

→ RD Living

The New Grade-Killer

Hey scholar, social media can harm your studies

Social networking sites keep you connected, but make sure you stay logged-out during study time. A recent study, a Dutch-US collaboration, suggests a significant inverse relationship between Facebook use and academic performance. Those offline while studying scored grades almost 19 percent higher than those who stay connected. Offline, they also spent more time studying than the others.

With exams round the corner, Dr Samir Parikh, head of psychiatry at Max Healthcare, New Delhi, offers suggestions:

For students

- Keep separate time slots for social networking in your day's schedule. Don't stay logged-in while studying.
- Take an active break from studies—a walk and some fresh air is far better than returning to Facebook.
- Go online only to de-stress and connect with friends for a predetermined period. And don't get too

involved in News Feed updates—they can be very distracting.

- Go to bed with a free mind. Don't log in before bedtime, so that your mind remains less cluttered with what your friends are up to.

For parents

- Don't ban Facebook for the kids—it's not going to help.
- If your child is going overboard with his social networking, sit with him and help him get his priorities right. Discuss the points given "For Students" above.

"Social media is being used beyond its purpose: to connect with people who are away. The addiction is only going to increase, overriding other priorities," adds Dr Roshan Jain, consultant psychiatrist at Apollo Hospitals, Bangalore. "Kids today network late into the night, and it affects their biological clocks. If you really want human interaction, phone your friends.

Even better, go meet them."

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