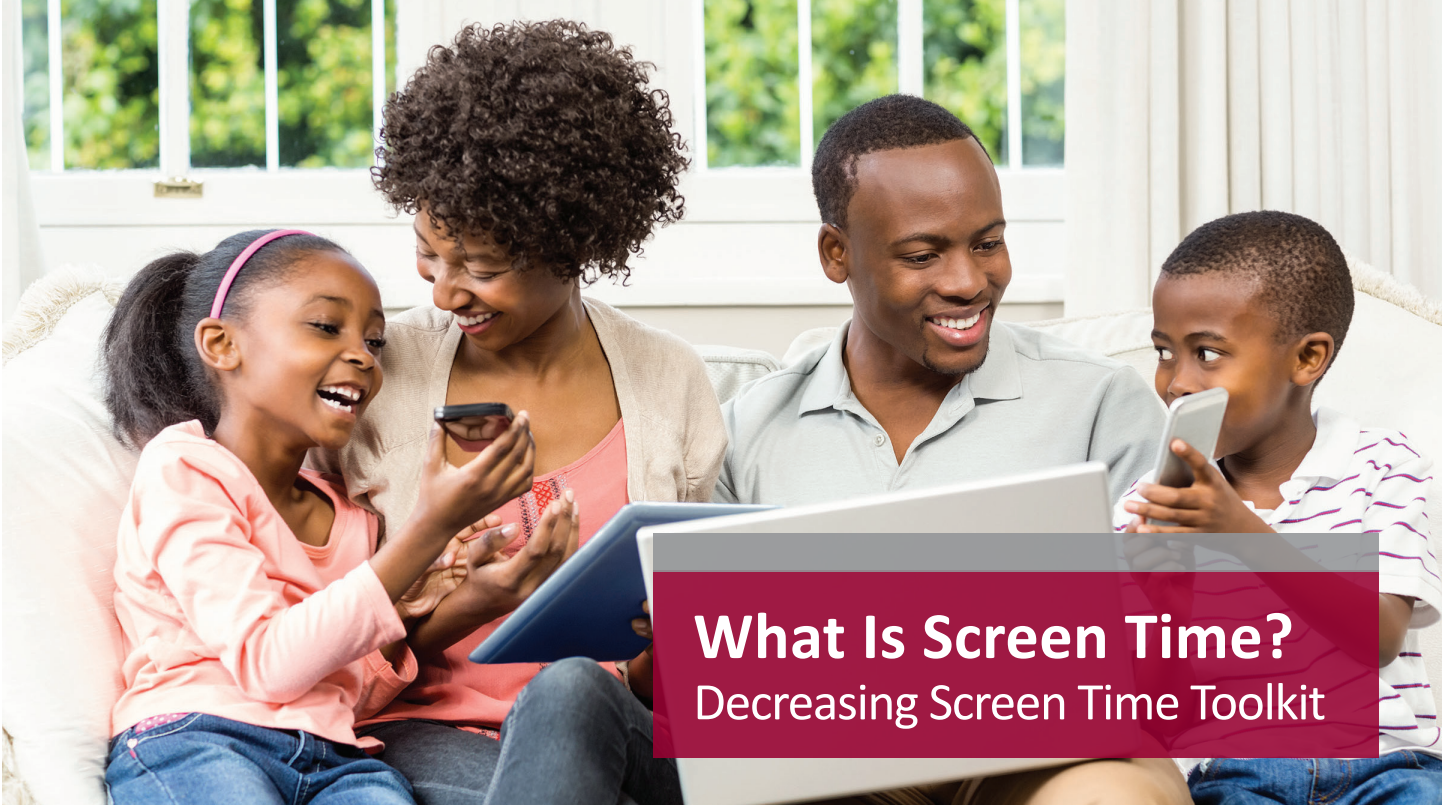




Wespath

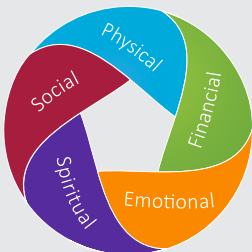
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS



What Is Screen Time? Decreasing Screen Time Toolkit

First of All— What Is Screen Time?

