

- Technology / Stress

# ARE YOU TECH STRESSED? TAKE A BREAK

## Like your best pals, experts suggest While electronic devices may seem they also push you down the abyss of physical and mental distress

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It's a known fact that humans shape the world of technology, but let's face it, technology, too, has a huge impact on us. While the multiple devices around us enable constant communication, they also give rise to the expectation that we should be available 24/7, especially with our workfrom-home schedules. All of us have at one point or another worked on a laptop with one hand, while holding a phone and conversing on a call with the other hand. Technology has left us vulnerable and stressed out, resulting in fractured attention, haywire sleeping patterns, untimely meals, aches, pains and exhaustion, and has given birth to the term, tech-nostress.

### TAKE A BREAK

While electronic devices may seem like your best pals, experts suggest they also push you down the abyss of physical and mental distress



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Dr Anuneet Sabharwal, MBBS, MD psychiatrist and founder, The Happy Tree, says, "Technology can be defined as the signficant psychological link between people and the introduction of new technologies. Modern communication has eased our lives but it has also significantly increased the speed at which we move, leading to stress. Exchange of information that would take weeks by mail, can now happen in seconds. Modern technological advancements have gained such prevalence that it's easy to become addicted to social media and smartphones. We often tend to use them to the point that it starts impacting our functioning."

the adverse impact associated with excessive use of technology," says Dr Sarana Dharai, MBBS, MD, consultant psychiatrist at Parnatec Hospital. Being connected to the internet and using email, text services and social media drives most of us up the wall and turns us into emotional wrecks. The stress disrupts our body's natural rhythm and functions like digestion, sleep and immune health. It greatly affects the visual system that comprises the eye. Dr PV Sureshchander, Moha Ayurveda Eye Hospital, Irindranth, says, "We live in an online era and depend on various types of online services for most of our needs. They definitely create a lot of stress on our eyes."

He adds, "The screens are blurring in nature. This causes your eyes to become hyper sensitive to bright light. Exposure to these bright screens increases the chances of degeneration of your cornea."

For most of us, reaching for our phones is a default whenever we even minutely become "bored." Vidhwa K Mishra, health expert and author, says, "We have built a dependency on our phones for accessing the internet, banking system and even more. They have become our whole lives and so there is no one to ever be without them. This fear translates to stress as we always have a need to feel attached."

By recognising and understanding the stressors, we can curb the stress and anxiety. "Technology has to be utilised as a tool for enhancing growth and not as the only way of being. Any form of behavioural addiction such as gaming, social networking, etc, needs expert attention for comprehensive management," says Dr Dharai.

Modern communication has eased our lives but it has also significantly increased the speed at which we move, leading to stress. DRANUJEET SABHARWAL, Psychiatrist



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### Reclaim mental peace

- 1 Set Boundaries**  
Non-negotiable healthy phone boundaries such as not using it during a meeting or when you're in a social situation is needed. "Create a schedule where you can afford to be away a day or night and do not feel guilty," says Mishra.
- 2 Spend time in nature**  
Distance your self from your phone and occupy that time with things that bring you joy. "Go for walks without your smartphone and interact with people. Read books and avoid digital clutter," says author Sujata Sahi.
- 3 Meditation**  
Take charge of your mental well-being. "Dedicate time for exercise, yoga and physical activity. Try to engage in breathing or relaxation exercises instead of over-scrolling in social media," says Dr Sabharwal.
- 4 Beslow to upgrade**  
Every new tech upgrade is not to be bought. Sabhi adds, "Recognise and embrace that new might not be necessarily better." Cutting down the hours we spend on our devices and not upgrading is both financially and environmentally beneficial.



Dr Anuneet Sabharwal, MBBS, MD psychiatrist and founder, The Happy Tree, says, "Tech-nostress can be defined as the negative psychological link between people and the introduction of new technologies. Modern communication has eased our lives but it has also signifi-

cantly increased the speed at which we move, leading to stress. Exchange of information that would take weeks by mail can now happen in seconds. Modern technological advancements have gained such prominence that it's easy to become addicted to social media and smartphones. We often tend to use them to the point that it starts impacting our functioning.”

“The constant desire to be connected and informed via the virtual world poses the danger of a possible behavioural addiction. Pathologising terms such as nomophobia, fomo, textaphrenia, ringxiety or phantom ringing phenomena indicate the adverse impacts associated with excessive use of technology,” says Dr Samant Darshi, MBBS, MD, consultant psychiatrist at Psymate Noida.

Being connected to the internet and using email, text services and social media drives most of us up the wall and turns us into emotional wrecks. The stress disrupts our body's natural rhythm and functions like digestion, sleep and immune health. It greatly affects the visual system that comprises the eye. Dr PK Santhakumari, Matha Ayurveda Eye Hospital, Trivandrum, says, “We live in an online era and depend on various types of online services for most of our needs. They definitely create a lot of stress on our eyes.”

He adds, “The screens are illuminating in nature. This causes your eye to become hypersensitive to bright light. Exposure to these bright screens increases the chances of degeneration of your cornea.”

For most of us, reaching for our phone is a default whenever we're even minutely bored or lonely. Vaibhav R Mishra, health expert and model, says, “We have built a dependency on our phones for accessing the internet, banking system and even music. They have become our whole lives and so there is a fear to ever be without them. This fear then leads to stress as we always have a need to feel attached.”

By recognising and understanding the stressors, we can curb the stress and anxiety. “Technology has to be visualised as a tool for enhancing growth and not as the only way of living. Any form of behavioural addiction such as gaming, social networking, etc, needs expert attention for comprehensive management,” says Dr Darshi.

PNon-negotiable healthy phone boundaries such as not using it during a meal or when you're in a social situation is needed. “Create a schedule where you can allot two hours a day for digital detox and relaxation,” says Mishra.

Distance yourself from your phone and occupy that time with things that bring you joy. “Go for walks without your smartphones and interact with people. Read books and not digital copies,” says author Sujata Salvi.

Every new tech upgrade is not to be bought. Salvi adds, “Recognise and embrace that new might not be necessarily better.” Cutting down the hours we spend on our devices and not upgrading is both financially and environmentally beneficial.