



## LIMITING TIME ON PHONES

This strategy is suggested in the 14-16 BrainWaves lesson:

### Taking control of smart phones

#### About limiting time on phones

Limiting phone use involves intentionally reducing the amount of time spent on a smartphone and establishing clear digital boundaries. This includes implementing structural changes like turning off non-essential notifications, utilizing "do not disturb" modes, and keeping devices out of the bedroom during sleep hours. To make this successful, it is important that individuals focus on mindful technology integration rather than feeling entirely restricted or isolated from their peer networks.

#### The scientific evidence behind limiting time on phones

Emerging research has established a direct, causal link between reducing smartphone use and significant improvements in psychological wellbeing. A landmark randomized controlled trial (RCT) published in BMC Medicine (2025) tracked individuals who capped their daily smartphone screen time to under two hours for three weeks. The study demonstrated measurable reductions in clinical stress, depressive symptoms, and insomnia, providing concrete evidence that scaling back phone reliance directly reverses adverse mental health.

- See Pieh, C., Humer, E., Mayerhofer, D., Dale, R., Hoenigl, A., Schwab, J., & Haider, K. (2025). Smartphone screen time reduction improves mental health: a randomized controlled trial. BMC Medicine, 23(1), 107.

Similarly, a rigorous study published in PN Nexus (2025) evaluated the impact of a two-week mobile internet "detox." The researchers discovered that even partial compliance or minor reductions in online connectivity yielded profound psychological benefits. Participants experienced reduced anxiety, heightened life satisfaction, and improved sleep duration.

- See Castelo, N., Kushlev, K., Ward, A. F., Esterman, M., & Reiner, P. B. (2025). Blocking mobile internet on smartphones improves sustained attention, mental health, and subjective well-being. PNAS Nexus, 4(2), pgaf017.

#### Further reading

This website offers evidence-based tools and frameworks for educators looking to help students strike a healthy balance between online connectivity and mental well-being in the classroom: <https://amhie.com/limiting-screen-time-protects-childrens-mental-health/>