User Guide: ScreenTime Widget

SCREENTIME

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1. Introduction

Overview of the Software

ScreenTime is an Android widget application designed to help users monitor and manage their device usage. It provides a convenient home screen widget that displays two timers: a daily timer for tracking total screen time per day, and a session timer for monitoring continuous usage.

Purpose of the User Guide

This guide aims to provide you with all the necessary information to install, configure, and effectively use ScreenTime. It includes step-by-step instructions, troubleshooting tips, and explanations of key features to ensure you get the most out of the widget.

Target Audience

This guide is intended for Android users who want to monitor and manage their screen time. No technical expertise is required to use this widget, making it suitable for users of all skill levels.

2. Getting Started

System Requirements

- Android device running Android 12 (API level 31) or higher
- Sufficient space on your device to install the widget (approximately 21.1 MB)

Installation Instructions

Since the app is not currently available on the Google Play Store, you'll need to download and install it directly from GitHub. Follow these steps carefully:

1. First, you need to allow installation from unknown sources on your Android device:
    - Go to Settings.
    - In the search bar type "unknown".
    - Look for the option "Install unknown apps" or "Install from unknown sources"
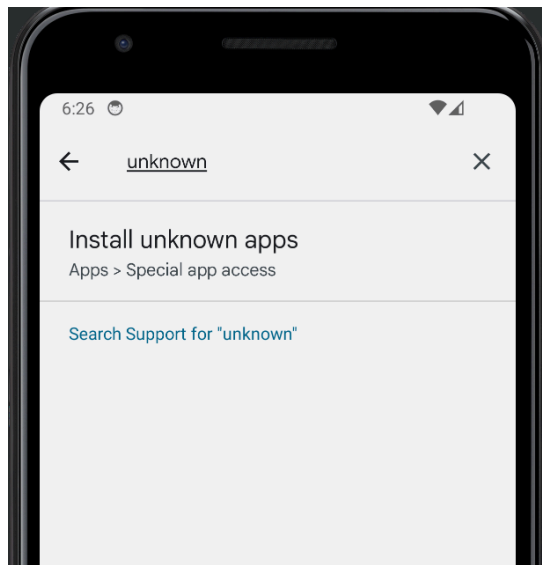
- ○ If you see a list of apps, select your preferred browser (e.g., Chrome)
- ○ Toggle on "Allow from this source"
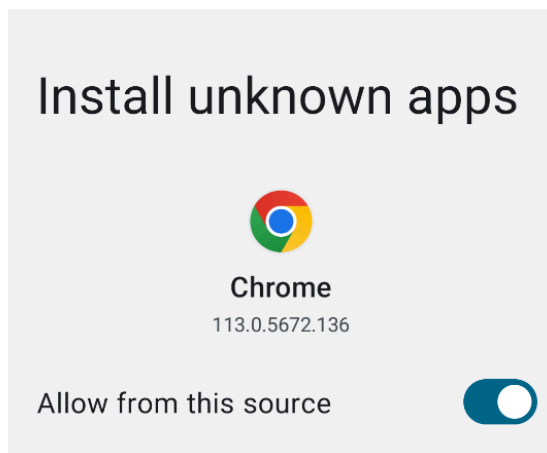
2. On your Android device, open your preferred web browser.
3. Navigate to the GitHub repository for the ScreenTime widget: https://github.com/kdausuel/screentime-capstone/
4. On the home page, scroll down to the "Releases" section and select the most current release (v1.0.0 as of 30 July 2024).

Releases 1

v1.0.0 (Latest)
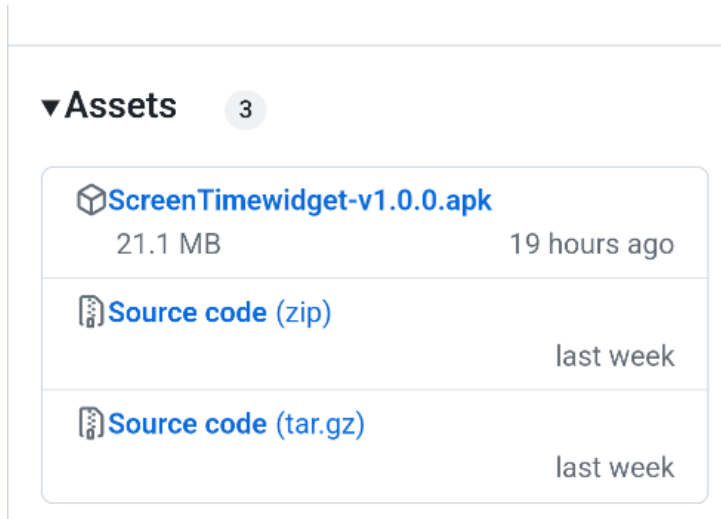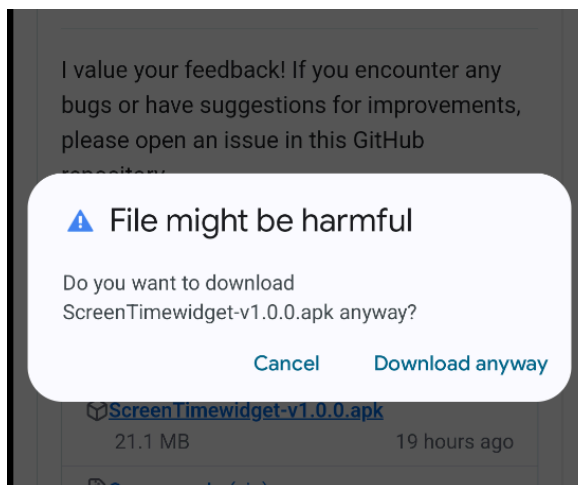19 hours ago
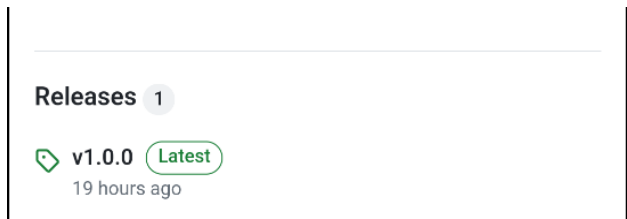
5. On the release page, scroll down to the "Assets" section.

▼**Assets** 3

☒ **ScreenTimewidget-v1.0.0.apk**
21.1 MB   19 hours ago

☒ **Source code** (zip)
                                                 last week

☒ **Source code** (tar.gz)
                                                 last week

6. Tap on the `ScreenTimewidget-v1.0.0.apk` file (or the relevant apk if a newer release is available) to download it. The file size is 21.1 MB.
7. A warning might appear that the file could be harmful. As long as the file was obtained from the site provided, the file is safe and you should click "Download Anyway"

I value your feedback! If you encounter any bugs or have suggestions for improvements, please open an issue in this GitHub

⚠ **File might be harmful**

Do you want to download
ScreenTimewidget-v1.0.0.apk anyway?

                    Cancel   **Download anyway**

☒ ScreenTimewidget-v1.0.0.apk
21.1 MB   19 hours ago

8. Once the download is complete, tap on the downloaded APK file to begin installation.
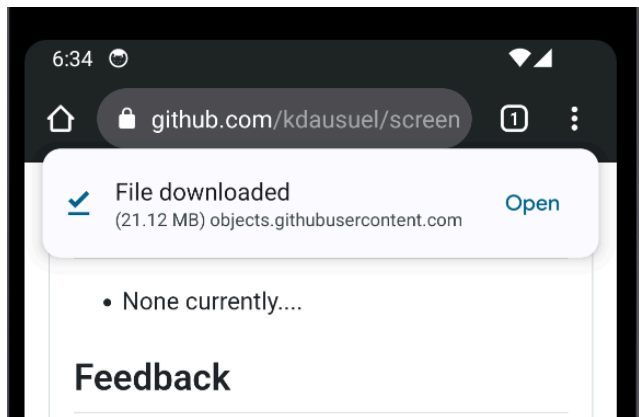
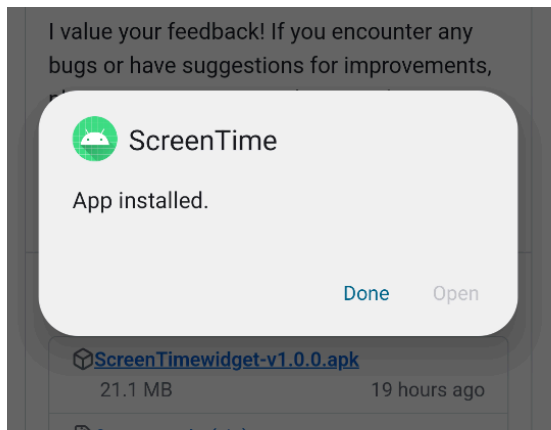9. A prompt may appear asking if you want to install this application. Tap "Install" to proceed.
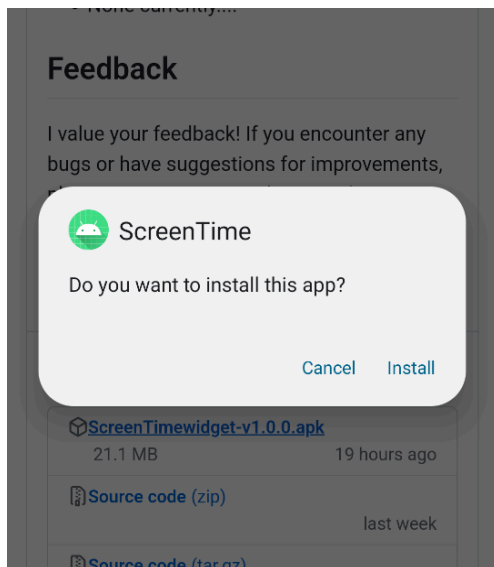
10. Wait for the installation to complete.
11. Once installed, you'll see an "App installed" message. Tap "Done" to close the installer.

12. Important: After installation, go back to your device settings and turn off the "Install from unknown sources" option for the browser you used. This helps maintain your device's security.

User Interface Overview

The ScreenTime widget consists of two main components:

1. **Timer Display**: This is the primary interface you'll interact with. It displays your timers (daily/session) and the button to access configuration settings.
2. **Configuration Screen**: This is where you set up your timer limits.

3. Using the Software

Adding the Widget to Your Home Screen and Initial Setup

1. Long-press on an empty area of your home screen.

2. Tap on "Widgets" in the menu that appears.

3. Scroll through the list of available widgets until you find "ScreenTime".

4. Tap and hold the preview icon for ScreenTime, then drag it to your desired location on the home screen.

5. Release to place the widget. This will trigger the initial setup process.

6. The widget will request two permissions. Grant both permissions when prompted:

   - Permission to draw over other apps (for notifications)

Display over other apps

ScreenTime
1.0

Allow display over other apps
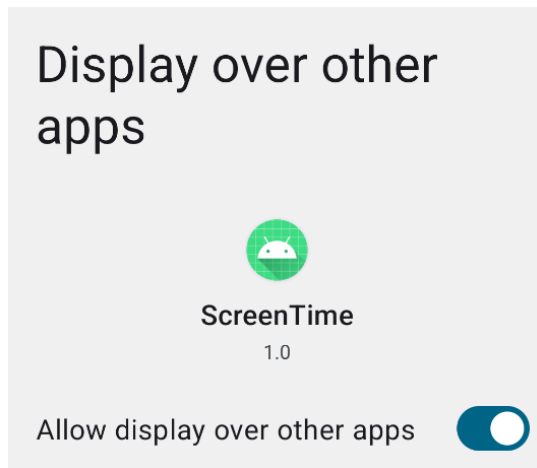
○ Permission to schedule exact alarms (for accurate timer functionality)

Alarms & reminders

ScreenTime
1.0

Allow setting alarms and reminders
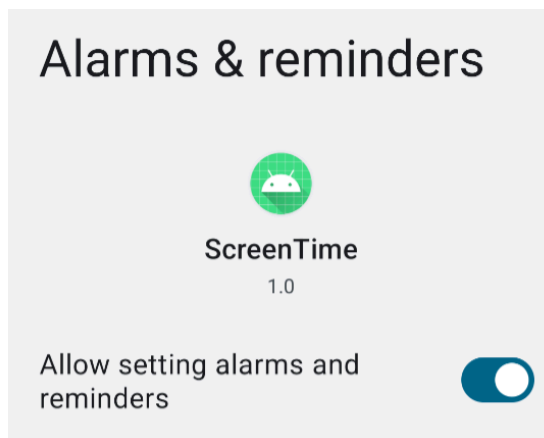
7. After granting permissions, the configuration screen will appear. This is where you'll set your daily and session time limits.

5:22

Daily Timer   00 mins 00 secs   Change

Session Timer   00 mins 00 secs   Change

Save Changes
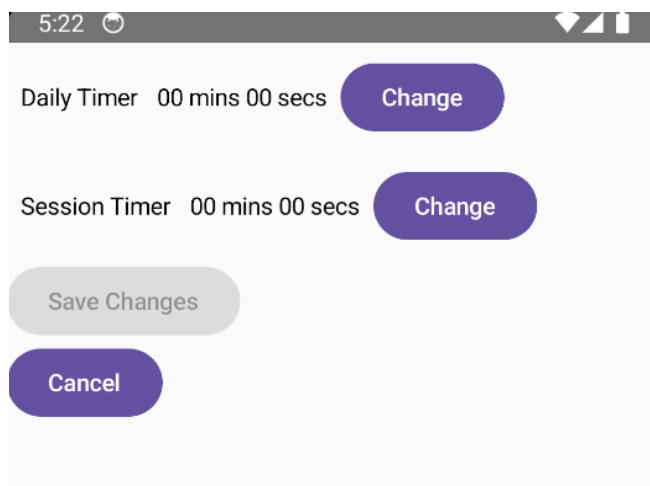
Cancel

- Set your desired time limits by clicking the Change button next to the Daily/Session Timers and using the provided controls.

- Tap "Save Changes" to apply your settings.

- If you tap "Cancel" at this stage, the widget won't be placed on your home screen, and you'll need to start the process again from Step 1.

8. Once you've saved your configuration, the widget will appear on your home screen, displaying your set time limits.
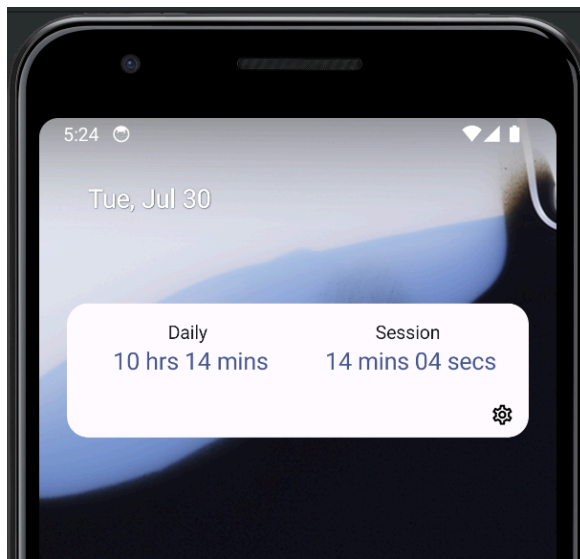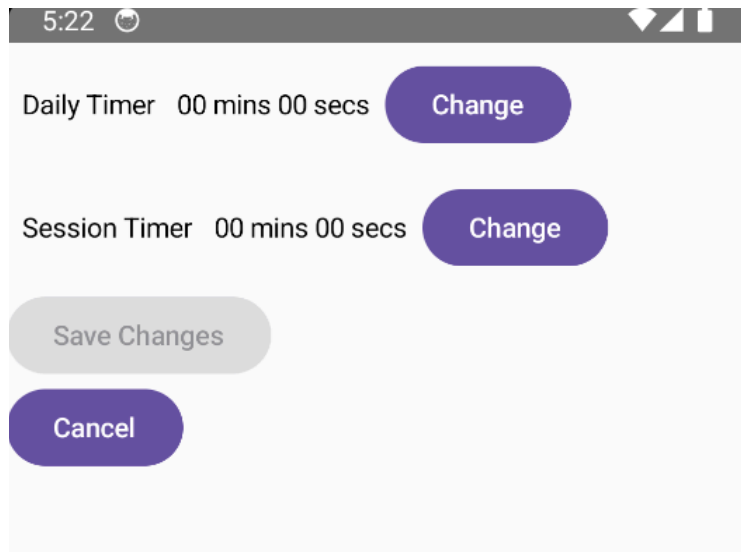

Note: If you need to adjust your settings later or need specific guidance on setting the timers, please follow the directions in the Configuring Timer Limits section.

