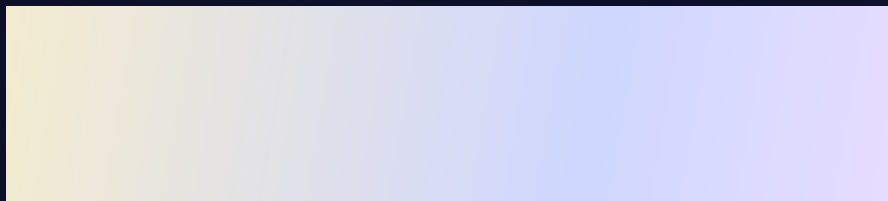




SLEEP & REST COLLECTION



Protect Your Evenings

DIGITAL WIND-DOWN GUIDE

The Digital Wind-Down Guide

Protect Your Evenings



A practical guide to setting limits around screens and stimulation, so your evenings actually help you rest.

For informational and educational purposes only.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome

You sit down after a long day meaning to relax for "just a few minutes," and somehow an hour and a half disappears into a screen. Then it's suddenly too late to wind down properly, and the cycle repeats the next night.

This isn't a discipline problem. Screens are built, deliberately, to be hard to put down. Fighting that with willpower alone is like trying to out-swim a current — exhausting, and usually unsuccessful.

This guide takes a different approach: understanding exactly what's keeping you wired, then setting boundaries specific enough to hold, without turning your evenings into something you dread.

Here's to evenings that actually feel like rest.

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Chapter 01

What's Actually Keeping You Wired

Before setting any boundary, it helps to understand the specific mechanisms that make screens so hard to put down at night.

Light, content, and habit

Screens interfere with rest through three separate channels. The **light** itself, especially blue-toned light, delays the release of sleep-promoting hormones. The **content** — endless feeds, notifications, cliffhangers — is engineered to trigger small dopamine hits that keep you reaching for "just one more." And the **habit loop** itself, picking up your phone reflexively at the first idle moment, runs largely below conscious awareness.

Work bleed: a fourth channel

For many people, there's a fourth factor: checking email or work messages in the evening, which can trigger real stress hormones, not just mild stimulation. Even a two-minute check can leave your mind churning on a problem for the rest of the night.

WORTH REMEMBERING

You're not fighting a lack of discipline. You're fighting light, content design, habit, and sometimes real stress — all at once. Naming each one makes them easier to address separately.

✦ TRY THIS

Identify your biggest driver

Of the four channels above — light, content, habit, work bleed — which is the strongest pull for you personally in the evening?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Screens interfere with rest through light, content design, habit, and sometimes work-related stress.
- These are separate mechanisms, which means they often need separate solutions.
- Naming your specific driver makes it easier to address directly.

Chapter 02

The Screen Boundary That Fits Your Life

Not every boundary works for every person — the right one depends on your specific pull toward screens.

Three types of boundaries

Boundaries around screens generally fall into three categories, and different people benefit from different types depending on what's actually driving their usage.

- **Time-based:** A fixed cutoff — for example, no screens after 9:30pm. Works well if habit or idle scrolling is your main driver.
- **Location-based:** Screens stay out of the bedroom, or out of a specific room reserved for winding down. Works well if the bed itself has become associated with scrolling.
- **Content-based:** Certain apps or types of content (work email, news, social feeds) are off-limits in the evening, while others (a podcast, a call with a friend) remain fine. Works well if specific content — not screens generally — is the real problem.

Choosing yours

You don't need all three. Pick the one type that most directly addresses the driver you identified in Chapter 1, and start there. You can always add a second boundary later once the first feels stable.

✦ TRY THIS

Choose your boundary type

Based on your driver from Chapter 1, write down which boundary type — time, location, or content — you'll try first, and the specific rule you'll set.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Boundaries around screens fall into time-based, location-based, and content-based types.
- The right type depends on your specific driver, not a one-size-fits-all rule.
- Start with one boundary type and add more only once it feels stable.

Chapter 03

Scripts for Stepping Away Without White- Knuckling It

Willpower alone is a poor match for engineered engagement — a few practical scripts make stepping away much easier.

Replace, don't just remove

Simply telling yourself "no phone" leaves a gap that's uncomfortable to sit in, and discomfort is exactly what sends most people reaching back for the screen. It works far better to have a specific, ready replacement for the moment you'd normally reach for your phone.

A few practical swaps

Choose one or two of these to have ready, rather than trying to will your way through the urge with nothing to replace it.

- Keep a physical book or magazine in the exact spot you'd normally put your phone down.
- Have a specific low-effort task ready — folding laundry, a simple puzzle — for the restless "I need to do something" feeling.
- If it's connection you're craving, a short phone call (voice only) can meet that need without the scrolling pull.
- Physically move your charger to another room, so reaching for your phone requires a deliberate walk, not a reflex.

TRY THIS TONIGHT

Pick one swap from the list above and put it in the exact physical spot your phone usually occupies in the evening.

