

Health Enews



Are You Married to Your Smartphone?

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Most would admit that it is harder and harder to disconnect from your smartphone. We are constantly on our email, social media, and apps. In fact, a Harvard professor found that of 1,500 managers and professionals, 70% check their smartphones within an hour of waking and 44% said they would experience “a great deal of anxiety” if they lost their phone and couldn't replace it for a week. According to David Greenfield PhD, a psychologist from Connecticut, computer technology can be addictive because they are “psychoactive”. Email, in particular, gives us satisfaction due to what is called “variable ratio enforcement”. That is, we never know when we'll get a satisfying email, so we keep checking, over and over again. It's like a slot machine. We're seeking that pleasurable hit. Smartphones allow us to seek rewards (twitter feeds, news and status updates, email) anytime and anywhere.

Unhealthy Behavior

- Does your smartphone cause you to ignore your friends over lunch to post a Facebook status?
- Do you tune out a distressed spouse or colleague in a meeting to check email?
- Do you answer text messages in the middle of a conversation?
- Do you interrupt family time by checking messages and emails during meals?
- Do you text and drive knowing that is dangerous to you and others?



How to Manage Your Smartphone Use

- Be disciplined about not using your device in certain situations (such as when you're with your children, driving, in a meeting, with friends) or at certain hours (for instance, between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.)
- Avoid using your web browser unless you truly need information
- Turn your phone off when you get in your car
- Power your phone off or avoid using your cell phone at least an hour before going to bed
- Turn off notifications from your apps
- Lock your phone with an annoying long password using 15 characters with symbols and upper case letters