



## Take the 7 Day Screen-Free Challenge

The average American between the ages of 6 and 18 spends six hours in front of a computer screen each day. Televisions and computers can be fun and educational, but it's easy to spend more time in front of screens than we realize. Too much screen time can contribute to poor school performance, attention problems, and even obesity.

Will you take the 7 Day Screen-Free Challenge with us? Dim your screen for National Screen-Free Week - Monday, May 1 through Sunday, May 7 - or do this patch program at any time with your troop or your family. You can get more information about being screen-free at [screenfree.org](http://screenfree.org) (you'll need to do this before the week of the challenge).

Once you have completed the patch requirements, just fill out the attached form and have a troop leader or parent/guardian sign it. Then, bring it to any Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa shop to purchase your patch!

### Step 1: Screen Time Log

Do you know how much screen time you get in an average day? The first step of the Screen-Free Challenge is to find out how much time you spend in front of a screen. First, what counts as a screen time? Watching TV counts, but so does watching YouTube videos on a computer, texting, Facebook and other Social Media. Going to the movies, surfing the web, and videogames all count. Do you use a computer to do research or homework? Do you read books on a tablet? That counts, too. Write it all down on your screen time log.

#### Sample Log:

*Monday:*

*6:30 a.m. - Watched cartoons (30 mins)*

*7:00 a.m. - Texted Julie about homework (5 min)*

*9:30 a.m. - Watched a video in the library for school project (60 mins)*

*11:30 a.m. - Facebook (45 mins)*

*1:45 p.m. - Texted Josh (10 mins)*

*3:45 p.m. - Used Wikipedia for homework, then surfed internet (90 mins)*

*7:00 p.m. - Watched TV/texted friends (120 mins)*

## Step 2: Identify Your Obstacles

It might not be possible to eliminate all of your screen time. For example, you might watch a movie at school about the human heart as part of your unit on anatomy. That’s great! Aren’t you glad you live in a world where you can see what the human heart looks like? You can still do the challenge! The important part is to eliminate what you can for only 7 days. What other obstacles will you face on the 7-Day Screen-Free Challenge? Write down your obstacles and see if you can find solutions. You may not be able to avoid the screen entirely, but you may be surprised what you can do without. Enlist the adults in your life to help you meet the challenge. This is a great opportunity for adults to examine their own screen habits, so invite them to take the pledge with you in Step 3.

### Sample Obstacles:

<b>Obstacle</b>	<b>Possible Solution</b>
<i>TV at School</i>	<i>Tell the teacher ahead of time I will be doing a Screen-Free Challenge. Maybe she will offer me an alternate activity or delay the video.</i>
<i>Mom always wants me to text her when I get home from school.</i>	<i>Ask Mom if I can call her instead.</i>
<i>Julie and I always watch Phineas and Ferb on Tuesdays.</i>	<i>Ask Julie if we can do something else for just one week. Maybe we can record it for later.</i>
<i>I am reading the Hunger Games on my Kindle.</i>	<i>Try taking a break and reading a different book made out of paper.</i>
<i>I am too nervous to talk to Josh on the phone, but I think he really likes me. Sometimes I text him.</i>	<i>Try writing a letter instead. Stick it in his locker.</i>
<i>My friends will forget about me if I don’t use social media for a week.</i>	<i>Tell my friends ahead of time what I’m doing and why I think it’s important. Maybe some of them will join me!</i>
<i>I do all my homework on the computer.</i>	<i>Talk to my teacher and see if he will accept handwritten homework for a week just as an experiment.</i>

**You may not have a solution for every obstacle. That’s ok. Remember it is only 7 days!**

## Step 3: Take the 7-Day Screen-Free Pledge

Now that you have thought about what media you can't cut out for the week, it's time to take the pledge. You and your parents/guardians, teacher, or leader can write the pledge together so that it fits your needs. For example, your mom might not be able to take phone calls at work and needs you to text her when you get home from school. That's ok. Just write that into your pledge.

