

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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Taming the notification overload



Taming 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 a taxi arrival.
- Moderate: Notifications from apps that are not frequently checked but are important to be informed 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

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

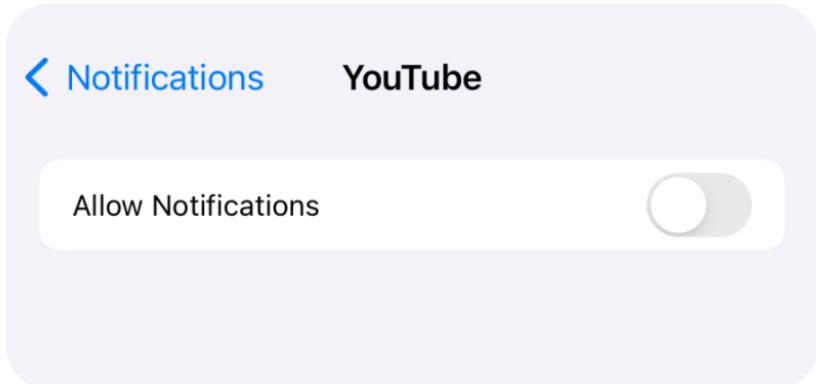
Sounds

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

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

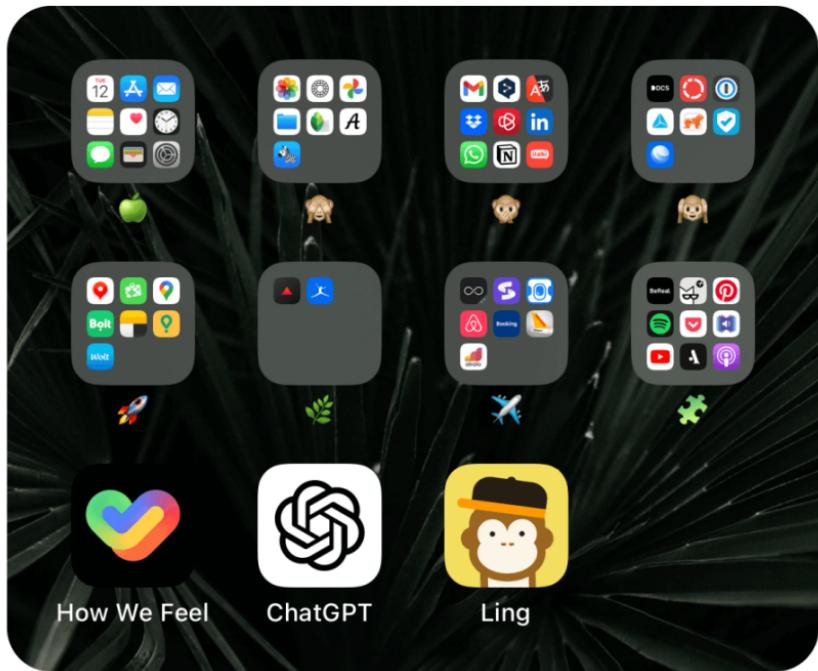
Organizing your iPhone's home screen can significantly reduce distractions and save you time when navigating through your device. Here are some effective strategies to consider:

- 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.

