

Exercise: Digital Detox – Creating Healthy Boundaries

This exercise can be used to support more intentional relationship with social media through small, manageable boundaries. Use the table to log how frequently they occur, how they affect you, and whether you'd like to adjust them. This isn't about labeling habits as “bad,” but about recognizing which ones align, or conflict, with your emotional and relational goals.

Step 1: Digital Audit

Digital Habit	Frequency (<i>Rarely, Sometimes, Often</i>)	Impact on Mood or Relationships	Keep, Modify or Replace
Checking social media before bed			
Comparing my body or life to others online			
Using social media during meals or conversations			
Posting to get validation or reassurance			
Using phone when bored, anxious, or uncomfortable			
Checking for notifications compulsively (<i>even when none are expected</i>)			
Reading or re-reading texts or social media posts for hidden meaning			
Avoiding or delaying responses to avoid emotional discomfort			
Using digital content (reels, memes, articles) as a proxy for expressing feelings			
Deleting or editing posts/messages repeatedly out of fear of judgment			
Multitasking with devices during intimate or important conversations			

Step 2: Design Your Detox Plan

Now experiment with a small, realistic changes. Choose one boundary to test, pair it with a meaningful replacement, and decide how you'll track your emotional response. This isn't about a full stop (but it could be), it's more about making your screen time more intentional.

Boundary I'll Try (*pick one*):

- Stop using my phone an hour before bed
- Take a 24-hour break from social media
- Unfollow accounts that trigger comparison
- Silence non-essential notifications
- Other: _____

Replacement Intention (*what I'll do instead*):

- Go outside, take a walk
- Keep a small notebook for real-time thoughts
- Call or spend time with someone I care about
- Practice mindfulness or breathing for 2 minutes
- Other: _____

Check-In Plan: How will I stay aware of how this boundary is affecting me?

- Daily journaling (1–2 lines)
- Talking about it with a partner or therapist
- Mood check at the end of each day
- Visual reminder on my device or desk
- Other: _____

Reflection:

- What do you hope to gain, not just avoid, by limiting your screen time? _____