Configuring Timer Limits

1. Tap on the gear icon in the bottom right corner of the widget.
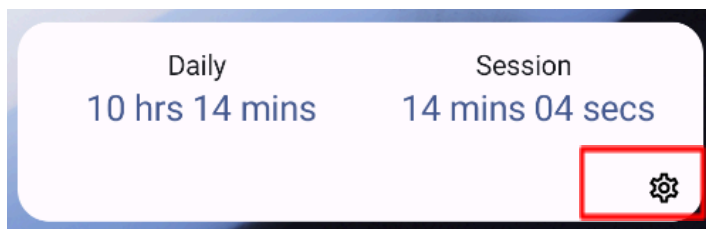
2. The configuration screen will open.

3. To set the daily timer limit:

      ○ Tap on "Change" next to "Daily Timer".

      ○ Use the time picker to set your desired daily limit.

      ○ Tap "OK" to confirm.

4. To set the session timer limit:

      ○ Tap on "Change" next to "Session Timer".

      ○ Use the time picker to set your desired session limit.

      ○ Tap "OK" to confirm.

5. Tap "Save Changes" to apply your new settings.
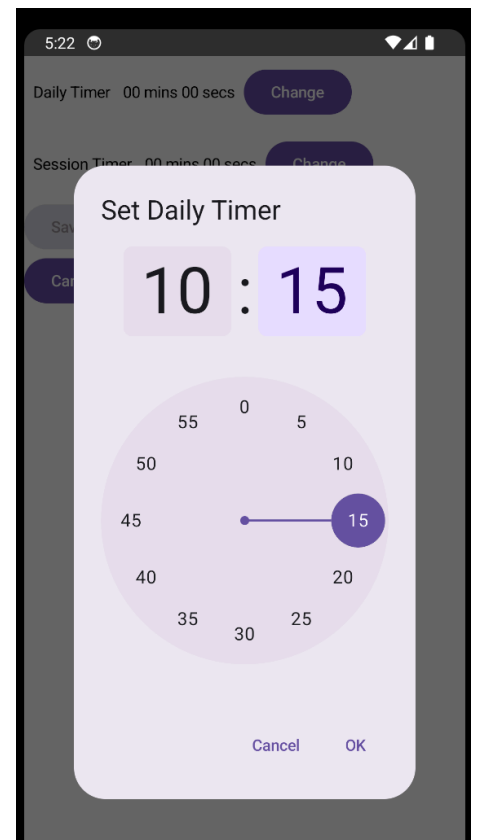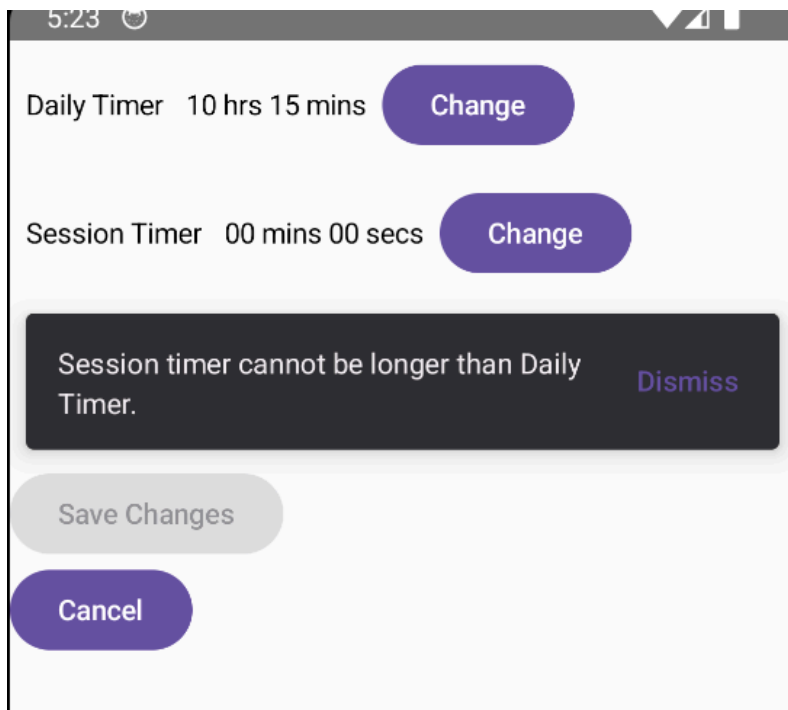
Note: The session timer limit cannot be longer than the daily timer limit.

Understanding the Timer Display

The widget displays two timers:

- Daily Timer: Shows the remaining time for your total daily screen usage.