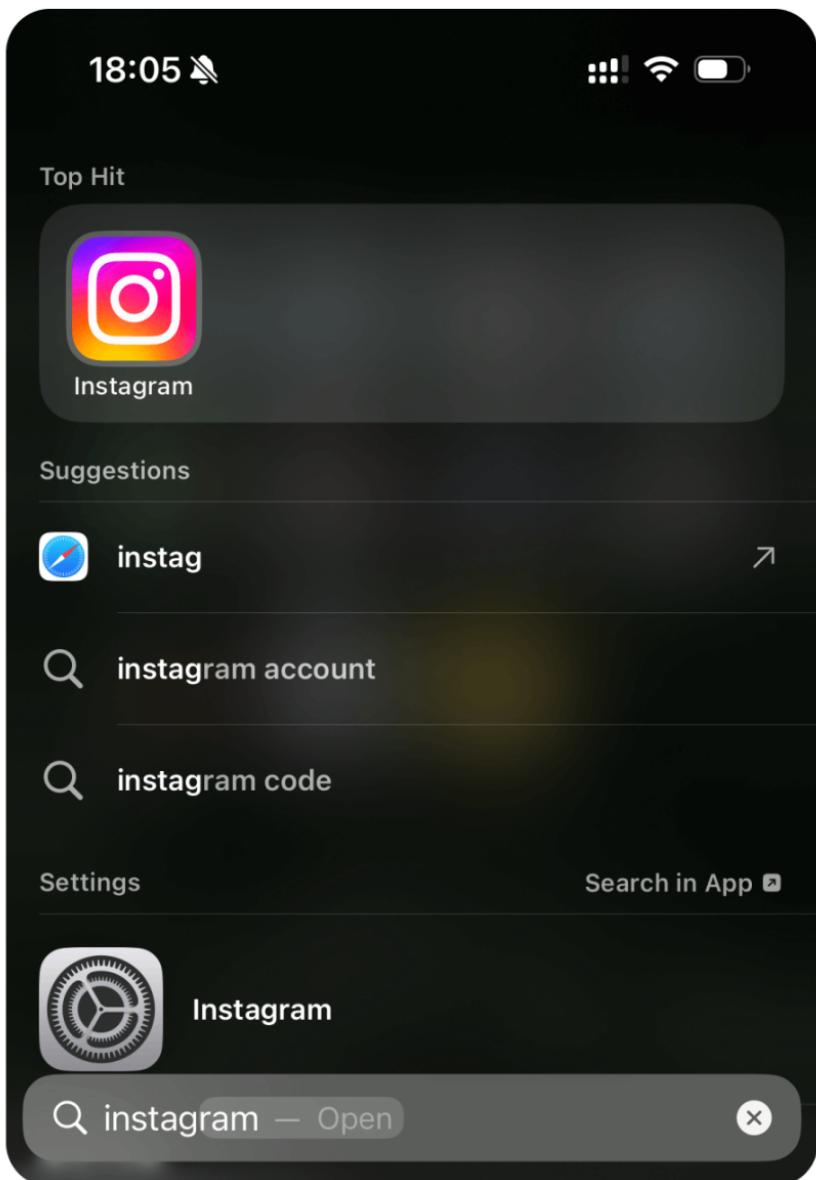
You can create folders based on app function or category, such as navigation, finance, travel, or social media.



