

Doomscrolling

Introduction

Everyone's been guilty of scrolling through social media at least once in their life. This includes scrolling through Instagram reels, tiktoks, and Youtube shorts. It's just that addicting. According to Newsweek, an American weekly news magazine, a survey conducted by Morning Consult found that 31 percent of Americans engage in doomscrolling regularly, with rates higher among younger populations (Laws, 2025). Thus, this is a very large-scale issue that can affect anyone around the world who uses technology. The increase in doomscrolling is concerning especially since technology can have detrimental effects on mental health. So, it's important for people to develop healthy habits that prevent them from spiraling into this vicious cycle.

Doomscrolling

According to the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest biomedical library, this addiction is caused by the release of a neurotransmitter called dopamine. (Sharpe & Spooner, 2025). As a result, the brain's release of dopamine signals your mind to keep scrolling through social media for the pursuit of entertainment. As stated by the Cleveland Clinic, a nonprofit medical center, dopamine, the "feel-good hormone," is something that motivates you to continue doing something pleasurable (Cleveland Clinic, 2022). Since these videos are short, you can immediately scroll to the next video if you start to feel bored. This perpetuates a cycle of continuous scrolling, especially since the content you're consuming is virtually endless. Also, algorithms keep changing to suit your tastes, delivering you more and more of what you want to watch.

Mental Health

Doomscrolling can have very visible effects on your mood. Using social media as a way to procrastinate may increase feelings of guilt, anxiety, and helplessness. You are consuming media that can make you feel negative emotions, but at the same time, the cycle of continuously scrolling can also make you feel unproductive. Furthermore, Mayo Clinic, a nonprofit in medical research, has stated that doomscrolling can cause sleep procrastination and worsen your social health, consequently worsening your mood. Since it's difficult to end the cycle of doomscrolling, you may find yourself scrolling past your bed time (Bowman, 2024). The loss of sleep can make you feel irritable the next day. Also, since you're going to be spending more time on your phone, there will be less opportunities to connect with your peers and family. According to Harvard Health Publishing, in a study published in Computers in Human Behavior Reports, they found that doomscrolling elicits feelings of existential anxiety (Salamon, 2024). This can create feelings of dread and hopelessness, as well as questions about the meaning of life. Overstimulation from the intake of negative information makes it difficult for people to connect with the real world, which moves at a slower pace.

How to Stop Doomscrolling

It's definitely difficult to take control and stop this almost never-ending cycle. However, that doesn't mean to cut social media from your life completely, but to learn how to set boundaries with it.

1. Don't start your day using social media! Instead, be mindful and keep your dopamine levels low, avoiding screens for the first 30 minutes of your morning.
2. Try setting your phone on grayscale to avoid color oversimulation. One of the most engaging parts of social media is the colors you'll see.

3. Keep your phone away from you before you sleep. Instead of putting it on your nightstand, try putting it further away so you can't impulsively reach for it while you're trying to fall asleep.
4. Spend more time outdoors. Doomscrolling can make you feel guilty for being unproductive, so you should try out emotionally positive activities such as creating art or going hiking.
5. Set a time limit on your apps! For example, maybe try setting your screentime to 20 minutes on entertainment apps.

References

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