

# Digital *hygiene*



DIGITAL HYGIENE

A guide to  
building a *healthy*  
relationship with  
the digital world

# Hi there



Hello and welcome to the "Digital Hygiene" guide! In this guide, we will provide tips and insights on how to maintain a healthy relationship with technology.

Our goal is to transform your phone – from a source of distraction, irritation, and anxiety – into a useful tool that inspires and empowers you. While this guide focuses on iPhone, the recommendations are universal, and similar features should be available on Android devices. This guide includes practical advice, curated content recommendations, and beautiful phone wallpapers.

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*Tame the  
notification  
overload*



# Tame the Notification Overload

Our attention is a precious resource. Constant distractions from notifications, such as someone liking our post, can deplete it. Throughout the day, our focus may shift to these external interruptions instead of what truly matters. A simple and effective way to reduce this noise and anxiety is to turn off non-essential notifications on your phone.



# Recommended Notification Settings

- Essential: Calls and messages from close contacts and alerts that require immediate attention, such as taxi arrivals.
- Moderate: Notifications from apps that are not frequently checked but are important to inform about significant updates.
- Low Priority: Feel free to disable notifications from emails, work chats, and social media. You are likely to check these regularly anyway, and not responding immediately will not cause any issues.

By managing your notifications, you can reclaim your attention and reduce unnecessary stress.

On your iPhone, navigate to **Settings** → **Notifications**, select an app, and adjust the notification settings to suit your needs.

The image shows a screenshot of an iPhone's Settings app, specifically the Notifications section for an app. At the top, there is a back arrow pointing left, the word "Notifications" in blue, and the word "Screen Time" in black. Below this, there is a section titled "Allow Notifications" with a green toggle switch. Underneath, it says "ALWAYS DELIVER IMMEDIATELY". There is a section for "Time-Sensitive Notifications" with a yellow alarm icon and a grey toggle switch. A descriptive text below states: "Time Sensitive notifications are always delivered immediately and remain on the Lock Screen for an hour." The next section is titled "ALERTS" and contains three items: "Lock Screen" (with a blue phone icon and a checked radio button), "Notification Centre" (with a grey battery icon and an unselected radio button), and "Banners" (with a grey battery icon and an unselected radio button). Below these are two more sections: "Sounds" (with a grey toggle switch) and "Badges" (with a green toggle switch).

Allow Notifications

Screen Time

ALWAYS DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

Time-Sensitive Notifications

Time Sensitive notifications are always delivered immediately and remain on the Lock Screen for an hour.

ALERTS

Lock Screen

Notification Centre

Banners

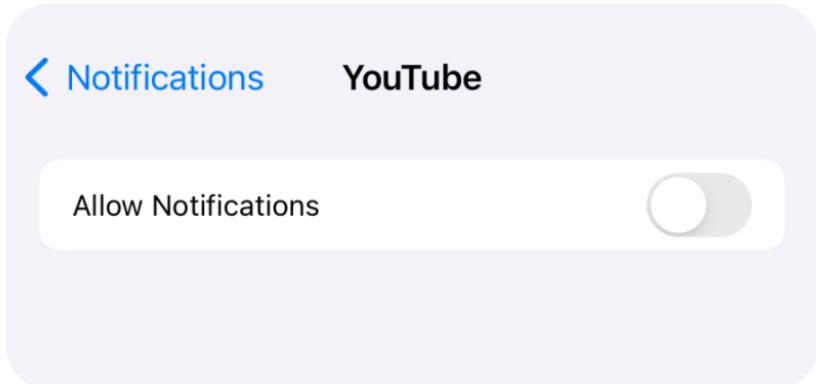
Sounds

Badges

The iPhone offers extensive customization options for managing notifications effectively. For more detailed guidance, visit Apple's support site:

 [support.apple.com/en-us/108781](https://support.apple.com/en-us/108781)

For those who prefer a minimalist approach, the simplest option is to disable all notifications for some apps directly from the settings:



For apps where only certain notifications are critical, keep only those enabled. If you communicate with close contacts via a messaging app, consider disabling notifications for unrelated chats.

Most apps provide flexible options for managing notifications, allowing you to tailor your experience to your needs.

Give it a try – this change can feel like a breath of fresh air. If you encounter any issues, you can easily revert to your previous settings, but chances are, you'll appreciate the newfound quiet.

