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# 5 Ways to Not Be So Addicted to Your Phone

by Corie Hengst

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"In today's world, a misplaced or forgotten cell phone is enough to evoke a panic attack," says clinical psychologist Lisa Strohman, founder of [the Technology Wellness Center](#) in Scottsdale, AZ. Beyond just emotional stress, Strohman says our tech dependency can also impact us behaviorally, physically, *and* interpersonally. So, what's the best way to find a healthy balance? She shares five ideas:

### 1. No tech allowed in the bedroom

Otherwise, "You're not really allowing your body to shut down," says Strohman. And if you use your phone as your alarm clock? No excuses. "If you can go retro, your life will be simpler in so many ways," she says.

### 2. Go outside—sans your smartphone

Take a walk, ride a bike, enjoy a coffee at an outdoor café. "Just set the phone down and actually engage in life," says Strohman. Sure, you'll be tempted to Instagram this beautiful park and that gorgeous flower shop, but that's the point—your head is up and you're actually seeing the world around you. "Don't be afraid to trust your mind to hold that memory for you," says Strohman.

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### 3. Connect with people offline

Better yet, turn it into a challenge for yourself—maybe it's, "I'm going to make three people smile today," or "I'm going to say hello to two people." It can even be as simple as making eye contact with another person, Strohman says. Just do it, and watch your mood go up and up and up.

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### 4. Create "tech-pectations"

Give your friends and family permission to disconnect by designating an area in your place where they can unload their phones and tablets. You can also declare an entire day tech-free. At Strohman's house, she says they practice "tech-free Tuesdays." "It shows my kids by example that it's OK to be offline," she says.

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### 5. Balance out your day

Try to maintain a 1:1 ratio of tech time versus real-life time in your day. If you just sat in front of your laptop for three hours, take three hours of leisure time (read, cook, go on a run) in return. Strohman also suggests reviewing your cellphone statements to monitor data usage. "Looking at your bill can help you put things into perspective," she says.

Lisa Strohman is the author of the upcoming book, *Unplugged: What Every Parent Needs to Know About Raising a Child in the Digital World*.

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