



DIGITAL DIET

The Digital Diet is a simple way to test the waters in lessening the burden of technology in your life. In a time where you are constantly bombarded with current and new technology it is essential you learn how technology is affecting your daily life. The Digital Diet is a specific process you can use in order to take back control of the technology in your life.

Goals

In entering the Digital Diet, there are three main goals to accomplish.

1) Take Back Control

You have an unlimited supply of activities and entertainment at your fingertips. While some of these choices are useful, many of them are simply distractions. This phenomenon will only get worse as time goes by. You need to learn now to be in control of what you view instead of letting a device control you. Aligning with what Paul states in **1 Corinthians 10:23** that all things are permissible, but not all things are helpful.

This is one of the major goals to achieve during this period. When it comes to you or your children, everyone needs to understand their freedom and not be controlled, especially by those items you have complete control over. This exercise is an attempt to open your eyes to see how, and where, technology is controlling your life.

2) Eliminate Distractions

The second goal is to simply eliminate the distractions in your life. The majority of what is available to you through your smart phone or the internet is nothing but a distraction. These distractions are keeping you from engaging in meaningful relationships and activities. If you can eliminate these distractions, which you have control over, you can begin to replace them with more intentional activities.

3) Use Imagination and Creativity

Much of society has lost the ability to be bored. Through technology, you were given a shortcut to get out of boredom instead of letting yourself seek creative alternatives.

A study from the University of Limerick showed that "Bored people feel that their actions are meaningless and so they are motivated to engage in meaningful behavior," Which means people are more prone to create something new, serve someone in need, or engage in more altruistic activities when in a state of boredom. All of which better serve you and those around you. But you are not affording yourself, or your children, this opportunity by always offering a distraction to keep you from boredom.

Don't Make Excuses

When you read the items on the checklist, your first response will be to come up with an excuse as to why you need a certain technology and the reason it is important to you. If the first word out of your mouth is "but" then be very cautious. You can make excuses about everything and convince yourself you need everything. Go into this plan with the understanding you are going to cut back and make changes. If you enter the plan with the right perspective it will help you in the



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planning and execution of your technology plan.

10 Digital Diet Tips

In attempting to discover what you could do during this diet, there are 10 different tips you can narrow down to begin your Digital Diet.

1) No phone in the bedroom

Remove all the phones from the bedroom. Buy an alarm clock and setup a docking station in the kitchen, living room, or your home office for everyone to charge their phone. The purpose of this is to not make the phone the first thing you see in the morning and the last thing you see before going to bed.

2) Games or Mindless Browsing

This exercise goes back to the boredom goal. Think of other activities you can accomplish instead of going to your phone, the internet, or a video game as a first line of defense. You are probably busy and work hard and simply want to come home and “veg” a little. But “vegging” usually entails using some type of technology.

How can you relax now by listening to music, playing an instrument, reading, drawing, playing board games, or engaging in some craft? The activities are endless and extremely more beneficial if you simply stop and take the time to figure out another path to pursue.

3) Scheduled time for TV and Video Games

Remember this is a diet and not a complete technology ban. You can still enjoy watching movies together and most likely a lot of your work is done on a computer. This is why you can schedule times as a family to watch a movie or play games. The key point is “as a family.” What you are attempting to eliminate are the individual times you, or family members, are watching TV or playing games.

Do a specific activity, and put all other technology aside so you can focus in on the one activity in front of you. Scheduling assists you, or your family, to be more creative and intentional with your time.

4) No Phones During Other Activities

When you are participating in other activities, then you must put your phones down. Whether this is playing a game, eating dinner, watching a movie, or specific technology free night. Put your phones on the kitchen counter or someplace away from the activity.

This activity allows you to be firmly in the moment without distraction. To ensure you can talk, communicate, and relate to one another without being bothered by notifications, web searches, or social media posts.

5) Turned Off Notifications



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Notifications are an interesting area. While it is nice to be notified when we get a text, email, or post update. The notification is disruptive, it comes when the event happens, which may not be the best timing for you to be interrupted.

By turning off the notifications on your phone you are in control of when you check your messages. You are not in an endless loop of interruptions. But instead set aside specific times to check all your messages. The end result is fewer interruptions which end up making for less stress and distractions during your day. You can spend more energy concentrated on the task at hand.

On your phone, you can turn off notifications on almost all apps. Be honest with yourself and unless you really need to be notified, turn off notifications. You will survive. Also, be aware that many new apps you download may automatically turn on notifications. Ensure you check each time you download a new app.

6) Weekly Phone-free Night

In order to be intentional about your time together and your time away from technology, implement a no-technology activity night. This is usually a game night one specific night during the week. But the intent is to spend time as a family, doing some activity, which does not involve any type of technology.

The purpose of this activity is two-fold. First off, it is much needed time with the family. With many families being involved in too many activities, it can be a challenge to get everyone in the same house at one time. The second reason is to remind everyone they can still have fun without technology. This is a much-needed reminder in a time where we go to our phones for everything.

7) Turn Off Cellular Data

By turning off the cellular data, all the apps can only be checked when you are within a Wi-Fi signal. This eliminates a lot of extra checking and going to your phone when you are out and about. If you go to your settings on your phone you can turn off all your cellular data or just pick specific apps.

8) Change Environments

If staying in your house is too challenging to complete a step or there are too many temptations for you, then change your environment. This doesn't mean you have to hide away in the Shire for a month, although it might be helpful. But if family night is too challenging to do at home, then go to a coffee shop, play a game in the park, or find books at the library. The point is you go someplace where you leave your phones, and the temptation of technology, at home. Don't make this exercise too difficult on yourself, if you need to change your environment to lose the tech, then find a more suitable place.

9) Sabbatical Sundays

For the most part, you probably really don't need your digital devices on Sunday. If you are not working on Sunday, then try and use Sunday's as a Sabbatical Sunday. A Sabbatical is simply a "period of rest." Put your phones down, turn off your computers, and unplug the television. Take a rest from your technology.



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At most a 30-day Digital Diet will incorporate four Sundays. See what it is like to simply unplug for an entire day each week during the diet. This may be more on the extreme end, but will probably yield the greatest benefits.

10) OK Not Knowing

With a search engine to look up anything you could ever imagine in the palm of your hands; it has become the norm to look up any questions you might have. Not having to know everything is a good step to take during your Digital Diet.

Be OK with not knowing. Whether it is a fact, a movie, weather, latest news, or event. Refrain from going to your phone the next time a question arises which would prompt you to go for your phone as an answer. It is ok not knowing. What you are doing in the process is breaking the trigger which always sends you to your phone to answer questions which you will alright with not knowing the answer.

Be Strategic with Your Start

- **30-Day Ramp up** – Don't just jump into these changes. Get yourself in the mindset that you will be making these changes. If you decide to go down this route, then pick the start day 30 days from now to begin.
- **Get what you need** – Use the 30 days to get an alarm clock for your bedroom. Prepare a charging station in your living area, office, or kitchen. Find a bin where you, family, and friends can keep your phones during dinner or game nights.
- **Plan** - Have a specific plan for how you will handle each piece of technology. Use the questions below to spark thought about how you do use technology and how you should be using technology. If you are doing a 30-day diet then be very specific as to what you think those 30 days will look like. Also, be specific about what outcomes you would like to see from the diet.
- **Alternate Activities** - Make a list of alternative activities which you can engage in during the fast. One of the main reasons we go to our phones or TV's is we get bored. Use the space below to identify all types of activities you, or your family, enjoy. Use this list as a way engage in a specific activity together instead of reaching for the phone.