How to Manage your Time on the Internet

Try these tips:

1) BEFORE you sit down at the computer, make a list of things you need to accomplish, and estimate the time it will take.

2) Give yourself a specific amount of time to answer email--15 minutes, perhaps, and learn to answer the important ones first. When the time is up, get to work on the list you made in tip number 1. Tim Ferris talks about this in his book "The 4 hour work week". He says that you should only check your email twice a day. He actually checks his less than twice a day. I don't know about you, but I probably check mine 5 or 6 times a day. Most of the time I don't have anything that takes up much of my time, but it makes sense. It's just one extra thing to distract you, and there are very few emails that can't wait 24 hours, unless it's something specific that you are waiting for. Block the SPAM. Use a SPAM blocker to isolate or block SPAM email and keep it up to date. Use a separate email address for your business and personal email. Open personal email during your leisure time and business email during your scheduled communication time within your work hours.

Use a SPAM blocker to isolate or block SPAM email and keep it up to date. Use a separate email address for your business and personal email. Open personal email during your leisure time and business email during your scheduled communication time within your work hours.

3) Limit the time you spend surfing. Set a timer. Again, 15 minutes is a good number. Say to yourself that you're only going to check your favorite sites once in the morning or at night for 30 to 45 minutes. Anything longer than that is just a waste of time.

4) Have a clear goal. For each site you visit, have a reason why you want to be there. Have a clear goal of what you would like to accomplish. Three well-known time wasters, Digg, YouTube, and Facebook, can easily turn productive when you have a goal planned. For Digg, may be you want to read one useful article or find one new website. Perhaps on Youtube you want to find a video on a topic that interests you, or maybe you want to make a new contact on Facebook. If you don't have a clear goal before visiting a site, then avoid it. That is a positive sign of a time waster.

When you are searching for new information about your field or about a new idea, know exactly what you are looking for, and be very focused. It is easy to spend 4 hours looking for new information and reading a lot online, but have very little to show for your time afterwards. If you aren't finding what you want, wait until later.

5) Determine to take action. Once you have learned how to do something—just do it. Start on it. It is too easy online to just keep gathering information, but never get the real work done.

Don't stray away. If you don't want to spend too much time doing nothing and getting nowhere on the web, then you must prevent yourself from straying off and losing focus. If you're watching a video don't click on any of the related videos. If you watch one video, click on a related video, then that video will have 25 more related videos, if you click on another one, 25 more, and so on. These links will never end and consume even more of your valuable time. Focus on that one video or article now and come back to the related videos or links some other time.

6) If you work at home, be able to balance your free time and work time. If you are working, don't stop every ten minutes to do something around the house.

7) At the same time, when you are not working, do not check your email every ten minutes. It can wait until the morning. A dangerous cycle is that you find yourself being distracted when you are working and also when you are not. If you can seriously separate work from home, you will be more productive when you work.

8) Kill the messenger. Skip the IMs If you use messenger programs such as MSN Messenger or Yahoo Messenger, log out during your work hours. If you conduct business communications through the messenger program, open separate accounts or block contacts so that only your business associates that you need to be available to can contact you via the messenger program during your work hours. Additionally, don't sign into an instant message service if you really don't have anything to say. Many people sign in just to see what's going on. Similar to websites, if you want to save time, have a clear goal of what you want to accomplish. Don't just strike up a pointless conversation because you could be wasting someone else's time as well.

9.) Take a day off. Just step away from the internet for a day. A full twenty-four hours. It's simple but difficult for most. When your twenty-four hours is up and you're back online, you'll be much more ambitious to get a lot done.

10.) Avoid arguments. The internet has brought people together and has given individuals the opportunity to express their true views. Many times people can be very tough or downright nasty on forums and social media sites. Take other people's opinions into account and move on.

Don’t waste your time with an argument. A disagreement online usually takes longer because of the time in between a rebuttal post. This is very true for forums.

