



Nature's Reset Button: 5 Ways to Recenter Yourself and Build Relationships Outdoors

By Joe B.

In our fast-paced lives, it can be challenging to get outside to reset. The need to constantly be on our phones, computers, and iPads is real.

Frequent use of smartphones and social media has the potentially harmful effects of increased impaired brain development, social isolation, and disrupted sleep.

However, people of all ages are starting to go without their devices for extended periods to regain their mental clarity. You can see how [The Luddite Club](#), made up of New York teens, chose to toss their phones to the side to hang out in real life in Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

More than fifteen states have banned or restricted cell phones in the classroom so that students can concentrate on their work and socialize with each other. Many adults are switching out their smartphones for old Nokia flip phones.

Some people are deleting their social media accounts. Others are putting self-imposed restrictions on screen-gazing an hour before bed and an hour after waking up.

Before we get into the tips, how about a free pair of trail runners? You could win by signing up for our weekly Evergreen Journal email. [Click here for your chance to win some new shoes. Every Friday, you'll get an email packed with fun ideas for getting outside](#)—we promise not to overwhelm your inbox!

Tip #1: Put a time limit on your phone ➡ 

The first step is to find a way to get off your phone, set limits, or step away from technology. Do you find yourself [doomscrolling](#), lost in a vortex of never-ending TikTok

videos, Instagram reels, or YouTube shorts? Are you sick of staring at your phone? You should probably consider limiting your screen time.



Time limits will force you to stop staring at [blue light](#), which could have harmful side effects like decreased sleep quality. Instagram has a built-in setting where you can choose a 5, 10, or 15-minute time limit. The app will notify you it's time to step away from the device. iPhone users can also [Schedule Time Away From the Screen](#).

Tip #2: 🏃‍♀️ Build Natural Exposure into your daily routine

It can be 30 minutes, an hour, or longer. Build in time outdoors every day during your lunch hour or after you come home from work.

If you live in New York City, visit Central Park, which has trees and green space. If you live near a state park, get on that trail.



You could:

- take a stroll
- speed walk
- ride your bike
- jog
- trail run
- meditate on a sunny rock

You'll feel rejuvenated. Your vitamin-D-infused reset will counterbalance the feelings of low energy, anxiety, and stress built up throughout the week.

Tip #3: 🚶 Call up a friend to go for a hike 🚶

Do you have a friend? Do you have a dog? Does your friend have a dog? This summer, I reconnected with a good childhood friend. We live in different cities now, but we get together when I'm back home. He brings his dog, and we catch up on the hike.



You and a friend can explore county park trails and have deeper conversations than surface-level texting.

In addition to the physical exercise you get by hiking, Spending time in green spaces has a positive effect on mental health and could lower the risk of depression, according to [a Stanford-led study](#).

Tip #4: Schedule an Outdoors Activity that You have Been Dying to Try Out 🌈

Have you been watching windsurfing videos on YouTube? Google local windsurfing and give it a whirl! Or google "yoga in the park" if you are into something a bit chiller. Yoga groups meet all the time in parks across the country. These sessions are great opportunities to join a group of like-minded people, make friends, and do something healthy while surrounded by nature.



I've recently been going on morning strolls. The park has a running trail that many people of all ages use. Even though I don't consider myself a runner, I caught the bug and had to give it a go. The few times I ran, it felt great. I've even signed up to join a running group to meet some new people and run short distances.

Tip #5: When in doubt, go outside. Your spirit will thank you.



If you've ever said, "I'm done with my phone!" and felt like you had to get out of the house you might relate to the following quote.

In his essay "[Walking](#)," the American author Henry David Thoreau wrote:

*I think that **I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least--and it is commonly more than that--sauntering** through the woods and over the hills and fields, **absolutely free from all worldly engagements**.*

It's reassuring that in 1851, people in New England were dealing with feelings similar to those we have today. Still, how many of us have 4+ hours a day just to "saunter" like ole' Henry?! I'll tell you, walking for 30 minutes, 45 minutes, or an hour a day is a worthy pursuit!



Do you wish you could be free from all these "worldly engagements" like spam calls, notifications, and constant ads? Let's preserve our bodies, minds, and spirits this new season. You deserve to feel fully alive and happy. Don't you?

Here are some ideas for disengaging with your tech and re-engaging with yourself in the real world.

- Build in limits like getting off your phone or computer
- Go to the park every day for a leisurely bike ride, run, walk, or stroll
- Call up a friend to go for a hike
- Try a new outdoor activity like rollerblading, boxing, capoeira, early morning Tai Chi, dancing to live music in the plaza, or a HIIT workout
- Get outside and read something inspirational

Remember that you're not alone in this struggle to use technology in moderation. Start small and pick one or two activities to start. Your body and mind will thank you. What are some habits you implement to make sure you're staying balanced, connected, and in touch with nature? Let us know in the comments. We love hearing from you!

Do you want practical tips for getting up, getting out, and feeling your best? How about inspirational quotes and motivational stories from your friends at Evergreen Journal? We would love to share more with you! [Click here to receive an inspirational email every Friday and a chance to win a free pair of trail runners](#)—we promise not to spam your inbox!