
Harmful Cell Phone Use And Ways To Break Off This Habit

In our society, people are being more dependent on technology--especially cell phones. There are many benefits of having a mobile device, and yet most people don't realize that they are overusing them--actually harming their own well being: socially, physically, and emotionally. It's something about the 'ping' of a text message and the number of likes or comments that keeps us hooked to our phones. It has made children into gamblers; sitting at the slots machine, losing track of time, and addicted to the next spin. A survey has found that the average person looks at their phone 27 times. But to us, that's considered as light because we actually spend... 8 hours per day! And this is a huge concern. As younger generations are exposed to these technologies longer, they are putting a risk on their mental health.

You're probably thinking--So what? How is this lifestyle unhealthy? Well, even though there are many benefits of having a phone, most people are overusing them--actually harming their own wellbeing to the point, our phones give us a sense of relieve. This is called NOMOPHOBIA: No Mobile Phone Phobia, or FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out.

Dopamine Labs is an industry that keeps tabs on how people use their phones, and with this, they can make apps more engaging and persuasive. An example of this is Facebook's infinite scroll--infinite scrolling is a web-design that loads content ceaselessly as the user scrolls down. As a result, people are now spending an hour on Facebook everyday, and that's 25% more than 2 years ago! As for Snapchat, users have streaks reaching over 300 days! These are just a couple of ways how tech industries keep people hooked onto their apps; increasing their profits.

Research also shows that technology can impact our memory, concentration, mood, and sleep. Similar to candy, children cannot repress their desires--they don't know when to stop. This can seriously impact their health, as their brains are not fully developed. In another experiment, it showed that text notifications or vibrations cause people to lose focus. This demonstrates that we are becoming TOO dependant on our phones--having no control over ourselves.

And it's not just being addicted that makes cell phones so unhealthy--radiation and blue light plays a major factor as well. Smartphone companies like Apple and Samsung are required to share a message about RF exposure, yet most people have never seen it before or be able to find it. If you go into your phone's settings, under the legal subsection, there will be an article about RF exposure: "To reduce RF energy, use a hands free option such as speakerphone and carry the phone at least 5 mm away". Despite these recommendations, most people hold their phones up against their bodies. And for those who don't know what blue light is... Blue light is a colour in the visible light spectrum, which our eyes are sensitive towards. Since blue light has a short wavelength, it produces a high amount of energy. Studies show that being exposed to blue light for a long period of time can cause retinal damage and macular degeneration, which can lead to loss of vision like cataracts.

This leads us to our next topic, the types of diseases or illnesses cell phones can cause. For years, there was a constant disagreement on whether or not radiations (emitted from cell phone) were harmful. Until 2011, WHO stated that cell phone radiation was possibly carcinogenic--in other words, cancerous. When a \$25 million study tested the effects of cell

phone radiation with rats, they unfortunately developed severe heart and brain tumors. And it's not just only that. I want everyone to look at their hands. Have you ever noticed that your pinky is bent more than the other hand? ... It's probably because of big smartphones. These dents could be a sign of Dupuytren's contracture, which causes tissues covering your tendons to stiffen. How about text neck? That cramping, stabbing pain from looking down at your phone too long. This is because when you keep your head down on a 45 degree angle, it puts on approximately 49 pounds on your neck This can affect your spine, respiratory functions, and even emotions if you're not careful.

However, it's not too late to fix the damage caused by our cell phones. We can reduce these effects through mindfulness or as we call it, mindful moment. Guidelines recommend keeping phones away from the body when they're not in use; not in your pockets--and sleeping with phones away from the bed. We should also use speakerphone or a headset to make calls, instead of holding the phone against our heads. In addition to that, try to replace phone use time with engaging activities or actually interacting with people/friends.

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