

14 Year Round Ideas to Break Free from Screens



1. Move your screens set to a less visible, hard to reach location; cover your TV with a poster.
2. Hide hand held devices and the remote control (e.g., put charging stations out of reach).
3. Remove the screens from your child's bedroom. Screens in the bedroom draws their attention away from family activities, and distracts them from homework, reading, thinking and sleeping. Studies indicate that if there is a TV in a child's bedroom it can negatively impact their health. (Dennison et al, Pediatrics, 2002)
4. Keep the TV off, and screens away from the table during dinner. Meals are a great time for family conversation. Research also suggests that families who have the TV off at mealtime have healthier eating habits than those who do not. (Coon et al, Pediatrics, 2001)
5. Place clear limits on screen time (all screens not just TV and tablets). Allow 30 minutes each day or 1 hour every other day. Try being positive, instead of saying "You can't watch TV" say, "Let's turn off the TV so we can..."
6. Involve children in household activities and meal preparation. Make it fun! Have a make your own pizza night.
7. Designate certain days of the week as "Pause to Play Days" or one week a month as "Pause to Play Week".
8. Cancel your cable, satellite or streaming services and use this money to pay for fun family activities.
9. Avoid using screens as a reward or a punishment. This gives screens more power.
10. Don't worry if your children complain that they are bored. Boredom often leads to creativity and physically active play.
11. Replace your screen time with something more active. Look for family activities in your community. If you don't feel like going out, put on some music and dance.
12. Be a positive role model by being physically active and cutting down on screen time yourself.
13. Start a family routine like after dinner walks.
14. Plan family "Theme Days" like Monday Madness, where every Monday the family chooses a different activity to do (e.g., swimming, skating, cycling or a game of tag) or Wednesday Wiggle Day, where, after dinner you put on music and dance (this may work better with younger children).

Be Creative And Have Tons of Screen Free Family Fun!

For more information, call the Health ACTION Line
1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