✦ TRY THIS

Set up your swap

Choose one replacement activity, and write down where you'll place it tonight so it's within easy reach when the urge to scroll hits.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Removing screens without a replacement usually fails — the discomfort sends you back.
- Having a specific, ready swap makes stepping away far easier than relying on willpower alone.
- Physical placement matters: put the charger, and the swap, in the right spots.

“

*You don't beat a habit by refusing it. You
beat it by giving your hands somewhere
else to go.*

Chapter 04

Letting Go of the Guilt

Feeling guilty for logging off early is common — and worth examining, because it usually doesn't hold up.

Where the guilt comes from

Logging off early can trigger a specific kind of guilt: fear of missing something, of seeming unavailable, of falling behind. This feeling is often less about the actual cost of stepping away and more about a habit of equating constant availability with being responsible or connected.

A values-based reframe

It helps to ask directly: what do I actually value more — being available at 10pm, or having the energy and clarity that comes from real rest? For almost everyone, on reflection, rest wins. The guilt tends to fade once the boundary is framed as protecting something you value, rather than avoiding something you "should" be doing.

- Notice the specific fear behind the guilt (missing out, seeming unavailable, falling behind) — naming it reduces its pull.
- Remind yourself what the boundary is protecting, not just what it's restricting.
- Expect the guilt to be strongest in the first week or two, and to fade with repetition.

✦ TRY THIS

Name your guilt, and your reason

Write down the specific fear behind your guilt about logging off early, and one sentence about what your evening boundary is protecting instead.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Guilt about logging off is often about a fear (missing out, seeming unavailable) more than an actual cost.
- Reframing the boundary around what it protects — rather than what it restricts — reduces the guilt.
- The guilt typically fades with repetition, especially in the first two weeks.

Chapter 05

Handling Pushback

Notifications, work culture, and other people will sometimes test your boundary — here's how to hold it anyway.

Pushback from your device

Notifications are designed to interrupt, and a single ping can undo an otherwise solid boundary. The most reliable fix isn't willpower — it's adjusting your settings so the interruption never reaches you in the first place, through scheduled do-not-disturb or app-specific notification limits.

Pushback from people

Colleagues, friends, or family may occasionally expect an evening response out of habit, not real urgency. A short, calm statement of your boundary — said once, clearly — usually resolves this faster than repeatedly explaining or apologizing for it.

- "I'm off screens after 9:30, but I'll get back to you first thing tomorrow."
- "I don't check messages in the evening — if it's urgent, call me."
- For recurring work-culture pressure, a brief, direct conversation with your manager is more effective than silently absorbing the pressure.

✦ TRY THIS

Prepare one response

Write one short, calm sentence you could use if someone pushes back on your evening boundary this week.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Notification settings do more reliable work than willpower when it comes to interruptions.

- A short, calm boundary statement usually resolves social pushback faster than repeated explanation.
- Recurring work-culture pressure is worth addressing directly, rather than absorbing silently.

Chapter 06

How Boundaries Improve Your Evenings

A well-held boundary doesn't shrink your life — it tends to make the hours you do have feel noticeably better.

What people usually notice

Most people who successfully protect their evenings report the same handful of changes within a few weeks: falling asleep faster, feeling less mentally scattered before bed, and — somewhat counterintuitively — feeling more present during the screen time they do allow themselves earlier in the day.

The long view

The evening is one of the few parts of the day most people have real control over. Protecting it isn't about restriction for its own sake — it's a way of reclaiming a piece of the day that was quietly being spent somewhere other than where you actually wanted it.

WORTH REMEMBERING

A boundary that feels restrictive at first often feels like relief within a few weeks, once the guilt fades and the benefits become noticeable.

✦ TRY THIS

Picture the payoff

Write one sentence about what you're hoping your evenings will feel like a month from now, once this boundary is in place.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A protected evening tends to improve sleep onset and mental clarity before bed.

- The evening is one of the most controllable parts of the day, worth actively protecting.
- Initial resistance to the boundary usually gives way to relief within a few weeks.

Your First 14 Evenings

Reclaiming your evenings works best in layers. Use this sequence to build your boundary without overhauling everything at once.

- ☐ **Nights 1–2:** Identify your biggest driver — light, content, habit, or work bleed (Chapter 1).
- ☐ **Nights 3–7:** Choose and set your first boundary type, and prepare one replacement activity (Chapters 2–3).
- ☐ **Nights 3–7 (parallel):** Adjust your notification settings so interruptions can't reach you.
- ☐ **Nights 8–10:** Notice and name any guilt that comes up, using the reframe from Chapter 4.
- ☐ **Nights 11–14:** Prepare and use your pushback response if anyone tests the boundary.
- ☐ **Ongoing:** Revisit your boundary type every few weeks and adjust as your evenings change.



Your Evenings Are Worth Protecting

A boundary around screens isn't about missing out — it's about making sure the hours before bed actually belong to your rest. Give it a few weeks, and notice what changes.

The Digital Wind-Down Guide is a digital educational product. It is not a substitute for professional medical or mental health advice. Individual results vary based on personal effort and the environments involved.