

Teens and Screens

Teenagers love using their mobile phones. Whether it is watching videos on YouTube, scrolling through Instagram, making videos for TikTok or gaming, children seem to be constantly glued to their phones and other screens.

Recent statistics report that teens will spend up to **nine hours per day** looking at their screens, with some **estimating their usage even higher**. Nearly all the teenagers spoken to in a recent study agreed that they have been taught about Internet safety (**97%**) and many described taking a **responsible approach to their personal safety online, using privacy settings** and **being cautious about the amount of personal data they disclose online**. However, over half also agreed that they spend too long on their phones and that **they do not have a good balance between screen time and doing other things**. Lots of parents worry too about the time that their child spends on their mobile phone, especially when its **use is beginning to interfere with school work, family life and sleep**.

Regular poor sleep puts you at risk of serious medical conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes – and it shortens your life expectancy, but how do you get your teenager to put their phone down and prioritise a good night’s sleep over screen time?

- **Talk to them about your concerns** – at a time when you are both calm and relaxed. A proper conversation will be more productive than a shouting match
- **Use the technology** – many phones now include weekly screen time reports that will help your teenager keep track of their usage. There are also settings for night time use and ‘do not disturb’ time. Even something as simple as switch off the red notifications and putting the phone screen down at night can help to reduce the anxiety of missing something ‘important’
- **Agree reasonable compromises** – mobile phones are far more important to teenagers than some parents realise. Agree some timings, especially around late-night use
- **Set a good example** – make sure your teenager sees you spending time away from your phone too

Useful Links

- [Why Lack of Sleep is Bad for your Health](#)
- [My Teenager is Always on their Phone](#)
- [The Design Tricks that get you Hooked on your Phone](#)
- [Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report](#)