

Title: GRAY MATTER

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Are you familiar with the phrase, “The eyes are the window to the soul”? No, this is not a rhetorical question. Now, proceed with your answer. Please, do try to exercise proper form in public spaces and refrain from answering aloud. “The face is a picture of the mind as the eyes are its interpreter”, as one of the greatest orators, Cicero, succinctly articulated. Now, are you familiar with the phrase, “the eyes are the window to the brain”? Yes, this is a rhetorical question, and I suspect this phrase had not made an appearance in our beloved Cicero’s letters to Atticus. Although, there remains, the oral tradition regarding the attribution of the phrase “The eyes are the window to the soul”. The ambiguity of the authorship has produced a trifecta of notable prospects including Shakespeare, Da Vinci and Cicero, and thus remains a gray matter. Now, if you have not experienced a reduction of gray matter while continuing to read this, it is “safe” to say, you likely have experienced thinning of your cerebral cortex and a minor degree of neurodegeneration by your “smart” phone usage (as you read this article). In other words, you have brain damage.

Our brains are incurring a degree of brain damage by excessive screen time of 2 or more hours a day.¹ The RF-EMF radiation, emitted by these devices, results in disruptions of the brain energy homeostasis leading to increase consumption of carbohydrate intake.² Admittedly, in my personal opinion, this finding pertaining to an increase of carbohydrate intake and inevitable weight gain, could serve as a useful deterrent from excessive smart phone and overall screen time usage. One could limit their screen time and adopt a new lifestyle routine. Strengthening and resistance training requires a holistic mind and body approach. I have included a few suggestions that I implement daily:

1. Limit screen time engagement till after at least 1 hour upon waking.
2. Avoid blue light-emitting screen use before bedtime and during the day. Set your phone settings to a warmer setting. (It appeared strange at first and awfully “yellow”, although I quickly became accustomed to it. I also modified the screen settings on my laptop. I noticed reduced tension in and around my eyes and forehead.)
3. Monitor screen time usage on your phone. (Your phone may require this setting to be turned on.)
4. Limit specific apps on your phone. (For example, limit Youtube to “5” minutes per day. This can be setup through your phone settings for any app and browser installed on your phone.)
5. Trade in your Kindle for actual BOOKS!
6. Cancel Spotify and other music streaming services along with bluetooth ear devices. Consider a portable CD player without bluetooth, a record player for home use, etc...
7. Learn to be comfortable being uncomfortable. Be present and mindful. Live in each moment without distraction and/or dissociation.

8. Try working out without headphones/music. Goggins style!

(<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11469-019-00182-2>)

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(<https://scienceblog.cincinnatichildrens.org/screen-usage-linked-to-differences-in-brain-structure-in-young-children/>)

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(<https://hms.harvard.edu/news/screen-time-brain>)

(<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/reduce-screen-time/tips-to-reduce-screen-time.htm>)