

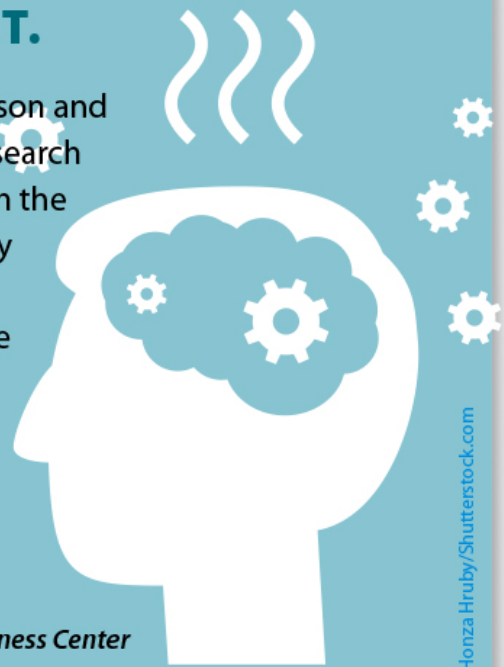
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PHYSICIANS PRACTICE

1. PROTECT AGAINST BURNOUT.

Doctors work longer hours than the average person and are under constant pressure to continue their research and education. The only way to do this is through the aid of technology, but this makes them especially prone to burnout. To stay on top of their game, refresh, and manage the stressors that contribute to job burnout, doctors need to disconnect as much as possible when they leave the workplace. This can be as simple as going for a walk, to the gym, or out to dinner and leaving the cell phone at home.

– Lisa Strohman, founder and director, Technology Wellness Center



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2. AVOID “TEXT NECK.”

Medical experts say that for every inch the head tilts forward, the pressure on the spine doubles, which leads to neck, back, and shoulder pain. Smartphone users spend an average of two hours to four hours per day hunched over reading e-mails, sending text messages, or checking social media sites. Because of this activity, back and neck pain have increased among users of electronic gadgets.

– John B. Richards, CEO of The Joint Corp.

Ten Reasons Physicians Should Unplug from Technology

PHYSICIANS PRACTICE

3. REENERGIZE.

Multi-tasking is the new mantra and call for action, but the human brain is not made to complete several tasks simultaneously. It jumps back and forth between various activities, which requires more and more energy to sustain the ever-increasing attention at an acceptable level. In the long run and without appropriate breaks, this form of “getting things done” will do more harm than good.

Even when one learns how to actively keep many balls in the air — multi-tasking or not — it is even more difficult to stop and shift to a relaxed state when the day is over. In the worst case scenario, it is like running a marathon, collapsing at the finish line, only to be expected to run another one the following day. Day after day.



– Wolfgang Gilliar, DO, dean of NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine

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4. STAY IN CONTROL.

Physicians need to be able to set daily priorities with confidence and sufficient flexibility to get things done — to stay in control of their work and patient load. They need to take appropriate breaks and organize a hectic day around specific principles rather than being reactive to what is being thrown their way at any one moment.



Technology is helpful, but it is important to learn to step back from it — to take a vacation from it — so it does not become a competing challenge to the other things that occupy a physician's time.

– Gilliar

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5. KEEP AN EYE ON THE BIGGER PICTURE, AND IMPROVE EMPATHY AND COMPASSION.

Taking a mental vacation from technology lets physicians better appreciate the bigger things going on around them. Free from digital distractions, they can engage in deep meaningful thought and reconcile thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes about their lives and place in the world.



Advanced introspection and insight helps improve the quality of care rendered to patients and their families. It also allows for acceptance of other peoples' views on life. This can only occur if time is dedicated to enlightenment.

– Akram Alashari, MD, Surgical Critical Care
at University of Florida

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6. ALLOW FOR UNINTERRUPTED RECREATION.

Disconnecting from technology allows individuals to be relieved from worries and obligations, freeing up time to do things that bring joy simply for the sake of happiness. Oftentimes, creativity, euphoria, flow state, and peak experiences occur while in an elevated mood during recreation.

