

## Words About Wellness

# Digital Wellness – How to Use Social Media and Stay Happy

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**T**echnology has been changing rapidly, and it can appear even faster and more foreign the older you are. It has made many advances possible, particularly in communication, medicine, and transportation. Technology has transformed our daily lives in many good ways, but brings some problems. The world can feel like it is constantly “on,” and our increase in digital connectedness brings serious pressure, which can affect the wellness of those who are using technology frequently and those who are around them (read: everybody who is reading this right now). Here are some things to consider regarding your use of social media.



### **Social Media and Mood**

Use of social networks has upsides for some people, and can make them feel more connected with peers, freer in their expression, and more aware of others. However, in addition to being addictive, here are some research findings on the impact of social media on mood:

- Research has found a link between social media use and mood disorders, although this relationship is likely complex.
- Increased use of Facebook amongst college students has been correlated with higher levels of loneliness overall.
- In a survey of young adults on the impact of social media on emotional difficulty, YouTube was found to have the most positive impact, while Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter showed negative effects on mental health overall.

### **Social Media and Body image**

- Research has found that those who more frequently edit photos of themselves before posting report greater degrees of body dissatisfaction, eating concerns, and dieting behaviors.
- In 2016, a study of 50 “fitspiration” websites revealed messaging that was often indistinguishable from pro-anorexia or “thinspiration” sites, with both using strong language to induce guilt about weight or the body and promoting stigmatization of all but a narrow range of body types,

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### How to be Mindful with Social Media

- Before you post, know your intentions. Are you looking for appreciation, approval, inclusion, or something else? If you are looking to be seen or validated, ask yourself if there is something more constructive you could do to meet that need.
- Limit the time you spend on social media. Research shows that people who spend more than two hours per day on social media have significantly lower self-esteem than those who don't.
- Think about the stories your mind makes up as you scroll. Ask yourself whether these thoughts and feelings are helpful for you.

### Some Other Social Media Tips

- Be careful about your personal safety when using dating websites.
- If you or someone you know are being harassed or abused using technology, learn how to document it here: <https://www.techsafety.org/documentationtips/> and contact someone who can help.
- Limit the personal data you reveal.
- 94% of job recruiters use or plan to use social media when recruiting. So think before you post. You may want to try and make this work in your favor by presenting yourself positively before applying for a job, and utilizing social career networking sites like LinkedIn.



### References:

- The article above was based on this link: <https://www.washington.edu/studentlife/digital-wellness-101-sr/>

### Additional references include:

- Kross et al. (2013) FaceBook use Predicts Declines in Subjective Well-Being in Young Adults. PLOS one
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- Hunt et al. (2018) No More FOMO: Limiting Social media Decreases Loneliness and Depression. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology