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Digital Fast Guide

HERE'S HOW THE TEST WORKS - FIRST, MAKE A CHECKMARK NEXT TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW THAT APPLY TO YOU

- Do you find yourself spending more time on your cell or smartphone than you realize?
- Do you find yourself mindlessly passing time on a regular basis by staring at your cell or smartphone?
- Do you seem to lose track of time when on your cell or smartphone?
- Do you find yourself spending more time texting, tweeting, or emailing as opposed to talking to people in person?
- Has the amount of time you spend on your cell or smartphone been increasing?
- Do you wish you could be a little less involved with your phone?
- Do you regularly sleep with your cell or smartphone (turned on) under your pillow or next to your bed?
- Do you find yourself viewing and answering texts, tweets, and emails at all hours of the day and night—even if it means interrupting other things you are doing?
- Do you text, email, tweet, Snapchat, Facebook message, or surf while driving or doing other similar activities that require your focused attention and concentration?
- Do you feel your use of your cell or smartphone decreases your productivity at times?
- Do you feel reluctant to be without your cell or smartphone, even for a short time?
- Do you feel ill at ease or uncomfortable when you accidentally leave your smartphone in the car or at home, have no service, or have a broken phone?
- When you eat meals, is your cell or smartphone always part of the table setting?
- When your cell or smartphone rings, beeps, or buzzes, do you feel an intense urge to check for texts, tweets, emails, updates, and so on?
- Do you find yourself mindlessly checking your cell or smartphone many times a day, even when you know there is likely nothing new or important to see?

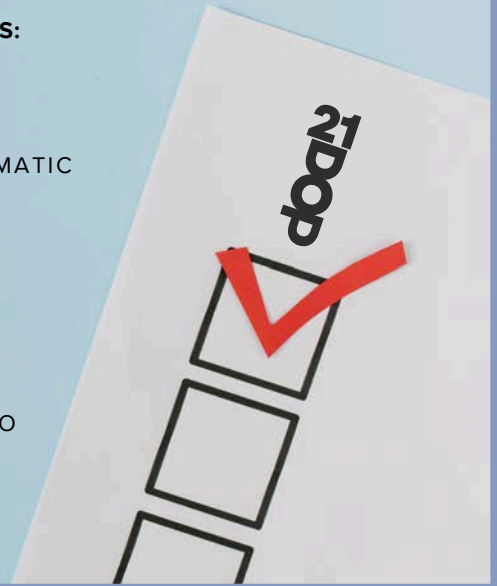
**NEXT, COUNT YOUR SCORE.
HERE'S HOW GREENFIELD INTERPRETS PEOPLE'S SCORES:**

1-2: YOUR BEHAVIOR IS NORMAL

3-4: YOUR BEHAVIOR IS LEANING TOWARD PROBLEMATIC
OR COMPULSIVE USE

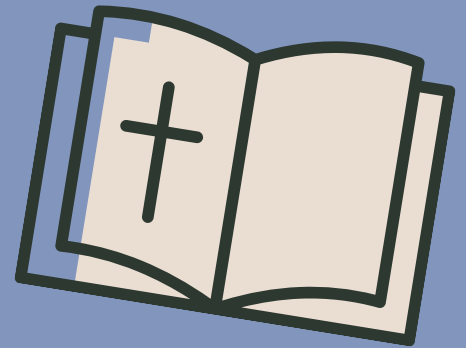
5 OR MORE: YOU MAY HAVE A PROBLEMATIC OR
COMPULSIVE SMARTPHONE USE PATTERN

8 OR MORE: IF YOUR SCORE IS 8 OR HIGHER, YOU
MIGHT CONSIDER SEEING A PSYCHOTHERAPIST WHO
SPECIALIZES IN BEHAVIORAL ADDICTIONS FOR A
CONSULTATION



Turn my eyes from looking
at worthless things and
give me life in your ways.

—PSALM 119:37



Everyone is different, and the necessity for access to digital technology and devices varies. With that in mind, we want to give you two options for the digital fast:

**A FULL
DIGITAL FAST**

**A MODIFIED
DIGITAL FAST**

**Regardless of which you choose, taking a break from plugging in
to reconnect with others and life will benefit you.**

That much we can promise.



Full Digital Fast



- Make your smartphone dumb. Move anything off your phone that you can do on your computer or laptop.
- Think about your apps in terms of “distraction” vs. “utility.” Ask yourself, “Is this distracting me (or supposed to distract me) or is this something useful?”
 - *Examples of distraction:* email, social media, news apps, games, a web browser, video, and shopping apps
 - *Examples of utility:* phone, text, calendar, airline apps, building/garage access, camera, weather
- Eliminate screens for personal use and enjoyment
 - *Examples:* gaming devices, streaming services, cable television, etc.
- Limit digital technology to work apps during work hours on your work devices. Commit to no work outside of work hours.

