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Overcome Technology Addiction Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Understand Your Addiction

2 · Are You Addicted?

3 · Tracking Your Usage

4 · Technology Addiction Triggers

5 · Challenge Your Limiting Beliefs

6 · Overcome Technology Addiction

7 · Completing Your Digital Detox

8 · Digital Boundaries

9 · Changes to Support Your Recovery

How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.
- Assess current safety, suicidal and homicidal thoughts, self-harm, intoxication or withdrawal, violence, exploitation, psychosis, mania, medical instability, and ability to meet basic needs when relevant. Use local emergency or crisis procedures for imminent risk.
- Activities involving exposure, trauma detail, urges, means, disclosure, or relationship repair require appropriate competence, informed consent, pacing, and safety planning; a worksheet is not a substitute for these safeguards.

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Understand Your Addiction

All addictions are based on the same fundamental principle: the brain's expectation of the reward that engaging in a particular activity will produce.

The addict might not be aware of this reward and it may even seem counterintuitive since it poses potential harm. But the brain interprets it as a positive experience.

When it comes to technology addiction, studies show that the act of checking texts and social media, for example, stimulates the release of dopamine, which in turn keeps you hooked, wanting to experience it again and again.

Examples of technology addiction include. Check the ones you relate to:

- ☐ Social Media Addiction
- ☐ Gaming Addiction
- ☐ Internet Surfing Addiction
- ☐ Streaming Addiction (Movies/TV Shows)
- ☐ Smartphone Addiction
- ☐ Online Shopping Addiction
- ☐ Work-Related Technology Addiction
- ☐ Online Gambling Addiction
- ☐ Online Pornography Addiction
- ☐ Virtual Reality (VR) Addiction
- ☐ Online Dating Addiction
- ☐ Forum/Community Addiction
- ☐ Others _____

Are You Addicted?

Technology addiction can be hard to recognize if you don't know what to look for. While the symptoms of addiction vary depending on the device you're addicted to, there are many signs of technology addiction that are similar across the board. Below are some examples. Check off the signs you relate to:

- ☐ Inability to abstain from a specific digital device or control how much time you spend using digital devices.
- ☐ Experiencing cravings and urges to use digital devices.
- ☐ Preoccupation with thinking about using your devices.
- ☐ Experiencing unwanted mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, stress or irritability as a result of technology addiction.
- ☐ Using digital devices to experience gratification or induce pleasure.
- ☐ Using digital devices in dangerous situations such as while driving a car or walking across a city street.
- ☐ Lying about or hiding digital usage from family or friends as a result of shame.
- ☐ Neglecting important life areas such as work, school or relationships as a result of technology addiction.
- ☐ Losing interest in social and leisure activities that you used to enjoy as a result of technology addiction.
- ☐ Continuing to use digital devices despite their negative consequences on your life.

Notes:

Tracking Your Usage

1. Begin by tracking the amount of time you spend using technology. You may use app usage trackers such as **Toggl Track** (Android, iOS, Windows, macOS, Linux, Web, and browser extensions), **Harvest** (Android, iOS, Windows, macOS, Web, browser extensions),

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Total time estimated							
Texting							
Calls							
Social media							
Browsing							
Shopping							
Gaming							
Porn							
Other							

2. What feelings came up today?

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Saturday: _____

Sunday: _____

3. Notice your phone usage and your feelings during each day. Are you using your gadgets on days where you're feeling more anxious, sad, bored? Are you trying to avoid pain or stress?

4. Is there another way you can express those emotions rather than using your gadgets?

5. What did you try to reduce your technology use before? Detail it here and rate its effectiveness on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 had no effect; 10 is totally effective).

Coping Strategy Used	Effectiveness (1-10)

6. What you'd like your technology usage to be—your final target?

Current use: _____ hours

Target use: _____ hours

7. Imagine that you've achieved your goal. How would you like to spend the time saved?

8. What precisely do you find so addictive about your technology use?

9. What function does your addiction serve in your life? Is it keeping you from having to deal with difficult emotions?

10. What was going on in the period prior to the addiction?

11. If you persist in this addiction, what are the top three worst consequences?

12. If you give up this addiction, what can you gain?

13. What do you want my life to look like a year from now? What do you need to do to get there?

14. What are your fears and worries around cutting back on your technology use?

Technology Addiction Triggers

1. The following are some factors that can contribute to developing technology addiction. Check the ones you relate to:

- ☐ Boredom
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Using technology as an escape from stress, anxiety, or depression
- ☐ Habitual use
- ☐ FOMO (fear of missing out) - worrying about not being "in the know" on the latest news, trends, or social updates
- ☐ Instant gratification - the immediate rewards from likes, and messages
- ☐ Accessibility and availability of gadgets
- ☐ Alerts and notifications
- ☐ The cultural norm of being constantly connected and responsive to messages and emails.
- ☐ Procrastination - delaying or avoiding unpleasant tasks by diverting attention to digital devices
- ☐ Discomfort with stillness or quiet
- ☐ Need for approval
- ☐ Video games with rewarding systems that entice continuous play
- ☐ Novelty seeking - a natural human inclination towards new experiences
- ☐ Work demands - the expectation to always be reachable for work purposes
- ☐ Education requirements which often necessitate the use of technology
- ☐ Content algorithms designed to present content that maximizes user engagement
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. What times of day do you notice yourself using technology excessively?
(e.g., “Right after waking up,” “During work breaks,” “Late at night.”)

