

Digital Detox & Sleep Reset

A science-backed protocol for reclaiming deep sleep in a screen-saturated world

WHY SCREENS DAMAGE SLEEP

Blue light emitted by screens (wavelengths 450-490 nm) suppresses melatonin synthesis by up to 85% when viewed within 2 hours of bedtime, per research in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2015). But light is only part of the mechanism. Smartphone use activates the dopaminergic reward system, creating cortical hyperarousal that delays sleep onset by 30-60 minutes independent of light exposure.

A 2022 meta-analysis in *Sleep Medicine Reviews* (58 studies, 125,000 participants) found that each additional hour of screen use after 8pm was associated with a 12-minute reduction in total sleep time and significantly elevated next-day fatigue scores.

THE 7-DAY RESET PROTOCOL

DAYS 1-2: Establish the baseline cutoff

- ☐ Set a hard screen cutoff 90 minutes before your target sleep time
- ☐ Enable Night Shift or blue light filter on all devices from 6pm onwards
- ☐ Remove your phone from your bedroom — charge it in another room
- ☐ Note your sleep onset time in a paper journal each morning

DAYS 3-4: Replace screen time with recovery rituals

- ☐ Replace 30 min of evening screen use with physical reading (paper book)
- ☐ Practice 10 minutes of progressive muscle relaxation or NSDR audio
- ☐ Dim all household lights to under 10 lux after 9pm
- ☐ Avoid checking email or social media after your cutoff

DAYS 5-7: Deepen and sustain

- ☐ Extend screen cutoff to 2 hours before bed
- ☐ Use a physical alarm clock — remove phone from bedroom entirely
- ☐ Add 5-10 minutes of outdoor morning sunlight within 30 minutes of waking
- ☐ Log sleep onset time, wake time, and subjective rest quality each day
- ☐ Compare Day 7 sleep quality score to Day 1 baseline

EVENING ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Bedroom temperature set to 65-68°F (18-20°C)
- ☐ Blackout curtains or sleep mask in place
- ☐ White noise or fan running if environment is noisy
- ☐ No overhead bright lights — use lamps only after 7pm
- ☐ Blue-light blocking glasses worn if screens are unavoidable
- ☐ All notification sounds silenced on devices outside bedroom

SLEEP HYGIENE NON-NEGOTIABLES

- ☐ Fixed wake time 7 days per week (anchor point for circadian clock)
- ☐ No caffeine after 1pm — half-life of caffeine is 5-7 hours
- ☐ No alcohol within 3 hours of sleep (disrupts REM architecture)
- ☐ Last meal at least 2 hours before bed
- ☐ Brief 5-minute walk after dinner to lower cortisol

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD OF SCREENS

- ☐ Read fiction — narrative processing is engaging but not arousing
- ☐ Journaling: write 3 things that went well today
- ☐ Light stretching or yoga — 10 minutes reduces core body temperature
- ☐ Conversation without devices — social bonding increases oxytocin
- ☐ Guided meditation or body scan audio (20 min replaces screen habit)

TRACKING PROGRESS (LOG DAILY)

- ☐ Sleep onset latency — target under 20 minutes
- ☐ Total sleep time — target 7-9 hours for most adults
- ☐ Number of nighttime awakenings — target 0-1
- ☐ Morning freshness score (1-10 scale)
- ☐ Daytime focus quality (1-10) — sensitive indicator of sleep debt

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