



# Digital Wellbeing

## Ctrl your scroll

### Less scrolling, more living

Being over-dependent on our phones, particularly social media pages and short videos, leads us to scroll through life rather than live it, harming our focus and wellbeing. **Seeing it as something you control—rather than something that controls you—can make a big difference to your ability to concentrate as well as overall happiness.** Instead of keeping your phone within reach and checking it constantly, try putting it in a specific place in your bag or room and switching it to silent when you need to concentrate. During study sessions, lectures, or classes, it can even help to pack your phone away and only take it out when absolutely necessary. Your phone needs a parking spot! If your phone is not within arm's reach, it's way less tempting. By reducing distractions, you can stay present, focus better, and make the most of your study time and interactions with others.



### Digital declutter: "Sweep", Delete, Reset

Choose one day each week to do a quick phone cleanup by deleting unnecessary documents, photos, and other media. Delete old screenshots, clear downloads and unfollow accounts that don't add value.

**Call it a "Sunday Scroll cleanse" or "Midweek digital reset."** Clearing out digital clutter can also help clear your mind, making it easier to reset and start fresh. When we declutter different areas of our lives in a practical, hands-on way, it often leads to a more positive outlook and leaves us feeling more energised and motivated.



### The "Just one episode" rule

Set a clear stopping point before you open an app:

- "I'll scroll TikTok for 10 minutes."
- "One episode, then stop."

**Tip: Use a timer, not willpower. When it goes off, phone goes face-down or away.**

### The 25–5 focus hack

- **25 minutes:** focus (phone on silent, out of sight)
- **5 minutes:** check your phone guilt-free. Repeat 3–4 times, then take a longer break.

**This works well because you don't feel "cut off" forever.** Start or join study groups where phones are stacked or put away, and friends can gently call each other out for doom-scrolling. Peer accountability often works better than relying on self-discipline alone.

## Dopamine break

Every time you scroll, like, or get a notification, your brain gets a tiny hit of dopamine — the “feel-good” chemical linked to reward and motivation. The catch? Your brain starts chasing the next hit, which is why one quick scroll turns into 30 minutes without you noticing. It’s not a lack of discipline — it’s your brain doing exactly what it’s wired to do. The good news: when you pause the scroll, the loop breaks, and focus comes back. You can set up your phone to give your brain a mini dopamine break:

- Switch your phone to grayscale during study hours
- Turn off non-essential notifications
- Move social apps off your home screen

### Some scroll-replacement ideas:

#### *Move your body*

- Stand up and stretch for 60 seconds
- Walk to refill your water bottle
- Do 10 squats or a quick shake-out

Movement helps burn off that dopamine itch.

#### *Switch to low-effort focus*

- Read one page of notes
- Review flashcards
- Highlight key points without overthinking

The goal is momentum, not perfection.

#### *Do something with your hands*

- Write a quick to-do list
- Doodle, colour, or scribble
- Tidy one small thing on your desk
- Build or make something, like a small DIY project, model, bracelet, or even repair something broken.
- Gardening or caring for plants, even just repotting one—very grounding and satisfying.
- Play a physical game or instrument, like cards, chess, guitar, or piano.
- Craft something small, like origami, knitting, or clay.

**By letting your hands move, you give your brain space to quiet and slow down.**

#### *Use sound instead of a screen*

- Put on instrumental music or a study playlist
- Listen to a short podcast or calming audio

#### **Still stimulating, but way less distracting.**

Adopt a mindset that makes managing your phone feel like a smart choice, not a punishment.

#### *Tell yourself:*

**“I’m not quitting my phone — I’m just pausing it.”**

Content adapted from the following two sources:

Bach, M., et al. (2025). Reducing smartphone screen time improves mental health in students. BMC Medicine.  
TimeAlign. (2024). Digital wellbeing tips for focused phone use. <https://www.timealignapp.com/blog/digital-wellbeing>