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

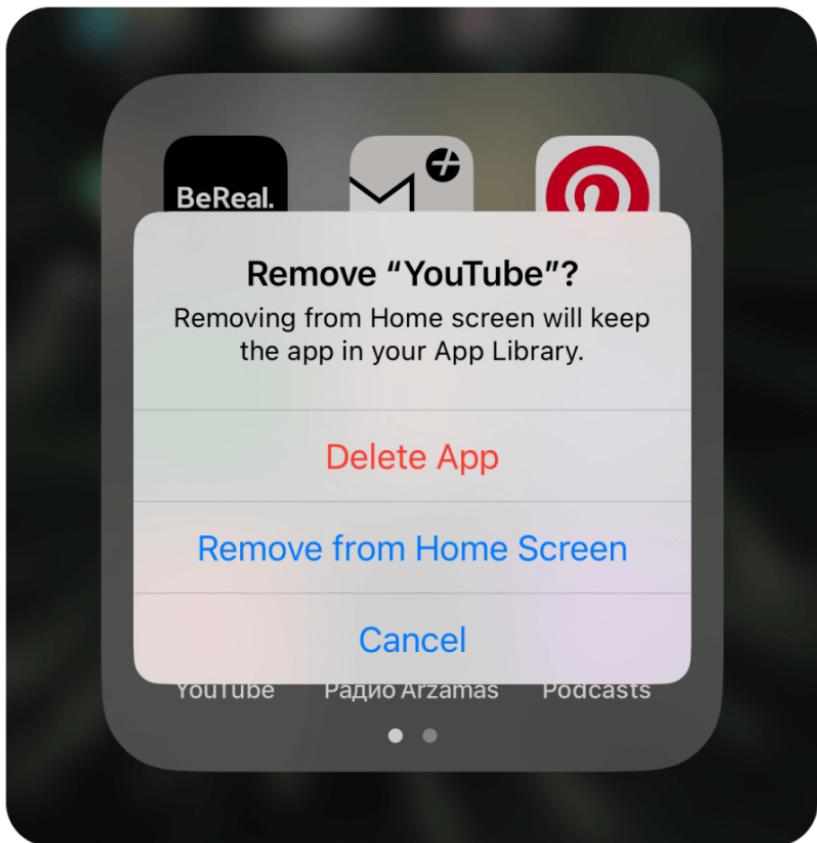
Spotlight Search

For quick app launching, use the Spotlight search feature. Simply swipe down on the home screen and start typing the app's name. This method is particularly useful for apps you use infrequently, 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.



DIGITAL HYGIENE

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

Decluttering the feed



Decluttering 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. I think the future is about micro-influencers—people who share their values with a small group of people who think 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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Dealing with *Instagram*



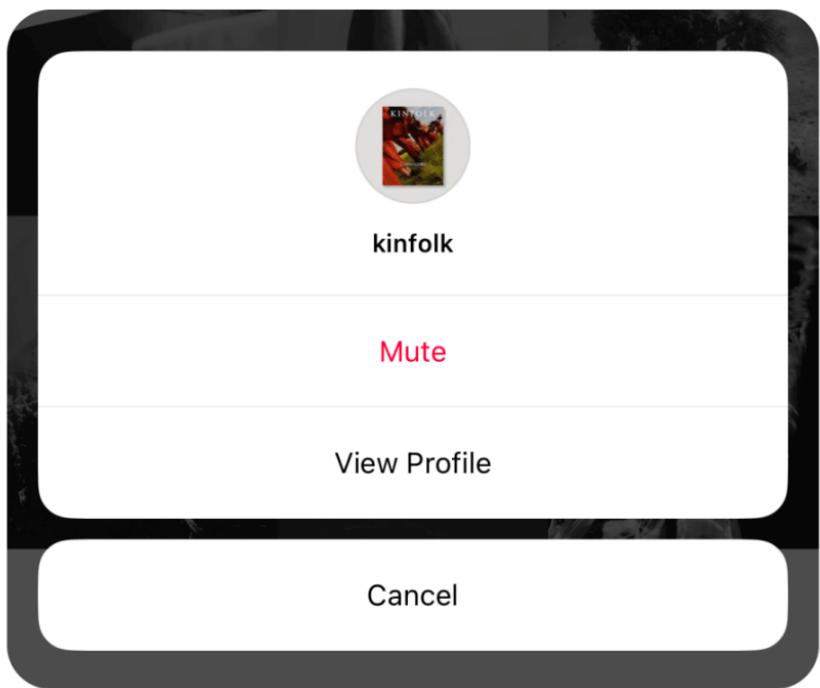
Dealing with Instagram

Decluttering

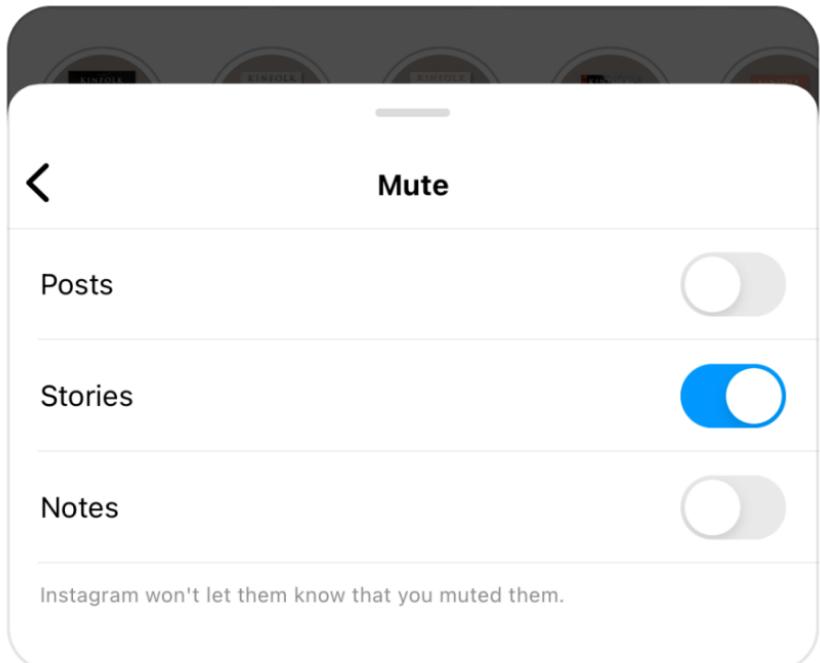
We discussed decluttering your feed in the previous chapter. Start by unsubscribing from celebrity accounts with millions of followers—you can always re-subscribe later.

