

# **How Does Technology Affect Your Health?**

## **The Good, the Bad, and Tips for Use**

All manner of technology surrounds us. From our personal laptops, tablets, and phones to behind-the-scenes technology that furthers medicine, science, and education. Technology is here to stay, but it's always morphing and expanding. As each new technology enters the scene, it has the potential to improve lives. But, in some cases, it also has the potential to negatively affect physical and emotional health.

### Digital eye strain

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), prolonged use of computers, tablets, and cellphones can lead to digital eye strain. Symptoms of digital eye strain may include: blurred vision, dry eyes, headaches, neck and shoulder pain. Contributing factors are screen glare, bad lighting, and improper viewing distance. The AOA recommends the 20-20-20 rule to ease eye strain. To follow this rule, try to take a 20-second break every 20 minutes to look at something that's 20 feet away.

### Musculoskeletal problems

When you use a smartphone, the chances are that you're holding your head in an unnatural forward-leaning position. This position puts a lot of stress on your neck, shoulders, and spine. An earlier study found that among teens, neck-shoulder pain and low back pain rose during the 1990s at the same time that the use of information and communication technology was increasing. Overuse of technology can also lead to repetitive strain injuries of the fingers, thumbs, and wrists.

If you're feeling the pain of technology, you can take the following steps to reduce these issues:

- take frequent breaks to stretch
- create an ergonomic workspace
- maintain proper posture while using your devices

### Sleep problems

Technology in the bedroom can interfere with sleep in a number of ways. A 2015 study demonstrated that exposure to the blue light that devices emit can suppress melatonin and interrupt your circadian clock. Both of these effects can make it harder to fall asleep and result in you being less alert in the morning. Having electronic devices in the bedroom places temptation at your fingertips, and it can make switching off more difficult. That, in turn, can make it harder to drift off when you try to sleep.

### Emotional problems

Using social media can make you feel more connected to the world. But, comparing yourself to others can leave you feeling inadequate or left out. A recent study looked at the social media use of more than 1,700 people between the ages of 19 and 32. The researchers found that those with high social media use felt more socially isolated than those who spent less time on social media. However, the researchers noted that whether it has a beneficial or detrimental effect depends on the quality of social factors in the social network environment. If social media use makes you feel anxious or depressed, try cutting back to see if doing so makes a difference.

### Positive effects of technology

Technology plays a role in virtually every part of our lives, whether we're aware of it or not. These are just a few of the ways in which technology may positively affect our physical and mental health:

- health apps to track chronic illnesses and communicate vital information to doctors
- health apps that help you track diet, exercise, and mental health information
- online medical records that give you access to test results and allow you to fill prescriptions
- virtual doctor visits
- online education and ease of research
- enhanced communication with others (feeling of connection)

## **READ AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN YOUR COPYBOOK:**

- 1) Have you ever experienced one of the situations mentioned in the text? Which ones?
- 2) Does technology affect people's health? How so?
- 3) Which effects are more important: positive or negative ones? Why?
- 4) How can we reduce negative effects of technology in our health? Name and explain.

**READ AND MATCH POSSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN OUR HEALTH:**

**ONLINE EDUCATION**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**NECK AND BACK PAIN**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**HEALTH APPS**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**SLEEP PROBLEMS**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**VIRTUAL DOCTOR VISITS**

**POSITIVE EFFECT**

**NEGATIVE EFFECT**

**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PICTURES REFLECT A POSSITIVE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGY?  
SELECT THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE:**



1



2



3

*Good  
Luck!*