

A 7-DAY CHALLENGE

Phone lives in the kitchen.

The smallest possible change that actually works.

Connected AU

The Offline Movement

WHY THIS WORKS

The part that matters.

There's a reason you can't put it down.

The average adult unlocks their phone 144 times a day. That's once every seven waking minutes. Over a year, it's 23 entire days of your life. Over a lifetime, five years. (Asurion, 2023; RescueTime).

What's striking is not the number. It's that you didn't choose it. Your phone isn't sitting in the kitchen waiting for you. It's in your pocket, on the couch, beside the bed, in your hand. The reason you reach for it 144 times isn't willpower. It's proximity.

Two pieces of research worth knowing:

Mark, Gloria (UC Irvine, 2015): It takes an average of 23 minutes and 15 seconds to fully refocus after a single interruption. Every notification, every glance, costs you nearly half an hour of attention you don't get back.

Ward, Duke, Gneezy & Bos (2017, JACR): The mere presence of a phone in the room, even face-down and silent, measurably reduces cognitive capacity. Your brain knows it's there. Part of you is always listening for it.

This is not a moral failing. The phone is engineered to win this fight. The only intervention that works long-term is the boring one: distance.

*So we're not asking you to delete apps, do a digital detox, or punish yourself.
We're asking you to move one charger. For seven days.*

THE RULE

Your phone lives in the kitchen now.

The charger goes near the sink, or on the bench, or somewhere you can see it but it isn't on you.

It stays there from the moment you walk in the front door until you leave again in the morning. You can walk in and check it any time. You can answer messages. You just have to walk to the kitchen to do it.

That's the whole challenge.

NOT NEGOTIABLE

- The charger doesn't live in the bedroom.
- The phone doesn't come to bed.
- The phone doesn't sit on the couch beside you.

NEGOTIABLE

- The exact spot. Bench, shelf, drawer, a small basket. Whatever looks right in your kitchen.
- The check-ins. Want to check it every twenty minutes? Fine. The point isn't fewer check-ins. The point is they are a choice.
- Emergencies. If you are on call, expecting a delivery, have a sick parent, take it. This is a 7-day pattern, not a vow.

SET IT UP TONIGHT

Five minutes, before you go to bed.

01

Choose the spot.

Somewhere visible, somewhere not on a soft surface, somewhere you can plug a charger in. The bench by the sink is the classic. A shelf above the toaster. The kitchen table if it's clean.

02

Move the charger.

Unplug it from the bedroom (or wherever it currently lives) and plug it in at the new spot. If you don't have a second charger and want one for travel, grab a cheap second one. For tonight, just move the one you have.

03

Tell the people you live with.

Partner, housemate, kids. *"My phone lives in the kitchen for the next week. If you need me, come find me, or text and I'll see it when I walk past."* This is the bit people skip. And skipping it's why it never sticks.

04

Plug it in. Walk away. Go to bed.

Day 1 has started.

No app. No settings change. No apology to the algorithm.

THE CHART

Print this page, fold it, pin it to the fridge.

PIN IT TO THE FRIDGE

Phone lives in the kitchen.

7 days. Tick the nights you made it to bed without it.

Started: _____

☐	DAY 1	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 2	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 3	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 4	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 5	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 6	_____	notes _____
☐	DAY 7	_____	notes _____

By day 7, write the one thing that changed:

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WHAT TO EXPECT

Day by day. What most people report.

Day 1. Phantom reaches. You'll touch your hip pocket five times in the first hour. Your hand keeps looking for something. This is normal. It passes.

Day 2. Late afternoon is hardest. Around 4-5pm, when you'd usually have a long unwind scroll. Make a cup of tea. Sit. Notice how heavy boredom feels for ten minutes. Then it gets quieter.

Day 3. The first evening that feels different. You'll be on the couch, no phone, and notice the room is silent. Sometimes uncomfortable. Sometimes good.

Day 4. Your sleep starts changing. People report falling asleep faster and waking up less, even by night four. (Sleep researchers consistently find screen-free bedrooms shorten sleep latency by 15-25 minutes.)

Day 5. You finish something. A book chapter, a meal you actually plated, a conversation that went somewhere. This is the surprise reward.

Day 6. You forget the phone exists for an hour. Maybe two. This is the goal. Not forever. Just enough that you remember what it feels like.

Day 7. You look at your screen-time number and it's already different. Not by magic. By distance.

WHEN YOU SLIP

Because you will. That's fine.

You'll bring the phone to bed one night. You'll answer one text in the lounge room and end up scrolling for forty minutes. You'll wake up and grab it before your feet hit the floor.

This isn't failure. It's the pattern reasserting itself. It doesn't mean the challenge is over.

THREE THINGS THAT HELP

The reset sentence. Out loud, to yourself: *"Phone lives in the kitchen."* Then walk it back. No story, no shame.

Notice the trigger, don't fight it. Common ones: bored on the couch, anxious before sleep, woke up before the alarm, first thing after a hard conversation. These aren't your weakness. They're your brain doing what it learned. Notice it without arguing with it.

Tomorrow starts at 6am, not Monday. You don't have to wait until next week to restart. Put the phone back in the kitchen this evening. That's it.

The point of seven days isn't a perfect streak. It's enough nights for your body to feel the difference, so the kitchen becomes the new default without you thinking about it.

TEN QUIET THINGS

What to do with the time you save.

You'll have time you didn't have before. Not a lot. About 60-90 minutes a day, on average. Pick one. Don't try them all.

- 01 Finish the book on your bedside. The one you've been reading for two months. Twenty pages a night and you are done in a fortnight.
- 02 Cook one slow dinner this week. Not impressive. Just slow. Music on, glass of something, no rush, the whole room smelling of food.
- 03 Write one real letter. To a parent, a friend, a sibling, your future self. Paper, pen, real envelope, post it.
- 04 Go to bed an hour earlier one night. Tea, book, lamp. Notice how you feel the next day.
- 05 Sit somewhere green for twenty minutes. No podcast, no phone. Park, garden, paddock, balcony with a plant.
- 06 Call one person you love instead of texting them. Five minutes. Voice, not message.
- 07 Plant something. A herb in a pot on the windowsill counts. Garlic in a jar counts.
- 08 Make something with your hands. Pot a plant, knit a row, mend a button, sketch something badly, arrange flowers from the supermarket.
- 09 Have one meal with no screen. No phone, no TV, no laptop. Just the food and your own company or the person across from you.
- 10 Do absolutely nothing for fifteen minutes. Sit in a chair. Look out the window. Let your mind wander. This is the most radical one. It's also the one your brain will thank you for the most.

WHAT NOW

You did seven days. Or four. Or one, and started again. All of it counts.

The kitchen rule is the smallest possible intervention that actually works. Most people who do this for seven days keep doing it, with or without the chart, because they've felt what it gives them. You don't need an app. You don't need willpower. You just need the phone to live somewhere that isn't you.

If you want company doing more of this kind of thing, two gentle suggestions:

THE 30-DAY OFFLINE CHEATSHEET

Free.

One small offline thing each day for thirty days. Print it, stick it on the fridge next to this one.

join.connectedau.com.au/30-days

THE OFFLINE BOX

A\$99/month. Cancel anytime.

A monthly box of real things to make, cook, grow and read. Posted across Australia. The natural next step.

join.connectedau.com.au/offline-box

And if neither feels right, that's fine. The printable was the gift. Keep going.

With love,

Mea and the Connected AU team

join.connectedau.com.au