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.

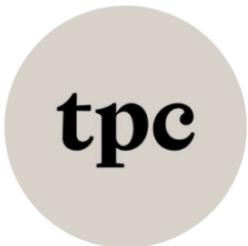
I share a passion for fashion and interior design, and here are a few of my favorite accounts to get you started.



Bloggers & Creators

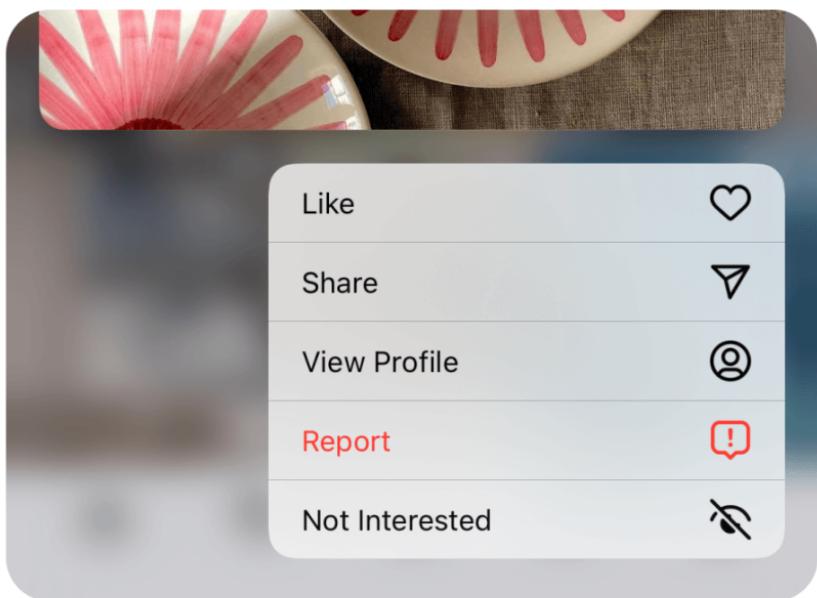


Projects



Tune recommendations

Begin shaping your feed, and Instagram will start to recommend similar accounts. I enjoy browsing the Explore tab, where I find a continuation of the aesthetic and content I 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 I use to limit my 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 opening Instagram in the morning to prevent distraction throughout the day. I have set a recurring task in my to-do app to check Instagram only after lunch. This gives me a designated 10-minute break to enjoy the app.

