what's going on, or if it's for emergencies, turn them off.



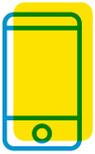
05 Think about why and how you are busy



In the same way that going without sleep often gets glamorised, being busy all the time is often seen as a positive thing. This is not true. If you're constantly connected and multi-tasking, you may find it difficult to focus.

You will make more errors and actually be even busier and less productive. It can be easy to use as an excuse for not making your goals or not getting to the things you should be prioritising in your life. It can also cause burnout. Take the time you're saving on social media to think about which important tasks or projects you want to focus on going ahead. If you don't make the choice, the world will make it for you.

06 Don't allow your phone to become your security blanket



How often do you catch yourself looking at your phone while standing in line or even while the kettle is boiling? Why do we do this? Perhaps it's habit, or even a way to push down

anxiety or to distract us from our emotions. Instead of doing this and engaging in yet another mindless scroll, focus on what's happening in and around you. Just be present for a while and practice mindful breathing while you wait. You'll find this improves your state of mind and you will feel calmer and happier.

Bottom line

Realise that as a consumer of social media, you, your time and your attention is the product being sold. How much, then, is your attention and time worth to you? By taking time off your devices you will place a greater value on your own time and can focus on doing more of what you love, and with who you love. You will discover that you will rest better, be more present with your loved ones and enjoy your life more.

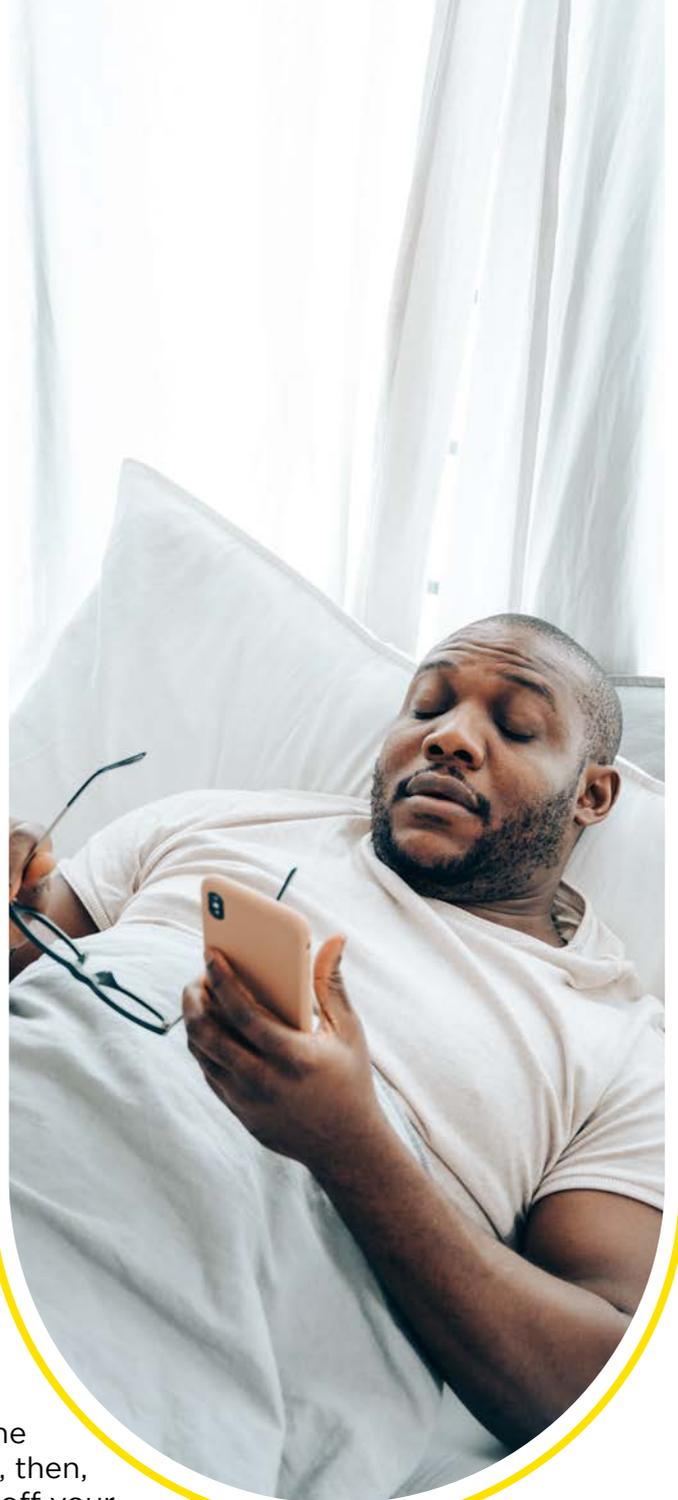
If you or your loved one needs support during this time, reach out to your ICAS EHWP via your toll-free number to seek counselling support. Alternatively, download the ICAS On-the-Go App and login with your Company App Code.

Call your dedicated **Toll-Free Line**.

(Free from landlines and mobile phones.)

Or request a call back: ***134*905#**

Applicable to you and those who live under your roof.



References:

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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/click-here-happiness/201801/5-ways-do-digital-detox>