



# ATTENTION HIJACKED

Using Mindfulness to Reclaim  
Your Brain from Tech

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social  
media

Lerner™



# Technology Use Survey

Choose the most accurate answer to each question and add up the points below your answers to find your total score.

	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
How soon after waking do you usually start using technology?	More than 1 hour	30 minutes	Immediately
How soon before sleep do you usually stop using technology?	2 hours	1 hour	Just before sleep
Do you stay up later than you'd like while using technology?	Never	Sometimes	Often
How many meals a day do you spend in front of technology?	None	One	Two or more
Do you use technology to self-soothe when you're feeling upset, sad, or angry?	Never	Sometimes	Often
Do you use technology when you're bored?	Never	Sometimes	Often
Do you lose track of time on your device and spend longer than you intended?	Never	Sometimes	Often
Do you crave using your technology when you're not using it?	Never	Sometimes	Often
How many hours a day, not school-related, do you spend in front of a device?	None	One	Two or more
If you have a phone, do you keep it on and out at work or school?	Never	Sometimes	Always
How often do you get in arguments with family or friends because of your tech use?	Never	Sometimes	Often
Do you have your phone out or use other unrelated tabs on your computer while doing your homework?	Never	Sometimes	Always
How often do you notice you feel bad about yourself after scrolling through social media?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Do you say things online that you wouldn't say in person?	Never	Sometimes	Often
Do you ever notice yourself wanting more likes, comments, or feedback on your social media than you receive?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Do you prefer to have hard conversations over text message or through the internet rather than face-to-face?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Do you have limited downtime because you pick up your phone every spare moment?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Do you ever avoid dealing with difficult emotions or having difficult conversations by using tech?	Never	Sometimes	Always

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSSIBLE SCORE RANGE: 0–36:** The higher your total score, the more likely it is that technology is having an impact on your life. Explore the research and practices in *Attention Hijacked* to find a more mindful way to use technology.

# Technology Myth or Fact?

## MYTH OR FACT 1: Technology causes depression and anxiety

**Answer:** It's complicated. It all depends on the kind of technology, length of time, and the person using it. The most important thing is to consider how it may be impacting *you*.

## MYTH OR FACT 2: Using technology causes stress

**Answer:** Technology can contribute to your stress, but again, it depends on what you are doing and how much. If you are experiencing a lot of stress, consider the ways you use your tech, and think about whether changing your tech use could help you manage that stress.

## MYTH OR FACT 3: Using technology makes people dumb

**Answer:** Technology does not inherently make us dumber. But what we are doing while on our technology—and what we aren't doing—absolutely impacts the way our brains are wired and what kinds of thinking we are most capable of. If you are spending many of your waking hours scrolling and gaming, you may be more agile but less able to pay attention in a sustained way and do deeper thinking. We may want to consider what kinds of thinking we need to improve and make sure we build time into our lives for that.

## MYTH OR FACT 4: Reading paper books and articles is better than reading them on a screen

**Answer:** Research seems to suggest there may be some benefit to reading hard copies over screen versions, but it's not a huge difference and could just be about where you are most comfortable reading. It's a worthwhile investigation for yourself. Do you notice a difference? At the end of the day, any reading is better than no reading, so maybe you choose how you read based on how much you need to take away from a text. Celebrity gossip can probably be gleaned from your phone. Reading for school may be best read printed out or from a physical book.

## MYTH OR FACT 5: Handwriting is better than typing

**Answer:** Writing longhand may give us a slower, more creative experience and help us retain information by processing it as we go. Typing is quick, easy, and accessible, and it may be better for on-the-go recording and when we want to capture information word for word.

## MYTH OR FACT 6: People can multitask just as well as they can single task

**Answer:** Hard and fast on this one: No. We simply cannot multitask as well as we can tackle one thing at a time. That doesn't mean we should never do it. But if we are trying to learn something new or share our genius ideas with others, we probably should set aside the distractions and give our full attention to our work.

## MYTH OR FACT 7: People can be addicted to technology

**Answer:** Being on your phone a ton? Not necessarily an addiction. There are certain criteria that define an addiction, and in the United States, tech addiction is not yet a clinical diagnosis. However, keep in mind that just because you can't be diagnosed as "addicted" in this country doesn't mean technology use can't be harmful. Start paying attention to your habits and how they are affecting you. If you do find your tech usage is interfering with your life, get help with kicking some of those habits.

## MYTH OR FACT 8: Technology messes with your sleep

**Answer:** Technology absolutely can mess with your sleep. If you feel well rested, sleep like a rock, and are clocking the recommended hours, you probably don't have to worry about it. But if you're walking around like a zombie all day or struggling to get to sleep or stay asleep, it's important to consider tech as one aspect of your sleep-better plan. See if you can start noticing your energy levels throughout the day. Though it is normal to have natural dips and rebounds, if you are perpetually dog-tired, it likely means you ought to try something different.

## MYTH OR FACT 9: Technology use messes with people's health

**Answer:** Spending a lot of time on your device can certainly affect your eyes, posture, and the amount of movement you get (which has all sorts of health implications). Start investigating your own personal balance. Are you still getting those sixty-plus minutes of exercise in your day? Do you generally feel healthy, energized, and strong? Do you take regular breaks to stretch your eyes and spine while using technology? It's worth paying attention to our physical health and considering how technology impacts it.

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offers a roadmap for those deciding how they want to deal with technology, exploring the ways technology affects the individual, dispelling common misinformation, and using this knowledge to make personalized decisions. QR codes in the book lead to mindfulness and meditation audio clips. Using mindfulness techniques, this book gives readers the power to take charge of their technology use.

## Benefits of Mindful Tech Use

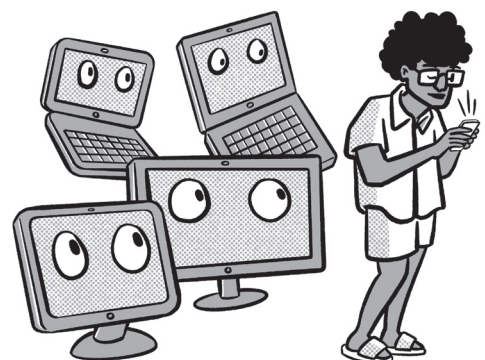
To be mindful of our technology use means we are:

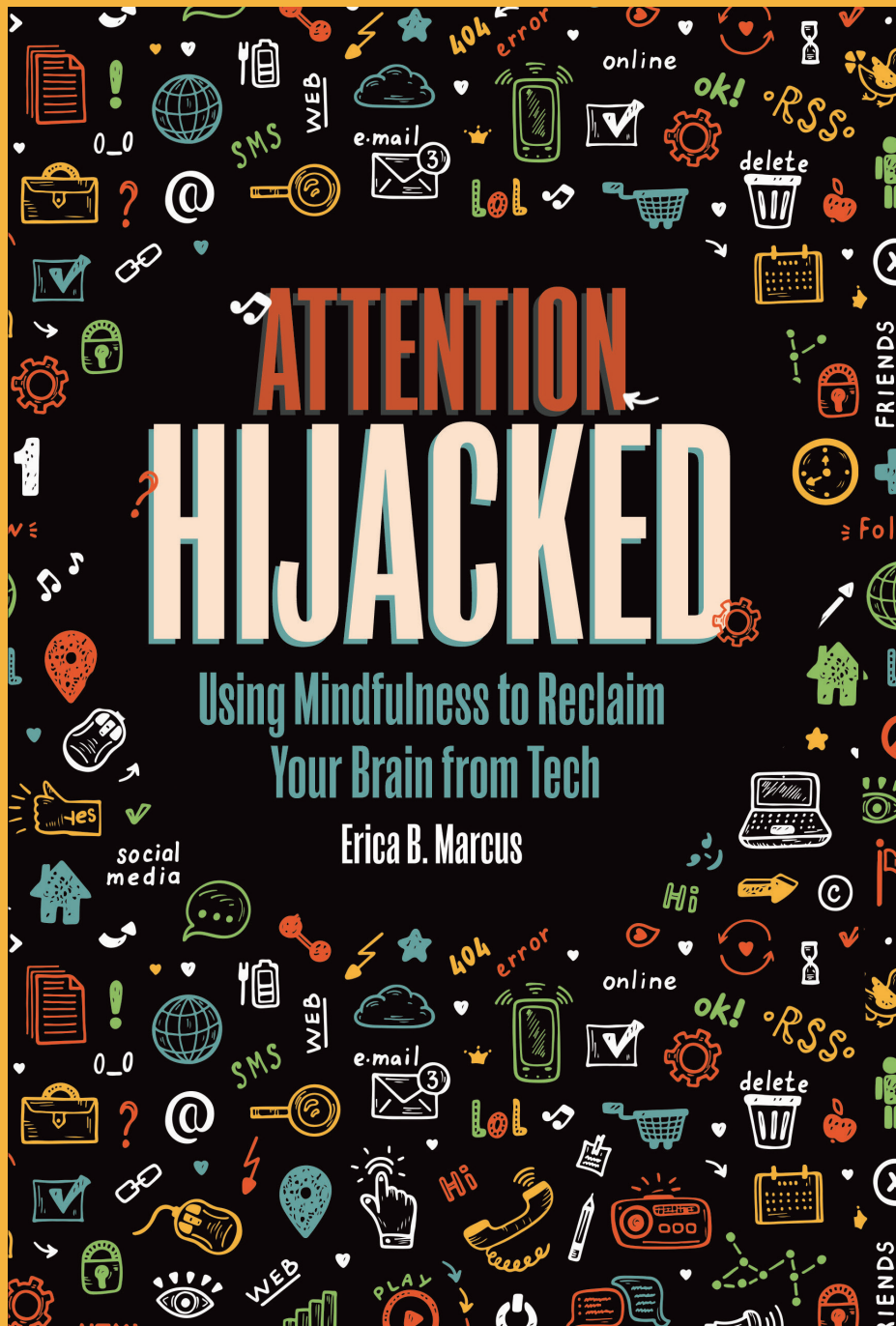
- Grateful for the opportunity to have technology in our lives.
- Fully aware of our own habits of use, without lying to ourselves or others about it.
- Clear about how our habits of use impact all parts of us: our minds, bodies, and social relationships.
- Clear about how our technology use relates to our bigger goals and aspirations in life.
- Clear about what we intend to do before we get on our technology and how long we want to be on it.
- Connected with our minds and bodies while using technology to observe the impact.
- Free from impulsively distracting ourselves from any uncomfortable emotions or thoughts.
- Free from needing a particular response from people on social platforms.
- Honest, kind, and compassionate with our communication on social platforms.
- Kind and compassionate with our inner narrator while engaging with technology.
- Forgiving of ourselves when we are not mindful or make mistakes.

## How to Develop Mindful Technology Habits

Read *Attention Hijacked* for a thorough overview of the research related to technology use, physical and mental health, mindfulness basics, journal prompts, and links to audio meditation practices. Here's a quick cheat sheet to start developing mindful technology habits.

1. **Slow your roll.** Before you start any tech session, take a moment to set an intention for what you want to do while you're on there. Questions to ask: *Why am I getting on my device? What am I hoping to do while I'm there? How much time would I like to spend?*
2. **Hit the pause button.** As you're using your devices, consider setting a timer at regular intervals to pause and see what you need. When the timer goes off, pause and check in. *How do I feel right now? What do I need right now? Can I keep at it? Should I keep at it? Am I intending to write this essay but actually reading BuzzFeed? How does my body feel? Should I get up and walk around?*
3. **Locate yourself in space.** Oftentimes we get swept up in our experience of tech and lose track of our physical space. Tuning in to the world around you and your internal sensations will give you a way to return after you've been tossed about. Turn to page 109 of *Attention Hijacked* for a mindfulness practice that will help you find yourself in space.
4. **Check your internal weather.** When you are pausing, or ready to step away from your device for a moment, try this out. Feel the touch points of your body making contact with the floor or chair or whatever is underneath you. Now, notice how your body feels. Notice the state of your mind. Notice what emotions are present. In general, what's your sense of how you are feeling in this moment? Knowing that, ask yourself, *what is my next step?*
5. **Center the good.** It can be easy to take our technology for granted or even hate on it. But how often do we really take the time to appreciate the many ways it helps us live our best life? What might it be like to pause after a session on your technology and consider the ways your life is better for having this tool? How would it feel to truly let those ideas sink into your body?





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