

5. **Accountability** - Having a close family member or friend to monitor you and hold you accountable to your goals to cut down, etc. is a good motivator and helps keep you in line.
6. **Moderation** - Islam encourages us to find balance in our lives. Completely ridding yourself of a phone or other device may not be practical and can leave you feeling empty or lost. Be moderate in your use.
7. **Evaluation** - Before sleeping, do an assessment of your time spent and make Istighfar for time wasted and be grateful for time spent beneficially - contemplate on the temporary nature of this world, and that one's life could terminate at any time - focus on the everlasting life of the Hereafter and what is required to be successful there. Be regretful if you have been neglectful.
8. **Routine** - Follow a practical routine of your day and try to implement it as far as possible.
9. **Penalty** - Impose a penalty of 4 Rakats Nafl Salah, recitation of Istighfar one hundred times and some monetary fine whenever you contravene your limit.
10. **Dua** - Turn to Allah Ta'ala for help and protection and learn and recite the Sunnah Duas in this regard daily.

May Allah Ta'ala give us the guidance and ability to value our time.



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SOCIAL MEDIA 'ADDICTION'



Published By:



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Are you finding difficulty in managing your time for yourself and family due to social media? You are not alone. Social media overuse is increasingly common today, and can affect your physical and mental health.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Also known as digital dementia, social media addiction has not yet been classified as a clinical disorder, but researchers believe that it can prove addictive. Like other types of addictive behaviour, using social media is rewarding and gratifying to the brain, thereby causing it to release dopamine, the chemical that is released in the brain when one is enjoying a state of joy or ecstasy. Continued use of social media reinforces this good feeling with the brain and gradually leads a person to want more, potentially leading to over consumption or addiction.

General and moderate use of social media is beneficial and can be rewarding. Today, more people are becoming addicted to social media due to excessive or compulsive use. This addiction is driven by an uncontrollable urge to use social media that eventually impacts on other important areas of life. Ultimately, people who spend long amounts of time on social media have less time for in person interactions. This negatively affects a person spiritually, physically and mentally.

CAUSES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

- Social media giants pour billions into advertising and hire engineers to make content more addictive. These sites track users' activity, customising your feed to show you posts you are most likely to watch or comment on. This causes people to continue viewing their preferences.

- They work hard on improving and growing the amount of people they can bring onto their platform, alongside maximising the amount of time a person spends on their platform. It is designed to keep you hooked online.
- Lack of focus and routine in one's time. Neglecting one's core responsibilities, like Salah, Zikr, Qur'an recitation and forsaking family time ultimately leads one to becoming more occupied with social media.

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF OVERUSE

- The overuse of social media is causing a host of mental, health and relationship problems. Not everyone who uses social media will develop an addiction, but people may develop the inability to restrain their use of it. Due to the effect on the brain, social media is addictive both physically and psychologically.
- relationships, self-esteem, making people less conscious and less productive.

SIGNS OF ADDICTION

- A common sign of addiction is to continue using something even after it has negatively impacted on your life.
- Neglecting important duties and work, and being inattentive to others.
- Using social media so excessively that it impacts negatively on critical areas of your life, like Ibadah (prayer), work, studies, and relationships.
- Experiencing withdrawal feelings of anxiety and irritability, when you can't access social media.
- Using social media as a way to cope with negative emotions.

A 10 POINT PLAN ON HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA BENEFICIALLY

Social media has immense socio economic benefits in terms of connection, communication, access to information, business, education, etc. However, the risks outweigh the reward. Key to social media usage is control. Usage must be regulated and evaluated.

1. **Intention** - Use social media intentionally and purposefully. Ask yourself why you are using social media and what benefit you want to get out of it. It must not be a past time or used impulsively for no reason.
2. **Time** - When using social media, first take a look at the clock and be conscious of the time being spent. Allocate time that you will use it for and actively put the device off or away once your time is expired without compromise. This will be tough at first but will prove beneficial in the long run.
3. **Wean yourself off** - If you are developing a dependency or addiction, quitting it altogether may not be effective. It could lead to a relapse and a worse outcome. Cut your screen time down from gradually, e.g. 7 hours a day to 6 to 5... day by day. Fill the saved time with constructive activity. Create 'curfew' slots for yourself and the family.
4. **Respect** - Do not use social media whilst eating, speaking to someone, in a meeting and when with family & relatives. Also respect the Azan, Masjid, Islamic gatherings and Qura'n by not using your device at such times.