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Tech Diet – Is your family “tech fat”?

The *Tech Diet* is a four step plan to *wean*, or in some cases *lean*, your family off technology. Designed by pediatric occupational therapist Cris Rowan, the *Tech Diet* consists of the four R’s – Rate, Reset, Reorder and Rules. The *Tech Diet* enables families to explore the changes technology has caused to their family structure, and envision a new and healthy future.

THE ZONE’IN TECH DIET

The 4 Step Plan to Get Your Family Back on Track to Health and Wellness

1) RATE - technology usage

Many families have no idea how much technology they actually use on a daily basis, and consequently often overuse technology without conscious thought. While one can easily see the effects of overeating, overusing technology is more ubiquitous. Child technology usage often follows that of the highest using parent, as this parent inadvertently encourages high technology usage in all family members to normalize or condone their own high usage rates.

<u>Tech Light</u> 1-2 hours/day	<u>Tech Moderate</u> 2-4 hours/day	<u>Tech Heavy</u> 4-6 hours/day	<u>Tech Fat</u> >6 hours/day	Technology Screen www.zonein.ca
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2) RESET - unplug all technology

In order to reduce the use of technology, and establish new values, interests and habits, it is imperative for your family to experience life without technology. Unplugging from all technology for a short period of time, resets the family on a path toward health and wellness. The *rate* of technology usage determines the duration of the *reset*, or technology unplug. Families which fall into the *Tech Heavy* or *Tech Fat* usage rates, may have technology addictions, and will consequently need to experience longer duration technology unplugging in order to successfully reset their pre-tech values, interests and habits.

<u>Tech Light</u> 1-2 weeks	<u>Tech Moderate</u> 2-4 weeks	<u>Tech Heavy</u> 4-7 weeks	<u>Tech Fat</u> >6 weeks	Tech Addiction Q Unplug’in Game www.zonein.ca
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3) REORDER - schedule activity replacement

Technology kills a lot of time which could be filled with more healthy and inter-connected family activities. Many families have no other activity pursuits than technology, and need to spend time to schedule in alternative activities. Suggest development of family theme nights, such as those listed below, to get started with scheduled activity replacement.

Technology Schedule
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<u>Sunday</u> dinner party	<u>Monday</u> cookie night	<u>Tuesday</u> clean rooms	<u>Wednesday</u> games night	<u>Thursday</u> music/dance	<u>Friday</u> movie night	<u>Saturday</u> free night
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4) RULES - structure change

Each family should discuss what type of structure and rules they need to establish to support and complete the *Tech Diet*. Suggestion is that each family acquire a *Tech Box* with lock, and that all technology upon entering the home is locked up. Key or combination for lock should be given to the lowest technology user, generally this would be the youngest child in the family. Penalties for cheating should be agreed upon, as well as technology usage rules when members are outside the family home.

Note * Technology referenced in below *Tech Diet* is for entertainment purposes only e.g. TV, video games, internet, social networking, or pornography; not music, or technology used for vocational or educational purposes. ©Zone’in Programs Inc. February 2013