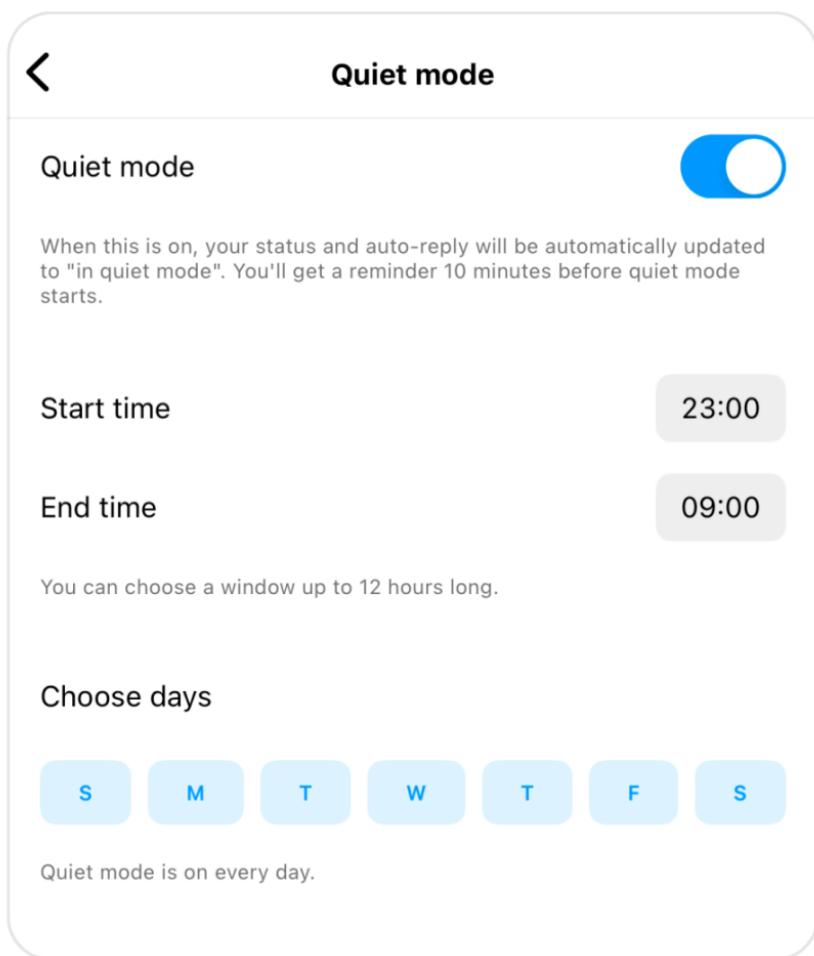
Manage notifications: I turned off all notifications except for direct messages and set up Quiet Mode, which silences notifications during specified hours.

Navigate to **Settings → Notifications**:

The screenshot shows the 'Notifications' section of the Instagram settings. At the top, there's a header with a back arrow on the left and the title 'Notifications' in bold. Below the header, there's a section titled 'Push notifications' with a sub-section 'Pause all'. A note says 'Notifications are paused because quiet mode is on.' next to a blue toggle switch. The main list of notification types includes 'Quiet mode', 'Posts, stories and comments', 'Following and followers', 'Messages', 'Calls', 'Live and reels', 'Fundraisers', 'From Instagram', and 'Birthdays', each preceded by a right-pointing arrow indicating further options.

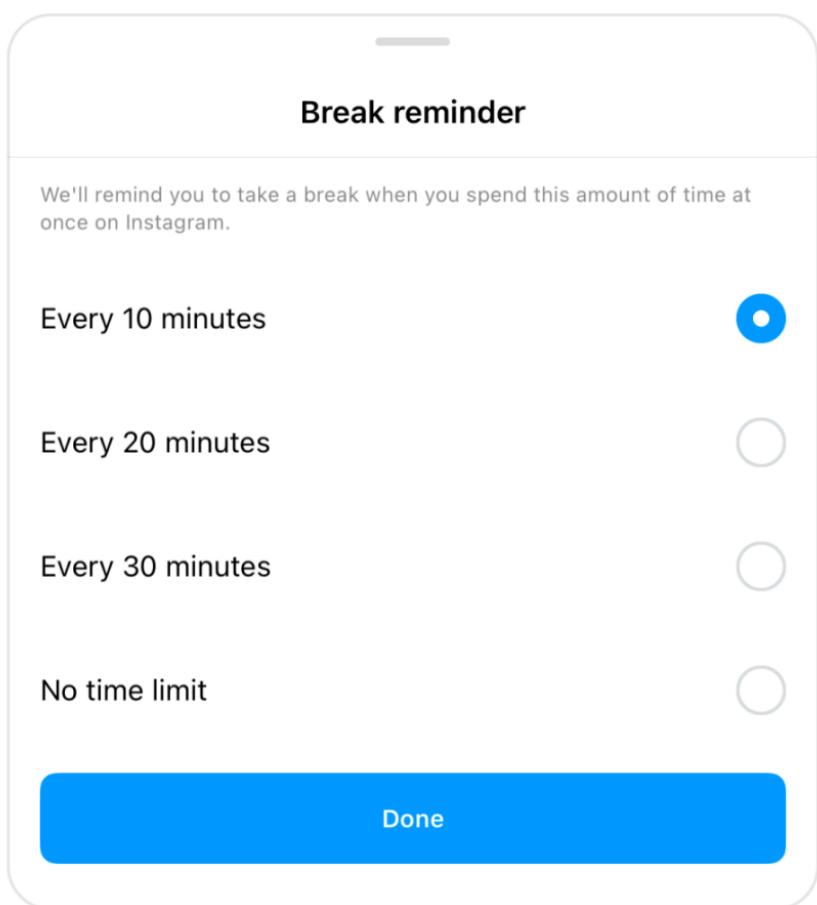
Notification Type	Action
Quiet mode	Automatically mute notifications at night or whenever you need to focus.
Posts, stories and comments	
Following and followers	
Messages	
Calls	
Live and reels	
Fundraisers	
From Instagram	
Birthdays	

