



THE SCROLL BREAK

A 4-Step Reset for Teens Who Can't Stop Scrolling

You didn't mean to scroll for 45 minutes. It just happened.

One video led to another, one post to the next, and somewhere along the way the restless feeling you opened the app to escape got worse, not better.

Research shows that passive scrolling activates the brain's threat-response systems, the same systems triggered by social rejection. Your nervous system isn't resting when you scroll. It's on high alert, waiting for the next signal. This guide helps you interrupt that loop one break at a time.

THE 4-STEP SCROLL BREAK

1

NOTICE

The moment you feel that restless pull to open an app, pause. Ask: am I bored, anxious, lonely, or tired? Name what you actually feel before you reach for the phone.

NAME YOUR FEELING HERE

2

PUT IT DOWN

Set your phone face-down or in another room for 10 minutes. Set a timer if it helps. You're not quitting. You're taking a break. 10 minutes is enough to reset.

WHERE WILL YOU PUT IT?

3

REPLACE

Do one physical thing: walk outside, get a glass of water, stretch, write three sentences in a journal, or call someone. The brain needs a different kind of input.

WHAT WILL YOU REPLACE IT WITH?

4

CHECK IN

After 10 minutes, ask: how do I feel now compared to 10 minutes ago? Notice the difference. That difference is data and it belongs to you.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Sources: JAMA Pediatrics, 2023 | APA Advisory on Social Media and Youth, 2023





GO DEEPER

Reflect, reset, and take back your time

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When you scroll, what are you usually looking for? Do you ever find it?

2. How do you feel after 30 minutes of scrolling compared to 30 minutes of something screen-free?

3. Is there a time of day you reach for your phone automatically? Maybe even before you're really bored? What triggers it?

4. What's one thing you'd want to spend 10 minutes on instead of scrolling this week?

ACTION STEPS

- Pick one "scroll window" today and replace it with a 10-minute Scroll Break.
- Keep this guide somewhere visible - on your nightstand, your desk, or bathroom mirror.
- Track how you feel after three Scroll Breaks.
- Notice any pattern.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- "What do you think you're looking for when you open a social media app?"
- "Have you ever scrolled for a while and felt worse afterward? What happened?"
- "What would you do with your evenings if your phone wasn't part of them?"

Journal

