# Balancing Technology During COVID-19

Balancing technology use is challenging any time, but it is even more so while we are social distancing. During this unusual time, many people are working from home more often or for the first time. With most meetings taking place on your screen rather than in person, you are probably using a computer more often than ever. Read the tips below to keep your eyes, body, and mind well.

Working From Home

- Take breaks outdoors if you can safely do so.
- While working on your home laptop, use a separate monitor, mouse, and/or keyboard if possible. For more information about ergonomics and working from home, visit *uhs.berkeley.edu/ergonomics*.
- Use the 20-20-20 rule. Whether your working on the computer, watching TV, using your phone, or video chatting with friends or family: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break from your screen and focus your eyes on something at least 20 feet away.
- Video chats help us feel connected to colleagues, family and friends, which is so important right now. Consider adapting your video calls to reduce the negative effects on your body:
  o Take the call standing and place your device at eye level
  o Video chat with friends or family while doing an activity that doesn't require you to look at the screen constantly. Ideas include a dance party, cooking the same recipe, teaching each other a new skill, or reading aloud (from print) to each other.
  o Build in transition periods between calls – stretch, move around, pet your dog/cat, etc.
  o Spend some time to check in with each other's well-being at the start of the call. It helps us maintain trust and reduce fatigue.
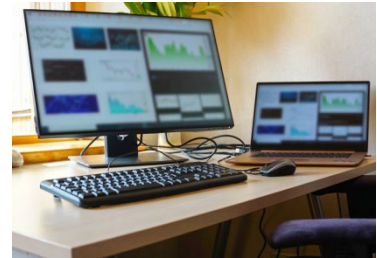
Eating and Exercise

- Limit your screen time when you exercise. Write down your favorite fitness routine, use a stopwatch, turn up the music and have fun.
- Try a recipe from a cookbook rather than the internet.
- Make the dinner table a no-screen zone. Help everyone engage with each other by letting different family members choose a topic to discuss.

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Having Fun
- Explore screen-free leisure activities: reading a book, cooking, meditation, listening to music, dance, puzzles, etc.
- Set limits and encourage screen-free playtime. Join in and help your child explore their creative side!
- Connect with nature: Being outdoors can have many positive health benefits. While respecting social distance, take a walk around the neighborhood or walk a local trail. This activity can be a calming and connecting activity.
- Set up parental controls on your devices. For Android, use the Family Link app to manage apps and set screen time limits. For iOS, go to Settings > General > Restrictions to limit apps and features.
- Practice gratitude: Keep a daily gratitude journal and write down three things you are grateful for each day.
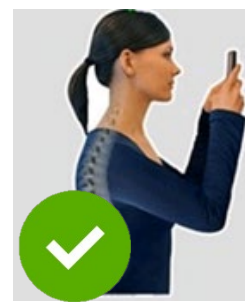
Sleep
- Before going to sleep, move the phone away from your head and turning airplane mode on to reduce exposure to potentially harmful radiofrequency energy (RF).
- Limit screen time before bed as screens emit a blue light which can suppress melatonin production - a natural hormone that aids your body in regulating sleep cycles.

Cell Phone-Specific Tips
- Avoid bending head downward to look at the screen.
- Use both hands to type, alternate the use of fingers to type, and avoid using the thumbs.
- Write short messages, use abbreviations, and enable word prediction/completion functions.
- To reduce your body's dopamine response to phone notifications, try to delay checking them.