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Does a 'digital detox' promote better health?...

Taking breaks from your phone may reduce stress and improve physical health

"Do you have anything on the 'information diet'?" someone asked. I wasn't exactly sure what he was talking about.

I told him that we had information on identifying reliable information on the web. Then it dawned on me what he meant.

We have more information coming at us than at any time in history. Many of us would benefit from putting away our phones and turning off our screens. Some call it a "digital detox."

I can't drive home without seeing billboards with messages. I enjoy listening to the radio, but I do not always have it on. I like to drive in solitude and pay attention to the drivers around me, who sometimes are on phones and occasionally drive through red lights.

Getting away from the constant stream of information hitting us from every direction can benefit our health on several levels.

I recognize the irony of some of you reading this on a computer, phone, tablet or other device.

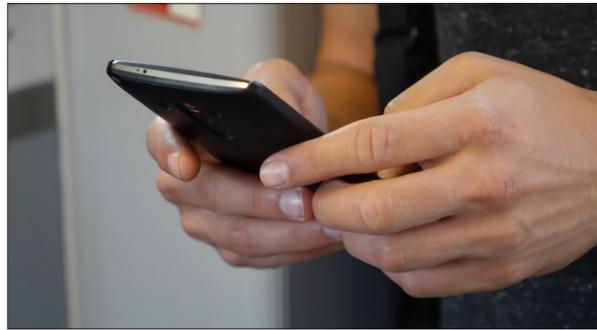
In North Dakota, a state law requires students to turn off and store electronic devices during school hours or leave them at home.

As I walk around a college campus, I am often amazed to see a line of students, all on their devices, while their peers are walking or sitting next to them.

So, what's the problem with all this media? Devices are distracting and reduce face-to-face interaction and learning. Our brains are not designed to truly multitask.

We may feel addicted to technology or fear we are missing something if we set aside our devices.

Yoo much screen time and blue light can negatively affect sleep. Staring at screens can strain our eyes. That's why eye care professionals recommend the 20-20-20 rule: take a 20-second break to look



Many experts recommend limiting recreational screen time to no more than two hours a day. (Pixabay photo)

at something 20 feet away every 20 minutes.

If you take some breaks from your phone, you might notice reduced stress and better physical health — maybe even more creativity. You also may cultivate stronger relationships by taking a walk with a friend during a break instead of scrolling on a device.

Our devices can also leave us with "tech neck" from bending our heads forward to look at screens. Our heads weigh about 10 pounds, and slumping forward increases pressure on the neck and shoulders. Sit up straight with your body aligned and your feet flat on the floor. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has information about ergonomics to help prevent strains.

Let's also consider the cleanliness of these screens. More than two decades of research show that digital devices can harbor bacteria and fungi, which may be transferred to our food and mouths from our scrolling fingers.

Many people take their phones to the bathroom. Give yourself some privacy. Some researchers have reported that phones can carry thousands of bacteria per square inch — sometimes more than a toilet seat.

Many experts recommend limiting recreational screen time to no more than two hours a day. You might set a timer, turn off your device at night, clean it with an alcohol-based wipe (or whatever your manufacturer recommends) and keep it out of your bedroom.

As I write this column on my computer, I know technology is not going away. Unlike my children, I am not a "digital native." I was an adult when I bought a cell phone, while my kids grew up with technology.

Use devices for what they are: tools to help us when we need them. If you would like to read about recognizing reliable information while online, see "Nourish Your Mind and Body with Accurate Health Information" from North Dakota State

University Extension.

Reclaiming some time from screens can open space for movement, conversation and nourishing food. Try this recipe from Iowa State University and enjoy it on a brisk walk with a buddy.

Peanut Butter Banana Smoothie

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 container (6 ounces) vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1/2 teaspoon cocoa powder (optional)
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds (optional)
- 3 ice cubes (optional)

Cut a fresh banana into 4 to 6 chunks. Place in a tightly sealed container or zippered bag and freeze for at least 4 hours. Place frozen banana, yogurt, milk, peanut butter and optional ingredients in a blender. Blend until smooth.

Makes two servings. When made with nonfat milk, each serving has 190 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 7 grams protein, 33 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams fiber and 100 milligrams sodium.

(Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., is a North Dakota State University Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences.)

Make Cards for Foster Children

Rolla Public Library
Monday, March 2, 2026 —
6:30p.m. — 8p.m.
\$15/Person (to cover supplies)
Ages 12+ with adult supervision

Limited space!!!
Call/Text Petra Kroll @ 701-477-4515
BLACKCATSTAMPING @GMAIL.COM

BID REQUEST

Open Date: March 2, 2026

The Belcourt School District is calling for sealed bids for:

The sale of:

- 2015 GMC Terrain SUV AS IS CONDITION
- 2001 Buick LeSabre Sedan AS IS CONDITION

The option to bid on one individual vehicle or both vehicles will be allowed. Each bidder must list the bid amount per vehicle separately. The bidder will be responsible for the timely removal of the vehicles after purchase is finalized with bus garage assistance if needed. The vehicles can be viewed by contacting Kevin Davis at the Belcourt School District Business Office between the hours of 9am to 2pm. He can be reached by calling 701-477-6471 ext. 3327 or cell 701-550-0330.

Sealed bids must be submitted to Duane Poitra at the school Business Office by the closing date of **March 12, 2026** at 4:00 pm. The mailing address is Belcourt School District #7, Attn: Duane Poitra, PO Box 440, Belcourt, ND 58316. The Belcourt School District #7 Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or any part of the bid or to waive any formalities in the bidding. For further information contact:

Duane Poitra
Business Manager
P.O. Box 440
Belcourt, ND 58316
(701) 477-6471 ext. 3213

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fairs and Fourth of July celebrations.

These societies were also active in summer parochial schools and Sunday School. An anniversary publication of North Prairie Church in Velva shows a photograph of three women and captions them as president, vice president and secretary of the Ladies Aid Society. On another page the same photograph captions them as the Sunday School Board of Education: superintendent, teacher and teacher.

By 1940 many city congregations had given their women the vote. By 1955 the last rural congregation had given its women the vote. Today the Lutheran women's societies remain steadfast in foreign missions, Bible study, church education, quilt-making, and tasty food.

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Minot UFOs Return By Jayme L. Job

March 5, 2026 – An unbelievable UFO sighting occurred on this date over the Minot Air Force base in 1967. Unbeknownst to many North Dakotans, the state has proved fertile ground for UFO sightings for several decades. In fact, the state even has a connection to the first UFO sighting in history, when the term "UFO" was first coined.

That 1947 event began over Washington state, when pilot Kenneth Arnold "...spotted nine unidentified objects flying near Mount Rainier." Arnold's report led reporters to term the entities, 'unidentified flying objects,' or UFOs. Arnold grew up in Minot, attending grade and high school there during the 1920s and '30s. After the initial description and media coverage, UFO sightings became much more common. In response, the Air Force created a catalog of UFO sightings in an attempt to chronicle and explain the phenomenon. Referred to as "Project Blue Book," the catalog documents dozens of UFO reports from North Dakota, most taking place near the Minot and Grand Forks Air Force Bases.

The UFO sighting on March 5, 1967, took place only three days after two sightings were reported near Mohall and Velva. Then on March 5, Minot Air Force Base security teams were alerted when Air Defense Command radar detected an "...unidentified target descending over the Minuteman missile silos of the 91st Strategic Missile Wing..."

When security police responded to the call, they saw a large metallic disk hovering over the missile silos. The disk was ringed with bright flashing lights. Before F-106 interceptors at the base were scrambled, the UFO left the silos, moving first over the launch control facility, and then climbing straight up into the air before taking off at an "incredible speed."

Between the years of 1967 and 1968, a number of UFO incidents occurred at or near the nuclear missile sites in North Dakota. One eyewitness, Lt. David Schuur, claimed in interviews that a brightly lit UFO hovering near missile sites in 1967 was responsible for initiating a launch sequence at the Echo Launch Control Center. Once the

glowing object left the vicinity, Schurr was able to activate the launch inhibit switch. Robert Hastings, the professional UFO reporter who interviewed Schuur, called the interview "one of the most disturbing" of his career.

