



Boredom & Digital Detox

“Scientists widely agree that smartphones are wreaking havoc on our brains,” creating shortened attention spans and frayed nerves.²

By removing device distractions, we allow time for reflection, introspection, and daydreaming.²

Our modern-day society has figured out a way to nearly eliminate boredom. The device that most of us carry around in our pockets has provided unlimited content to be engaged with for all of the in-between moments in life. We are living in an era of “digital saturation”.² A podcast on our commute to work, a social media scroll during an elevator ride, and a YouTube video while we are waiting for our lunch to heat up; there is no space that cannot be filled with screentime or information download. With what feels like the world at our fingertips, we often avoid what can feel like uncomfortable silence, space, or time to be left with our thoughts.

Have you ever considered that you may be digitally stifling your creativity or numbing your ability to reflect? Our technological connectedness comes with a “cognitive cost” – even a “brain drain”.³ While under-stimulation may lead to feelings of boredom or restlessness, over-stimulation could elicit feelings of irritation and anxiousness.¹

How can we reclaim time and space for ourselves in our hyperconnected world?

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND.

That smartphone sitting face down on your desk is a distraction, even if it is silenced or turned off.^{3,4}

- » Put your phone in a **different room**.

- » Leave your phone in your **bag or desk drawer**.
- » Create designated **tech-free zones**.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Not everything needs to be read, watched, or responded to immediately. Give yourself permission to complete a task without interruption.

- » Within reason, **set aside time throughout the day to be unavailable**. Add it to your calendar if you need to. Being always available 24/7 is draining.
- » **Remove notifications** from smart watches or certain applications in the settings of your device.
- » **Create digital boundaries** – set up hours of the day or night to silence or quiet notifications from the various applications on your phone.

DETOX YOUR DIGITAL CONSUMPTION

The devices are designed to be addictive, do not blame yourself if you find it challenging to break away.

- » **Find a screen-free hobby or activity**. Take a few minutes to journal, read, knit, draw, bake, puzzle, or do something else that you enjoy doing.
- » **Delete applications**, maybe not forever, but even removing the temptation for a few hours or days can bring you a different perspective to try a different pattern. You may be surprised to have some extra time on your hands!

This material is to be used for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any of the materials be construed as professional or medical advice.

1. Ferguson, S. (2025, April 2). Signs of overstimulation in adults. Healthline. Medically reviewed by Lori Lawrenz, PsyD. <https://www.healthline.com/health/signs-of-overstimulation-in-adults>

2. Engle, J. (2026, January 26). Do we all need a little more boredom in our lives? The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/26/learning/do-we-all-need-a-little-more-boredom-in-our-lives.html>

3. Duke, K., Ward, A., Gneezy, A., & Bos, M. (2018, March 20). Having your smartphone nearby takes a toll on your thinking. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2018/03/having-your-smartphone-nearby-takes-a-toll-on-your-thinking>

4. Shmerling, R. H. (2017, August 2). Keeping your smartphone nearby may not be so smart. Harvard Health Blog. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/keeping-your-smartphone-nearby-may-not-be-so-smart-2017080212163>