what is

healthy electronic gaming?

Gaming can be a positive and enjoyable pastime. It can help us to connect with others, feel socially included and improve our self-esteem. Healthy gaming can help us to have

These problems seem to be most common for young men between the ages of 12–20 years of age, but can occur in any gamer population.

If you think that your internet use or gaming is beginning to contribute to some problems in your life, there are lots of things you can do to get back in control.

signs of possible problems with gaming

It is not necessarily the amount of time you spend gaming that causes a problem, but when gaming takes time away from doing activities that keep you healthy and well. For

than usual with people you care about. You might be doing

or getting to school or work. You might be feeling some

If you are experiencing some of these symptoms below, it might be a sign that gaming is starting to have a negative impact on your everyday life:

it's OK to feel frustrated at a loss or situation from time to time but gaming should be a positive experience and if it isn't this may be a sign that something is wrong

other people expressing concern at the amount of time you spend gaming or online

spending less time with family and friends than you normally would

being preoccupied with gaming (spending large amounts of time thinking about the next gaming session or past sessions)

losing track of time and a loss of control over the time you spend gaming so important things get missed, such as appointments or other commitments

feeling physical pain or irritation, for example pain in your neck, wrists, or back, dry or red eyes

eating meals while playing or skipping meals

or in-game purchases

using gaming as a way of avoiding other activities.

You might also notice other changes in your life that don't appear directly related to your gaming such as:

loss of interest in school and other activities that you previously enjoyed

poor eating habits

headaches/migraines

decreased personal hygiene

performing less well at school or work.

related problems

experiencing other mental health conditions, for example,

supporting yourself and getting help

Take a "health check" on your gaming and internet use. Is it a fun activity that is helping you to feel good? How is your balance with other activities that keep you healthy and well? Are you feeling more or less connected to others?

There are a lot of tips that can help with keeping your game time in balance. Time on screens can sneak up without you realising it. Here are some things that you could consider.

Leave your internet and gaming time for after your

Get up and move regularly. Doing some simple stretches can really help.

Take a sleep audit. How much are you getting? Sleep should be a priority, as it is important for our physical and mental health.

If you or someone you know is going through a tough time you can get help and support from headspace.org.au, your school or university wellbeing service or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

The headspace Clinical Reference Group have approved this clinical resource.
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GAMES