



Status Update: Unplugged

Our digital tools help us work, learn and connect faster. With the advent of smartphones and tablets, time spent using mobile devices has increased 70% in the U.S. since 2012.

More than two-thirds of teens own smartphones and a third own tablets.

And many adults are also relying more and more on their mobile devices for work, social media and web-based entertainment.

However, too much time spent online with any device can lead to what the American Psychiatric Association calls **Internet Use Disorder**. Signs include escaping responsibilities by going online; spending more time online; discontinuing other interests; and trying unsuccessfully to reduce or stop online usage.

Researchers are learning more about the mental effects of heavy technology use – teens and adults alike can develop mental health problems including sleep disorders, depression and stress.

Is it time to downsize your daily use? Try this:

- » Use an app that monitors phone and, yes, app usage.
- » List things you'll do when you unplug.
- » Set boundaries for plugged-in time for you and your kids.
- » Identify networking activities to omit.
- » Unplug to enjoy other pastimes.
- » Exercise – every hour of screen time means time spent sitting.
- » Post away messages so everyone knows your response schedule.

Digital tools are designed to make life easier, not to dominate it.

“You can do anything you wish to do, have anything you wish to have, be anything you wish to be.” – Robert Collier

Inflammation:

What You Need to Know

Inflammation occurs naturally in your body.

This includes visible swelling and redness and the internal response needed to repair damaged tissue and fight infection, viruses and other toxic stimuli.

When you're ill or injured, your immune system sends white blood cells and chemical substances to begin healing. This process increases blood flow to the infection or injury site, and may result in redness or swelling, or may stimulate nerves and cause pain.

Inflammation overdose: After the infection or injury is gone, your immune system may fail to stop inflammation. Prolonged inflammation can occur if the healing substances remain, keeping your body in a state of emergency and causing potentially long-term damage to tissue, joints, artery walls and organs. A common outward sign of inflammation overdose is joint irritation.

Scientists are learning more about harmful inflammation and how it leads to disease.

Chronic, low-grade inflammation has been linked to increased risk for arthritis, cancer, diabetes, depression, Alzheimer's, heart attack and stroke. Fortunately, researchers have also identified several controllable irritants that raise the risk of chronic inflammation:

- smoking
- obesity
- heavy alcohol use
- chronic stress
- lack of exercise
- diet rich in processed foods



New habits can help control chronic inflammation.

Ask your health care provider for help with smoking cessation, weight loss or alcohol abuse. To offset stress, simplify your work and home life. Exercise regularly and eat nutritiously.

Ready for Yoga



Yoga produces well-documented benefits. They include increased strength, flexibility and balance, as well as improved relaxation and mental focus. To achieve yoga's benefits, take a class from a certified, skilled teacher.

» **The most popular yoga classes** include restorative, relaxation or athletic forms, joint flexibility and specialized classes for prenatal, weight loss, high blood pressure, pre-surgery and other conditions.

» **The form of yoga you choose will depend on what you want to achieve, such as stress reduction or overall fitness.** Most forms involve poses and breathing. Yoga varies from slower-moving practice with breathing and meditation to faster, flowing sequences combined with rhythmic breathing.

» **When choosing a class,** identify your personal health goals; ask your health care provider for advice and referrals. Your teacher should modify yoga poses based on your abilities or limitations. **If you're not comfortable in a pose or aren't sure of the alignment, don't do it.**

If you practice yoga several times a week for at least 30 minutes, you should soon notice gradual improvements in your health. Enjoy the process.

The Dairy Aisle: What's New

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

What would your morning latte or cereal be without milk? Dairy products add variety to the diet, and are rich in protein, calcium and vitamin D.

For those on dairy-free diets, there are many substitutes, too. Here's what's trending in the dairy aisle:

Sales are up for **Greek** and **Icelandic yogurts**. Try them and you'll see why – they're thick and creamy, with more protein and less sugar than regular yogurt.

Savory yogurt is a new innovation. Flavors such as tomato, beet and sriracha mango are popping up, and contain less sugar than traditional sweet varieties such as vanilla, peach and strawberry. You can also find non-dairy yogurt made from coconut, soy and almond milk.

Sales are also up for **kefir**, a fermented milk drink made with kefir grains that create a slightly fizzy, tart taste. The fermentation introduces healthy probiotic bacteria, which is good for digestion.



Cyberchondria: What Is It?

About a third of Americans say they search online to diagnose a medical condition. Example: You wake up totally deaf in 1 ear. You can promptly call your health care provider – your best choice – or you can search online for answers.

The downside of internet health information is that it's sometimes outdated, irrelevant or lacks scientific validity. This spells trouble for people who have hypochondria. They self-diagnose and obsess over imagined illnesses and exaggerated symptoms.

For people anxious about their health, a mole might mean melanoma, a headache means a brain tumor, and no matter how mild the ailment, it's a worst-case scenario supported by symptoms they read online. This behavior is called **cyberchondria** because it can feed hypochondria.



Cyberchondria concerns health care practitioners for several reasons: Patients now have broad access to potential misinformation about their symptoms or imagined disorders; they may fail to get prompt, proper care, insist on unnecessary testing and procedures, and suffer stress and medical anxiety.

If you have a health concern, see your provider so he or she can make a diagnosis. Accurate information and communication with your provider are the best steps to staying well. **Note:** Learn more about reliable websites at www.mlanet.org/resources/userguide.html.

Non-dairy milks account for more than a billion U.S. dollars in annual sales. Almond milk is fueling this growth, with cashew, flax, soy and hemp-based milks becoming popular, too.



Most alternative milks are enriched with calcium and vitamin D to meet the levels in cow's milk, but they fall short on protein. Soy milk is the only alternative that's naturally high in protein – with about 8 grams per cup, just like cow's milk (almond and hemp milk have <1 g).

The key to choosing a good milk alternative? Ensure it's high in protein, low in sugar and enriched with vitamins and minerals.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/16V7tools.

7.2016