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, reminding me 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

Dealing with *YouTube*



Dealing with YouTube

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

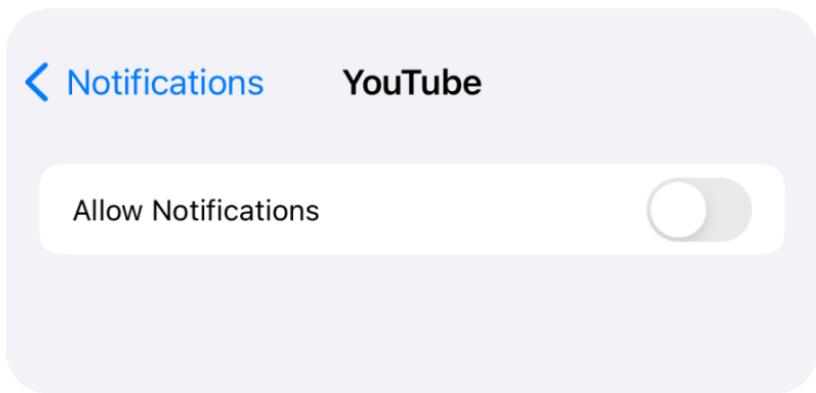
I stay away from YouTube Shorts because they are too addictive. They seem like a fun break, but they actually make me feel more tired.

Recommendations for YouTube are the same as for Instagram:

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

Notifications

There are no YouTube notifications that require immediate response for me. I disabled them in the iPhone settings, so I only see updates when I open the app.



Clean Up Your Feed

I use YouTube like my own TV. I only watch videos that I really want to see, which are usually longer and perfect for relaxing times like when I'm on the couch or commuting.

I split YouTube videos into two categories:

- Educational
- Leisure

Educational: These videos teach me something new, like how to get better at English, interface design, or learning about money and being productive.

The image shows a mobile device screen with three video thumbnails arranged vertically. Each thumbnail has a rounded rectangular border and a white header bar.

- Top Video:** A woman with long dark hair smiling. The title "PAYDAY ROUTINE" is displayed in large white letters across the top left of the video frame. Below the title, the text "Do This Every Month & Get Paid. Accurately." is visible, followed by "843K views".
- Middle Video:** A video titled "Advantages of Being a Non-Native Speaker in Tech". It features two circular profile pictures: one of a woman with glasses and another of a woman with short brown hair. The title is overlaid on a yellow brushstroke graphic. The video is from "BUSINESS ENGLISH WITH TANNIA SUÁREZ". The duration is listed as "30:40".
- Bottom Video:** A woman with long dark hair speaking. The title "THE MINDSHIFT SHIFT" is displayed in large white letters across the bottom of the video frame. Below the title, the text "DIANIA MERRIAM" is visible. The duration is listed as "19:24".

Below the thumbnails:

Unlocking the Abundance Mindset | A Paradigm Shift...