DIGITAL HYGIENE

*Organize*  
phone home  
screen



# Organize Phone Home Screen

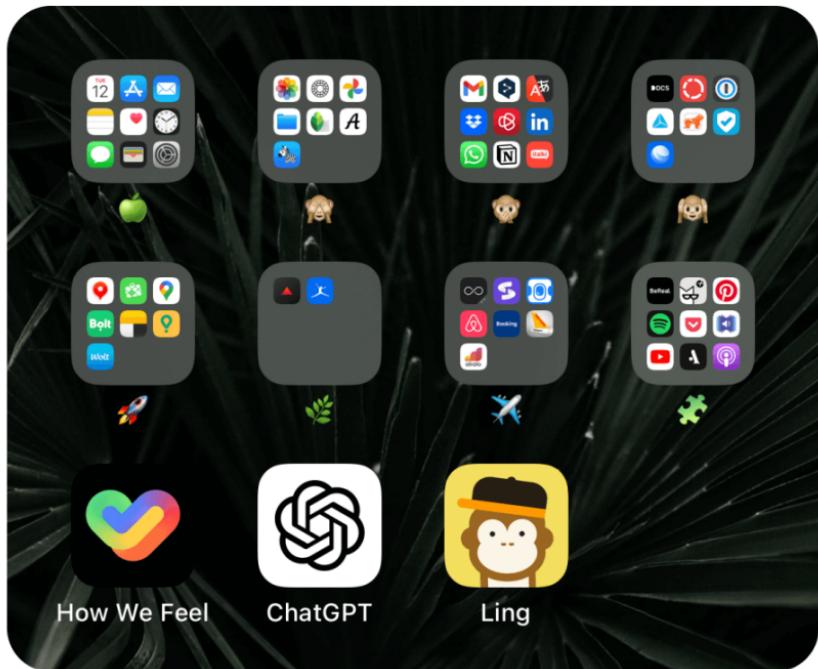
Organizing your iPhone's home screen can significantly reduce distractions and save you time when navigating your device. Here are some effective strategies to consider:

- Use Folders
- Spotlight Search
- Remove App Icons

# Use Folders

Group similar apps together into folders to declutter your home screen and make it easier to find what you need quickly.

You can create folders based on app function or category, such as navigation, finance, travel, or social media.



Alternatively, for a visually appealing arrangement, consider organizing apps by color.

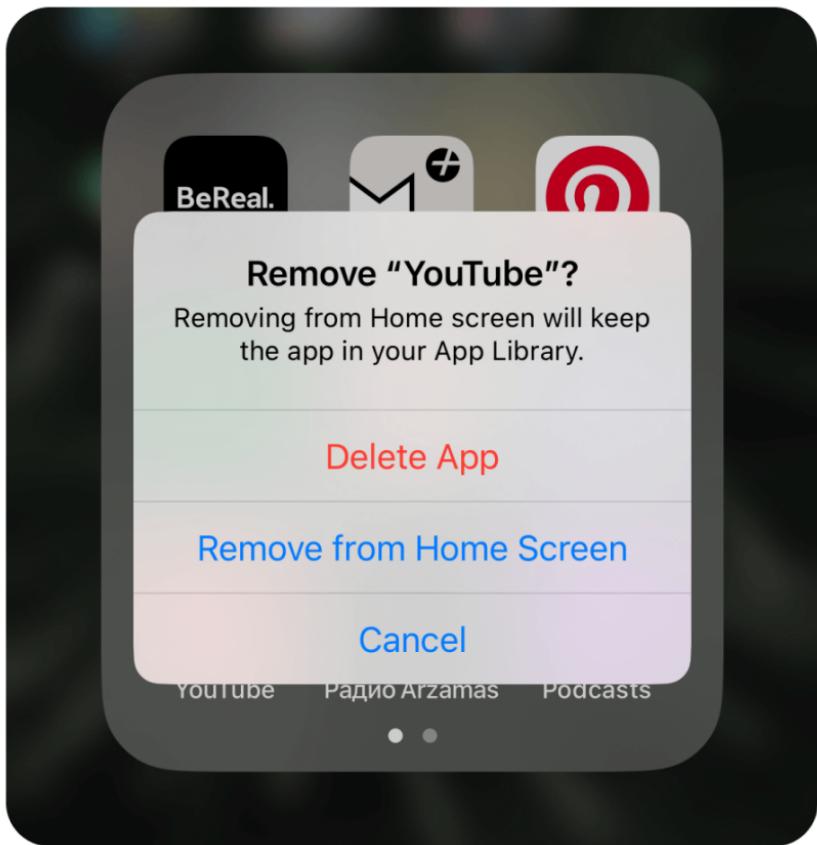
# Spotlight Search

For quick app launching, use the Spotlight search feature. Simply swipe down on the home screen and start typing the app name. This approach is especially beneficial for apps used rarely, keeping your home screen clean and focused.



# Remove App Icons

Consider removing app icons from the home screen without uninstalling the apps. This is especially useful for limiting distractions from social media apps like Instagram. You can still easily access these apps via the Spotlight search when needed.



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Sleep  
*without*  
phone



# Sleep without phone

To help you sleep better, don't bring your phone and tablet into the bedroom. Using them before bed can make it harder to fall asleep because they keep your mind active. Avoid browsing social media or reading the news before bedtime to allow your mind to unwind and prepare for sleep.

Starting your day without immediate access to your phone can also have its benefits. Instead of checking notifications as soon as you wake up, take a few moments to become alert. Stretch, listen to your body, and mentally prepare for the day. Use this time for yourself – it might be just what you need.

If your devices usually charge in the bedroom, consider moving the chargers to another room and leaving the devices there overnight.

For those who use their phone as an alarm, try setting the alarm volume higher, or better yet, invest in an alarm clock. There are many aesthetically pleasing options available, including alarms that simulate sunrise by gradually lighting up at a set time.



Here are some options for alarm clocks:

[businessinsider.com/guides/home/  
best-wake-up-light-alarm-clock](http://businessinsider.com/guides/home-best-wake-up-light-alarm-clock)

Initially, this change may cause some anxiety, particularly fear of missing out (FOMO): worrying about what might have happened overnight or what your friends may have discussed without you. It's normal to feel this way, but give it a few days and observe how this new routine impacts your well-being.

DIGITAL HYGIENE

*Declutter  
the feed*



# Declutter the feed

Social networks are just tools – they aren't good or bad by themselves. Like a knife can be used to hurt someone or to make dinner, social networks can be used for good things instead of causing anxiety, FOMO, and disappointment. Instagram can inspire you, YouTube can teach you things, and Facebook can help you stay in touch with family and friends who are far away.

People often say that we are influenced by the people around us. This is also true for our online lives. Social media feeds are like our digital circles. We can choose to follow people and content that inspire, motivate, and help us grow, rather than those that make us feel bad, jealous, or left out.

It might be a good time to clean up your social media. Go through your networks and stop following anyone who isn't interesting to you anymore. After cleaning up, you'll feel refreshed and ready to fill your feed with new, exciting content.

You don't have to follow all your friends, coworkers, and family members, especially if their posts are boring or uninspiring, or if you don't even talk to them much. Why spend time looking at other people's lives if it doesn't add anything good to yours?

This is also true for famous people with lots of followers. Their posts are usually made to appeal to everyone. Try to find unique content that really speaks to you, not something that everyone else is already following. We think the future is about micro-influencers – people who share their values with a small group of people who feel like they do.

Try to make your feed a place that makes you happy, where you can easily enjoy and relate to everything you see. In the next chapter, we'll show you how to set up your feed on Instagram and YouTube so it's just right for you.

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# Deal with *Instagram*



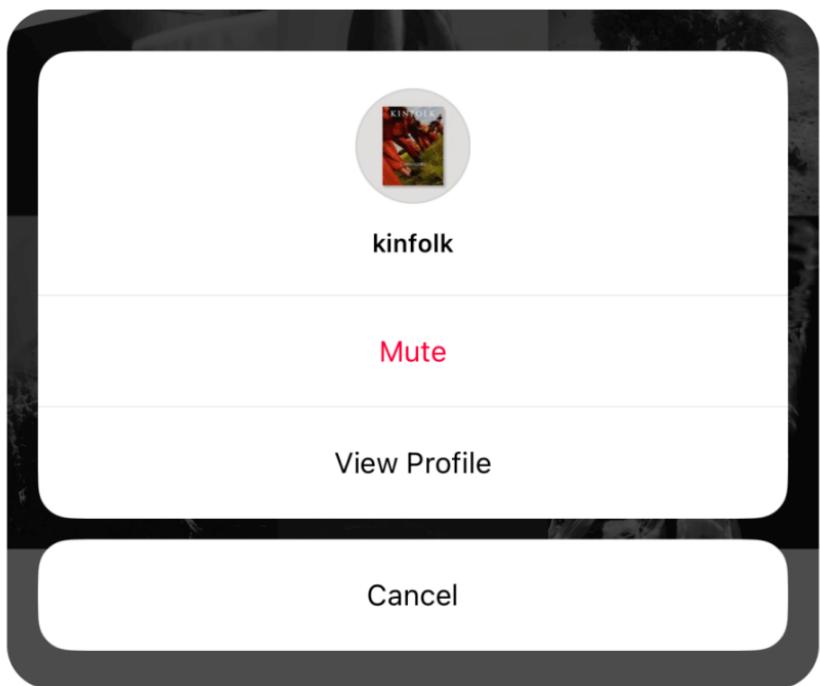
# Deal with Instagram

## Declutter

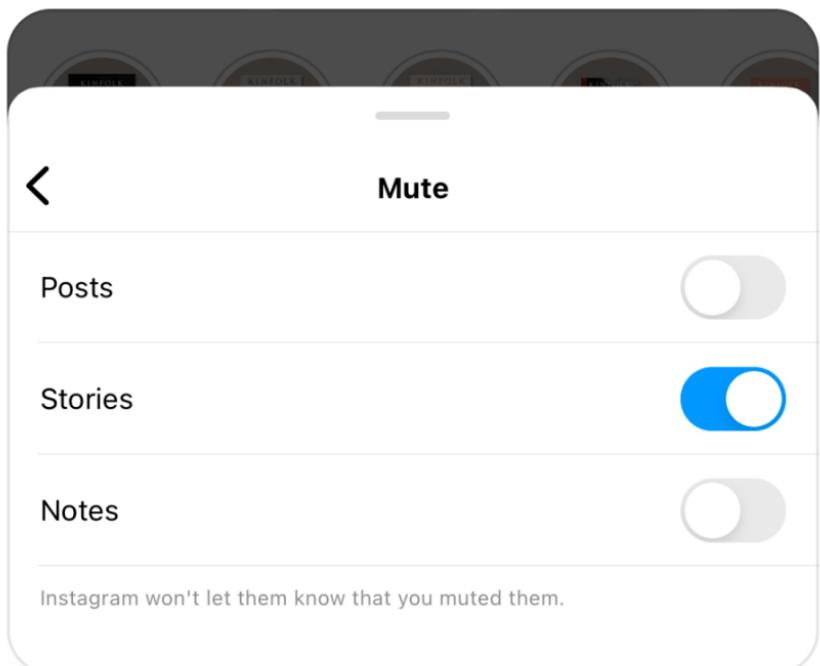
We discussed decluttering your feed in the previous chapter. Start by unsubscribing from celebrity accounts with millions of followers – you can always re-subscribe later.

You don't need to unfollow friends, relatives, and colleagues completely. Instead, you can hide their stories and posts to keep your feed clean. This way, their updates won't appear daily, but you can still view their profiles when you choose.

To hide someone's stories, make a long press on their avatar:



Or, to mute their posts or stories, go to their **Profile** → **Following** → **Mute**:



# Feed Formation

Now that your feed is cleaner, let's fill it with something inspiring. Seek out smaller accounts that motivate you, whether they are bloggers, digital creators, or niche commercial accounts.

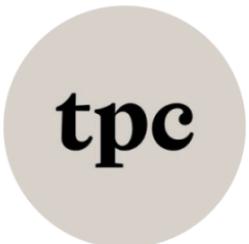
We love fashion and interior design, and here are a few of our favorite accounts to get you started.



# Bloggers & Creators



# Projects

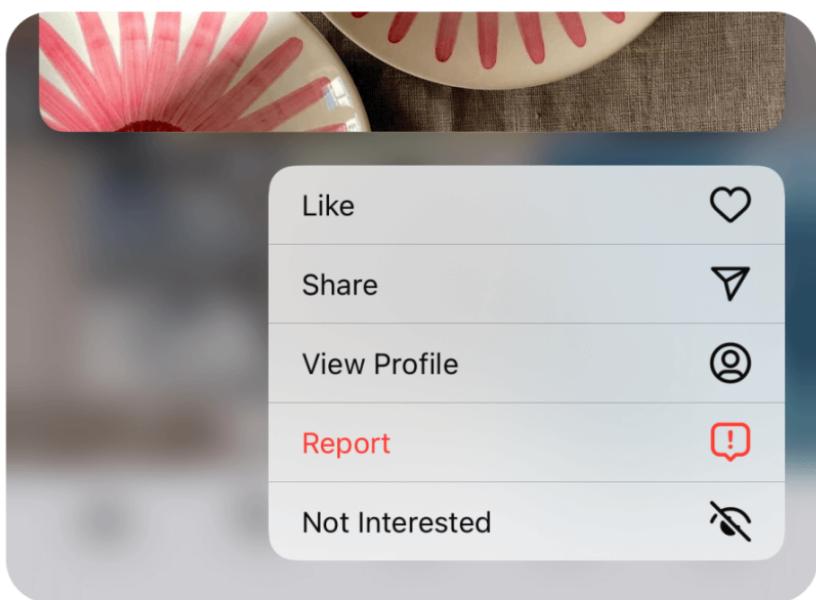


# Tune recommendations

Begin shaping your feed, and Instagram will start to recommend similar accounts.

We enjoy browsing the Explore tab, where we find a continuation of the aesthetic and content we like. Engage with posts and reels by liking and subscribing.

If something doesn't resonate, **press and hold the post** and select **Not Interested** to refine your recommendations.



This way, you can customize what Instagram suggests instead of accepting everything by default.

# Tips and Tricks

Here are some tips and tricks we use to limit our time on Instagram:

**Remove the app icon** from your main screen. Access Instagram through the search function instead, which adds a brief pause before opening the app and reduces impulsive usage.

**Avoid checking Instagram in the morning** to minimize distractions.

Set a recurring task in a to-do app to check Instagram only after lunch, giving you a 10-minute break to enjoy the app.

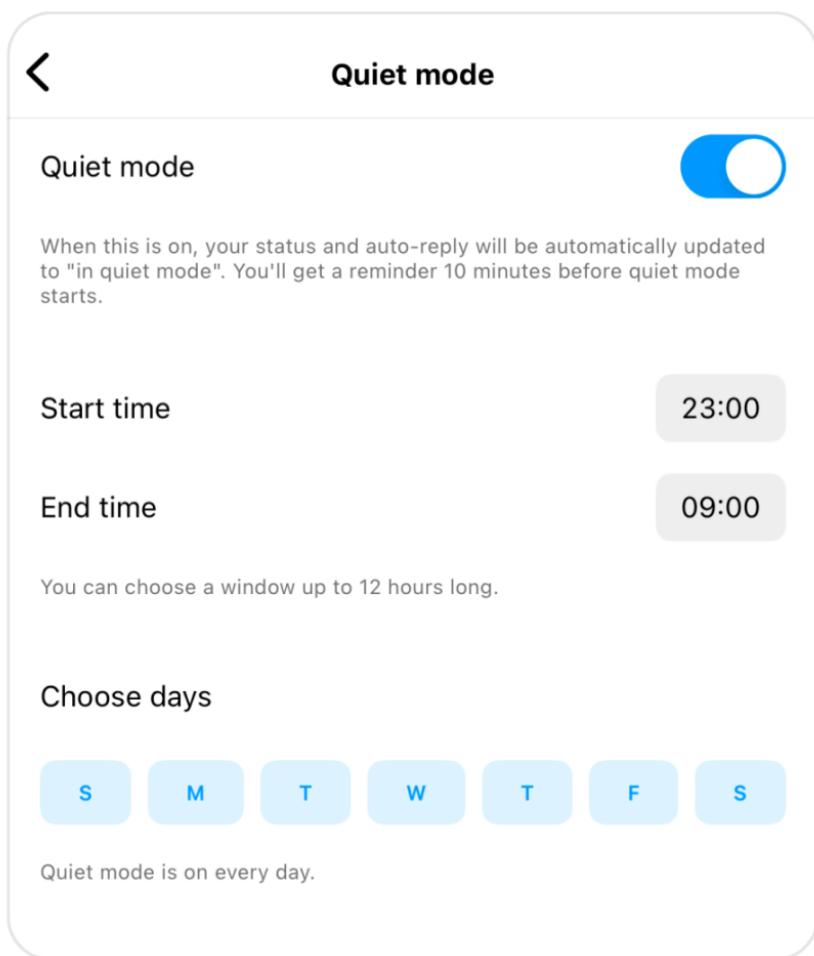
**Manage notifications:** turn off all notifications except for direct messages and set up **Quiet Mode**, which silences notifications during specified hours.

Navigate to **Settings → Notifications**:

The screenshot shows the 'Notifications' settings page. At the top, there's a back arrow icon and the title 'Notifications'. Below the title, there's a section titled 'Push notifications' with a blue toggle switch labeled 'Pause all'. A note says 'Notifications are paused because quiet mode is on.' To the right of the switch is a blue circular icon with a white checkmark. Below this, there's a list of categories each with a right-pointing arrow: 'Quiet mode', 'Posts, stories and comments', 'Following and followers', 'Messages', 'Calls', 'Live and reels', 'Fundraisers', 'From Instagram', and 'Birthdays'.

