

UNPLUG

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO #UNPLUG?

TAKING TIME AWAY FROM THE DIGITAL WORLD IS ESSENTIAL, BUT FINDING THAT TIME CAN BE DIFFICULT.

BY: JESSICA HULLINGER

If you're feeling overwhelmed by your gadgets--connected to your email list but not to your personal life--perhaps it's time to take a break. All this week, we're prepping you for a digital detox, starting with a list of potential times to [#unplug](#):

Take a vacation: Comedian, author, and 2011 Shorty Award winner for Foursquare Mayor of the Year Baratunde Thurston recently went offline for 25 days, and [lived to tell the tale](#). "I considered fleeing to a remote island for a few weeks, but I realized I wasn't craving physical escape," Thurston writes. "I didn't actually want to be alone. I just wanted to be mentally free of obligations, most of which asserted themselves in some digital fashion." To do this effectively, he would have to take some time off work. So, he identified a time when his work cycle was at a natural lull: Christmas. "With the exception of Mr. Scrooge, everyone slows down during the holidays, and so would I."

"Travel to a place where absence of wireless reception and wi-fi makes it impossible to connect. Life miraculously continues."
-Elena Sirpolaidis (@elenasirpo)

"Deactivate Facebook during vacation and set a rule to shop locally." -Blair Knobel ([@lbknobel](#))

Carson Tate, managing partner of [Working Simply](#), recently shared a bunch of tips with *Fast Company*: Get over yourself and prioritize some time off; think: "What's the worst that could happen?" [and more](#).

If vacation isn't an option for you, here are a few other times that make for great digital detox opportunities:

Take the weekend: "I think Saturday afternoon is pretty much the best time to unplug ... I find keeping the weekends quiet is critical."
-Gina Bianchini, founder & CEO at [Mightybell](#)

"When going away for a weekend, don't bring the charger. You'll be forced to conserve battery for only very important emails." -
Frank Gu ([@ugknarf](#))

Take a weekday: "I personally started unplugging one day a week, I've done it now for almost 3 years with my family, and it's changed my life." -[Tiffany Shlain](#), digital filmmaker and founder of the Webby Awards

Take the morning: Superlative executives tend to get up super early to work out, read, and otherwise get a jump on the day. If you have an iPhone, extend the do-not-disturb time past your wakeup to add in some quiet. [Here, more tips](#) on unplugging your morning routine.

Take the afternoon: A recent study showed that 2:55 p.m. is the point in the day when productivity levels are at their lowest. Why not take that time to step away from the office and defray your brain? Here, [four easy ways to unplug in the afternoon](#).

Take dinnertime: "No phones at the dinner table at home. This is time we have to connect with each other. Family time is family time. I try, as much as possible, to put the phone away when we're doing family activities and be actively engaged with my wife and son when we're together." -[Gerald Brady](#), managing director, Silicon Valley Bank

"I CONSIDERED FLEEING TO A REMOTE ISLAND FOR A FEW WEEKS, BUT I REALIZED I WASN'T CRAVING PHYSICAL ESCAPE. I DIDN'T ACTUALLY WANT TO BE ALONE. I JUST WANTED TO BE MENTALLY FREE OF OBLIGATIONS, MOST OF WHICH ASSERTED THEMSELVES IN SOME DIGITAL FASHION."

"When I'm having a meal with friends or family, it's an important time for us to share, connect and have meaningful conversations." -[Oliver Kharraz](#), COO and founder of ZocDoc

Take a workout break: "I really believe that unplugging through exercise has allowed me to keep the pace required for an exec role in a tech company." -[Catherine Courage](#), SVP of Customer Experience, Citrix

"We do encourage our team to take digital down-time," says [Ijad Madisch](#), CEO of ResearchGate. "We organize a lot of sports events: basketball games, table tennis matches or yoga classes. It's hard to check your emails in downward dog."

Take a minute: "These days, it's next to impossible to avoid the never-ending stream of email, texts and push notifications but it's so important to me to unplug during personal interactions. Even while sitting in a meeting, at a party or in the middle of a conversation with a friend, I try very hard to avoid it. I don't let technology take me away from my everyday interactions and experiences... from life. -[Ryan Holmes](#), CEO of HootSuite

"I never take my iPhone into meetings... It's important that I give my undivided attention to my colleagues and partners and I expect (and appreciate!) the same respect in return." -[Ivanka Trump](#)

However long you plan to #unplug, start prepping now. Identify a time that works for you and start making a list of things you'd like to accomplish while you detox. "I concocted a wish list of activity for my disconnected time," Thurston writes. "It was a pleasure to contemplate places to visit in New York, books to read, and people with whom I wanted to spend some quality time. "

What do you think is the best time to unplug? Tell us [here](#), or tweet your thoughts to [@FastCompany](#) using the [#unplug](#) hashtag.

[Broken Clock: [Kostsov](#) via Shutterstock]



JESSICA HULLINGER

Jessica Hullinger is Assistant News Editor for Fast Company Digital where she handles news items and social media outreach. Previously she served as Audience Development Manager for TheWeek.com. Her writing has been featured in Mental Floss, the New York Post, and elsewhere. Jessica has a soft spot for her home state of Indiana, an undying love for public radio, and an inexplicable obsession with archaeology. Follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

CONTINUE