

"For safety's sake—do something."

Prolonged Screen Time Hazards & How to Mitigate Them

All around the world the use of technology (specifically that which involves screens) is increasing both at work and home. Screens are a part of everyone's life these days, but prolonged screen time can have some unwanted effects. Let's take a look at some potential negative effects of prolonged screen time and how to mitigate them.

Negative Effect: *Obesity* – Spending prolonged time in sedentary activity, such as watching TV or playing video games, can put you at risk for obesity. Heart health can also be impacted and can lead to a higher risk of diabetes, increased blood pressure, or cholesterol.

Mitigation: Monitor your screen time. Make sure you are taking breaks throughout the day to go for walks or other activities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercises, such as brisk walking.

Negative Effect: Chronic neck and back pain – Prolonged screen time can lead to poor posture, causing chronic neck, shoulder, and back pain.

Mitigation: Be aware of your posture. If working from a computer: utilize an adjustable chair, place the monitor about 20 inches away with the top of the screen at or below eye level.

Negative Effect: Depression and anxiety – All the time spent in front of screens can negatively affect your mental and emotional wellbeing. A study conducted by a psychology professor at San Diego State University found that higher screen time and depression could be connected.

Mitigation: Set aside time to unplug. Choose a time for your whole family to unplug from the phone, TV, and computer. When you all agree to put down your devices, it gives your family the chance to spend quality time together. Encourage other activities as well.



Negative Effect: Eye Strain / Fatigue - Jobs like data processing, data entry, computer programming, proofreading, designing, and the like are particularly susceptible to eye strain / fatigue due to the focus on a computer screen or other interfaces with smaller, detailed items.

Mitigation: The 20 / 20 / 20 rule, if followed, helps reduce fatigue and eye strain. It is very easy to do and states: Every 20 minutes, take at least 20 seconds and look away from your work / screen, and focus on something else that is at least 20 feet away from you.

Safety Scott says,
"Safety always is
ALWAYS!"