Modified Digital Fast



- Make your smartphone dumb. Move anything off your phone that you can do on your computer or laptop. *(As above, think in terms of “distraction” vs. “utility”)*
- Fast from other entertainment through digital technology (such as TV) for a specific number of days during the week.
- Limit digital technology to work apps during work hours on your work devices. Commit to no work outside of work hours.

What to Expect

The practice of fasting stands in stark contrast to most of the ways we live in our day-to-day lives, especially as it relates to digital technology. Due to the addictive nature of digital technology, and specifically smartphones, I want you to be aware of what you may experience during this time. In terms of withdrawal, you may experience nervousness, restlessness, or irritability during the first several days. You may have heightened emotional sensitivity and realize feelings of anger, grief, or sadness, even if you’re initially unsure of the cause. Our engagement with digital technology often disguises unpleasant feelings and leads us to avoid coping with them.

The good news of a digital fast is that the benefits far outweigh the initial drawbacks. As with any fast, the further you progress, the more distinctly you may be aware of the leading of the Holy Spirit and of the nearness of God and His work in your heart and life. Additionally, people report better sleep almost immediately. Other benefits include better posture, noticing the faces and eyes of others, increased mental clarity, the ability to focus intentionally, easing of neck and shoulder tension, an uptick in peace, the ability to dream for the future, and a vibrancy to the physical world.

This experience is an invitation to explore a better way. Rather than asking, “Can I really do this for forty days?” you should ask, “What do I want to learn or experience in the next forty days?” The first question makes you focus on muscling through and getting to the finish line. With this approach, there is the potential to either abandon the pursuit if you stumble along the way or make it to the end without having experienced the benefits. The second question will help you discover what can be carried forward in your relationship with digital technology and your devices. If you don’t have a clear and established why in your pursuit, it will be more difficult for you to persevere and see results on the other side.


All that to say, stay with it! Trust the process! It is for your good and growth!



How to Prepare

In the week leading up to the fast, we suggest letting the people in your daily life know you plan to engage in a digital media fast. Here are some additional steps to consider:

- Purchase an alarm clock so your phone is not charging in your room or beside your bed, leading to scrolling upon waking.
- Purchase an analog watch to replace your smartwatch.
- If needed, put an auto-reply on your email account that tells people your work hours and sets an expectation for when they can expect a response.
- Talk with your work teams and supervisor about your hope to disengage from work and technology during non-working hours.
- Talk with your family about how you are participating in your digital fast and come up with ways they can support and encourage you and others.
- Find a few people who are also fasting and establish a regular check-in rhythm for the month and questions to ask one another regularly.
- Check out the resources below for recommended reading and stock up on books.
- Download the recommended podcasts below and others you've wanted to engage in.
- Curate and update your playlists in Spotify or Apple Music so you have great soundtracks to accompany your fast.



How to Engage

As you disentangle from digital devices, consider these ways to purposefully engage in the life right in front of you:

- Read a novel—or a few—that you've never gotten around to starting.
- Play board, card, or other games with your family and others. Make it fun and competitive (if that's your style).
- Enroll in a class that helps you learn more about how God has made you. It can be a cooking class or a dance, sporting, pottery, or auto mechanic class. Whatever it is, sign up and join in!
- Become a walker. Take advantage of living in God's beautiful creation. Go solo or take others with you to enjoy the many wonders of creation.
- Re-visit a former hobby or take up a new one. This is a great time to rekindle past talents or discover new skills for the first time.
- If you have small children, get on the floor and play with them as often as possible, being fully engaged in the worlds their little minds create.
- Commit to having meals only around a table and invite others to join you.
- Use the times you'd typically reach for your phone as a prompt to pray and thank God and encourage others.
- Become someone who journals. Keep track of how you're feeling, even negatively, as you detach from digital technology and your devices. Take note of all God is doing in you and through you in the world around you as you become more mindful of it.

Resources

BOOKS

- The Tech-Wise Family by Andy Crouch
- My Tech-Wise Life by Amy Crouch and Andy Crouch
- Digital Minimalism by Cal Newport
- How To Break Up with Your Phone by Catherine Price
- Restless Devices by Felicia Wu Song
- Taming the Technology Monster by Sissy Goff
- Our Digital Soul by Jenny Black and Bob Hutchins
- 30 Day Blackout by Stacey Jagger
- Finding Soul Rest by Curtis Zackery
- The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John

Mark Comer

PODCASTS

- The Case for Digital Asceticism with John Mark Comer
- Raising Boys & Girls Ep. 58 with Jenny Black
- Rule of Life Podcast Luminary Interview: Andy Crouch

