


STRIKING A TECH-LIFE BALANCE



The development of science and technology brings great convenience to our lives. In the past, people wrote letters and had to wait for a month or two to receive a reply. Nowadays, we can make phone calls and send instant messages via mobile phones to keep the connection at anytime and anywhere. In the old days, when we **encountered** problems in learning, we might have to dive into books to look for the answers. But now, thanks to Internet and cloud storage, digital library resources expand students' **horizons** in learning and facilitate the development of

education. With technological advances, we can buy and sell products in a way as easy as touching a button. As we can see, technologies have gradually become an essential part in our daily lives. However, although technologies have **innumerable** benefits, **over-reliance** on technologies can result in serious consequences.

How much time do you spend on your mobile phone each day? Claire, a fourteen-year-old girl, spends six to seven hours per day on her mobile phone. She checks her phone at any and every spare moment.



She has downloaded many applications on her phone, most of which are of social media, and she relies much on them to make friends online. She prefers texting her friends to hanging out with them, and so the friendships usually do not last long. Claire is aware that she needs to use her phone less often but she feels anxious whenever she turns it off. Soon, she finds it difficult to concentrate when studying. It is not until then that she seeks help from her parents and her school counsellor.

It is not difficult to find people on the streets tilting their heads forward to look at their **miniature** screens. Some of them may be experiencing similar problems to Claire's. In today's digital world, technologies of all kinds are undoubtedly playing important roles in our lives. However, we must develop healthy practices to strike a better balance between our lives and technology.

The excessive use of technology is affecting our personal connections and interactions, not to mention the global breakdowns resulting from its technology dependency. Here are some simple tips that may help balancing our technology use.

Turn off notifications

Many push notifications and alerts are not necessary. They may only be about application updates and promotions. Turning off the alert function of some applications can reduce our screen time. We can even consider turning off the push notifications of some social media applications since most of them serve only to facilitate the sharing of **trivial matters** and rumours instead of useful information. In this way, we **will** not be often **tempted** to check our phones.

Set a screen time limit

Most mobile phones allow us to access reports about how much time we spend on our phones. There are also applications that can help us to manage our screen time and set limits for specific applications. This can help us be more conscious of our phone usage.

Ditch the phone before bed

Studies have found that using our phones before bed is harmful to our health and it is also one of the reasons that cause **insomnia**. It is easy to lose track of time when we use our phones and we may miss our desired bedtime. It is recommended to stop using our phones and other electronic devices for at least half an hour before we go to sleep. Notifications and buzzes can also affect our sleep quality, and therefore it is better to put our phones on silent mode or disable mobile data during night time.

Avoid double-screening

Many of us have built the habit of using a computer and a mobile phone at the same time. We think that it is an effective way of **multitasking** but in fact it is bad for attention and productivity. We may find it hard to concentrate and get easily stressed out over time. It is also said that using dual screens for work increases the risk of developing muscle pain and skeletal problems.

We have to bear in mind that life is more important than our devices. There is no doubt that technology can help us to have instant access to a huge amount of information. However, the realistic world is bigger than we could have imagined. Instead of having our eyes glued to screens, we should walk out the door more often to boost our social life and develop more of the good habits to expand our mind. Try to stay away from your mobile phone for some time on a **daily basis** and you will soon find yourself leading a healthier and richer life.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|------------------------|----------|
| 1. encountered | 遇到 |
| 2. horizons | 視野 |
| 3. innumerable | 無數的 |
| 4. over-reliance | 過分依賴 |
| 5. miniature | 小型的 |
| 6. trivial matters | 瑣碎事情 |
| 7. will ... be tempted | 被誘惑 |
| 8. insomnia | 失眠 |
| 9. multitasking | 同時兼顧多件事情 |
| 10. daily basis | 日常 |

GRAMMAR POINT

1. “She prefers texting her friends to hanging out with them”

(2nd paragraph, line 9)

We can use the expression **prefer + noun/gerund + to + noun/gerund** to make a comparison. If you prefer someone/something, that means you like that person/thing better than the other.

Example:-

*I **prefer** regular coffee **to** specific blends.*

2. “It is not until then that she seeks help”

(2nd paragraph, last sentence)

We can use the expression **it’s not until + moment in time + that-clause** to refer to the fact that the situation is unreal at any moment in time before, but is true now and most likely true in the future:

Example:-

***It was not until** the next morning **that** he realized his mistake.*