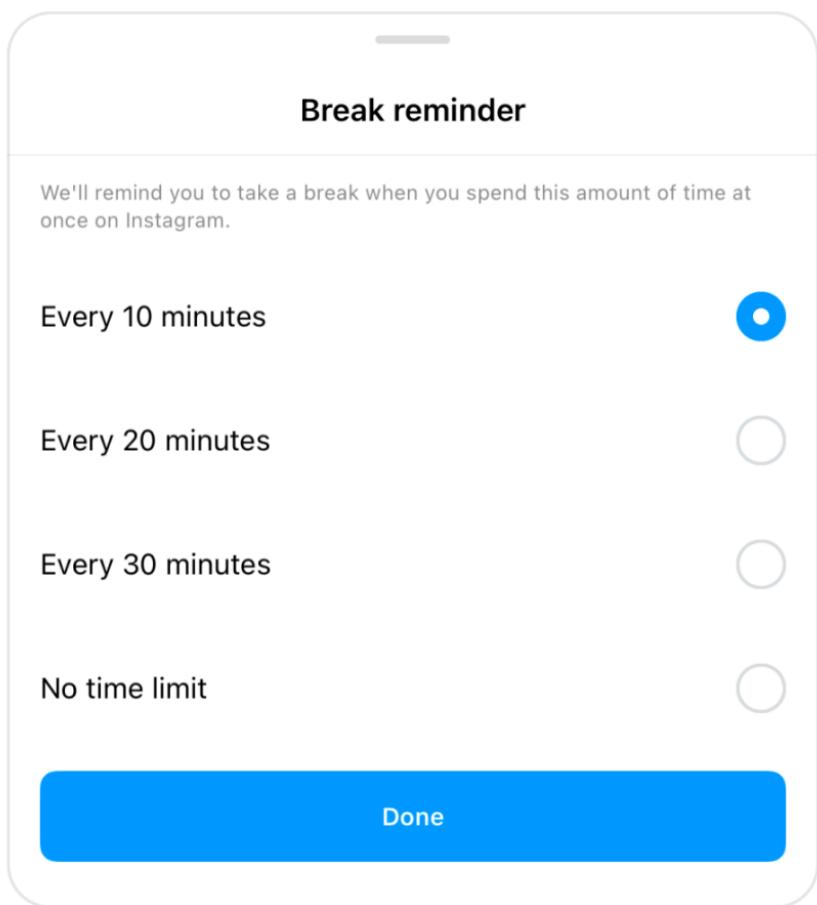
Category	Action
Push notifications	Paused (Quiet mode is on)
Quiet mode	Automatically mute notifications at night or whenever you need to focus.
Posts, stories and comments	
Following and followers	
Messages	
Calls	
Live and reels	
Fundraisers	
From Instagram	
Birthdays	

To enable Quiet Mode, navigate to  
**Settings → Time Spent → Quiet mode:**



**Set a reminder** to alert you when you've spent more than 10 minutes continuously in the app.

Navigate to **Settings → Time Spent → Break reminder** to set this up.



Every time the reminder goes off, it's a surprise how quickly 10 minutes can pass, serving as a prompt to take a break.



## Time for a break?

You've been using Instagram for 10 minutes. Take a moment to reset by closing the app.

[Manage settings](#)

[Not now](#)

DIGITAL HYGIENE

# Deal with *YouTube*



# Deal with YouTube

YouTube has a lot of great content, but it can also waste your time if you're not careful.

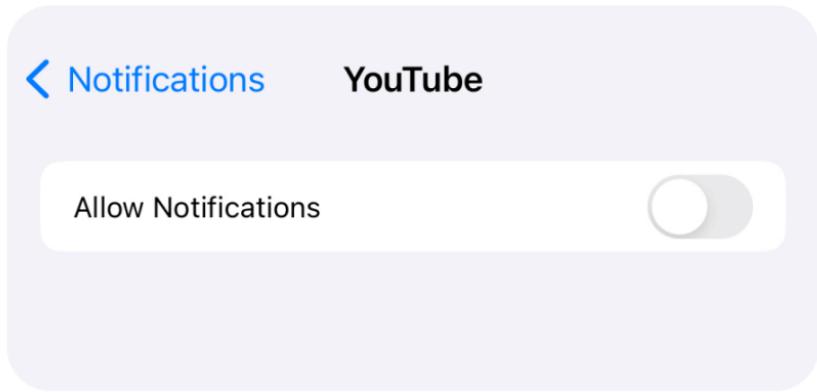
We recommend avoiding YouTube Shorts because they can be highly addictive. They seem like a fun break, but they actually make us feel more tired.