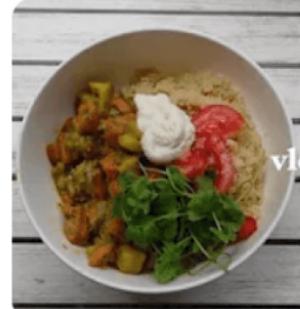
CampFI - Together We FI
721 views • 2 months ago

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



An Architect
Designed

The Local P
246K views



16:41

**what I eat in a week, book
and therapy update**

Chloé Kian

34K views • 2 years ago

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



nao ✓

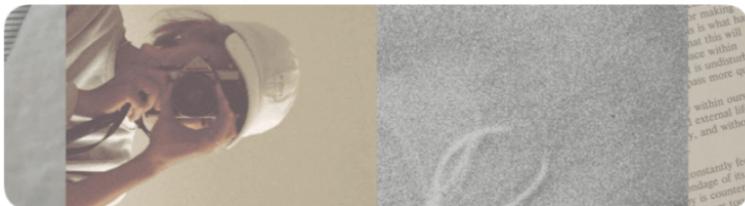
@nao.

666K subscribers • 112 videos

More about this channel >

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

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@ChloeKian

200K subscribers • 369 videos

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

open.spotify.com/show/36KYnmEtsASn2wTw5Sgyxt and 4 more links

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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 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 and 2 more links



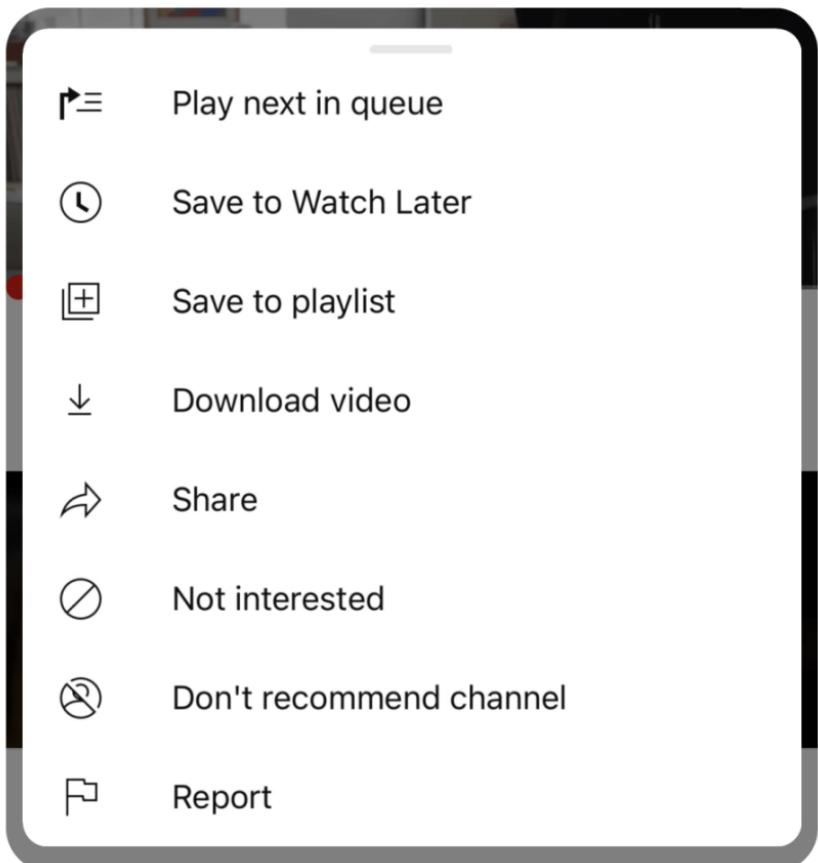
Subscribed



Recommendations

I like YouTube's recommendation system because it helps me find new channels and videos I might like. Here's how I make it work for me:

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



DIGITAL HYGIENE

Digital *detox*



Digital detox

In today's world, we are bombarded with more information than ever before. This overload can be more exhausting than a lack of information because our brains aren't built to handle today's constant digital bombardment. 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. I hope it helps you build healthier relationships with the digital world and make room for more valuable and important things in your life.

Remember, this isn't a course or a checklist—you don't need 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:

