

Social media resolutions

The Internet and social media have revolutionized the way people spend their time. In the not-so-distant past, the sharing of information took considerable time. But now the instant a thought pops into a person's head, it can immediately be broadcast and shared with the world.

According to the marketing and media resource Brandwatch, there were 2.3 billion active social media users as of 2015, and those users averaged 5.54 social media accounts apiece. A new social user is added every 12 seconds. Facebook says it adds 500,000 new users every day and six new profiles every second. In addition, 500 million people visit Twitter each month.

Social media and Internet usage has become pervasive, so much so that some people have become addicted to it. Cornell Information Science has even published research that looked at the difficulty some people have in quitting Facebook and other social networks. Professed "social media addicts" have described the need for social media as being as strong as a cigarette craving. Some people use social media at the expense of sleep, work and family. But even those who can control their social media habits may want to cut back on their usage, and the following are a handful of ways to do just that.

- **Start cleaning out friend and follow lists.** It won't be social suicide if you begin streamlining your social media feeds. Go through friend lists or who you are following and cut out the people with whom you do not regularly converse. Keep it to only the people with whom you care to remain updated.

- **Think before you "tweet," "post" or "snap."** Spend a few minutes really considering if the information you plan to share is worth sharing. Chances are you can reserve social media use for a more important purpose than sharing another photo of your lunch. And although everyone is entitled to his or her opinions, before commenting consider if a comment has the potential to ignite an argument or lead to a lengthy discussion you don't have the time or the desire to get involved with.

- **Schedule social media time.** Instead of routinely checking your phone or tablet for social media updates, set up a time once or twice per day to check in. This way you control how and when you use the information. Similarly, turn off notifications so that you will not be tempted to look at your mobile device each time a tone is sounded.

- **Keep some things a mystery.** Do not share locations or provide updates on vacations or travel plans in real time. This can be a security issue. Always exercise caution regarding the information you share. Making use of the privacy settings



available to you may help you achieve your goal of reducing time spent on social media.

- **Live in the moment.** Put down phones and experience situations as they happen, rather than through a screen.

Cutting down on social media usage or using platforms more intelligently are common resolutions. A little diligence can make it possible to break the cycle of constant use.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



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