3. How often do you reach for your phone, computer, or device without thinking? (e.g., “Every few minutes,” “Whenever I’m idle.”)

4. What do you tend to avoid by turning to technology?
(e.g., difficult tasks, uncomfortable emotions, in-person interactions.)

5. What are the consequences of excessive technology use in your life?
(e.g., less sleep, strained relationships, reduced productivity, feeling disconnected from reality.)

6. What situations or activities suffer because of your technology use?
(e.g., relationships, hobbies, work, physical health.)

7. What healthier alternatives can you use when triggered to overuse technology? (e.g., going for a walk, journaling, calling a friend, engaging in a hobby.)

8. What strategies can you use to reduce exposure to triggers? (e.g., turning off notifications, setting time limits on apps, using focus mode on devices.)

9. How can you prepare for situations where you're likely to be triggered? (e.g., bringing a book instead of your phone, scheduling screen-free activities.)

10. What is the first step you can take when you notice a trigger? (e.g., taking a deep breath, pausing before opening an app, journaling your emotions.)

11. What questions can you ask yourself before turning to technology? (e.g., "Do I really need to check this now?" "What am I trying to avoid?" "Is there a better way to spend my time?")

Challenge Your Limiting Beliefs

The following are some common negative beliefs that prevent people from overcoming technology addiction. Read through them and try to identify and challenge your own negative beliefs:

1. “I need my gadgets to get things done every day.”

While technology does make our lives easier, the intention behind doing digital detox is to re-balance the role of technology in your life by keeping what you genuinely need and reducing what is ultimately a waste of your time.

2. “I need my phone to check in with people in my life.”

Technology has definitely helped us meet and connect with others.

However, most of our technology use has little to do with connecting with other people. A digital detox can help you re-prioritize your time spent on your phone.

You may want to let people know that you’re going offline for a digital detox so they will know what to expect around your availability.

3. “I have to know the day’s headlines or else I’m afraid I’ll miss out on something important.”

It’s true that going offline would mean that you will “miss” some things. You won’t see every post, photo, or trending headline in the endless newsfeed stream.

But ask yourself, what are you missing that really matters? Was there a post or an update that was so important it changed your life? Or does it seem like you wasted so much time with nothing to show for it?

Negative Belief _____

Thought	Yes	No
Is this helpful thought?		
Is this thought self-loving?		
Am I making assumptions?		
Can I test my assumptions?		
Am I holding myself to unrealistic standards?		
Do I have evidence to support this thought?		
Could there be other perspectives?		
Would I say this to a friend?		

Challenge your negative belief _____

Overcome Technology Addiction

Schedule a Digital Detox

Determine how long your digital detox will last and when it's best to schedule it. When you are addicted to technology, deciding to unplug for an entire week, for example, might not be realistic.

Start with a 24h digital detox and schedule a day on your calendar to prompt your brain to prepare for it. Most people find the weekends to be the best option.

Declutter Your Phone

Get rid of the apps that no longer serve you or apps that you use to numb your mind such as Candy Crush and card game apps, shopping apps, and even social media apps that don't serve you.

List the mind-numbing apps you use:

Turn off alerts and notifications.

Alerts and notifications can make it difficult to resist checking your phone.

List apps on your phone or computer that you can turn off notifications for:

Create An Inspiring Lock Screen

Visual cues are extremely powerful, especially when you're exposed to them frequently.

Find a picture that represents something you wish to do instead of wasting your time using technology.

It could be learning a new skill, pursuing an interest, spending more time with your family, spending more time in nature, fighting for a cause. Find something that strongly links you to that activity and makes it your phone lock screen or your computer background.

My chosen activity/picture is:_____

Create An Out-of-Office Email Message

When you're usually reachable via email, your friends, family members, and coworkers will notice that you're not responding to their emails as quickly as they have come to expect and wonder where you are during your detox.

Creating an out-of-office email message that will be sent out automatically and immediately each time you receive an email, can help. You may choose to keep the message simple and brief or choose a humorous one.

For example,

"Thank you for your email. I'll be out of the office from March 7th through March 9th and have limited access to my phone and computer. I'll reply when I return back to my office."

Prepare Important Resources Beforehand

The internet has come to play a prominent role in our daily experiences. This dependency can sabotage your digital detox.

Before you unplug, make sure you have any information you need. If you're going to need a recipe, print it or write it down. If you're planning to travel to a destination for which you'll need driving directions, write down the address. If you're using your phone as an alarm, buy an alarm clock to use during your detox.

Let Your Friends and Family Know About Your Digital Detox

Telling the people in your life that you're planning to do a digital detox will help reset their expectations around your availability but can also create accountability.

Behavioral psychologists suggest that telling others about our plans makes us more likely to follow through on them.

List down people in your life you need to tell them about your digital detox

Cut Data Allowance

Reducing your data package can be a helpful way in overcoming tech addiction. It's a double win: you save money and time wasted away on your gadget.

Check with your operator for options available to reduce your data allowance.

To encourage yourself, write down what you intend to do with that money and time saved. Make it meaningful and specific to you:

Create a List of Activities to Do While You're Unplugged

It's important to give yourself alternative activities to focus your attention on and help you resist the urge to retrieve your devices.

Create a list of activities to do while you're unplugged. These may include tasks you've been putting off, or interests you want to pursue.

You may also choose to spend the day outdoors away from any temptation to use your devices, such as planning a lunch date, or exercising outdoors.

Don't wait until you're without your devices to brainstorm activities. Make sure you have your list ready beforehand.

You can inspire from the list by circling the activities you think will help you:

- ☐ Soaking in the bathtub
- ☐ Jogging, walking
- ☐ Reading magazines or newspapers
- ☐ Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building)
- ☐ Repairing things around the house
- ☐ Taking care of plants
- ☐ Exercising
- ☐ Having discussions with friends
- ☐ Having family get-togethers
- ☐ Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
- ☐ Playing musical instruments
- ☐ Doing arts and crafts

- ☐ Making a gift for someone
 - ☐ Cooking
 - ☐ Writing short stories, novels, poems, or articles
 - ☐ Reading books
 - ☐ Playing with children
 - ☐ Photography
 - ☐ Playing with pets
 - ☐ Dancing
 - ☐ Having lunch with a friend
 - ☐ Doing housework or laundry
-
-

Anticipate Potential Challenges

It's important to anticipate and address any potential obstacles.

If you're addicted to your phone, you may experience an effect known as phantom phone syndrome. This is the perception that your phone is vibrating or ringing.

Acknowledging that this may be one challenge you may encounter while unplugged can help you be more accepting and less frustrated.

Completing Your Digital Detox

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Turning off the internet on your devices or turning your devices off is not enough. Willpower alone won't be enough to help you resist the temptations.

When you're addicted to something, your mind will do everything to get you to act on your compulsions.

You will begin to rationalize taking a look at your phone or your social media, then soon enough you find yourself making defeatist thoughts, such as "If I'm going to fail I might as well take a look."

You need to put them somewhere out of sight. Place them at the back of your closet, or give them to your spouse.

Disconnect Your Office Computer From The Internet

The weekend is ideal for a digital detox because you won't have to worry about using your devices for tasks related to your job.

But if you're doing your digital detox on a working day or you have work to finish on a weekend, at least disconnect from the internet.

Get as much done as possible without internet access. If you need to send an email, reconnect then sever the connection again.

Wear a Watch

One of the main reasons why people check their phones is to check the time. But usually lead us to check out other time-wasting activities, such as checking out the latest posts on social media.

To avoid any temptations, start wearing a watch during your digital detox.

If you can't wear a watch because it will clash with your outfit or for any other reason, consider removing the wristband and putting the digital display in your pocket or purse.

Invest In A Paper Notebook

Get a paper notebook and use it as your personal journal during your digital detox and maybe on a daily basis.

Journaling will help you stay away from your gadgets but also will help you release any pent-up frustration.

Do something good for yourself before you reach for your gadget

Have a nice long shower, make yourself some tea, or practice meditation. Such activities can help reduce your dependence on technology and allow you to find pleasure in other things.

Don't look at work emails before you get to the office

Establishing some boundaries in your work life will not only reduce your technology dependence but will also help you maintain life/work balance.

Digital Boundaries

Digital boundaries are limits you set around technology use to protect your mental health, relationships, and productivity.

1. What specific activities or times do you want to protect from digital interruptions? (e.g., “Meals with family,” “Evenings before bed,” “My morning routine.”)

