Lifehacks for balanced and healthy time online

Keeping track of time online can be really hard. One minute you're doing that homework assignment, the next you've been on TikTok for hours and it's 2am. If this sounds familiar, you might have also felt exhausted, angry, headachey, or found it harder to concentrate on things the next day. This is a sign that you might need to rethink how much time you're spending in front of a screen.

Aussie government guidelines recommend around 2 hours of screen time a day for teens, but this can be hard to balance, especially when you're learning from home and in front of a laptop all day (as well as trying to keep up with your notifications). The good news is that there are ways to help you get the best from your screen time, and help you figure out the best way to balance online and offline life.

This guide will help you:

- Understand why too much screen time can be a problem
- Look out for signs that you could use a break from your screen
- Find ways to create healthy digital habits
- Seek more help if you need it

Ask Yourself...

- What do I like doing online? What are my favourite apps/websites/games?
- How much time online/in front of a screen is OK?
- What do I like doing offline? Why?
- What wellbeing apps could be useful to me?

Time online for Australian kids

Research into online behaviour of teens and children has found that:

- 83% of teens access the internet three or more times every day.
- 43% regularly use screens before bedtime; one in four report sleep problems related to screen use.
- The number of teens who access the internet between midnight and 6am has doubled in recent years.

COVID-19 has made it even harder to separate our online and offline lives as our normal structure is replaced by online learning and connecting with our mates over video chat. It's important to make sure you have regular study breaks (away from a screen), stay healthy and active and know that more time online could mean more exposure to privacy risks or contact from strangers. Check out our guides on staying safe online here.

Could you use a break?

According to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, some signs that your digital life could be affecting you are:

- less interest in social activities like meeting friends or playing sport
- not doing so well at school
- tiredness, not sleeping well, headaches, sore eyes
- changes in eating patterns
- reduced personal hygiene
- obsession with particular websites or games
- feeling angry when being asked to take a break from online activity
- feeling anxious or irritable when away from the computer, phone or device
- less time spent with friends and family

If you feel like any of these apply to you, it could be time to get some support. Chat to someone you trust such as a friend, parent, teacher, or Kids Helpline.
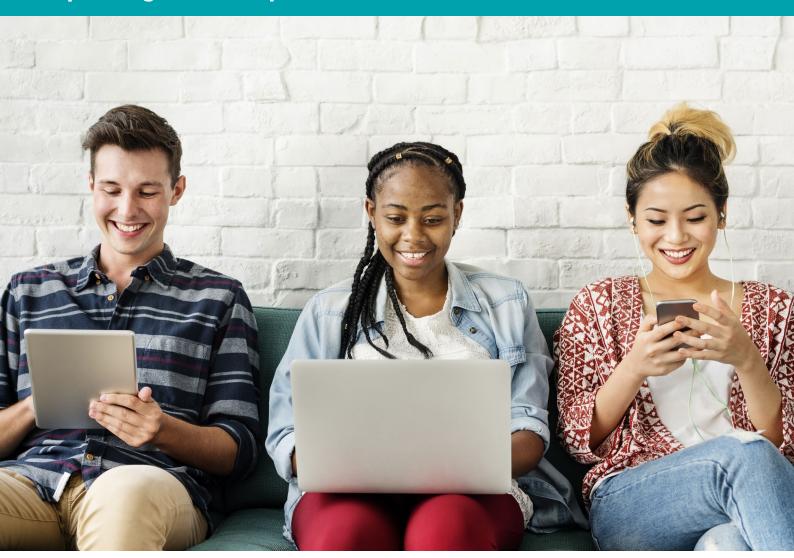
Create Healthy Habits

There are loads on apps and websites out there to help you set study schedules, block distractions and study more effectively, but also apps that you can use to support your physical and mental wellbeing. We've put together a list of some of the ones we've found:

Study Apps	Physical Wellbeing	Mental Wellbeing
• Anki Flashcards	• Nike Run Club	• Smiling Mind
• Brainscape Flashcards	• Zombies, Run!	• Headspace
• Memrise	• Yoga for Beginners	• The Check-in
• Supermemo	• 7 Minute Workout	• For Me
• Pomodoro	• SworkIt	
• Forest	• The Body Coach	
• Evernote	• iDance	
• Todait		

Like any digital platform, we recommend that you read the Terms of Service and reviews before downloading to make sure the app is right for you.

How to report inappropriate content

The eSafety Commissioner is Australia's national independent regulator for online safety.
The Office of the eSafety Commissioner has developed an **eSafety Guide** with reporting links and information for a range of social media services, games, apps and sites.
Reporting of inappropriate images, content, and cyberbullying can also be made directly to
https://www.esafety.gov.au/report

What to do if you need more help

If you ever see or receive anything online that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you should discuss it with your friends or a trusted adult. You can also call Kids Helpline, Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for 5 to 25 year olds.
1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au

About Optus Digital Thumbprint

Optus Digital Thumbprint is a free and award-winning educational program that supports young people and families to be safe, responsible and positive online.

Since 2013, we've delivered workshops and developed digital tools that have educated more than 320,000 primary and secondary school students across Australia.