- Session Timer: Shows the remaining time for your current continuous usage session.
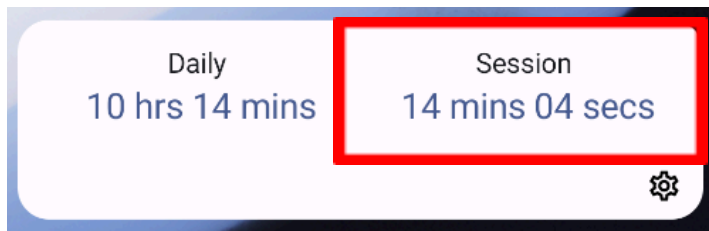
Both timers will count down when your screen is on and pause when the screen is off.

Resetting Timers

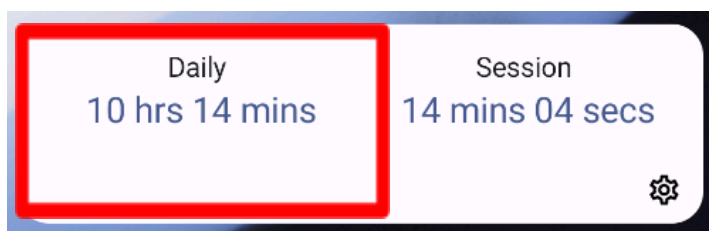- The daily timer automatically resets at midnight each day.

- The session timer resets after 15 minutes of screen inactivity (when the screen is off).

Managing Time Limits and Notifications

Reaching Time Limits

When you reach your set time limit for either the daily or session timer:

1. A notification will appear on your screen.
2. The notification will inform you that you've reached your set limit.
3. Tap "OK" to dismiss the notification.
4. Consider taking a break from your device as suggested.
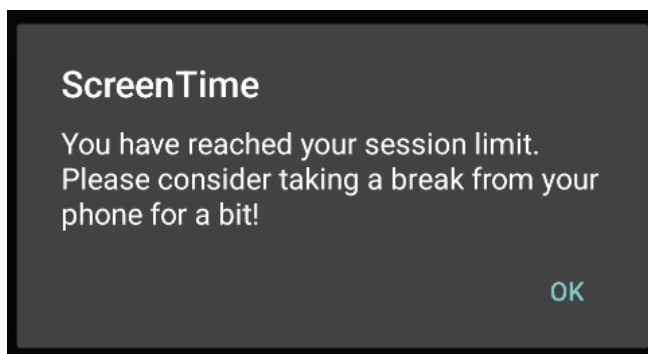
Exceeding Time Limits

If you continue to use your device after reaching a time limit:

1. The notification will not appear again for that specific limit (daily or session) during the current period.
2. The widget will display negative time to show how far you've exceeded the limit. For example:
   - If you've exceeded your daily limit by 1 hour and 2 minutes, the widget will show "-1 hr 2 mins" for the daily timer.
   - This negative time display helps you stay mindful of your usage beyond the set limits.

Understanding Negative Time Display

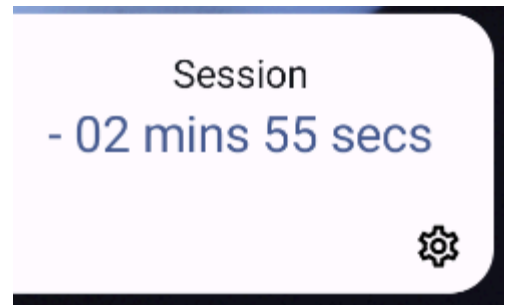- The negative time serves as a visual reminder of how much you've exceeded your set limit.
- This feature allows you to track your actual usage compared to your intended limits.
- You can use this information to:
  1. Be more mindful of your device usage.
  2. Adjust your time limits if you find them consistently unrealistic.
  3. Analyze your usage patterns and make informed decisions about your screen time.

Remember, the goal of ScreenTime is to help you manage your screen time effectively. The negative time display is not meant to induce stress but to provide you with accurate information about your usage habits.

If you find yourself regularly exceeding limits, consider:

- Gradually adjusting your limits to more achievable goals.
- Reflecting on your device usage patterns and identifying areas where you can reduce screen time.

- Using the widget's data to have conversations with yourself about your digital wellbeing goals.