Recommendations for YouTube are the same as for Instagram:

- Turn off notifications
- Clean up your feed
- Customize recommendations

# Notifications

There are no YouTube notifications needing immediate response.  
Disable them in the iPhone settings so that you only see updates when you open the app.



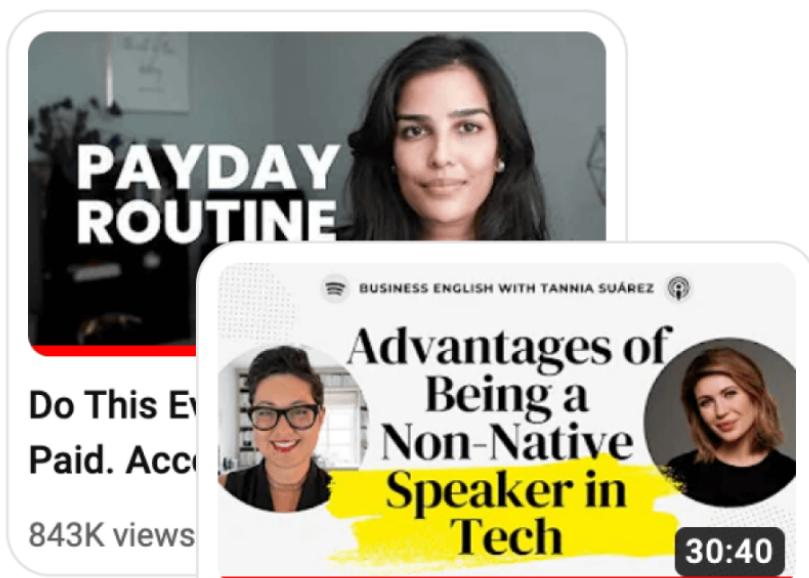
# Clean Up Your Feed

You can enjoy YouTube as your personal television. Some videos may be lengthy and ideal for relaxing, like while on the couch or during your commute.

We split YouTube videos into two categories:

- Educational
- Leisure

**Educational:** These videos teach us something new, such as improving our English skills, interface design, and managing money for greater productivity.



**Leisure:** These are just for fun, like watching a video about a beautiful house or a vlog from someone we like. Sometimes we watch funny cat videos, but not too much.

OG HOUSE

An Architect Designed The Local P 246K views

vlog

16:41

what I eat in a week, book and therapy update

Chloé Kian

34K views • 2 years ago

We regularly check who we're subscribed to and unsubscribe from channels that aren't interesting anymore. We also look for new channels that match what we're interested in now.



**nao**

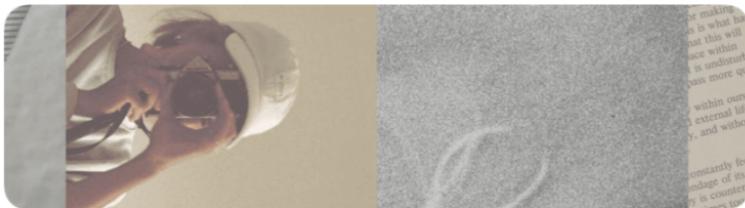
@nao.

666K subscribers • 112 videos

More about this channel >

[note.com/nao](https://note.com/nao) [note/m/m6e9d3e3ad57e](https://note/m/m6e9d3e3ad57e) and 3 more links

Subscribed



**Chloé Kian**

@ChloeKian

200K subscribers • 369 videos

<https://www.instagram.com/chloe.kian/> >

[open.spotify.com/show/36KYnmEtsASn2wTw5Sgyxt](https://open.spotify.com/show/36KYnmEtsASn2wTw5Sgyxt) and 4 more links

Subscribed



## ELENA BAZU

*About photography skills, YouTube for creators  
& slow living in the UK*



## Elena Bazu

@elenabazu

3.54K subscribers • 132 videos

Hello! I'm Elena, a lifestyle photographer based in London. We moved to the UK from Ukraine in 2021 and it's my second YouTube... >

[elenabazu.com](http://elenabazu.com) and 2 more links



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1.09M subscribers • 293 videos

The Local Project is your gateway to extraordinary architecture and interior design stories across Australia, New Zealand, and North A... >

[instagram.com/thelocalproject](http://instagram.com/thelocalproject) and 2 more links



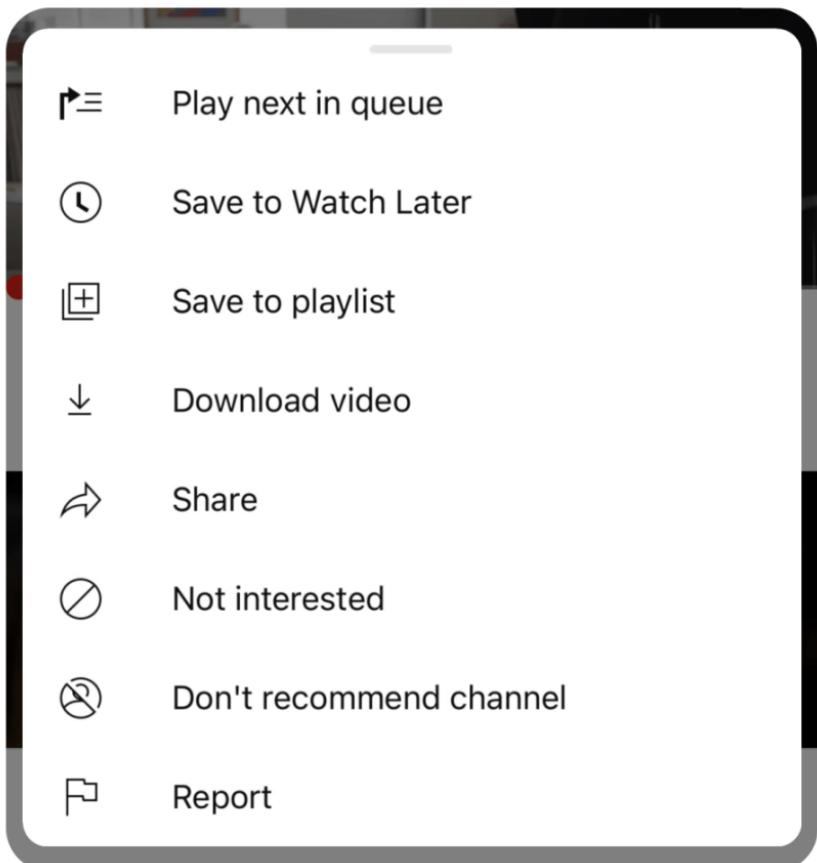
Subscribed



# Recommendations

We like the YouTube recommendation system because it helps us discover new channels and videos that we might enjoy. Here's how it works:

- If you like a video, hit the like button or subscribe to the channel.
- If you don't want to see a video or channel again, click **Not Interested** or **Don't Recommend Channel**.



DIGITAL HYGIENE

# Digital *detox*



# Digital detox

In today's world, we are overwhelmed with more information than ever before. This overload can be even more exhausting than a lack of information because our brains aren't designed to handle today's constant digital storm. This is why we often feel drained by the end of the day, even if we haven't done much.

Here are some simple digital detox habits that can help without needing extreme measures like a 10-day retreat or quitting social media:

- Don't reach for your phone first thing in the morning.
- Have meals without your phone.
- Limit social media.
- Practice a few hours of digital detox.

# Don't Reach for Your Phone First Thing in the Morning

Resist the temptation to begin your day with news or social media.

We discussed the benefits of peaceful mornings in the “Sleep without phone” chapter.

Try to keep your mornings free from digital distractions.

# Have Meals Without Your Phone

Eating without distractions can be tough, especially if you're used to scrolling through Instagram or watching YouTube during meals. However, focusing solely on your food enhances the eating experience and can make you feel significantly better.

# Limit Social Media

Set specific times for checking social media, ideally later in the day. This helps create a calm morning and reduces the impulse to check your phone constantly.

# Practice a Few Hours of Digital Detox

Try doing this on weekends. Let your family and friends know you'll be offline for a few hours and enjoy some time outdoors without your phone. It's a great way to disconnect and recharge.



# Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope it helps you build healthier relationships with the digital world and make room for more valuable and important things in your life.

Keep in mind that this is not a course or a checklist – you don't have to follow all the advice. Maybe some suggestions won't work for you, and that's perfectly fine. We're all different.

Consider this a small experiment: why not pick one piece of advice and try it out for a few days?

# Bonus

Download these beautiful wallpapers for your phone here:

