

How To Fight Tech With Tech

FOR PARENTS WHO WANT TO BE LESS DISTRACTED AROUND THEIR KIDS

Because tech companies are working so hard to overcome our willpower with Persuasive Design, trying to achieve better screen habits through willpower alone is really difficult. Luckily, there are also many tech products that can help. Fighting tech with tech is the easiest path to better screen habits. Here's what I use to keep my own tech use from getting in the way of real life:

WANT TO USE YOUR PHONE LESS?

Brick

The Brick is a small, secondary device that creates two modes for your phone. The first mode lets you use all your distracting apps (like news and social media). The second mode limits you to just the basic tools (like phone and maps) for when you'd like to be more present. You simply tap your phone to the Brick to switch back and forth.

Freedom

Freedom is a blocking app that allows you to block the most distracting apps and websites from your phone. You can set it to a fixed schedule, so that certain apps are blocked at certain times, or you can simply start a Freedom Session anytime you want. Freedom also has a "Locked Session" mode that comes in handy when you might be tempted to turn it off to check social media while you're hanging out with your kids.

One sec

One Sec is an app that creates a "waiting period" of up to one minute before you can open your most distracting apps and websites. The waiting period takes away the quick, easy dopamine our brains love so much, so it breaks our "constant checking" habit. It sounds so simple, but OneSec lowers distracting content usage by 57%.

Assistive Access

Assistive Access is an Apple setting originally designed to make iPhones simpler for people with cognitive disabilities to use. However, it's also a great option for anyone looking to make their iPhone less distracting. You can switch your phone into Assistive Access when you want to be more present and switch it out when you want full access to distracting content. (See handout "Parental Controls That Actually Work" for set up.)

WANT TO USE YOUR LAPTOP OR TABLET LESS?

1. Freedom works great on tablets and laptops too
2. One Sec works great on tablets and laptops too
3. Assistive Access also works on iPads, but not laptops
4. See the handout "Removing Persuasive Design from Technology" for more ideas

