

#SAFESOCIAL

12 Ways to Improve Your Social Media Experience



Once you've answered some deeper questions about your social media use, you're ready to start taking the appropriate steps towards healthier use for YOU. This is part of Step 2 in our 5 Steps Towards #SafeSocial.

Your solution needs to be specific to you. What might bother someone else might not be a problem for you, and therefore, their solutions might not work for you either. Here are 12 strategies for modifying your social media use to make it a better experience.

1. **Make it Mindful**

A. Try Mindful Scrolling

Instead of speeding through your social media feed, choose a feed and go through each post on your chosen feed thoughtfully (try at least 5). Look at the photo for more than 1s, read the caption, and consider who is sharing it. Ask yourself questions such as:

- Do I actually like this piece of content? Does this bring value or a benefit to my life?
- Do I not like it, but physically 'liked' / double-tapped' it anyways?
- Do I know the poster?
- Do I like the content the poster generally shares?
- Should I unfollow this person to remove this kind of content from my feed?

B. Elastic Band Trick

Put an elastic band or hairband around the centre of your phone. You will still be able to answer phone calls easily, but everything else (i.e. texting or social media) will require you to have a mindful conversation with yourself about your intentions.

2. **Audit Your Social Media Diet & Clean Up Your Feeds**

Mindfully go through your social media feeds, who you follow, and what they share. If they do not bring you joy, a laugh, connection, learning, or another positive experience, unfollow them. Sometimes we have to unfollow our friends. That's okay. This is about what YOU need to be well. They can still be your friends IRL! Just tell them you're following artists and comedians now.

3. **Track & Manage Your Time**

Use things like [Apple's "Screen Time"](#) or an equivalent to get a sense of your current usage rates. Here is a list of apps that help people limit their mobile or social media use. For example, apps that block notifications temporarily, remove blue light, track usage, send helpful reminders to you, etc.

- [Cold Turkey](#)
- [Offtime](#)
- [Moment](#)
- [Flipd](#)
- [Space](#)

4. **Avoid Distraction & Improve Focus**

Mindfulness helps improve focus, but if you need a helping hand, try one of these apps to help you focus, block distractions, or limit notifications temporarily or permanently.

- [Self-Control App](#)
- [Freedom](#)
- [Forest](#)
- [App Block](#)
- [Focus Me](#)
- [Cold Turkey](#)

5. **Tailor Your Privacy & Security Settings**

By taking time to set your privacy and security setting, you help ward off harassment and unwanted interactions. You also help create psychological safety for yourself. For example, do you know how to do these things?

- How to make your accounts private.
- How to limit who sees each post.
- How to block or report people.
- How to block comments with certain words in them.
- How to turn off location tags.

If not, we have compiled links to how to

do it for each of the following platforms:

- [Instagram privacy settings](#) and [controlling your visibility](#)
- [Facebook privacy settings](#)
- [Snapchat privacy settings](#)
- [LinkedIn privacy settings](#)
- [TikTok privacy settings](#)
- [Twitter privacy settings](#)

6. **Set & Prioritize Offline Time**

Set dedicated time to put the phone/social media away such as at the dinner table, when you sleep, or Sunday mornings. Prioritize the offline relationships because they have been shown to be more valuable and impactful.

7. **Try a Digital Detox**

For a set length of time – let’s say 30 days – and take a break from social media completely (eg. giving it up for lent, leaving your phone at home for a weekend, deactivating your accounts until exams are over, using the focus apps from above, etc).

8. **Try the “Analog” Versions”**

If you’re really trying to curb your smartphone/social media addictions, you want to try and remove as many temptations as possible. For example, you may be going on to answer an email or set a reminder, but then you see an Instagram notification and end up in a hole. Try removing the temptation by using the analog versions of phone apps:

- Anything that has a desktop/web version, try that first.
- Alarm -> alarm clock
- Calculator app -> a physical calculator
- Notes / Reminders apps -> paper/lists/journals

- Camera -> a digital camera
- Health apps -> Fitbit or other health-only tech
- Banking/travel apps-> website versions, calls, or branch visits
- Phone app -> okay... maybe keep that one. Who has a home phone anymore?

9. **Develop Offline Hobbies**

It’s easier to avoid temptation when you are busy doing something else. Try joining a spin gym, pottery class, camping, DIY, cooking, exploring, etc. Here’s [a giant list of hobbies](#) and another of [low-cost hobbies](#). As an additional bonus, they will make you a more interesting person!

10. **Create Goals and Execution Plans**

Our research showed that people who had long term goals, and were actively working on them, compared themselves less and had more positive experiences on social media. Similar to #8, if you’re working on something you’re passionate about such as building a business, writing a book, meeting your weight-loss goal, or graduating from school, you will have less time for social media.

11. **Join Our Weekly #SafeSocial Support Group (via Zoom)**

This is a recurring meetup for anyone to join. In this group meeting, you can feel free to share some of the problems you’re going through with social media, addiction, and mental health. You may also ask any questions you have. Sometimes there will be 2 people (you and a member of our #SafeSocial team), and sometimes there might be 10. We ask that you join via video and be open-minded, compassionate, and kind. We’re here for you. [Register here for our support group](#)

12. Turn to the Mental Health Experts

If it's getting to the point where you can't handle it yourself, call in the experts. There are many services that help with mental health and addiction as well as a few that focus primarily on tech-related issues.

- **Mental Health Services**
 - [Kids Help Phone](#)
 - [National Helpline](#)
 - [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
 - [Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#)
 - [Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(CHADD\)](#)
 - [Sidran Institute](#)
 - [HelpWhenYouNeedIt.org](#)
 - [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
 - [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)
 - [MentalHealth.gov](#)
 - [eMentalHealth.ca](#)
 - [MediaSmarts](#)

- **Online Mental Health /Therapy Apps**
 - [Inkblot](#)
 - [Talkspace](#)
 - [Better Help](#)

- **Youth Tech Addiction Recovery**
 - [reSTART](#)
 - [Paradigm Malibu](#)
 - [The Centre: A Place of Hope](#)