

# Screen Time and your Health

Do you spend your day looking at a computer screen or unwinding in front of the TV? Do you catch yourself scrolling on your phone throughout the day or before bed? Screen time can impact both your vision and your sleep. Keep reading to find out what you can do to reduce the impact.

## What is blue light?

Blue light is a visible, high-energy light that is produced from digital screens like your TV, computer, tablet, and cell phone. Blue light is also emitted from fluorescent lights, compact fluorescent lights, LEDs, and most notably, sunlight.



## Screens and your vision

Currently, there is no evidence indicating that blue light from screens damages your eyes. Research shows that people blink less frequently when looking at screens, causing **dry eyes**. Blue light is also difficult for the eye to focus, resulting in **eye strain**. Luckily, dry and strained eyes do not lead to lasting eye damage, and they can be managed using the tips in this article.

## Screens and your sleep

Extended screen time may not harm your vision, but it can affect your sleep. Exposure to blue light before bedtime reduces melatonin, the hormone that helps you feel sleepy, and increases cortisol, a stress hormone that gives you energy during the day. As a result, your sleep quality may suffer and cause lower daytime energy levels, mood swings, and impaired memory and cognitive function.

## Here are some tips to protect your eyes from screens:

1. **Practice the 20-20-20 rule during screen time:** Every 20 minutes, look at an object at least 20 feet away for a minimum of 20 seconds.
2. **Reduce your screen use:** Turn off all screens 2-3 hours before bed. Instead, try reading a book, doing a puzzle, journaling, or meditating to wind down.  
**Dim the lights:** Reducing lights in the house in the evening mimics the sun going down and supports your circadian rhythm to help you fall asleep.
3. **Try blue light filters on devices:** Adjust the settings on your devices to “night mode” to reduce blue light emission and its impact on your eyes.

While blue light exposure from screens is unlikely to cause serious damage to your health, it can cause discomfort and strain. Using these strategies to reduce your blue light exposure and practicing good eye care habits can help improve your sleep quality and well-being.



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