

ReAL Bodies

I N H E R T S

Social Media **Top tips**

Using social media is part of life, and it should be something that brings enjoyment and fun, rather than negatively impacting on us.

If you ever feel that social media isn't playing a positive role in your life, or you spend too much time scrolling, try these 'top tips'.

- 1 Take control of what you see**
- 2 Check-in with how you're feeling**
- 3 Keep it real**
- 4 Be the change you want to see**
- 5 Think twice before posting**
- 6 Report dangerous accounts or websites**
- 7 Speak to someone if you're being bullied online**
- 8 Prioritise real-life interactions**

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Young people, parents/carers and professionals can call First Steps ED for free with any body image questions or concerns they have.

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Social Media **Top tips**

1 **Take control of what you see**

Have a look through the accounts/people you follow. Think about how the posts they share make you feel.

- Stop following any that leave you feeling bad (or mute them)
- Keep following any that leave you feeling good

Some social media accounts also allow you to block or mute conversation topics, so if there is something that you know you find upsetting, try muting the key words/themes.

2 **Check-in with how you're feeling**

Sometimes we find ourselves scrolling through social media out of habit. Remember to check in with yourself regularly to work out whether you are actually enjoying being online. If you're not, think about whether you could use it less or even delete any apps that you don't enjoy.



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3 Keep it real

We know people tend to only share the very best pictures of themselves, and often use filters or take lots of pictures just to get the 'perfect' one – remember this if you tend to compare yourself negatively to people you see online.



4 Be the change you want to see

Social media can at times bring out the worst in people, but you can choose to use it positively. We should all strive to be kind to others. Research shows that being nice to other people not only makes them feel good but also has a positive impact on our own mood. Be accepting of peoples' differences (even if you don't necessarily agree with their views) and reach out to a friend if you see they have been treated badly on social media.

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5 **Think twice before posting**

Photos – Once you put a photo online, you lose control of that image. Even if you share it with a ‘share once’ option, someone could still screenshot it and it can then be shared, tagged and traced.

Posts – we all say things in the heat of the moment, but when we post them online we can’t take them back.



6 **Report dangerous accounts or websites**

Sadly, sometimes you may come across someone or something online that makes you feel unsafe or upset. You might stumble across a website that provides dangerous advice that could potentially place people’s mental or physical health, or even their lives, at risk. You can often report these on the social media sites themselves, but you can also report self-harm or suicide content here (reportharmfulcontent.com) You can find further information here (samaritans.org)

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7 Speak to someone if you're being bullied online

Being bullied is never OK and can be very upsetting. Make sure you talk to friends or a trusted adult about what's happening to you. There are also lots of support agencies that you could talk to, if you'd find that easier:

www.withyouth.org

www.kooth.com

www.childline.org.uk

8 Prioritise real-life interactions

It can sometimes feel easier to catch up over social media than arranging to meet in person. But it's helpful to our wellbeing to get a good balance of engaging online and spending time with our friends and family face to face.



For more information on looking after your mental health and staying safe online, visit www.youngminds.org.uk.

You can also visit justtalkherts.org for more information about the issues that matter to you and details of support available across Hertfordshire.

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