Exercising during this time improves health, well-being, and quality of life. It also increases energy and reduces feelings of depression.

– Alashari

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7. SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY.

Because of the rigorous work schedule of those in the medical field, intimate relationships become strained. Unplugging promotes relationship reconciliation and improves quality of life for those working in medicine as well as their family members.

– Alashari

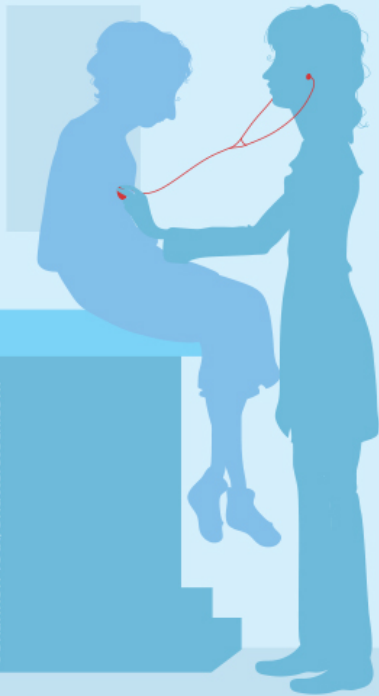
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8. CONNECT WITH PATIENTS.

Technology can't replace the personal connection between a doctor and patient. The palpable relief a patient feels when truly seen and heard requires that the physician is fully present and not distracted with high-tech tools. A doctor looking at a computer screen instead of into a patient's eyes can make that patient feel disconnected at best and dehumanized at worst.

– Megan Jones, chief science officer, Lantern
(online therapy provider)

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PHYSICIANS PRACTICE

9. MAKE BETTER CONCLUSIONS.

Data science improves decision making, but it needs to be considered in light of what is not quantifiable. Just like people, data can be wrong. Physicians need to check their conclusions with other team members and patients themselves to make sure all aspects of a situation are considered.

– Jones

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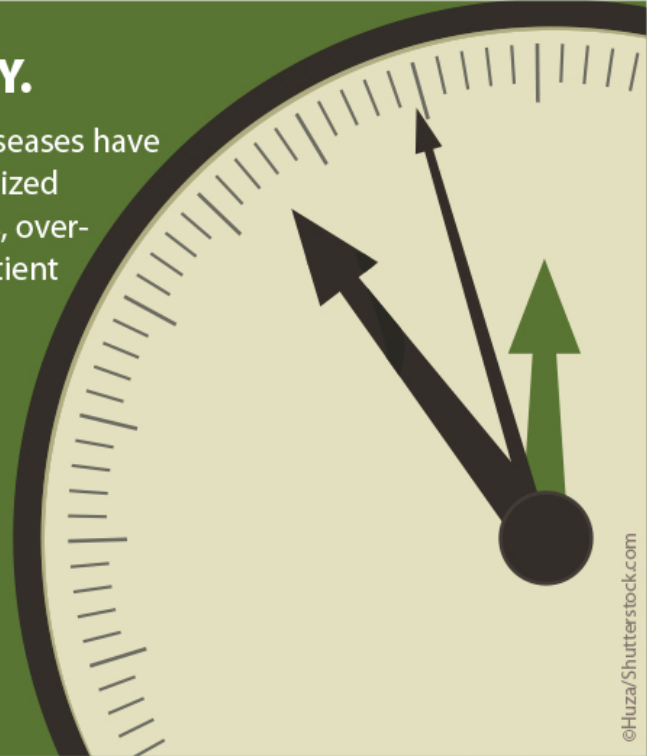
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10. RESTORE SIMPLICITY.

Most elderly patients with chronic diseases have a reasonable expectation of personalized care. Our crowded emergency rooms, over-worked hospitalist teams, and outpatient clinics with eight-minute office appointments cannot possibly fully address their plight. One of the critical elements to meeting these patients' wishes is not more science but more time.

– Jim Williams, family physician with a private practice affiliated with SignatureMD at Sibley Memorial Hospital (Washington, D.C.)



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