11.) Don’t stress the small things. On the internet we try to be as perfect as possible because we feel “everyone” is watching. People spend hours trying to get their social profiles just right and evenly rank their friends. Don’t worry about it. You’re never going to be perfect, no one will.

12.) Recognize waste. There’s going to be days when you feel like wasting time surfing the web and then you’ll have other days when you don’t feel like it’s a waste at all. There’s plenty of ways you can turn your wasteful surfing into something productive. Recognize your waste and turn it around.

Commit to a specific amount of time online every day and stick to it.
****

Logging onto the net can be a fun to spend free time. But what happens when our free time turns out to go on for hours. We lose track of time and sometimes reality. While we log onto our computers to do research, work and or homework; we tend to wander away from it. We log onto games, celebrity gossip and watching videos. So how can we stop spending too much time on the computer? By having rules. These rules should be in front of us at all times. Write down how much time you want to be on the computer and post it next to your monitor. Having it in sight constantly can help avoid deterring to fun stuff instead of getting work done.

Time - Kids can easily lose sight of what they wanted to do the moment they see something new to download or check out. By allowing a certain time, your child will have in mind just how much time they can spend. If they have an assignment due, they are more likely to get it done if they can only be on for so long. If they decide to play games instead, a punishment of no computer for a while may be suitable.

Games - Many games today have lobby rooms. Do not open these rooms until work is done. Why? Because it’s more tempting to take a break and play a game when the lobby is already open. It’s enticing because you’re already signed in and may be bored looking for a way out. Playing one game often times doesn’t work. The one game can easily turn into hours of game playing.

IMing-Iming is a fun and easy way to keep in touch. But it could also eat away at your time quickly. Yahoo, ICQ and AOL all have a noise signal when someone comes online or goes offline. This is easily a problem since seeing someone logged on may prompt a conversation that could be a while. MSN IM turns off its alerts when someone comes online when you’re setting is set to “busy.” Not knowing when someone is coming and going can actually help stop interruptions. But it may also drive you crazy by checking if someone has logged on while you were set to busy every few minutes.

E-mail-Many programs today alert us when we have mail. MSN, Yahoo IM and Outlook Express when open can alarm you of a new message. Leaving the volume up loud may cause a scare when a new message is received. Having these programs on while working can become disruptive. Many of us like to receive e-mail but getting caught up when we’re suppose to be working can create a problem. Shutting these down until you’re finished can help with becoming distracted.

Website blocking- If there’s someone in your family who has an addiction to a website, you can block the website. You simply enter the website under the internet options of your browser and put a password on the restricted website. This way only you can lock and unlock the website.

Message boards - Visiting a message board can eat away at your time if you’re refreshing and chatting with others for more than a few minutes. By removing a few from your daily list of items to check out, you can save time.

Newsletters - There seems to be a newsletter for everything today. And with the newsletter can be solo ads in our inboxes. Consider unsubscribing similar or useless newsletters to save time when reading your e-mail.

Fun time - Everyone deserves a little fun online. Allowing yourself 20 minutes for fun before you work can help tide over your constant craving to check out the latest gossip, gaming and more.

Timing - There are some free timer programs on download.com The timer programs are pretty simple. You enter a name for the timer and then have it countdown with a sound to let you know time is up. Or you can use an egg timer by your computer while you work. But the ticking may distract you. It’s easy to get lost on the web; many of us do it and will continue doing it. If you have a slip, get right back on your schedule and keep moving forward. Before turning on the computer, have a reason in mind why you’re really doing it. Is it because you’re bored or because you have a chore to do. By knowing what you need to get done, you’ll be more likely to make progress.