### ***Sample of Pledge Letter:***

*I, Jenny Girl Scout, promise to live screen-free for seven days from May 1 to May 7, 2017. I will not watch television, surf the internet, watch videos on YouTube, or use social media. I may use the computer at school to do homework only. I will use my phone for phone calls and texting mom only.*

*Jenny Girl Scout*

*Jenny Girl Scout's Mom*

## Step 4: The Gift of Time

Make a calendar for the seven days of your challenge. You can mark off each day with a marker or a sticker as you complete it. Now is the fun part - you have approximately 48 extra hours in your week! That's right. If you are like most American youth, you spend two whole days a week on screen time. That's time you can spend doing something else that's fun! Choose at least five of the activities below and come up with at least two more to do during your screen-free week. Mark these on your calendar. You can make your calendar anyway you want - be creative!

- Take a hike with a pet, a friend, or your family.
- Cook dinner for the family (sandwiches count).
- Read a book! Not sure what to read? Ask your librarian.
- Learn to knit, crochet, or do cross stitch.
- Learn a new game.
- Write in a journal or diary.
- Make a scrapbook.
- Phone a friend you haven't talked to in a while.
- Write a letter or make a card for an elderly person or someone who has been ill.
- Write a letter to a relative.
- Write a letter to a pen pal.
- Visit a nursing home.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- Learn or practice something you are not very good at.
- Play outside.

- Pretend you are Juliette Gordon Low.
- Play hopscotch, foursquare, or tag.
- Jump rope.
- Make clothes for your dolls, stuffed animals, or pets.
- Color or make posters to decorate your room.
- Ask you parents if there are extra chores you can do around the house to help make life easier for the family.
- Clean your room.
- Learn how to skip stones.
- Go to a museum or a play.
- Have a picnic.
- Pick up trash in your community.
- Play with a small child.
- Build something with blocks, Legos, or paper towel tubes.
- Paint.
- Take pictures of the new things you try and send them to your local council leadership center.
- Work in the garden.

### **Sample Calendar:**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>
<i>Rode my bike.</i>	<i>Played hopscotch.</i>	<i>Made dinner.</i>	<i>Rode my bike.</i>	<i>Played Monopoly with Jeff.</i>	<i>Read The Wizard of Oz.</i>	<i>Read The Wizard of Oz.</i>
<i>Called Julie.</i>	<i>Made a bathing suit for Teddyrella.</i>	<i>Played hopscotch with Julie.</i>	<i>Wrote to Grandma.</i>	<i>Helped mom make brownies.</i>	<i>Built a blanket fort with my little brother.</i>	<i>Went on a picnic with my troop.</i>
<i>Played chess with my dad.</i>	<i>Called Uncle Ted.</i>	<i>Wrote a letter to Josh.</i>	<i>Went to the library.</i>	<i>Borrowed Julie's pogo stick.</i>		<i>Had a neighborhood pet parade.</i>

Now that you have made it seven whole days without screen time, have you found some fun you were missing out on? It's ok to have some screen time, but choose your activities wisely to make a happy, healthy you. As you add the screen back to your life, ask yourself if you really want to spend six hours a day in front of a screen, or if it's just a habit. In step 5 you will be asked to limit your screen time, but you can choose how important it is to you.

# Step 5: Submit your paperwork and get your patch!

Congratulations! You did it! Please complete this form and have a troop leader or parent/guardian sign it. Once it's completed, bring it to any Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa shop to purchase your patch!

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Troop Number: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] I am a Juliette Grade Level (Circle One): D B J C S A

My Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

The best thing I did during Screen-Free Week:

The hardest thing about Screen-Free Week:

From now on, it will be my goal to have no more than \_\_\_\_\_ hours of screen time per week.

I have completed the following (you keep these):

\_\_\_\_ Screen Time Log

\_\_\_\_ Screen Time Obstacles

\_\_\_\_ Screen Time Pledge

\_\_\_\_ Screen Time Calendar

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Parent/Guardian/Leader's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number/Email Address