Screen time is time spent in front of a computer, TV, video game, smart phone, tablet or movie screen.



Twenty-five years ago, computers were becoming mainstream. Families were just starting to have them in their homes and some schools started offering computer programming as a curriculum, but the focus was just word processing, spreadsheets and presentations. Nowadays, there are computers everywhere. Smart phones, laptops, tablets and e-readers accompany us wherever we go. And our time spent using them—screen time—is increasing! **What does that mean for our health moving forward?**

This toolkit breaks down the impact of too much screen time on the health of adults, and children, and gives tips to help you reduce screen time and find the right balance for all concerned.

What Impact Does Screen Time Have?

Not all screen time is bad. Computers, smart phones and other devices have changed how we do our work—much of the time for the better. We have access to information at our fingertips. We are exposed to new ideas and thoughts and are entertained in ways that are new and exciting. But like the old adage states—there can be too much of a good thing.

(continued)



Spending too much time in front of a screen can have detrimental effects.

Physical Effects (established research)

- Metabolic syndrome—a study found that the likelihood of having metabolic syndrome in adolescents (12 – 19 years old) increased as daily screen time hours increased. Those reporting screening times of greater than three hours per day were two-to-three times more likely to have metabolic syndrome.*
- One study compared adults who spent less than two hours a day in front of the TV or other screen-based entertainment with those who logged more than four hours a day of recreational screen time. Those with greater screen time had:
 - A nearly 50% increased risk of death from general decreased health. The increased risk was separate from other traditional risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as smoking or high blood pressure.²
 - A 125% increased risk of events associated with cardiovascular disease, such as chest pain (angina) or heart attack.
- Eye strain—tired eyes from intense use, such as driving long distances or staring at screens. Two out of three Americans experience eye strain and fatigue which can reduce productivity.³

Socially and Emotionally (the new focus)

Impaired Face-to-Face Communication Skills

A study published in *Computers in Human Behavior* found that sixth graders who went five days without exposure to technology were significantly better at reading human emotions than kids regularly accessing phones, televisions and computers. In conclusion, children who interact with screens may lose the ability to interact, collaborate, work in teams and problem solve.⁴

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

It's a real thing! FOMO is defined as a feeling of inferiority and anxiety about missing out on meaningful experiences. This is triggered by self-comparison, which can be prompted by social media.⁵

* The increased risk was separate from other traditional risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as smoking or high blood pressure².

CELL PHONE DISTRACTION

It has become such a big problem in recent years that Injury Facts® 2015, the statistical report on unintentional deaths and injuries published by the National Safety Council, has included statistics on cell phone distracted walking.

MORE THAN 11,100

INJURIES DUE TO
CELL PHONE
DISTRACTION WERE
REPORTED BETWEEN
2000 AND 2011

52%

OF WALKING INJURIES
DUE TO CELL PHONE
DISTRACTION HAPPEN
AT HOME

68%

OF THOSE INJURED
ARE WOMEN

54%

ARE AGE 40
OR YOUNGER

NEARLY 80%

OF THE INJURIES WERE DUE TO FALL

Metabolic Syndrome

A cluster of conditions—increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels—that occur together, increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.¹

Provided by Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) as an educational service. Wespath's sharing of this general information should not be construed as, does not constitute, and should not be relied upon as medical advice or other professional advice or services in any manner.

1 Mark, Amy E., Janssen, Ian, "Relationship between screen time and metabolic syndrome in adolescents," *Journal of Public Health*, Volume 30, Number 2, pages 153–160

2 www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005

3 2016 Digital Eye Strain Report, The Vision Council

4 Summers, Juana, "Kids and screen time: What Does the Research Say?" npr.org

5 www.mequilibrium.com/2017/06/20/3-ways-to-fight-fomo

6 www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/news-and-resources-pedestrian-safety.aspx