Ways to Know Your Use of the Internet at Home is Impacting Your Children:

By: Angelica Perez http://www.angelicaperez.com/2010/02/08/is-your-time-on-the-internet-affecting-your-parenting/

- Your child is apprehensive approaching you with an important question or concern when you're using the computer.
- Your child becomes clingy, needy, and/or acts out when you are on the computer.
- Your child asks: "Mom/Dad…when are you going to be done with your work…?"
- Your child sits around you, bored and quiet (the "I'm waiting for you to be done mom/dad syndrome")
- Your child has learned to make request of your attention around your computer use time (e.g., "mom/dad, can we do something together *after* you're done with your computer work?")
- Your child comes to ask you a question or to share something exciting, but hesitates when they realize you are on the computer.
- Your child complains that you are "always on the computer…!"
- Your child anxiously reminds you that you received a new twitter, email or voice message on your phone.
- Your young children want to be on your lap while you're on the computer (this is often a sign that they *really* need you).
- Your children interrupt you continuously when you're online — they can't seem to stop asking for something, or they want to share what just happened, or they make multiple requests within a short period of time.

Powerful Underlying Messages Children Receive: Modern technology is the most distracting aspect of family life these days. Being aware of how we, as parents, allow ourselves to be distracted by the internet, our phones and other technological gadgets, is important. Failing to do so can result in conveying powerful messages to our children. Here are a few:

I. Work is All-Consuming: Often times we define our time on the internet as "work." Sometimes that's accurate, but sometimes it is not. It is a great way to justify our behavior. The reality is that we do spend a significant amount of time either surfing or social networking online, especially by the time our children are back from school. The "I'm working right now honey…" excuse that we give our children (once the work day is over) can convey powerful underlying messages about the concept of work, here are some:

1. There is no clear boundary between work time and time at home. This could have great impact in your children, as they grow up and need to create these important boundaries for themselves.
2. Work comes first before anything else at home.
3. Work is distracting and takes away the attention of important people in our life.
4. Work is addictive and it is difficult to let it go.
5. Work is all consuming.

II. Mom/Dad is Not Available to Me: Children need lots and lots of attention, especially from their parents. When parents are significantly distracted by stressors, emotional problems, alcohol, or technology, children begin to feel emotionally abandoned. This can have serious consequences in how they see themselves and their own self-worth.

III. Mom/Dad's Attention is Conditional: Children thrive when they learn that they are loved (and attended to) unconditionally. It is so easy to get caught up on responding to one more email, or sending one more attachment, and asking children to "wait just one more minute and I'll be there…" It is during that waiting time that children learn to internalize that your love and attention is conditional to being done with your needs. This, again, can make children feel invisible and insignificant.

1. Out of sight, out of mind. When your work day is over, and the children are back from school, put away all your gadgets: the phone, the laptop computer, your ipod, and anything else that can be distracting. If you have a desktop computer in your family area, turn off the screen. This will help decrease the distracting noises, alarms and sounds coming from these devices (and hence, getting your attention). Do not carry your phone in your pocket. And if you do, turn it off (do not put it on vibrate).
2. If you must use the computer when the children are home, carve out that time after having spent time with your children. Children are most needy when they return from school. Decide how much time you'll need and stick to it. If you need an hour, use the computer for an hour only.
3. Inform your children that you'll be using the computer and for how long exactly. Children like to know what's happening and what to expect. If you let them know ahead of time that you'll need to work on a special project, let them know and tell them for how long.
4. Ask your spouse or a babysitter to be available when you're on the computer. Have someone available for them to turn to when they need a glass of water, or they want to file a complaint about a sibling. You will also notice that you will be more productive as you'll experience less interruptions from your children.
5. Many parents wait until their children are in bed to use the computer. This is not always possible, but if it works for your schedule and your family situation, this is often a good plan. However, be mindful of the fact that many people who work online at night, tend to compromise their sleep schedule. I'm sure you're aware of the negative health factors associated with poor and lack of sleep.
6. Whenever possible, use the computer in another room, not around the children. This will help avoid children feeling that you are "somewhat" available. It is confusing to see mom or dad right there, but then know when or not they are really available for a conversation or a concern.