

# Dealing with digital stress.



**There are three main ways of dealing with digital stress.** The first is through time management: if your time is better organized, your online life won't get in the way of other things you need to do. The second is through changing your habits and attitudes to make your digital life less stressful. Finally, it's important to make time for rest and reflection so that you aren't constantly under stress.



### Time management

- You can't do everything. Think about the things that are most important to you (school, work, family, hobbies...) and make sure to put those first.
- Make a to-do list of things you need to do and use a planner to keep track of them. Prioritize the list by putting the most important things first.
- Put your digital devices to work for you by using calendar apps to remind you before things are supposed to be done.
- Decide ahead of time when you're going to check social media. Do it at specific times (on the bus, during your commute, for example, or when you've finished a specific task), rather than whenever you feel like it. If going a long time without checking is hard for you, start by going a shorter time and then make it a bit longer every day.



### Changing habits and attitudes

- Don't compare yourself to people you see online – including your friends. Remember that people usually just post their good news and their best pics online – and many people edit their photos and use filters to make them look as good as possible.
- Be where you are, when you are. When you're doing something fun, enjoy it. Don't worry about getting pictures of it or worrying about what other people will think of it.
- Accept that you can't be there for everything – even virtually. Trying to keep tabs on everything will just stress you out and remember that it's okay to not always respond to messages and notifications immediately.
- Don't take it personally. Odds are, your friends aren't posting things to make you jealous. They're most likely trying to make themselves and their lives look good.
- Be honest. You may feel like people expect you to only share positive things, but research has shown that people are actually happier – and get more emotional support from others – when they are honest about how they present themselves online.



### Making time for rest and reflection

- When you're not using your devices, turn off your notifications. You can't relax when your phone is always pinging or buzzing, or when you're anticipating possible notifications.
- Play a game of "phone stack" with your friends: when you're hanging out together, everyone puts their phones (or any other digital device) in a pile. Whoever can last longest without picking theirs up wins!
- Log out of all your social networks and turn off your phone at bedtime – totally off. Keep your phone outside of your bedroom, and use an old-school alarm clock. Not only will you be better rested, but there's no chance of "sleep-texting" something silly or embarrassing!
- Schedule time that doesn't include school, work and screens. Research has shown that even 10 minutes of "unitasking" – doing things like going for a walk, exercising or spending time with a friend without distraction – can do a lot to relieve stress.
- Take an occasional vacation from social media and digital devices. If that sounds hard for you, start with one day a month, or even a shorter period of time like the hour leading up to bed time, and try to work up to one day a week or more.