2. What specific boundaries do you want to set around technology use? The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ No phones at the dinner table.
- ☐ Limit social media use to 30 minutes a day.
- ☐ No screens an hour before bedtime.
- ☐ Turn off notifications during family time.
- ☐ Designate one day a week as a "screen-free day."
- ☐ No phones allowed in the bedroom.
- ☐ Only check work emails during office hours.
- ☐ Avoid texting while walking or driving.
- ☐ No gaming after 9 PM.
- ☐ Use devices only in shared spaces at home, not in private rooms.
- ☐ Set a time limit for streaming shows or videos (e.g., 2 episodes per day).
- ☐ No screens during morning routines.

- ☐ No devices at the gym or during workouts.
- ☐ Turn off work-related notifications on weekends.
- ☐ Only check social media at specific times (e.g., lunch break).
- ☐ Keep phones away during movie nights with friends or family.
- ☐ Avoid using technology during outdoor activities or nature walks.
- ☐ Limit online shopping to a set time each week.
- ☐ No phones allowed during romantic dates or partner time.
- ☐ Use "Do Not Disturb" mode during study sessions or focus time.
- ☐ Avoid checking emails immediately upon waking up.
- ☐ Only play games or use entertainment apps after completing daily priorities.
- ☐ Set time limits for YouTube or streaming apps (e.g., 1 hour per day).
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

3. What tools or features can help you enforce these boundaries?
(e.g., app time limits, do-not-disturb mode, screen-free zones.)

4. What activities can replace excessive technology use in your day?
(e.g., reading, exercising, journaling, spending time outdoors, engaging in a hobby.)

Changes to Support Your Recovery

Increasing Your Attention Span

Use the following ways to train yourself to focus for a specific period of time:

Pomodoro Technique. Work for 25 minutes, then take a break for 5 or 10 minutes. You can use an online timer to schedule your breaks or buy a physical Pomodoro timer.

Only Handle It Once (OHIO) method. If you start working on something, don't leave it until you complete it or at least a section of it.

Meditate. Meditation helps you train your mind to focus and redirect your thoughts. This habitual practice will help increase your attention span.

Chew gum. Many studies have found that chewing gum increases attention span and improves performance at work by increasing alertness and lowering stress.

Stay hydrated. Dehydration can affect your ability to think and focus.

Find a sense of meaning

Imagine yourself being 80 years old. Having life experience and emotional maturity, what do you consider to be most important in life? You may find it more helpful to reflect on this question while mediating.

What advice would you give yourself about what's important?

Live according to your values

What inspires you most? What annoys you most? Write the issue that springs to mind in response to these questions:

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No diagnosis under this title · No general technology-addiction diagnosis; Internet gaming disorder remains a DSM condition for further study, not equivalent to generic technology use.
- ICD-11 CDDR: 6C51 Gaming disorder · Formal diagnosis limited to gaming behavior.
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 16, 19, 22, 23. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Identify the specific behavior; establish impaired control, priority, continuation despite harm and impairment over the required course; differentiate normative/high engagement, ADHD, mood/anxiety, OCD-spectrum, mania, and occupational demands.

Document-specific corrections

- Pages [2, 5, 11] · Frame ·Overcome Technology Addiction· using the DSM/ICD status below; add duration, impairment, exclusions, and differentials without reproducing criteria. The title alone must never be treated as a diagnosis.
- Pages [1, 2, 7, 12, 16, 19, 22, 23] · Treat the Overcome Technology Addiction ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly.
- Pages [2] · Do not rely on urge logs alone when there is imminent danger, illegal conduct, severe financial loss, withdrawal/overdose risk, coercive sexual behavior, procedure-related medical risk, or danger to others; require condition-specific risk management, level-of-care assessment, and qualified treatment. Apply this specifically to the workbook-s Understand Your Addiction, Are You Addicted?, Tracking Your Usage, Technology Addiction Triggers sections.
- Pages [1, 2, 7, 11] · Review all medical assertions in Overcome Technology Addiction with a qualified medical professional; distinguish psychoeducation from individualized advice and add referral thresholds, contraindications, and medication/procedure cautions appropriate to this population.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Treat the Overcome Technology Addiction ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly. custom/unvalidated unless evidence is supplied confirm no third-party item wording was adapted

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Do not rely on urge logs alone when there is imminent danger, illegal conduct, severe financial loss, withdrawal/overdose risk, coercive sexual behavior, procedure-related medical risk, or danger to others; require condition-specific risk management, level-of-care assessment, and qualified treatment.
- Assess intoxication, withdrawal, overdose, medical instability, co-occurring disorders, suicidality, and access to means or high-risk opportunities. Some withdrawal states require medically supervised care.
- Behavioral tracking does not by itself establish an addictive disorder; confirm diagnostic boundaries and functional impairment.

Crisis and current resources

- U.S.: call or text 988; chat at <https://988lifeline.org/>. Immediate danger: local emergency services. International resources must be separately verified for the intended country and dated.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/locators>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/MH/sud/>