

# Screen time affects adults as much as youth

The effects of screen time are a point of frequent conversation. However, such discussions often focus on the impact of screen time on the health and well-being of children. But children are not the only age group who has to consider how much time they spend with their devices.

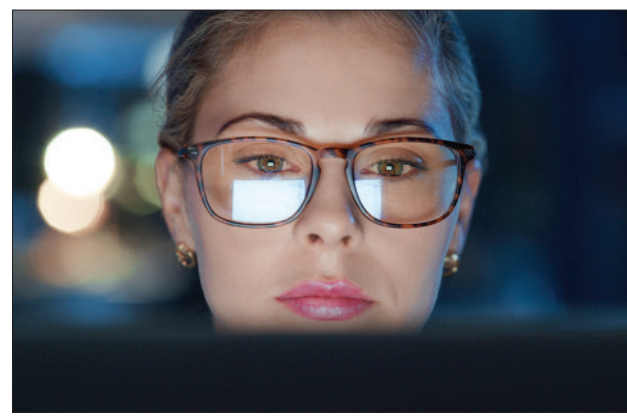
Many professionals spend hours on end in front of computers, and those same people may spend a lot of their free time watching shows and/or scrolling social media and news stories online.

There are quite a number of negative effects of too much screen time, even for adults. However, the point in time when device usage is considered detrimental to adults'

health is not clearly defined. Some health experts say that limiting social media use to 30 minutes per day leads to a "significant improvement in well-being." If that isn't enough to convince adults to put down their devices, perhaps an examination of the various harmful side effects of screens might do the job.

• **Depression:** A 2017 study published in the journal Preventative Medicine Reports found a significant association between television watching and computer use with moderate or severe levels of depression. Several studies also have found a positive association between screentime and depression in adolescents.

• **Eye strain:** Looking at screens can impact eye health. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the 20-20-20 rule for adults who work on a computer. This rule says that individuals look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes of the day.



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• **Neck and back pain:** Time spent sitting at a desk or on a phone and looking down adversely affects

the body. This places strain on the neck, shoulders and back. In fact, many health care providers refer to the condition as "tech neck." Pain can occur and the risk for severe musculoskeletal issues can increase when these positions are held for too long, according to Reid Health.

• **Cognitive changes:** A 2020 study in Science Direct found that adults who have been

diagnosed with smartphone addiction had problems with the part of their brains responsible for transmitting messages. Such adults also exhibited reduced cognitive performance. In addition, Stanford Lifestyle Medicine reports adults who watched television for five hours or more per day had an increased risk of developing brain-related diseases like dementia, stroke or Parkinson's.

• **Reduced physical activity:** People who spend too much time on screens may be less likely to engage in physical activity, such as going on walks, working in the garden, playing sports, or engaging in active hobby projects. A sedentary lifestyle is linked to various health impli-

cations, such as increased risk for obesity and the health problems that come with being overweight.

• **Impact sleep:** The JAMA Network reports that among a cross-sectional analysis of 122,058 participants in the American Cancer Society Cancer Prevention Study-3, screen use was associated with decreased sleep duration and worse self-reported sleep quality. Electronic screen use before bed can disrupt circadian rhythms, leading to poorer sleep.

Screen time is not just a concern for children. Adults should moderate screen usage to safeguard themselves from an assortment of negative, device-related outcomes.

# Toss or keep? How to sort items when organizing

Getting organized routinely tops people's lists of New Year's resolutions. After many months of accumulating an assortment of things, starting fresh in January with goals to organize such acquisitions can be a healthy endeavor.

One of the obstacles of getting organized is sorting through belongings and identifying what to get rid of and what to keep.

In fact, uncertainty about what's worthy of donation or trash is a common problem that can create clutter. These organizational tips can help people figure out what to toss and what to keep.

**Determine if items are useful**  
Ask yourself if you



have used the item in the last month to 90 days, or if you see yourself needing it in the next month. If not, this item likely can be put aside. An easy way to identify items that won't be useful is to check for duplicates or if anything is expired. Duplicate items can im-

mediately be moved to the toss pile.

### "Why do I want this item?"

Consider each item you come across and ask yourself how it serves a purpose. If it looks great in the home or is a cherished memento, then it likely can be kept. But if you can't say why you want it, it needs to find a new home, particularly if you already own something else that does the same thing but might also have other uses.

### Does it fit?

One of the biggest culprits to clutter and overflowing closets is holding on to clothes with the hope that you'll once again fit

into them. Keeping a collection of multi-sized shirts and pants with the intention of dropping or gaining weight so that they fit once more only leads to hangers and bins full of useless items. Although clothes can be expensive, should you fluctuate in weight, it's likely that you'll want to get new clothes instead of wearing outdated styles. When assessing shoes, figure out which ones are uncomfortable or seldom used (a collection of sandals might not be appropriate if you live in a cold climate). Donate items in good condition.

**Do you still feel the same about collectibles?**

People often collect figurines, shot glasses or other items through the years out of habit. Over time, items that once were popular fall out of favor. If your interest in porcelain pigs has waned, it may be time to clear out collectibles to make room for other things.

### Assess your paper files

Major financial records and/or business documents can be kept indefinitely, but other files likely can be shredded. The Internal Revenue Service gener-

ally has up to six years to audit a return, so it is helpful to keep tax returns and supporting documents for around seven years. Most people have pivoted to online bank statements and pay stubs, but the general consensus is to keep bank and credit card statements, pay stubs, paid medical bills, and such for a year before discarding them. Going digital by scanning files or documents and storing them securely might be an alternative to bulky files.

Getting organized means figuring out what to keep and what needs to go, a process that differs for each person.

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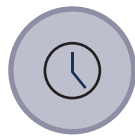
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