



Unplugging

Technology can be a huge distraction and doesn't allow us to "be" in the present. It would be very difficult to completely unplug, as technology plays an important part of daily life. However, unplugging on occasion may be helpful in bringing you back to the here and now.

Here are some tips for unplugging:

- ✓ Shut off your device; pretty simple right? If you need to, start slow and gradually increase the time you have it off
- ✓ Turn off tones that alert you to incoming messages, you will not hear every text or email
- ✓ Limit your screen time to a pre-determined amount of time per day
- ✓ Keep your devices out of sight, either zipped in your bag or in a drawer or locker to curb the urge to pick it up
- ✓ Try to leave your phone at home when you are running errands around town
- ✓ Make a "no device" rule for meals, at home or when out- make a pact to put devices away so you can savor your meal and enjoy the company of those around you
- ✓ Choose restaurants, vacation spots and other places that don't allow cell phones or have poor signals
- ✓ Instead of using playlists, go old school and grab some CDs to listen to in the car
- ✓ Fill your free time with activities that don't require digital devices...take a class, exercise, cook, or work in the garden
- ✓ Challenge friends and family to a digital detox to help get you started and to offer support to one another
- ✓ Meditate- although it may sound counterproductive, there are meditation and mindfulness apps available
- ✓ Utilize programs that monitor the time you spend on social media or your devices, some even block you from time wasting sites or kick you off when you have reached your "limit"
- ✓ Instead of messaging a friend, invite them for coffee or meet for dinner, spending face to face time with friends and family will help you really connect
- ✓ Place your device in airplane mode, it will require extra effort to use and may make you rethink checking social media
- ✓ You can even swap your phone with a "fake" or non-functioning device that looks and feels the same but doesn't do anything

There is no right or wrong when it comes to unplugging. Maybe you would like to unplug for a day, a week or cut back a couple of hours per day or maybe you want to eliminate a site from your device that is occupying your time. It is your personal decision, and you can choose which goals and parameters are right for you. It's best to plan ahead and be prepared. Really take this time to be mindful of the moments and enjoy "being present"!

