

Screen Use: The Effects On Adults

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Though society worries over the effects that screen use has on children, much less attention is paid to the effects of screen use on adults. The rapid advancement of technology in the modern world has led to extensive research about the effects of screen time, and researchers are still finding unknown yet detrimental effects. Adults' consistent use of screens may result in a multitude of negative effects, so people must recognize how much screen time is appropriate, the effects of excessive use, and strategies in order to limit screen exposure.

The recommended amount of screen time for adults may differ from that of children, but regulating the exposure to screen time is equally important for adults. Scientists have researched and concluded that people should be involved with activities away from screens to help discourage screen overuse. Dodgen-Magee, an Oregon-based psychologist, says "The goal is finding balance between screen-based and non-screen activities. If you're blowing off your friends or family in favor of spending time on screens, that's a problem" (Heid). Important things in life begin to not become prioritized, and nothing that's supposed to get done. Some adults however use screens so much they forget about significant others or activities of high priority. According to a study by Braun Research Center and Bank of America, "we're more likely to think about our phones when we wake up than about our significant others. Another study showed 80 percent of smartphone users check their phones before they brush their teeth in the morning" (Mortiz). When adults are able to prioritize and manage their screen time use they are able to better handle their stressful lives without the pressure of electronics. By disconnecting from devices, adults alleviate the stress of feeling tied to a screen. Experts are having trouble coming up with a set amount of healthy screen time, "Yes, experts believe, though they're largely hesitant to give a standardized number of

hours we should be spending staring at a screen. The average adult spends close to 11 hours looking at a screen per day and checks their phone every 10 minutes” (Mortiz). There may not be a defined amount of screen time but there’s always room to reduce and limit the time spent on screens. Screen time affects adults just as much as children, and it is important to manage and regulate screen use in order to limit the negative effects.

When screens are overused by adults, a large number of bodily functions and mental health may be affected in consequence. This mainly includes physical activity and exercise, which is limited when using devices. When using digital devices it takes up time you could spend exercising, “Consequently, your fitness levels decline and you may find yourself getting breathless more easily even when you partake in basic activities like walking or climbing the stairs” (“Screen Time Recommendations”). Unhealthy habits develop which affect basic daily physical activities which cut time off of exercise or missing it entirely. These habits can lead to more detrimental effects such as mental illness. A study in 2017 of adults found that spending six hours or more a day watching TV or using computers correlated with a high risk of depression (Heid). Effects related to depression begin to develop and overall morale is lowered. When one experiences these depression effects, mood and sleep are heavily affected. Too much time on screen can also make it harder to fall asleep. Studies have shown that “The blue light from your screens disrupts your melatonin levels and leads to an extended period of wakefulness. The mental stimulation from processing online content also keeps your brain alert – way too alert for sleeping” (“Screen Time Recommendations”). The time adults spend on screens may seem to make life simpler,

however, the reality is that too much screen time causes detrimental effects to the body, affecting exercise, free time, and sleep.

The reduction of screen time is critical in order to manage and help adults' lives. Negative effects of screen time continue and worsen, so people must reduce time spent on screens. People are not able to focus with their devices around them and must learn to prioritize. Screens are a major distraction, and so extra work is not done. Research has shown that multitasking with screens reduces productivity. "A study from a professor at the University of Texas at Austin showed that subjects whose phones were in a different room performed better on a cognitive test compared to those whose phones were in front of them—and set on "Silent" mode" (Schroder). Screens are one of the largest distractions in society today. People feel the need to check their phone every time they have a notification, giving them constant anxiety. Using screens within an hour of bedtime can negatively impact sleep, which can contribute to physical, cognitive, and mental issues. It's difficult to resist watching a show, ignore a text, or scroll through social media. Eliminate temptation by keeping phones out of the bedroom and reach for a book instead (Schroder). The more screens are used the less satisfaction we get from other activities that are enjoyed. One may receive more benefit when doing those extra activities as well. Too much screen time may interfere with opportunities that cause greater benefit for children. "For instance, no matter how many benefits Johnny gains from playing Minecraft with his friends, at some point, they would receive different and/or greater benefits from playing hide-and-seek outside or building an actual fort with their hands" (Brooks). It is important to always explore and try new things to find other sources that create happiness. Adults who are able to prioritize and manage their

screen time use are able to better handle their stressful lives without the pressure of electronics. Implementing these strategies may allow one to take tests better, improve relationships, and benefit in sleep.

Adults need to be informed of how much each screen time is appropriate. The effects that result from excessive use can be detrimental, and strategies must be put in place in order to limit the time we are using screens. Knowing how much time should be spent on screens, consequences that come with excessive use, and strategies to help manage screen time are beneficial in conjunction with new technology. This new technology will be the future of society, so it is important to learn all the effects from it.

Annotated Bibliography

Brooks, Mike. "How Much Screen Time Is Too Much?" *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, 26 Dec. 2018, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/tech-happy-life/201812/how-much-screen-time-is-too-much.

Doctor Brooks discusses the many variables involved with how adults use screens. How much screen time is too much is mentioned in multiple areas along with negative side effects from too much screen use.

Heid, Markham. "What's the Ideal Amount of Screen Time?" *Time*, Time, 29 May 2019, www.time.com/5592329/experts-say-how-much-is-the-wrong-way-to-assess-screen-time/.

In the source, Markham claims quantitative measurements of screen usage is the wrong way to assess screen time. Multiple studies are included in order to emphasize Markham's point, and do so throughout the text.

Mortiz, Katie. "Should Adults Have Screen Time Limits, Too?" *Rewire, Living*, 11 Apr. 2018, www.rewire.org/living/adults-screen-time-limits/.

The difference between screen use and screen addiction is explained which leads to setting the time limit. Each person reacts in different ways to screens, so there is no set time that is too much for humans.

Schroder, Nina. "NAMI." *Nami*, NAMI, 10 Aug. 2018, www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/August-2018/How-to-Reduce-Screen-Time-in-the-Digital-Age.

This article explains how to reduce the amount of time on screens and the benefits of doing so. It gives strategies to regulate time on screens, such as to connect in real life with people and avoid multitasking.

"Screen Time Recommendations: How Much Screen Time Is Healthy for Adults?" *ActiveSG*, Active Health, 28 Dec. 2018, www.myactivesg.com/active-health/read/2018/12/screen-time-recommendations-how-much-screen-time-is-healthy-for-adults.

Too much screen time is as big an issue to adults as it is to children, and individuals can be at a much higher risk of screen addiction than we realise. The signs of screen addiction are listed in the article along with consequences that derive from addiction and solutions to those.