

How do you know if YOU are an Internet Addict?

If you answer 'yes' to at least five of the following questions, you may have a problem with Internet addiction:

Preoccupation — Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (you think about your previous online activity or anticipate your next session)?

Increasing desire — Do you feel the need to spend more and more time on the internet in order to receive satisfaction?

Irresponsibility — Do you forgo important social, occupational, or recreational activities in order to make time for internet use?

Out of Control — Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop internet use?

Withdrawal — Do you become grumpy, jittery, or experience other classic signs of withdrawal when trying to reduce time spent on the internet?

Overdoing — Do you stay online longer than originally intended?

Social risk — Have you jeopardised, risked, the loss of a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?

Denial — Have you lied to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?

7 Steps to Tame Internet Addiction

If you have seen yourself all too clearly as you have read this section on Internet addiction, do not despair. Recognising that there is a problem is the first step toward curing an addiction. Here are some steps you can take to overcome internet addiction.

- **Limitation**

Take a holiday from the internet. Give yourself a day, a week, or even a month off. During this time period, try to use the computer only occasionally or for necessary tasks. When internet use is necessary, establish time limits and stick to them.

- **Diversion**

Spend time developing other hobbies or interests.

- **Distraction**

Whenever you are tempted to log on to the internet, take a brisk walk or engage in some other type of exercise.

- **Monitoring**

Talk to a friend or family member about what is happening in your life. Tell them of your concerns about internet use, and set aside quality time to build your social relationships.

- **Support**

Talk with a counsellor or join a support group.

- **Socialisation**

Spend time developing new relationships and friendships.

- **Self Control**

Shorten your internet sessions as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary surfing. Use a timer or get software that shuts off the computer after a certain period of time. Plan activities that will limit your time and access with the computer, such as lunch dates with friends. If all else fails, discontinue your internet access.