

A person is lying in a hammock, suspended between two trees. The person is wearing a dark swimsuit and has their arms raised, holding onto the sides of the hammock. The background shows a body of water and a cloudy sky. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue vertical bar on the left side, which contains the text.

A PRACTICAL WORKBOOK

THE DIGITAL DETOX PLAYBOOK

Get clear before you begin.

Plan the technology you want to stop or limit, the access you still need, what you will do with the time, and the support that will make the break easier to keep.

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START

Before you begin

A digital detox is a planned period when you stop or limit optional technology. Keep access to anything needed for health, safety, caring responsibilities, essential work or travel. The plan should reduce pressure, not create a new emergency.

Nothing entered in this PDF is sent anywhere. Save a copy on your own device or print it.

What technology use do you want to change?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Phone checking or scrolling | ☐ Social media |
| ☐ News | ☐ Email or work messages |
| ☐ Streaming or video | ☐ Gaming |
| ☐ Online shopping | ☐ Something else |

Something else

What would make this break useful?

Write one plain sentence

Why take a break?

Name what being too connected has cost you and what you want time for instead.

What has being too connected cost you?

1

2

3

4

5

What would you like more time or attention for?

1

2

3

4

5

Define the break

Decide the exact boundary now, so it does not have to be decided again in the moment.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ One full day away from optional technology | ☐ A planned break with a start and end |
| ☐ Daily limits around particular technology | ☐ My own version |

Start date and time

End date and time

What will you stop or limit?

What must remain available?

The exact rule for any necessary check-in

Example: one fifteen-minute work check at 4pm from a laptop. Avoid 'only when necessary,' because it does not define anything.

Close the open loops

Deal with the practical reasons you may genuinely need to reconnect.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Tell the people who need to reach me | ☐ Set an email or work-message reply |
| ☐ Download maps, tickets and phone numbers | ☐ Deal with banking or security access |
| ☐ Download music, meditations or documents | ☐ Make a plan for care or emergencies |

People to contact

Tasks to finish before the break

What counts as a genuine emergency, and how will somebody reach you?

Change the devices

Choose physical and technical changes instead of relying on repeated decisions.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Give a device to someone I trust | ☐ Put it somewhere locked or inconvenient |
| ☐ Use a timed lock box such as kSafe | ☐ Use Brick to block selected apps |
| ☐ Log out or remove selected apps | ☐ Use a blocker or Screen Time limits |
| ☐ Turn off non-essential notifications | ☐ Use one simpler device for essential access |

Optional tools: kSafe can lock away the whole phone and internet cable. Brick keeps the phone available while blocking selected apps. Keep separate access for health, care and emergencies. These are not sponsors.

Michael's note: I've tried all this stuff—including the idea of burying a device one hundred feet underground. It makes me laugh now. These tricks can help, but they don't always work. The thing that has helped me most is doing this with other people.

Where will each device be?

Who can help keep the boundary?

What could make you abandon the plan, and what will you do before that happens?

Plan the offline time

Choose things you genuinely want, not activities that merely look virtuous.

People I would like to spend time with

Places I would like to go

Things I would enjoy making, reading or learning

Rest, movement or time outdoors

Practical things I would feel relieved to finish

Simple things that already make a good day

More ideas

Replace the habits

Match a specific situation with an alternative small enough to use in that moment.

WHEN OR WHERE	WHAT I USUALLY DO	WHAT I CAN DO INSTEAD

Make the alternative easy to begin. 'Read one page' is more usable than 'become a reader.'

Arrange support

Support can be practical, social or professional. Choose what fits the seriousness of the problem.

If you want more support: MAA's closed Back-to-Basics Step Study is a month-long programme with daily meetings, a sponsor, all Twelve Steps and a fast from unnecessary media. It is intensive, so read the commitments before joining.

Official programme details: mediaaddictsanonymous.org/intergroups

Who knows what I am doing?

What help have I asked for?

When will I check in with somebody?

Where will I go if this feels beyond a habit?

If you go outside the plan: pause, note what happened and decide the next useful step. One lapse does not require abandoning the whole break.

My response if I go outside the plan

Your complete plan

Keep this page visible or give a copy to the person supporting you.

I am taking this break because

It begins

It ends

During the break I will not

I will keep access to

I will spend the time on

The person supporting me is

My first action when the break begins

During the break

Notice what happens. This is observation, not a score.

What I keep wanting to check

When the urge is strongest

What becomes easier

What becomes harder

What I had forgotten I enjoy

Anything the plan failed to account for

If writing about the break becomes another task, stop. The notes are optional.

After the break

The point is not to avoid technology forever. Decide what deserves a place in your life and under what conditions.

What helped most?

What did not help?

What technology am I glad to have?

What do I want to remove or limit?

What boundary will I keep for the next month?

What support or further help do I need?

Next: try the one-day guide at digitaldetox.io/detox.html, follow the complete free course at digitaldetox.io/course.html, or find meetings and professional support at digitaldetox.io/get-help.html.