

Digital Wellness Protocol for the Field Clinician

Pre-visit phone ritual, notification schedule, off-hours boundary framework, and 7-day challenge.

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THE EVIDENCE

A randomized controlled trial of healthcare workers found that an intervention to reduce work-related screen time during a weekend off doubled the reduction of stress levels compared to the control group — with the strongest effect in those who uninstalled work apps from personal devices.

Reducing work-related screen-time in healthcare workers. J Med Systems. 2026. PMC12811315.

WHAT IS COSTING YOU

- ✗ Scrolling before patient visits degrades attentional quality and emotional presence
- ✗ Constant notification interruption fragments deep thinking during documentation
- ✗ Social comparison on social media elevates baseline anxiety in healthcare workers
- ✗ Work messaging apps with no off-hours boundary erode psychological safety
- ✗ Blue light exposure after 9pm disrupts melatonin and reduces sleep quality
- ✗ 24-hour news cycles activate threat response and increase compassion fatigue
- ✗ Ambient checking during meals removes the only guaranteed break from clinical stress

THE FIELD PROTOCOL

- ✓ **Pre-visit ritual:** Airplane mode from the driveway to the door. Every time. Non-negotiable.
- ✓ **Meal rule:** No phone at the table for at least one meal per day.
- ✓ **Notification schedule:** Clinical apps on. Social media off during work hours.
- ✓ **Bedroom rule:** Phone charges outside the bedroom. Use an alarm clock.
- ✓ **Screenless hour:** One hour per day — walk, cook, sit outside, play an instrument.
- ✓ **Restoration use:** Use the phone for restoration: music, audiobooks, prayer, meditation apps.
- ✓ **Off-hours response:** Work messages: respond within 24 hours, not within 10 minutes.

7-DAY DIGITAL DETOX CHALLENGE

DAY	CHALLENGE	COMPLETED	REFLECTION
Day 1	Airplane mode at every home entry. Track how many visits. Note any anxiety.	■	_____
Day 2	No phone at lunch. One full meal unplugged.	■	_____
Day 3	Uninstall one social media app from your phone for 24 hours.	■	_____
Day 4	Phone charges in a different room tonight.	■	_____
Day 5	No work messages after 7pm. Let the boundary hold.	■	_____
Day 6	One screenless hour in the evening. No TV either.	■	_____
Day 7	Full day offline except for clinical necessity. Note how you feel.	■	_____

