



A Digital Break in the Kitchen

By Bill Bradley, Registered Dietitian and Cookbook Author

There is no doubt that most of us spend too much time on our technical devices. With the advent of smart phones, pads, laptops and now voice controlled “personal assistants” we are inundated almost constantly by the digital world. What seems like tuning in to the world by constantly checking social media, e-mails, the news, the weather, and everything else is actually a form of tuning out and studies show that it also has an effect on our health resulting in us being less patient, more forgetful, and making it increasingly difficult to sleep.

Personally, I have been trying with some success to cut back on my screen time. My favorite place to go digital free is in the kitchen. Here, I can leave all my digital devices behind (and I have a lot of them) and just focus on creating delicious food. The act of cooking has brought me back from an emotional abyss many times and there needn't be any digital tools involved.

Here are my tips on taking a peaceful digital break in the kitchen:

1. **Turn off all phones, pads, and computers.** Preferably, put them somewhere far away from the kitchen.
2. **Clean the kitchen.** If you want to truly relax in the kitchen, it's best to begin by cleaning it so you have a clear, clean space.
3. **Use a cookbook if you need a recipe.** Instead of looking for a recipe online try the old fashioned method of browsing a cookbook.

4. **Have all your ingredients and tools ready.** Once you know what recipe you will be making, take a few minutes and gather everything you need. Knowing that everything is right there, ready for you, will help you relax as you cook.
5. **Dim the lights.** Obviously, you don't want to make it too dark, but if your kitchen is really bright, see if you can dim the lights a bit or turn off the really bright ones.
6. **Cook in silence or turn on some relaxing music.** If you are someone who always has something making noise around them, you may want to try not having any music at all. Or you can put on some mellow music to keep you chilled out while you cook.
7. **Keep the devices off during dinner.** Ok, you made the dinner so you should be able to make some rules at dinner. Try to have a device free dinner. Your digestion will thank you!

Finally, see how you feel after being away from your digital tools for a few hours. There may be a part of you that feels anxious about not knowing what is going on every second, but you may also find a peace that you haven't felt in a while. That is usually what happens for me. You may even find that you have made something more delicious than usual! Bon Appetit!