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Forced Norwegian By Jayme L. Job

March 6, 2026 – The State Legislature passed a law on this date in 1891 that would require the teaching of Scandinavian languages at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Although less than 8% of the student population was of Norwegian descent, the state's Norwegian minority began clamoring for the bill as early as 1884, calling for the hiring of a Norwegian professor "of their own race," as they put it. After seven years of campaigning, they found victory in the hiring of a Norwegian professor, the Reverend George Rygh.

Although the 1880 Census recorded fewer than 9,000 Norwegians in North Dakota, the next decade witnessed an enormous influx. By 1900, their numbers had swelled over eight-fold to nearly 74,000, and soon nearly one of every three persons in the state was of Norwegian ancestry. As their numbers grew, so did their influence. The 1880s alone saw the emergence of thirteen Norwegian-language newspapers. Local politicians or political parties controlled many of these papers, hoping to reach their new and growing constituency through their own language. Most of the immigrants, however, learned English very quickly, and the majority were soon fluent bilinguals.

Despite their quick adoption of English and American customs, the Norwegians in the state hoped to preserve their own heritage as well. Passing down Norwegian cuisine and customs to their children, they also hoped to pass on the Norwegian language. To this end, they began lobbying for the bill to introduce Norwegian instruction at UND. Although opposed by the university's regency, the bill eventually passed, but the Reverend Rygh found little actual interest in the language, and was forced to fill his schedule teaching English and Greek. In one semester in 1893, he had only a single student enrolled in his Norwegian class. He resigned in 1895. However, with the increasing number of Norwegians arriving here, interest grew, and a chair of Scandinavian languages was established in 1900.

Norwegian continues to be taught at the university today.

"Dakota Datebook" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and with funding from the North Dakota Humanities Council. See all the Dakota Datebooks at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the Dakota Datebook book at shoppairiepublic.org.

Rolette County Soil Conservation District cordially invites you to attend the 69th Annual Achievement Awards Banquet, as well as the 4th Annual Conservation Assistance and Informational Meeting

Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026 @ 5:00 pm

at Memorial Hall Rolette, ND

complimentary pancake/sausage supper will be served

We will honor Rolette County Award Winners:

2025 Overall Achievement Award:

Mongeon Ranch

2025 Influential Woman of the Year Award:

Cynthia Tastad

Outstanding Youth Award:

Ella Pederson

Please consider joining us in honoring some of Rolette County's finest. Also, for informational booths, and presentations, who will be offering assistance with conservation programs and services from the following agencies:

NRCS, FSA, US Fish/Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, ND Game and Fish, Pheasants Forever, ND Forest Service and Rolette County Soil Conservation District.

BID REQUEST

Open Date: March 2, 2026

The Belcourt School District is calling for sealed bids for the purchase of:

(2) New 2026 or newer (23) Passenger plus Driver Activity Buses powered by a gas engine, 40-gallon fuel tank (minimum), 212" WB 14,500lb GVWR (minimum) chassis, 90,000btu (minimum) air conditioning condenser, overhead parcel racks, high-back reclining seats, with exterior color to be black. Buses are required to be available & delivered on-site by May of 2026.

Alternate bid price option to include one (adequately sized) additional rear located heater per bus.

The bidder will be required to specify trade-in amount for (2) used 2016 Chevy StarCraft 20 passenger activity buses which can be viewed at the Belcourt School Bus Garage.

Successful bidders must be a licensed, bonded, franchised dealer with warranty and parts availability. Any offers by the bidders of warranties, options, or assumed costs must be listed in the bids. Estimated date of delivery of the bus must be stated. For exact bid specifications or to inquire on trade, contact Mr. Ray Trotter Jr at (701)/477-6471 ext. 3307.

All interested businesses or parties submitting bids must comply with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) Requirements. All parties must have or acquire a tribal business license before the final purchase is made. For further information on TERO at (701)/477-2600.

Sealed bids must be submitted to the school Business Office by March 12th, 2026 at 4:00 pm. The mailing address is Belcourt School District #7, Attn: Duane Poitra, PO Box 440, Belcourt, ND 58316. The bid will be opened in an open setting and will be presented to the School Board at its next regular meeting. The Belcourt School District #7 Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or any part of the bid or to waive any formalities in the bidding. For further information contact:

Duane Poitra
Business Manager
P.O. Box 440
Belcourt, ND 58316
(701) 477-6471 ext. 3213