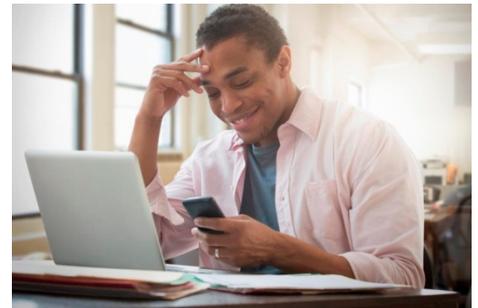


July 2019 Issue

Social Media's Connection to Wellbeing

Today, we are more connected and informed than ever, due in large part to smart phones and social media. These devices and platforms have brought about video chatting, photo sharing, group messages, and non-stop news; all of which have benefits. The consequences, however, have begun to rear their ugly heads, especially for our youth.

The body of research is growing that shows an unmistakable correlation between the rise of smart phones and social media and the decline of adolescent mental health. **The possible reasons are varied and vast, but the following rise to the top:**



1. **Hyperconnectivity.** Adolescents almost always have their phones, so they are constantly connected — there is no “break” from their peers. At the same time, loneliness is on the rise as kids spend more time on devices and less on in-person interaction.
2. **Decrease in sleep quantity and quality.** Scrolling through social media keeps kids up later, and the blue light from devices negatively impacts sleep quality.
3. **Fear of missing out.** Social media enables teens to know when they are being left out in the moment, then leaves an enduring reminder of the rejection.
4. **Constant comparison.** Young people have constant pressure to post the best pictures and create interesting content. In many ways, their self-esteem is based on the number of “likes” they receive.

The fewer hours adolescents spend on their devices and social media, the less likely they are to report unhappiness and loneliness. Adults also would benefit from less time on these platforms, and parents in particular can then help their children decrease their use.

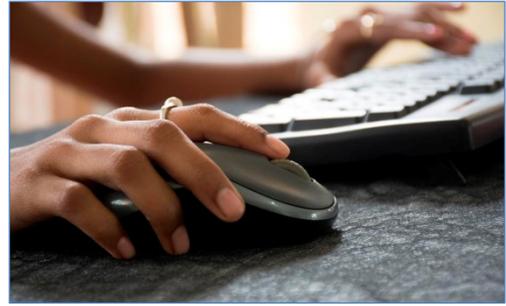
Four Tips for Improving Social Media Consumption

1. **Be a role model.** Decrease your own use of devices and social media, especially when at home. Be present and connect.
2. **Set limits.** Create boundaries of when devices can be used and have a designated spot for phones and tablets to be placed out of sight to reduce temptation.
3. **Buy an alarm clock.** Instead of using a phone alarm to wake up, get an alarm clock. Charge devices across the room from the bed instead of on the bedside table.
4. **Have meaningful conversations.** Talk about social media with your kids. Ask them what they think and how they feel—use the consequences listed above as discussion points.

Need to Limit Your Social Media Use? There's an App for That!

Ever feel like you need to get rid of your phone for a while? When it comes to social media, many of us easily can get sucked in without even realizing how often we mindlessly scroll on our phones. It can be a difficult habit to break and requires a conscious effort to put our phones down and be more present.

Thankfully, there are many apps available to help limit your phone or social media use. **Below are several suggestions to get you started:**



1. **Flipd (iOS and Android)** - Set specific times to hide distracting apps so you can be more productive. Use the wellness hub feature for breathing exercises, inspiration, and more
2. **AppBlock (Android)** - Temporarily block your access to apps that distract you the most by setting your own time limits.
3. **OFFTIME (iOS and Android)** - This app gives you phone usage stats so you know what you use your phone for the most. You can limit access to apps that are most distracting to you and block calls, texts, and notifications for a specific amount of time when you know you need to focus. You even can invite other people to join you in some undistracted time.
4. **Moments (iOS)** - Set daily screen-time targets, monitor your family members' screen time and see how many times you pick up your phone throughout the day.

How to Pick the Right Fitness Tracker

A fitness tracker is a great tool to help you get serious about keeping active. Designed to be comfortable, easy to use and fashionable, most companies offer a range of bracelet styles in varying colors. Fitness trackers (also called sportsbands) can help you track daily and weekly activity levels and ensure your heart rate stays within a safe zone while working out.

More than that, fitness trackers can help motivate you to keep up your new regimen. They provide encouragement that ranges from a virtual coach who delivers voiced approval to game-like scoring systems that reward you for progress and prompt you to share your accomplishments with friends.

But picking the right tracker can be a bit tricky. Sportsbands offer varying features and can differ in price by hundreds of dollars. Begin by identifying the key features you want. If all you need is a device that counts your steps and tracks calories burned, you can get away with spending a lot less. If you want something more advanced—like the ability to track your jogging route via GPS without bringing your phone with you—you'll pay a lot more.

You also should consider details such as battery life—some sportsbands need to be recharged every few days; others come with a replaceable battery that can last up to a year—and the companion app that's available for your phone. These apps can make a big difference. Some simply organize and present information collected by your tracker. Others provide detailed insights on each of your daily activities, help you set long-term goals and connect you with a network of peers for extra motivation. Typically free, these apps can be downloaded before you buy to get a sense of which tracker and app are right for you.

