



## Cyberbalance in a Digital Culture

Finding and maintaining a healthy cyberbalance is a challenge in a connected culture where virtually we can go anywhere, see anyone, and do anything at the touch of a screen. Technology does not have to distract us. Device settings, reminders and apps can help us enhance our relationships, improve our health and wellbeing, and be more productive. However, a study released by iKeepSafe shows that both children and adults struggle to maintain a healthy balance using their digital devices. Cyberbalance in a Digital Culture reports that the biggest challenge to cyberbalance shared by all ages is “managing the distractions” created by digital devices. A full third responded that digital device use has replaced an activity they used to love.

While dependence on technology is growing, many are unsure whether they have achieved the balance between on and offline activities that is necessary to enjoy a thriving, healthy life in today’s digital culture.

### Managing Distractions is a Universal Challenge

Funded, in part, through a grant from AT&T, the study further indicates that tweens, teens, and adults self-report they do not get enough sleep and have challenges completing work/homework:

- 44% of teens admit they do to not get enough sleep because of digital devices.
- 40% of teens don’t complete their homework because of time with devices.
- 37% of teens admit their devices interfere with day to day activities.
- 30% of adults report their devices interfere with normal, every day activities.
- 25% of adults admit they don’t get enough sleep because of digital devices.

Findings also probed parent involvement and capacities to find: only half of adults feel confident that they are a strong positive role model or have a healthy cyberbalance themselves. Thirty-one percent of teens have no rules for digital device use, despite a 2013 study published in Pediatrics encouraging parents “to establish a family home use plan for all media.”[1] Millennials are most likely to report disruption of normal life due to digital devices.

## Encouraging Trends

Despite the challenges reflected in the surveys, we see a number of encouraging trends. Of the parents that have digital use rules, 7 out of 10 feel confident that they are followed by teens. 1 out of 6 tweens are not allowed to use cell phones at the dinner table, and 6 out of 10 tweens follow device usage limits. More people are using technology to support better health, such as fit bits and apps to track diet. Additionally, survey respondents reported that friends and family are still more important than digital devices.

## Moving Forward

iKeepSafe's goal is to help individuals and families thrive in a digital culture. This includes learning the skills, competencies and habits that promote health and wellbeing while also leveraging all of the potential gains connected technologies provide.

*Cyberbalance* in a Digital Culture reveals that people of all ages are struggling to maintain a healthy balance, but they are interested in learning strategies and teaching healthy habits. The trends and opportunities identified in this research can be utilized by health practitioners and organizations to support cyberbalance education in the most useful and relevant ways.

For ideas on how to teach children and teens about creating a healthy cyberbalance, visit [iKeepSafe.org/balance-matrix](http://iKeepSafe.org/balance-matrix) and download our K-12 Healthy Balance Curriculum Matrix.

## Experts and Methodology

The iKeepSafe Cyberbalance in a Digital Culture Report is part of a research effort directed by Suzanne Martin, Ph.D of Martin Research Consulting, with Dr. Michael Rich, MD, MPH "The Mediatrixian" from the Center on Media and Child Health at the Boston Children's Hospital and Dr. Kimberly Young, PsyD, of the Center for Internet Addiction, and made possible by generous support from AT&T. For analysis and full results of the report, visit [www.ikeepSAFE.org/cyberbalance](http://www.ikeepSAFE.org/cyberbalance).

This report is based on a nationally representative survey of 1,003 of tweens (ages 8-12), teens (ages 13-18) and adults (ages 18+) conducted in September 2015. The study was conducted through an online survey by Gazelle Global lasting 10 minutes in length.



[1] "Children, Adolescents, and the Media." Pediatrics 132.5 (2013): 958-61. Children, Adolescents, and the Media. American Academy of Pediatrics. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.