



## SCREEN TIME AND YOUR WELLBEING

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Screen time is the time per day a person spends engaged with screens including a television, computer, or personal device. This includes productive work time as well as time spent playing games and consuming content. While we are more isolated, remote working, and spending all our time on Zoom, screen time goes up, so what can we do to help protect our health? Keep reading for tips.

### Screen Time and Mental Health

There is an ongoing debate about how much screen time is too much, but studies have shown that spending hours each day engaged with screens can increase thoughts and feelings of anxiety and depression. For children and adolescents, part of the concern is consuming negative or violent content, and the amount of time they spend ‘plugged in’ prevents them from being active. For these reasons, too much screen time can exacerbate an existing mental health condition in teens.

However, many of the same negative effects can happen to adults when they spend too much time engaged with screens. The more screen time you’re

clocking each day, the more likely you are to be sedentary. The more time you spend on social media, studies have shown that it can influence your happiness. Face-to-face interactions with people even lose meaning when you are continually distracted by your own devices, leading to loneliness. Don’t underestimate the power of taking a break from your devices, because you may even see your real-life relationships improve.

### Screen Time and Physical Health

Too much time focused on a screen can result in eyestrain, which can cause headaches, light sensitivity, and blurred vision. Excessive screen time can also lead to other physical problems like back



and neck pain from always looking down at a device. Working adults can't always unplug, so how can you manage your screen time for your health?

Take breaks from screens every 20 minutes. The 20-20-20 rule is recognized by the American Optometric Association and the American Academy of Ophthalmology. It says that for every 20 minutes you spend engaged with a screen, you should look at an object that is 20 feet away for 20 seconds to prevent eye strain.

You should wear your glasses if prescribed, and you can wear blue-light-blocking glasses to engage with screens. You can also adjust screen brightness settings on your devices and increase font sizes on screens to reduce eye strain. Keeping screens and devices arm's length away from your face and positioning your monitor so that it is at or below eye level can help prevent neck strain.

## Screen Breaks

At Medcor we promote wellness breaks, which are times in the workday you can take a walk or participate in stretch breaks with your colleagues. Remember to take breaks throughout your workday to stretch, rest your eyes from screens, and reduce time on personal devices to improve your overall wellbeing.

### Resources:

1. [Screen Time and Mental Health \(news-medical.net\)](https://www.news-medical.net)
2. [How Your Smartphone May Be Making You Unhappy \(usnews.com\)](https://www.usnews.com)
3. [Screen time might boost depression, suicide behaviors in teens: ScienceDaily](https://www.sciencedaily.com)
4. [20-20-20 rule: How to prevent eye strain \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com)