

Ways to Reduce Screen Time

Screen time includes any activity that involves a screen, such as TV, computer, iPad, video games, and smart phones. It is a necessity that children and adults know how to use technology in today's world. However, *excessive* amounts of screen time can have a negative effect on our health. Research tells us that too much screen time can be harmful to our health and increase our risk of developing chronic diseases. Bouts of physical activity or active play may not 'fix' or 'undo' large amounts of screen time. Here are a few tips to help you and your children reduce screen time.

Have a Family Meeting

Talk to your children about the effects of screen time on our health. Explain that it is important to sit less and move more to be healthy.

Be a Role Model

Model the importance by limiting your screen time and increasing your physical activity.



Set Limits on Screen Time

Set the house goal that you and your children (over 5 years) will spend no more than two hours a day participating in screen time. Discuss ways that you will help each other achieve this goal.

Note: No screen time for children under 1 year. No more than one hour per day of screen time for children between 1-4 years.

Schedule Screen Free Time

Set screen free times in your house so everyone can have an activity break.

Don't Use Electronics as a Reward or Punishment

Practices like this make screen time seem even more important to children.

Minimize the Influence of TV in Your Home

Remove TVs, computers, electronic devices, and gaming equipment from all bedrooms. Research says, by having these items in our bedrooms it increases our amount of screen time. Re-arrange family room furniture so all the couches and chairs do not face the TV.

The Hour before Bed

Turn off the TV or other electronic devices the hour before going to bed. This will help limit your daily screen time but also it may help you sleep more sound.

Make Meal Time, Family Time

Turn off the TV or other electronic devices during family meal time. Research has shown that families who eat together tend to eat more nutritious meals than families who eat separately. Make eating together a priority and schedule family meals at least two to three times a week.

Make Your Home Play Friendly

Break up screen time with periods of active play such as playing outside, learning a new hobby or sport, or spending time with family and friends.

Be a Savvy Media Consumer

Children lack the skills to be able to understand the influences of marketing on their food choices, physical activity, and body image.

Help your child develop healthy eating habits and become media savvy by teaching them to recognize a sales pitch. Ask your child why their favourite cartoon character is trying to get them to eat a certain food. Explain to them that this is so that companies can make more money by children asking their parents to buy the food.

Switch Screen Time to Active Time

Swap an hour of screen time for an hour of active play or physical activity. Pick an activity that you enjoy or something new you have wanted to try.

