

## **Media Fast: A Strategy for Self-Reflection and Growth**

It's a time-honored tradition in many families: Go for a day (or even longer) without any form of media. What's the point? A media fast gives you and your family the opportunity to reflect on the complex dependence we have on mass media and digital technology. It's a chance to see how deeply media and technology are woven into the fabric of our lives.

There's a discipline in fasting: It's not easy to do, but sometimes it's the best way to grow in self-reflection. A fast makes you think hard about your choices. A fast encourages introspection, and might reveal to you any bad habits you may have developed. A fast can also remind you about what you really love about media and technology.

Blogger and journalist Leo Babauta ([www.zenhabits.net](http://www.zenhabits.net)) offers these options for a media fast:

- ∞ If you're feeling bold, cut out everything for a week: No Internet, radio or newspaper. No reading. Watch the people and the world all around you. Get into your own head and start thinking and feeling for yourself.
- ∞ Can't hack a week? Try one day. Cutting all Internet, TV, radio and even reading for a day would be pretty drastic for most of us. See what happens when you try it.
- ∞ Fast on specific media, and take turns. Instead of cutting out everything, try cutting out only TV for a day or two. Then try one day going without music. Then see if you can live without e-mail for a day.
- ∞ Can't give it up completely? Then track the time you spend on media for one day without actually cutting back. Add it up at the end of the day. See how many minutes you devote to each type of media. It might be an eye-opener.

To benefit most from your media fast, take time to reflect afterward in writing or in conversation. Ask yourself what was most difficult and why. What did you miss? What did you enjoy?

Rethink your media intake. What changes do you want to make to your media use? What do you need to do to implement those changes? You may discover that cutting out certain forms of media wasn't as hard as you thought and that you were able to get a lot done without them. Instead of launching right back into your old media habits, use media and digital technologies more thoughtfully from now on.