The Phone Cleanse
A Modern Guide to Improve Your Mobile Well-Being

Foreword by Deb Lee
Digital Productivity Coach
Foreword

I’m a lover of all things tech. And as a productivity consultant for 12-plus years, I’m always on the lookout for digital tools that will help my clients get more done. I get a thrill out of knowing I’ve helped someone find the right app, strategy, or device to do some of the heavy lifting in his or her life.

At times, though, tech can be a double-edged sword—especially when it comes to smartphones. Those useful tools can sometimes become a distraction. And as you spend more time interacting with your phone and the apps that come with it, you might spend less time focused on the things you enjoy.

Does that mean you should go cold turkey—to just stop using your phone? For most people, that’s probably not realistic. Or is there a way to reboot your relationship with your device so you can be more aware of the way you use it? What if you could make it a more effective tool in your daily life?

This is where the Phone Cleanse comes in. Honestly, as a big fan of simplicity, I fell in love with it! The cleanse shares simple ways to both unclutter your device and transform the way you use it. Take on each day’s challenge and you’ll quickly find yourself feeling less distracted. Then with a fresh perspective on your mobile habits, you’ll be ready to fall in love with your (organized) phone again.

I’m so glad you decided to try the Phone Cleanse and hope you get as much out of it as I did!

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Digital Productivity Coach
Table of Contents

An Introduction 04
What Is the Phone Cleanse?

Day One 06
The App Purge

Day Two 10
Gray for a Day

Day Three 14
The 24-Hour Notification Fast

Day Four 18
The Storage War

Day Five 22
The 60-Minute Rule

Day Six 26
Sleep Separation

Day Seven 30
The Minimalist Home Screen

The Post-Cleanse Wrap-Up 34
Epilogue
An Introduction

What Is the Phone Cleanse?

Odds are, if you have a smartphone, you’re in the midst of a love-hate relationship. Your device is simultaneously the most important tool in your life, but it’s also a point of frustration. That’s OK. Most of us feel the same way.

The issue is that we rarely stop and take a moment to rethink our relationship with our device. The Phone Cleanse is our attempt to help you do just that. Consider this cleanse an experiment between you and your phone—seven days of challenges inspired by the latest advice from leading experts in the space. The Phone Cleanse will pull you from your routine, give you a new sense of awareness, and leave you with lasting tips and tools to make your smartphone even smarter.

To make things a little easier, we created a cutout that holds your phone while you follow along with the cleanse. That way you’ll be able to adjust and optimize your device’s settings in real-time as we guide you through each day of the cleanse. Ready to create better mobile well-being? Let’s go!

Have fun,
The Xfinity Mobile Team

Pre-Cleanse Routine

One more thing: You might want to post something to let friends know that your mobile habits will be a little unusual this week.

Once that’s done, put your phone in the cutout and turn the page to begin.
The App Purge

Every day, you’re carrying around mobile apps that you never use.

Delete 10 apps. Right now. They’re hiding in rarely visited folders or buried on your phone’s fourth page. Get rid of them.

Getting Through the Day

You probably looked at each app on the chopping block and recalled fondly why you downloaded it. Whether you added it for one-time use, or in hopes that it would become part of your regular routine, now it’s just hogging space from what you want to be doing. As you evaluate each app, ask yourself: Have I opened this in the past 90 days? If you haven’t, you know what to do.

What You’ll Notice

Beyond the obvious storage space you just freed up, there’s something more substantial: efficiency. Less mobile bloat means more mobile productivity. That could lead to a permanently streamlined device, or it could also just free up space for an app that fits your evolving interests.

9 apps

The average number of applications a person uses every day. Despite using only nine, the average person has nearly two apps on his or her phone.

The Challenge

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Deleting 10 apps every day isn’t sustainable, but being smart about what you add is. Two suggestions:

1. Set a monthly calendar alert to remind you to go through your phone and delete unused apps.

2. Get into the habit of deleting one app every time you download a new one.
Gray for a Day

Sometimes our screens are so enchanting it seems impossible to stop scrolling.

