

# Social Media Detox

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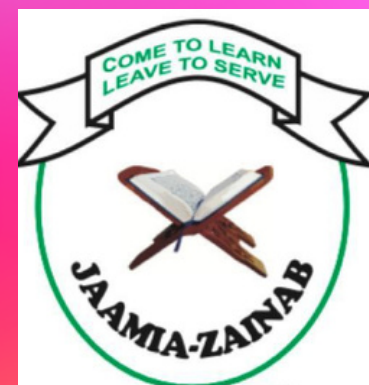
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- **What is the effect of social media on our society?**
- **How does social media impact our mental and physical well-being?**
- **What steps can we take in order to effectively detox ourselves from this drug?**





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## *Social Media...*

The noun that is synonymous to destruction, hate and loneliness, social media has found its way into each and every household. Social media is a term used to describe apps or websites that cater for communication, interaction and collaboration. However, the very same term can be used to describe a platform that spreads disaster, distances one from close relatives, and flings a person in trenches of abyss.

Those Sundays when the entire family would crowd around grandmother's photo album to revisit old memories are far gone. Nowadays, all we need to do is to switch on the phone and take a peek into our friends' lives early in the morning. Ahmad was spinning in his new car, Aisha just went to a party, and Yusuf lost 3kgs of weight...

Social media has become an integral part of people's lives due to the ease of communication. Most businesses have based themselves entirely on social media with most people not having to come out of their homes for shopping. It is just a matter of 'add to cart' and voila the commodity is in your home. Education has also become so convenient with technology and social media. You don't need to travel donkey years to meet a relative. In fact, it is due to social media that most people earn a living. Indeed, major strides and developments in this century could be attributed to social media. Great tool. Isn't it?



## ***Why then are the happiness levels of our societies decreasing?***

Keeping in mind all its 'wonderful' benefits, it is important to remember that social media can never be a replacement for real-world human connection. The hormone that alleviates stress is triggered by person to person communication. While people may find it surprising, social media can lead to peer pressure. The emergence of social media giants like Tiktok and Instagram has led to increased pressure on many users. This is because the influencers on these platforms dictate how a person should look, how much money a person should have and how many followers a person should have. If you can't be chauffeured in a brand new Merc you aren't cool. If you can't stay abreast with the latest hairstyle you aren't beautiful. If you don't know your actors and actresses well, I'm afraid you aren't smart.

Furthermore, this increased pressure from these supernatural humans leads to a fake persona. With a multitude of filters and A.I powered beauty cams, our flawless public facade masks our true selves. We even tend to forget our real selves, when after-all that guised picture on the story won't even matter five years later.

Continued snapshotting of selfies can lead to a person becoming self-absorbed and self-centered in an unhealthy way.





The prevalent condition in this epoch is that we're submerged in technology. Our social life has been lost to something unreal. When was the last time we went to meet an old person in the society? When was the last time we smiled at someone when coming out of the Masjid? When was the last time we paid one of our relatives a surprise visit?

A study dubbed, 'video-deficit' discovered that children learn more from live interactions than from the screen.

Furthermore, the inception of abbreviations such as LOL, OMG and WYD are overshadowing real communication skills. This has led to an overall decrease in grammar and proficiency in youths and teens cannot even speak their own mother tongue, leave alone the English language.

A research conducted at the University of Pennsylvania had discovered that an increased usage of Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram may make a person feel lonely. On the flipside, people who reduce the usage of these apps generally feel happier. Moreover, the increase in the number of cyberbullying victims and perpetrators is worrying. Almost ten percent of teens online reported being bullied. This can eventually lead to lifelong mental scars. All in all, the demon called 'social media', is here to stay. Thus, if action has to be taken it has to be from our side.

**We need to take a social media detox.**



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## STEPS TO A SMOOTH DETOX

Yes! You heard me right. A detox... Now you will have to follow these tips for a smooth detox:

### 1. Set a plan:

Essentially, a social media detox should be practiced for life time, but a minimum of three months should be enough. Firstly, you will have to inform friends and family of your transition from the virtual world to the real world. Thereafter, you will have to strategize your activities for the day in such a way that no time is wasted and you do not have any time for social media.

### 2. Deactivate or delete your accounts

This will help you avoid distraction as each time you think of sending a selfie or catching up on what's latest you remember that your account has been deactivated. If you have the courage, in fact you should delete the account and the app as well. Some time later, you will realize that you do not need to fidget for your phone each time you are standing in the queue. You will realize that you do not need to text your bestie each time the Bayan is going on.

### 3. Convince yourself that everything out there is unreal

The grass is not greener on the other side.. Chloe Madanese, a renowned therapist claims that the easiest way to become unhappy is to compare yourself with others. That is exactly what is happening.. Remember that sophisticated photo editing software is used, and the designer is paid thousands of dollars for just that one post. Things aren't that rosy for that actor too. Imagine if we had to start a life with no filters, what would we witness. Early morning fights... ugly faces... dirty dishes etc...



*"The easiest way to be unhappy is to compare yourself to others."*

Keep in mind the beautiful Hadeeth of Nabi ﷺ:

عن أبي هريرة - رضي الله عنه - قال: قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم -: الدنيا سجنُ المؤمن، وجنَّةُ الكافر.

**Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that Nabi ﷺ said:**  
**"This world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the unbeliever."**

We were not sent in this world to 'live life', rather we have been sent to this world for a purpose.

**"I have not created the jinns and men but to worship Me."**

Thus established our purpose in this world is not to live the life of the stars. We have been created to worship Allah.



#### 4. Establish the triggers

According to a research conducted by Chicago university social media addiction can be worse than drug addiction. We all have the urge to tweet or send that post on our Instagram feed. That is why it is important to look for the trigger. For some, it could be a certain time, for example late at night at 12 AM. To rectify this one can sleep earlier. For others it may be peer pressure. Once you've recognized what tempts you to use social media, it is important to cut it out.

In a nutshell, the harms of social media far outweigh its benefits. It is an addictive drug, monopolising our two most precious assets; time and energy. Enough is enough! Let's kick aside this petty thief and take back control of our lives. Tear your eyes away from the glittery, superficial mirage and open your eyes to the real world around you.

