

Screen Time & Healthy Balance

Quick Activities

These quick activities around screen time are designed for use with 7-11 year olds but are easily adapted for other ages.



Spotting the signs

Get students thinking about the signs they experience when they've been online for too long. This could be through discussion or using the examples below.

Why not ask them to sort the signs they've found into two categories?

- Signs from the world around you
- Signs from your own body

This could be done using a table (right) or by colour coding.

Signs from the world around you

Mum and Dad make me put the tablet away

I notice it's got dark outside

Signs from your own body

My eyes hurt

I need a drink

Remind students that they won't experience these signs every time they go online. These are only the signs we get if we're online too often or for too long.

Can your students come up with any more examples not shown here?

Headache	Finding it difficult to get to sleep	The device feels very hot	Feeling moody or grumpy
Constantly thinking about being online	Family members mention how long you've been online	Blurry vision	The device runs out of battery
Feeling hungry	Looking at the clock and realising lots of time has passed	A message on the screen asking if you're still there	Neck ache

Get creative! Students could draw the outline of a body and then label where they experience signs they've been online too long, or you could ask them to make road signs warning of the dangers of spending too long online.



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Continued

Once students are familiar with the signs they might experience, it's time to start thinking about how they can respond to them.

This all comes back to finding a healthy balance of online and offline activities.

You could give them a matching task, like the one to the right, where they choose a response for each sign experienced.

Make your students the experts

Maybe they could act as Agony Aunts responding to letters asking for advice about spending too much time online.

"I love playing online but sometimes I get a really bad headache. I find myself thinking about gaming all the time and sometimes I even forget to eat. What should I do? Lonely from London"



Finding a balance

Feeling hungry	If you've been sat looking at a screen too long, try some gentle exercises. Play a game like football or tag which gets your body moving.
Neck ache	Take a break and find something to eat! You might need a snack but a drink like water or juice can also help give your body the energy it needs.
Flat battery	Being online can affect your mood so put down the device and find something to cheer you up: catch up with friends or relax with your family.
Headache	Don't just plug in and keep using the device. Use this as an excuse to put it to one side and do something else instead. Why not go outside for a bit?
Feeling moody	This is a sign you haven't been drinking enough, so get a glass of water straight away. It's also good to do something which gives your eyes a break.

Use scales to make the concept of 'balance' as visual as possible

Give them a diagram of some scales and ask them to note down all the things they enjoy doing online on one side, but to always balance them with the things they enjoy doing offline on the other.

If you have access to balancing scales you could get them to do this in groups physically - using cubes they add one to each side whilst explaining to their peers something they enjoy doing online and an equivalent they enjoy offline.

Use drama by getting students to roleplay as healthy balance doctors. One is the patient who spends lots of time online - the other is the doctor.

What treatment will they prescribe?

For younger children it can be difficult to manage their own time online. Make sure they know that if they're ever struggling to find a healthy balance, they can speak to an adult for help and support, or contact **ChildLine** - **0800 11 11** www.childline.org.uk



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