



PHOTO BY RAMI AL-ZAYAT

WARNING!

TECH MAY HARM YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

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We treat technology almost like a clingy newborn baby. Think about it, we put our phones and other devices right beside us before bed at night, refuse to leave them alone for more than five minutes throughout the day and even sometimes have them right there with us as we use the bathroom or take a shower. However, our precious sidekick can actually be harmful to our psychological health. Don't get too upset yet though, you can still be inseparable from your beloved technological devices, without being concerned about the outcomes. I'll give you some general, quick tips on how to minimize these negative effects before we go into what these effects actually are.

Overall, every one of the harms I'm about to

mention can be avoided if we simply take more breaks from technology. Go on an adventure with some friends, read a new and exciting book, or remodel your room. Speaking of friends, when you are with them, create a "no phone zone." Actually talk to them, not sit in silence scrolling through Instagram! Also, try turning off all technological devices at least an hour before bed. As you'll see momentarily, you really need a break from the light emitted from your phone screen, TV, or any other technological device. Try a new nighttime yoga routine or do a puzzle...do anything but lay in bed and stare at some screen! Lastly, stop stressing yourself out about how many likes you might get on Instagram or comments on Twitter. Remind yourself that you do not need the self-justification of even one single like or comment. Your eyebrows will still be "on fleek" without somebody commenting that they are. Now, it's time for the bad news...

HARM #1: DIMINISHING FOCUS



Your mind is constantly running rampant, thinking for one second about how you need to text bae, before quickly shifting to check how many likes you got on Instagram, before finally closing Instagram to tweet something or check your email. A study conducted by Professor Rosen of California State University showed that high school students could only concentrate on studying for an average of three minutes before their minds wandered elsewhere. "Multi-tasking" on technology is the direct cause of this.

HARM #2: ELIMINATING PATIENCE



You know how you get frustrated if a video takes more than 10 seconds to load? This is because technology gives us something called instant gratification, which is basically when you instantly receive something. For example, within a matter of seconds, we can order the latest, trendy gadget, or binge-watch our favorite TV shows. Technology rarely makes us wait, at least not for long. Studies show that recurring patterns of instant gratification leads to lack of patience; lack of patience is directly related to making poor life choices.

HARM #3: PROMOTING NARCISSISM



In some cases, technology can cause narcissism, where individuals are overly obsessed with self-promoting activities. Some examples of these activities are obsessing over which selfie to post, posting frequently and feeling the strong need to receive a certain amount of likes. This behavior can also lead to antisocial behavior, such as reacting angrily to a negative comment on Facebook. Social media can unintentionally encourage this "me-centered" behavior. It's completely normal to want to post your best selfie and receive a lot of likes, but it becomes an issue when these activities affect your behavior or mood.

HARM #4: CAUSING DEPRESSION AND SLEEP DISORDERS



Technology impacts your circadian rhythm, which is basically an internal clock that regulates when you feel sleepy and when you feel awake and alert. An American Medical Association study in 2012 showed that all of the constant exposure to the artificial light emitted from our devices can throw off our circadian rhythms, confusing our brain as to when we should feel tired and when we should feel awake. An altered or inconsistent circadian rhythm can spur effects of depression, mood disorders and sleep disorders, and also increase the risk of cancer.