



Digital Detox

Information for Students



In your Be Strong Online session with the Be Strong Online Ambassadors you explored the topic of **Digital Detox**.

There is a whole world online which is part of people's everyday lives. Social networks, news updates, instant messaging, games: the internet provides us with constant activity.

So much so that Ofcom's 2016 report on usage¹ showed that people spend more time online than they do sleeping in a day.

Whilst being connected to the internet can be very helpful, there are a few possible downsides:

- ⓪ Using smartphones before going to bed can delay your sleep by at least an hour²
- ⓪ Lack of sleep can lead to health problems, make you moody or mean you're less able to concentrate³
- ⓪ It can affect your relationships with friends and family: 40% of people in one study said they felt ignored by a friend or relative whose attention was entirely on their smartphone⁴

You should feel that **you control technology, not the other way round**. If you think you spend too much time online and want to moderate it, here are some tips:



Listen to people around you: it can be annoying when people tell us that we have been on our phone for too long. But try to see things from their point of view –if they are someone close to you, such as a friend or family member, they are probably trying to help by letting you know they think you could do with a break



Use activity apps: research has suggested that “remaining seated for too long can be bad for your health”⁵, so it's worth thinking about whether

¹ <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr16/bitesize.pdf> pp6

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-34744859>

³ <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/tiredness-and-fatigue/Pages/lack-of-sleep-health-risks.aspx>

⁴ <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr16/bitesize.pdf> pp6

you spend long periods of time sitting down when you use technology. There are some great health apps around which can encourage you to get active and help you track your achievements

 **Close apps:** think, are there any apps which you spend a lot of time on which you don't actually enjoy using? Think about uninstalling them for a while and see how you feel

 **Switch off notifications:** do you find yourself getting distracted when a notification pings up? Do you really need to be alerted about all of them? A lot of apps activate notifications automatically when you download them. Think about which ones you actually want to be notified about and switch off the rest

 **Use a timer:** if you have an important task to do and want to focus, schedule internet breaks. Set a timer or alarm for your internet use to let you know when your time's up. This will help you concentrate on finishing the thing you need to do

 **Use airplane mode:** this is a good way to help you take a quick break from the internet without having to turn your phone or tablet off. Airplane mode is also handy if you use your device as an alarm clock but don't want to be tempted to use it during the night – the alarm will still go off even when offline

 **Try a 'digital detox':** 15 million people a year are now choosing to take control by spending time offline.⁴ If you feel anxious when you're away from your device or feel hooked to it, taking a break could be a good idea. Set yourself a realistic target, let friends know that you won't be online, and see how you feel at the end of the challenge

 **Talk to someone:** if you're worried you may be spending too much time online, it may be helpful to talk to a friend, family member or trusted adult. <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/cmr16/bitesize.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/sitting-and-sedentary-behaviour-are-bad-for-your-health.aspx>