

Stop scrolling and start living!
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#WellbeingWarriors

Quote taken from The Social Dilemma: "Nothing vast enters the lives of mortals without a curse."

Do you ever log in to Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, and Instagram, thinking you will check your social media quickly and then get back to whatever else you were doing? But instead, that minute turns into hours of mindless scrolling, and you end up feeling dissatisfied with your life? 'Mindless scrolling' has become a habit for most people. What many don't realise is how the time we spend on social media might be affecting our overall psychological wellbeing.

So, for that purpose, this article is to create awareness about the impact social media has on our psychological wellbeing and provide tips and tools for managing your time on social media. Nevertheless, social media is not one-sided; there are indeed positives that can be highlighted.

Benefits of Social Media

Social media is useful in that it brings people together for a common cause; it starts conversations that seek to make the world safe and inclusive.

It can help with creating awareness.

Moreover, social media helps us stay connected with loved ones and brings us together. It also allows us to discover new ideas and trends that may bring excitement into our lives. The Jerusalema dance challenge is one trend that has created excitement and joy for many people.

YouTube is also an example of a social media platform that can broaden our minds and introduce us to novel ideas. Many people use YouTube to get information, communicate their views, and form a community based on the ideas they share.

Other benefits:

- Fostering social connections remotely.
- Ability to consult professionals online, anywhere and anytime.
- Promotes awareness of mental health (e.g., World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September), Mental Health Awareness Month (October)).
- Strengthening social ties and decreasing a sense of loneliness.
- Promotes a healthy lifestyle (e.g., Blogs, Vlogs, and fitness videos).
- Provides avenues for the expression of creativity.

Dangers of Social Media

But what happens when we are not mindful in how we interact with these social media platforms?

- Social media can promote physical standards that are often unrealistic, causing many to be dissatisfied with their appearances. Essentially, social media can lead to a negative body image and diminish self-esteem.
- But what if I want some inspiration for my fitness journey? It will not cause any harm to scroll through #fitspiration images on Instagram. Right? Well, it depends! Studies have shown that we can conflate or confuse having an "ideal" body type with being healthy. When we fail to achieve the "ideal" body type portrayed on social media, this can cause us to **question our worth**. With all the photographic filters that we have at our disposal on social media, most times, we may actually be comparing ourselves to fake images.
- People may also seek validation from social media and in the process, act in ways that are not in line with their values. This seeking of validation may result in **rumination or anxiety** over content that has already been sent out and cannot be deleted. Once you post something on the internet, you have less control over how it may be used.
- **Bullying** is another dark side of the internet and social media. Bullying has always been an issue in communities. However, social media offers anonymity and people can hide behind fake accounts to torment and abuse their targets. Cyberbullying occurs in many forms and has detrimental effects on the psychological wellbeing of the affected victims.
- Social media multi-tasking affects your **attention**. Trying to type your assignment that is due in 12 hours and continuously checking WhatsApp to see if your crush or partner has read your message will not help you to dedicate all your cognitive resources to the assignment. Social media can become a timewaster that negatively impacts academic performance. Another way that social media wastes our time is because of how **addictive** it is.
Quote taken from The Social Dilemma: "Social media is a drug."
- Do you ever feel **lonely and isolated**, even though you have 500 Facebook friends? Sometimes we all need real human interaction, and the more time we spend on social media, the less skilled we become in face-to-face interactions.

Some Tips

1. Set SMART goals. Why are you on social media in the first place? Put social media to work for you, not against you. It can be difficult, as social media also has its own goals; it is a business that strives through your presence and constant use. Pay attention to when you are not benefiting from a social media platform.
2. Delete all apps that you do not need.
3. Turn off notifications and have a planned time to check messages. Set a limit on how much time you spend on social media. You may use apps to help track your activity; some phones have this function already installed so that it can help with digital wellbeing.
4. Follow people that you seek to build relationships with and unfollow toxic accounts.
5. Mute keywords or accounts that trigger you or that make you feel bad about yourself. Block and report cyberbullies.
6. Think... and think again before you post.
7. Follow reputable mental health accounts.
8. Try not to compare yourself to what you see on social media.

9. Pursue hobbies outside of the internet.

Quote by DaveWillis.org: "Don't use social media to impress people; use it to impact people."

Comments:

You can also choose not to use it at all. Find what works for you, find what contributes to your wellbeing and what helps you function optimally and do it!

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Something to Watch:

The Social Dilemma on Netflix

Ted Talk: [Why you Should Quit Social Media?](#)