Say goodbye to color and put your phone in grayscale. Search for “Color Filter” on iPhone or “Color Adjustment” on Android, and toggle the color switch.

At first this might not seem like a big deal, but wait a few hours. Actually, just wait a few minutes. Color perception impacts excitement and attention levels, so as you look at a gray news feed or colorless game, those satisfying hits of dopamine are less frequent. Without color, the apps that you like to escape to aren’t quite as stimulating.

You’ll start using your phone in different ways: mindless scrolling sessions will be replaced by purposeful apps such as email, text, and calendar—all of which are just as effective in black and white. Another bonus: grayscale will probably help you cut down on instant stalking your coworkers.

Getting Through the Day

The amount of mobile content that the average person scrolls through every day?

300 feet
Lasting Tips
Tomorrow, as you reenter a world of color, consider these tips:

1. Recognize which apps weren’t as enjoyable in grayscale, and move them to a folder on the third page of your phone.

2. Dim your screen brightness to help curb usage of the most captivating apps—and save some battery life.
The 24-Hour Notification Fast

Here’s the solution to all those alerts that keep begging for your attention.

Open your settings, scroll to “Notifications,” and turn off ALL of them—texts, emails, everything. For an entire day.

Getting Through the Day
Is anxiety already setting in? Are you worried that you’re missing the “likes” on your photo? That’s OK. Remember, you can still use your phone today, but now you’ll look at it based on your schedule and your interests.

What You’ll Notice
You’ve become trained to react to buzzes in your pocket, but on a day without notifications, you have the freedom to focus. You can now give your full attention to your kid’s sandcastle, or that audiobook you’ve been trying to finish.

23,000
The number of mobile notifications the average person receives in a year.
Lasting Tips

Tomorrow, as you slowly begin to turn back on essential alerts (we recommend reactivating a max of five), consider these tips to optimize your phone for focus:

1. Create custom Do Not Disturb times tailored to your schedule.

2. Android users can download a notification manager, such as AcDisplay, to help simplify and prioritize alerts.

3. Cut down on email alerts by turning off auto-sync.
The Storage War
It’s time to stop carrying around so much dead weight.

The Challenge
Free up storage by clearing five gigs of media. Photos, videos, music, texts—delete whatever it takes to make space.

Getting Through the Day
Most devices have built-in storage managers. Search your phone for that feature and be bold with what you delete. Remember that digital media is replaceable. That backlog of "new" music? That Netflix show you never got around to watching? These storage hogs can easily be redownloaded. And the important stuff? Your HD photos? Your years-long text chats? These can all be safely moved to the cloud, where you can revisit them whenever the urge strikes.

What You’ll Notice
When you clear substantial amounts of clutter, you get something in return: peace of mind. There’s nothing more frustrating than hitting your storage limit at the exact moment your cat does something adorable.

65 MB
The approximate size of a 30-second iPhone video shot on the default settings.
Now that you cleared up some space, here’s how to keep storage light:

1. Go to your camera settings and limit the size of what you can capture.

2. Change your settings to delete old text chains automatically.

3. Download Google Photos to instantly save pics and videos to the cloud.
The 60-Minute Rule

How long can you go without looking at your phone?

The Challenge

Only check your device once an hour. When you do look at it, limit your time. (We recommend a max of 10 minutes.)

Getting Through the Day

Before now, access to your phone was virtually limitless. You could pick it up at any moment of curiosity or boredom. You might find yourself in an elevator or waiting in line at the grocery store—what will you look at? If the anxiety becomes too great, try writing out your to-dos on paper, so when you do check your phone, you know exactly what you need to take care of.

By breaking up your hour into segments, you’ll know exactly when to pay attention to your digital life and when to focus on your actual life. You might even realize that while multitasking feels more productive, it actually causes you to do multiple things less efficiently.

