4.

MAKE YOURSELF HEARD

If you aren't happy with the addictive or persuasive designs or misinformation on websites you frequent or apps you use, you can send emails, write tweets and let companies know that you don't agree with their practices. When companies are pressured to take action by their most valuable assets –their users – there's a chance they might change.

If you don't feel like your feedback is being heard, there's something really powerful you can do: use a different website or app. If you've communicated that you're unhappy with something a website or app is doing and then actually stop using it or uninstall it – and enough people do it – **they'll notice.**

5.

SPREAD THE WORD

Pass it on! This is an easy tip to forget, but it can have a big effect. Tell your friends, family and co-workers about the things you're noticing, and even ask them to join you in this detox! Everyone struggles with managing their phone habits. What's important is that you find a way that feels right for you and suits your lifestyle. Experiment until you find the right fit, then update your habits as your needs change over time. There's no one-size-fits-all solution.

And finally, communicate your tech choices with those around you. Let's say you'll be unreachable on your messenger app everyday after 8pm because that's when you'll start your screen-free routine: tell your family and friends so they can call you instead. Keep the dialogue open, ask questions and you can live a balanced online life that suits you.

DATA DETOX KIT

ESCAPE THE DEFAULTS

to enhance your digital wellbeing

When was the last time you "unplugged" and didn't touch technology for a day, or even just an hour? If you're constantly online, you're not alone. How can you make sure that time on your device is quality time?

It starts with knowing that the irresistible pull toward your tech isn't your fault! Believe it or not, your favourite apps and websites are designed so that every feature, colour and sound has been 'optimised' to keep you hooked, sold and coming back for more.

Want to find a healthier balance between your online life and your offline one? That's what this part of the Data Detox is all about.

Let's get started!
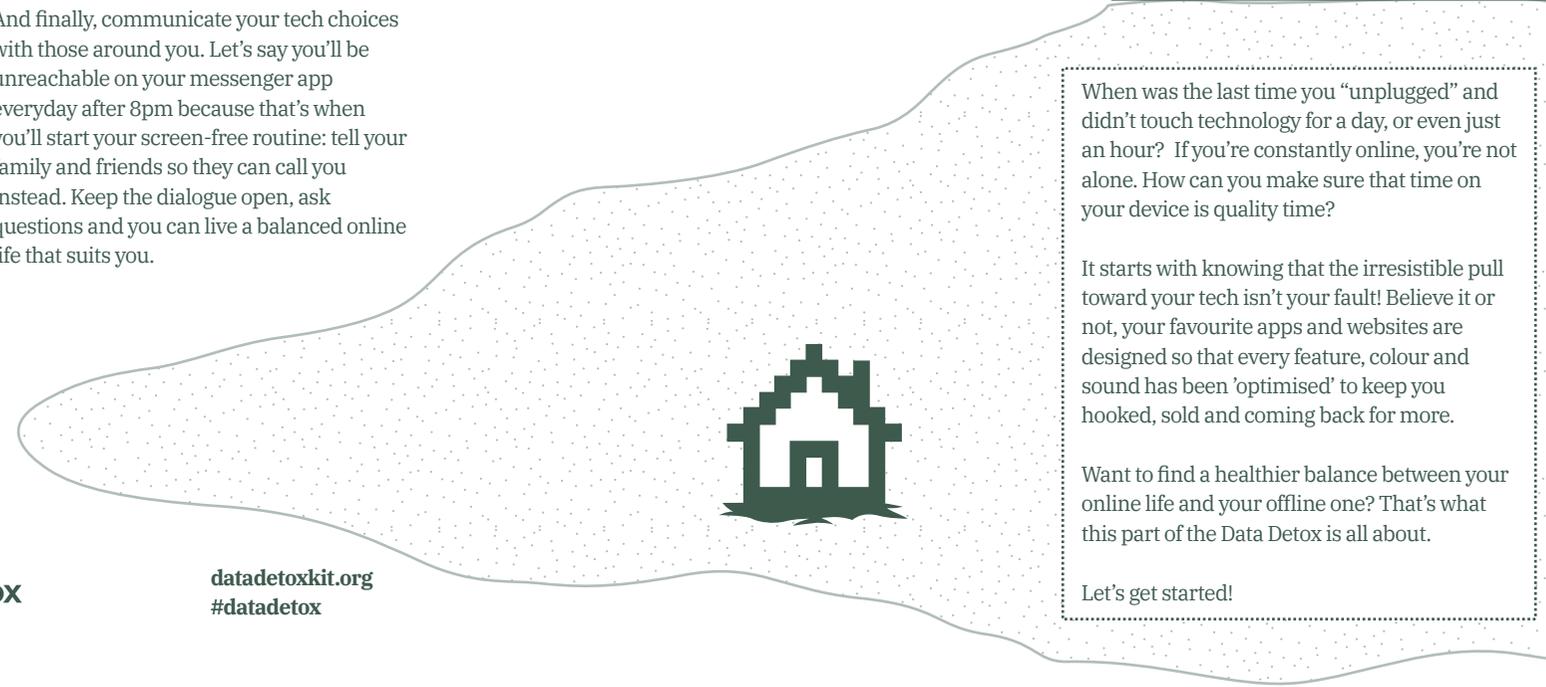
1.

