

Nomophobia -It's the fear of being away from your smartphone or not having network coverage.

It's on the rise. 87% of young adults say their smartphone never leaves their side, while, 80 % percent of smart phone users check their phone within 15 minutes of waking up.



Smartphone dependency is becoming a big problem. Here are some signs of dependency:

- You frequently use your phone at mealtimes.
- You spend more time on your phone than interacting with others in person.
- You frequently use your phone when you know you should be doing something else more productive.
- You frequently use your phone while performing tasks that require focus, such as completing an assignment, writing a report, or driving.
- You feel uncomfortable when your phone isn't with you.
- You sometimes check your phone in the middle of the night.

Do you feel overly-dependent on your phone?

Here are ways to help you overcome it. If you implement the tips, I guarantee you'll break this potentially destructive habit.

1. TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS.

Many people get distracted by the endless notifications they receive from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Spotify, and other apps. You don't need to know right away if someone "likes" your status update, follows you on Instagram, or sends you an email.

The more often you check your phone, the more it becomes an ingrained habit. So turn off notifications, and you'll feel less compelled to use your phone.

The only apps for which you don't turn off notifications might be your text messaging app and your calendar app. This is because sometimes you're urgently waiting for a text, or your calendar app notifications keep you on schedule.

2. WHEN YOU FEEL THE URGE TO CHECK YOUR PHONE, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

The urge to check your phone comes in waves. If you hold out for just a few seconds, the urge will pass. You can then get back to work.

When you feel like you just *have* to check your phone, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Inhale for three seconds, and exhale for three seconds. The urge will usually disappear.

If the urge is still there, take another deep breath. You should then have the willpower to return to your original task. This is a simple but powerful technique to help you break your smartphone addiction.

3. DELETE ALL THE SOCIAL MEDIA APPS ON YOUR PHONE.

This sounds like a drastic measure, but it isn't. You'll still be able to access social media sites through your phone's Internet browser.

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have mobile-friendly websites. Sure, the mobile web experience isn't as seamless as the app experience. But it's good enough to satisfy your occasional social media craving. I challenge you to go one step further: Delete every single game on your phone. You'll become a more productive person as a result.

4. DELETE ALL THE APPS YOU DON'T USE.

This will help you remove the clutter from your phone, and reduce the time you spend "exploring" your apps. As such, you'll be that much closer to overcoming your smartphone addiction.

Deleting your unused – or little-used – apps also frees up storage space, and improves your phone's battery life and performance.

If the urge is still there, take another deep breath. You should then have the willpower to return to your original task.

5. SET SPECIFIC BOUNDARIES FOR SMARTPHONE USAGE.

Telling yourself that you should "use your phone less" isn't effective, because that phrase is too general. To limit your phone usage, set specific boundaries instead.

Here are some possible boundaries:

- No phone usage at mealtimes
- Absolutely no phone usage during study time.
- No phone usage at social events
- No phone usage during in-person conversations
- No phone usage in the bedroom

Start with an easy one, and add one a month. Over time, you'll see a huge difference in your phone usage patterns.

6. MUTE YOUR GROUP CHATS.

If you're like most people, the messages you receive from your group chats aren't time-sensitive. So it's fine if you only read through the messages a few times a day.

7. REPLY TO TEXT MESSAGES JUST THREE TIMES A DAY.

Apart from urgent text messages from family and close friends, don't reply immediately. I know the temptation to reply right away is great, but you must resist it. Why?

Because it's more efficient to reply to text messages in batches, rather than one at a time.

8. TURN OFF YOUR PHONE BEFORE GOING TO BED.

Turn off your phone before going to bed, and leave it to charge outside your bedroom.

It is tempting to use your phone in bed and before you know, an hour has passed. You are stealing sleep hours to feed your phone habit. Research strongly demonstrates that Phone usage negatively impacts on our ability to sleep and the quality of our sleep.

If you are tempted to use your phone in bed, you'll need to walk out of your room in a half-awake state. Next, you'll need to wait 30 seconds for your phone to boot up. So you'll probably just go back to sleep instead – which is what you ought to do anyway.

9. USE AN ACTUAL ALARM CLOCK INSTEAD OF YOUR PHONE

Before you studying, put your phone at least 10 feet away from you, or better again outside the room where you plan to study. To eliminate temptation completely, turn your phone off – or at least to airplane mode.

10. WEAR A WATCH SO YOU DON'T NEED TO CHECK YOUR PHONE FOR THE TIME.

You probably use your phone to tell the time. You glance at your phone to see what time it is. As you do this, you see a flood of Facebook notifications and text messages. You start going through them, and in the blink of an eye 15 minutes have gone by.

And all you wanted to do was take *two seconds* to check the time.

What's one way to prevent this from happening?

Wear a watch. It's that simple, really.

11. TELL OTHERS ABOUT YOUR DECISION TO REDUCE YOUR PHONE USAGE AND ENLIST THEIR HELP.

If you tell others about your decision to break your smartphone addiction and ask for their help, you're more likely to succeed.

Here are a few ways you can do that:

- Inform your friends and family about your decision, and ask them to check in with you once a week.
- Before you get to study, give your phone to a trusted friend or family member.
- Tell your friend that every time you don't stick to your plan, you'll give her \$10.
- Find a friend who's also addicted to his smartphone, and persuade him to join you in breaking the habit.

Smartphones are meant to help us lead better and more productive lives. But when we succumb to smartphone addiction, we become slaves to our phone. This affects the quality and productiveness of our life, study, work and relationships with family and friends.