

Is tech draining your energy? We've got five tips for dealing with online fatigue

Coping with the coronavirus pandemic has meant the world has moved even further towards the digital space and left people spending hours in front of a screen working, socializing, shopping and more. Whilst technology has enabled students to study from their homes and maintain contact with friends and family, where physical interaction is limited, it has also increased tiredness and disengagement due to the pressure of feeling like you have to be online at all times. This phenomenon is known as 'online fatigue'.

Online fatigue can have a negative impact on student mental health, heightening feelings of anxiety, being overwhelmed and the ability to focus. [Togetherall's](#) Clinical Director, Dr Tim Rogers, shares his top tips on how to reset your relationship with technology.

1. Set app limits

Many of us don't realise how much time we are actually spending online. Your device will likely be able to tell you this, so take advantage. Monitor your activity and gradually reduce the time you spend on each platform, especially across social media - set yourself time limits. For example, turn off email notifications in the evening, or reduce social media use during mealtimes and before sleep. If these features aren't built into your device, there are plenty of services who can help, such as [Digital Wellbeing](#) for Android.

2. Do one thing at the time

With the introduction of online teaching, it's tempting to multi-task, but it's important to resist the urge. To perform at its best, the brain needs to concentrate on one task at a time. When studying or listening to an online lecture, close any tabs or programmes that might distract you, like your inbox or messaging, put your phone away, and stay present. We know it can be tempting, but remind yourself that the message you received can wait a few minutes. You will be able to craft a better response when you are not dividing your attention.

3. Be aware of social media

Comparison is the thief of joy, so try to follow social media accounts that are aligned with what is important to you and foster positivity and motivation. It's easy to feel inadequate and get a false sense of ourselves when we are constantly comparing with the best selves of others. Remember that no one's life is perfect and what people show on social media is often a façade.

If you suffer from depression or anxiety, it's good advice to think about whether to delete those apps altogether for a while, especially for younger women, for whom social media can be most damaging in terms of mental health.

If you need a safe space to connect with others and express how you are feeling, the [Togetherall community](#) is available 24/7 and monitored round the clock by trained professionals.

4. Remember to take regular breaks from online work

If you find there are moments in your day that feel overwhelming, take a few minutes of reflection and positive action, such as starting a Togetherall course which can help you reset and refocus.

It's important to take regular breaks between tasks – at least five minutes every hour – to set your energy levels and restore focus. During your break, try to step away from technology. Stand up and walk around, drink a glass of water or try some breathing exercises to let go of stress.

5. Don't forget the importance of exercise, nutrition and a good night sleep

It can feel good to work hard and push ourselves when things are tough, even if this requires working extra hours to achieve top results. Rest and recovery, however, are paramount to maintaining high performance, and this starts with a good night's sleep. Diet also plays a key role in maintaining a healthy body. Remember to drink plenty of water during the day to avoid dehydration – your brain needs at least 2 litres of it per day - and follow a balanced and healthy diet to improve your mood.

Activity is important for mental health as much as it's for physical health. If you spend most of your time sat on a chair, it's important to engage in daily physical activity to improve posture and strengthen the muscles. For most, any step up in physical activity will improve the mood, even if it is five minutes to stand up and stretch or move around - try to climb the stairs!