15 min

That’s how often most people check their phones.*
Here are some simple ways to avoid over-checking your phone:

1. Go to Pinterest and download a wallpaper with a message that keeps you focused.

2. Assign important contacts a specific vibration or ring to know which alerts are distractions and which aren’t.

3. Add a productivity app, such as Forest, to help you avoid using your phone when you’re supposed to be working.
Sleep Separation

Your phone is getting in the way of a good night’s rest.

The Challenge

After setting your alarm before bed, put your phone completely out of reach and don’t touch it again until morning.

Getting Through the Night

When was the last time you kept your phone out of bed? Tonight’s challenge might seem unnatural for you, but our tired bodies do better without a screen so close to our face. The blue light from our screens blocks the production of melatonin, which we rely on to fall asleep.

What You’ll Notice

Forcing yourself to sleep phone-free isn’t just about the physical impact; doing so will also change your mindset. Without that temptation to endlessly scroll, those feelings of excitement, anxiety, and stress vanish. Instead, the focus is on deep, undisturbed rest.

39,000

The number of people in a Facebook group created for those who have dropped a phone on their face while lying down and texting.

Your phone is getting in the way of a good night’s rest.
Lasting Tips

So maybe you still want your phone nearby when you go to bed, but these tips can also help you sleep:

1. Turn on PM settings such as Night Shift or Night Mode to reduce blue light.

2. Download a presleep program—find one on an app like Calm—to help ease you into the night with meditation and relaxation techniques.
Day Seven

The Minimalist Home Screen

The most obvious distractions are living on your home screen.

The Challenge

Clear your home screen of every app. Leave only text, email, and phone in your toolbar, and put everything else in a single folder on your second page.

Getting Through the Day

First off, give your fingers a rest. A complete app reorg is like a marathon for your hands. As you acclimate to this minimalist layout, use the search bar to find what you need (swipe down on iPhone and swipe up on Android). Gone are the days of getting lost in an app wormhole and forgetting why you opened your phone in the first place.

What You’ll Notice

Isn’t an empty home screen refreshing? That once overwhelming page is now a place of simplicity. Or is there unease knowing that your favorite apps are all buried in the same folder? It’s OK to feel that way. Today is about learning to live with an empty home screen.

8

67%

The percentage of people who say that they would save up to 30 minutes per day if they were more organized.
THE PHONE CLEANSE

Day Seven

THE MINIMALIST HOME SCREEN

Lasting Tips

Regardless of whether you keep your home screen clear, you should have a system to organize all your apps. Here are two that we like:

1. Categorical - Create a system of folders based on your preference. Organize them according to what each app does (e.g., entertain, communicate, share, etc.) or just simply arrange them alphabetically.

2. Rainbow - Organize by colors. You’ll be amazed at how well your brain recalls the color of your favorite apps.
The Post-Cleanse Wrap-Up

Epilogue

After seven days of rejiggering, rejuvenating, and reorganizing your device, you’ve officially finished the Phone Cleanse. Sure, maybe you didn’t adopt every single tip or complete every challenge, but we hope it helped you rethink the relationship you have with your phone.

Now, hopefully, you’ll approach each phone interaction with more purpose.

Rethinking the way people use their phones is what Xfinity Mobile was founded on. It’s why we created a new kind of network combining the nation’s largest, most reliable 4G LTE network with millions of WiFi hotspots. And it’s why our mission is to make it as easy as possible for anyone to switch their smartphone to our network. We want everyone to unlock the potential of Xfinity Mobile.

Bring your phone to a local Xfinity store and experience a more modern way to mobile.

Visit xfinity.com/mobile/buytolearnmore.

4. https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=2628363.2628364 (this stat was multiplied by 365 to reflect the amount of notifications in a year)

Thanks for doing the Phone Cleanse. We hope you have a new sense of mobile well-being and your phone is feeling refreshed.