

DETOXING

the digital way

With everything moving to digital, switching off is becoming more important. But how do you go about detoxing from your digital devices and how can it help?

BY JESSICA ABELSOHN



According to a recent survey by EY (formerly Ernst & Young), Australians are spending on average, more than 10 hours engaging with devices each day. Additionally, 24 per cent say they feel overwhelmed by the information provided by their mobile device and four in 10 are struggling to keep up with the increased capabilities of smart devices. Digital detoxing may help.

WHAT IS DIGITAL DETOXING?

The pressure to connect, and be constantly connected, can be extreme at times. The digital detox is very simple: take a break from your devices. And we mean all of them.

Today, the lines are blurred between weekday and weekend, travelling the world and engaging in a culture. Even when on holiday, when we should be immersed in our surroundings, we're updating Facebook with pictures and

searching through our smartphones for recommendations of the best restaurants. What happened to asking the people at the front desk for some help? Or stopping someone on the street to ask for directions?

HOW CAN IT HELP?

It's no secret that too much screen time can affect our health and wellbeing. In fact, checking a smart device close to bedtime can actually cause insomnia. And the other benefits of switching off are key to a better life, from engaging with the people around you to improving your memory.

Before smart devices, people would brainstorm and discuss things, especially when it came to answering questions. Heated exchanges, however, have been replaced by 'Googling'; we no longer need to think, the internet answers all of our questions.

Additionally, our memories were much better before we had the ability to hold all the information in the pocket of our jeans. Rather

than having immediate access to phone numbers and names, we were forced to remember details about people and places.

WHAT CAN I DO?

It's easy to commit to a digital detox in theory, but practically applying it can be a bit more difficult. Start simply. Commit to putting down your devices and switching off during all meals, even when dining alone. Pick up a book or a paper, and converse with those around you.

Another easy idea is to switch off at 9pm every night. Don't pick up your smart devices and switch off the television. This will do wonders for your sleep.

Finally, commit to checking your email and social media at certain points during the day, for example first thing in the morning, just before lunch and at the end of the day.

While it may be difficult at first, in time you'll find you're much more aware of your surroundings and the people around you. ••