



Fact Sheet [Print this page](#) - [Find out if you or someone you love is addicted to video games.](#)

Computer and Video Game Addiction

Computers, video games, and the Internet have become entrenched features of our daily lives. Computer use has reached beyond work and is now a major source of fun and entertainment for many people. For most people, computer use and video game play is integrated into their lives in a balanced healthy manner. For others, time spent on the computer or video game is out of balance, and has displaced work, school, friends, and even family.

What is computer and video game addiction?

When time spent on the computer, playing video games or cruising the Internet reaches a point that it harms a child's or adult's family and social relationships, or disrupts school or work life, that person may be caught in a cycle of addiction. Like other addictions, the computer or video game has replaced friends and family as the source of a person's emotional life. Increasingly, to feel good, the addicted person spends more time playing video games or searching the Internet. Time away from the computer or game causes moodiness or withdrawal.

When a person spends up to ten hours a day or more rearranging or sending files, playing games, surfing the net, visiting chat rooms, instant messaging, and reading emails, that easily can reach up to seventy to eighty hours a week on-line with the computer. Major social, school or work disruptions will result.

Symptoms of computer or video game addiction:

For children:

- Most of non-school hours are spent on the computer or playing video games.
- Falling asleep in school.
- Not keeping up with assignments.
- Worsening grades.
- Lying about computer or video game use.
- Choosing to use the computer or play video games, rather than see friends.
- Dropping out of other social groups (clubs or sports).
- Irritable when not playing a video game or on the computer.

For adults:

- Computer or video game use is characterized by intense feelings of pleasure and guilt.
- Obsessing and pre-occupied about being on the computer, even when not connected.
- Hours playing video games or on the computer increasing, seriously disrupting family, social or even work life.
- Lying about computer or video game use.
- Experience feelings of withdrawal, anger, or depression when not on the computer or involved with their video game.
- May incur large phone or credit bills for on-line services.
- Can't control computer or video game use.
- Fantasy life on-line replaces emotional life with partner.

There are even physical symptoms that may point to addiction:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Sleep disturbances
- Back, neck aches

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- Headaches
- Dry eyes
- Failure to eat regularly or neglect personal hygiene

For the computer or video game addicted person, a fantasy world on-line or in a game has replaced his or her real world. The virtual reality of the computer or game is more inviting than the every day world of family, school or work. With the increased access to pornography on the Internet and in games, this fantasy world may be highly sexual.

The first step to healing is to recognize the symptoms. Help from a professional is often needed.

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