Choosing Effective Timer Limits

Selecting appropriate time limits for your daily and session timers is crucial for making the most of ScreenTime. Here are some tips to help you set effective limits:

Daily Timer:

1. Estimate Your Current Usage: Since you need to set limits when first installing the widget, make an educated guess about your daily screen time. Consider how often you use your phone throughout the day and for what purposes.
2. Start Conservatively: If you're unsure, start with a higher limit than you think you might need. It's easier to decrease the limit later than to start too restrictively.
3. Consider Your Schedule: Set a limit that accommodates both necessary and recreational screen time in your typical day.
4. Aim for Healthy Targets: Health experts often recommend limiting recreational screen time. Consider setting your daily limit to allow for necessary tasks while reducing unnecessary usage.

Session Timer:

1. Define a "Session": Decide what constitutes a reasonable continuous period of use for you. This might be the length of time you're comfortable using your device before taking a significant break.
2. Consider Your Typical Activities: Set a session limit that aligns with your common tasks. For example, if you often watch hour-long videos, you might set the session timer to slightly over an hour.
3. Encourage Regular Breaks: Set the session limit to remind you to take a break after a period of continuous use. This could be 1-2 hours, depending on your needs and preferences.

Recommended Starting Limits

If you're unsure where to start, here are some generally reasonable limits to consider:

1. Daily Limit: 3 hours (180 minutes) This allows for essential phone use and some recreational time, while encouraging mindful usage. It's a middle-ground that works for many users.

2. Session Limit: 1 hour (60 minutes) This duration allows for most common activities (watching a show, extended reading, etc.) while prompting regular breaks.

Remember, these are just starting points. You should adjust these limits based on your personal needs, work requirements, and lifestyle. Some users might need more time, while others might aim for less. The key is to find a balance that works for you and helps you achieve your digital wellbeing goals.

General Tips:

- Be Realistic: Ensure your limits are practical for your lifestyle. If they're too restrictive, you might be tempted to ignore them.
- Review and Adjust: Regularly review your limits and adjust them based on your experiences and goals.
- Use as an Awareness Tool: Remember, the widget doesn't automatically stop you from using your device. Use it as a tool to increase awareness of your usage patterns.
- Combine with Other Strategies: Use these limits in conjunction with other digital wellbeing practices for a comprehensive approach to managing screen time.

4. Troubleshooting

Common Issues and Solutions

1. **Widget not updating:**
   - Ensure that battery optimization is not restricting the app. Go to Settings > Apps > ScreenTime > Battery > Unrestricted.
   - Try removing and re-adding the widget to your home screen.
2. **Notifications not appearing:**
   - Check if notifications are enabled for the app. Go to Settings > Apps > ScreenTime > Notifications.
   - Ensure that your device is not in Do Not Disturb mode.
3. **Timers reset unexpectedly:**
   - For the daily timer, check if your device's date and time settings are correct.
   - For the session timer, remember that it resets after 15 minutes of inactivity.
4. **Cannot set desired time limit:**
   - Remember that the session timer limit cannot be longer than the daily timer limit.
   - If you're unable to set a specific time, try restarting the app and your device.
5. **Widget disappears after device restart:**
   - Some Android launchers may remove widgets after a device restart. Simply add the widget again to your home screen.
6. **Timer Display values appear "jumpy":**
   - On some Android devices, multiple instances of the ScreenTime widget on the home screen can cause timer values on the display to appear to not count down smoothly.
   - If this happens to you, simply remove all duplicate instances of the widget until there is only one. A phone restart may also be required.

If you encounter any issues not covered here, try uninstalling and reinstalling the app. If problems persist, please log a ticket on the repository at: https://github.com/kdausuel/screentime-capstone/issues.

5. Reference

Glossary of Terms

- **Configuration Screen**: The interface where you set up or modify the timers. Accessed via a gear icon on the lower right side of the Timer Display.
- **Daily Timer**: The timer that tracks your total screen time for the day.
- **Session Timer**: The timer that tracks your continuous screen time without a break longer than 15 minutes.
- **Timer Display**: The visual representation on the widget showing the amount of time remaining (or exceeded) for your daily and session usage. It continuously updates to reflect your current screen time status.
- **Time Limit**: The maximum amount of time you set for your daily or session usage.
- **Widget**: A small application that can be placed on the Android home screen.