BE PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

This tip is tougher than it sounds. Staying in the moment requires daily practice. It's like a muscle in your brain you need to train regularly in order to build up its strength. You can start by noticing your relationship with the technology you use.

How much time do you spend on your phone?

If you're unhappy with the answer, there are settings and strategies you can follow to gain control of your tech use.

If your goal is to spend less time on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat, change the settings and permissions of those apps to make them work better for you.

Some apps like Instagram even have an option where the app gently reminds you when you've reached your daily time limit.

> Instagram:
> **Profile → Menu →
> Settings → Account →
> Your Activity →
> Set Daily Reminder**

If you find that your phone disrupts your real-life conversations with rings, buzzes or flashes, you can silence it temporarily, put it face down or even tuck it away in your pocket or bag so it's out of your eye line.

2.

SPOT THE DESIGN TRICKS

Persuasive design, also known as "dark patterns," are designs based on human psychology that are used to provoke you into signing up for something, buying something or giving away more personal information than you thought or intended.

Common design nudges may include the use of particular colours, placement of buttons, unclear texts or incomplete information. Sometimes these tricks are obvious, but other times they're harder to spot. You might have already noticed some of these when signing up for a subscription or shopping online. The reason you see these design tricks everywhere is because they work – they get us to click, subscribe, buy more often and keep coming back. The more you're aware of the subtle prompts and manipulations embedded in the websites you use, the more savvy and informed you'll become.

There are a number of things you can do to outsmart your apps.

> **Recognise when you're being nudged:** The first thing you can do is simply be aware of the use of these techniques.

> **Screenshot and share:** Take screenshots anytime you encounter persuasive designs online and share them with your friends (omitting any personally identifiable details – privacy first!). You can also ask companies to change their practices.

> **Stay calm:** If there's a countdown clock on a purchase page, ask yourself, "Is this really urgent?" If you find yourself clicking a button when you didn't really want to, think about the wording on the buttons or the colours used by the service. If you feel confused, don't immediately assume you're at fault — consider the words used by the website or app, as they might be unclear.

3.

STAY MEDIA SAVVY

Just as you can learn to outsmart the features and designs that are meant to keep you scrolling and clicking, you can also get smart about spotting news items or posts that are meant to mislead you.

By now you've probably heard about the problems of 'misinformation' and 'fake news'. You can get wise to misinformation if you make it a habit to ask critical questions of any news you consume, especially if it seems surprising, outrageous or too good to be true.

In the end, you'll want to verify which news is real or fake – especially if you plan to share it with family or friends.

> **What website is this from?
> Who wrote it (and when)?
> What does the whole article say, beyond the headline?
> Which sources are they referring to?**

If you think it's misinformation and want to stop it from spreading, most platforms have a place where you can report the posting. You may also want to decide whether or not to continue following the account that published it.

DATA DETOX KIT