

# Avoiding Doom Scrolling

*What to do with your phone at 11pm instead*

STILL DAD

---

## WHY IT HAPPENS

---

You're not weak or addicted: you're avoiding something. The scroll is a numbing behavior that fills the silence so you don't have to sit with what's actually going on. At 11pm alone, that something is usually grief, anxiety, anger, or just the absence of the life you used to have. The scroll doesn't fix any of it. It just delays the next day's version of the same thing.

## THE REPLACEMENT FRAMEWORK

---

You can't just stop the scroll without putting something in its place. The replacement has to match the need, not just the behavior.

- If the trigger is loneliness: Replace with a call or message to someone real
- If the trigger is anxiety: Replace with box breathing or a notebook
- If the trigger is boredom: Replace with something absorbing: a book, a show, a game
- If the trigger is avoidance: Replace with 10 minutes of the thing you're avoiding
- If the trigger is just habit: Replace with a physical interrupt: get up, change rooms, get water

## WHAT TO DO INSTEAD: BY ENERGY LEVEL

### LOW ENERGY: JUST LYING THERE

- Put on a podcast or audiobook instead of opening apps
- Body scan (see the breathing sheet)
- Read a physical book or e-reader without notifications
- Write three sentences in a notebook about the day
- Listen to music with your eyes closed

### HIGHER ENERGY: CAN'T WIND DOWN

- Go for a walk, even 15 minutes
- Do pushups or some physical movement until you're tired
- Shower: especially a cold one if you're really wired
- Make something: a plan, a meal, a playlist
- Build something toward a goal you actually care about

### MEDIUM ENERGY: AWAKE BUT RESTLESS

- Do the dishes or tidy the kitchen (10 min clears your head)
- Write a longer journal entry
- Work on something small: a list, a plan, an email you've been putting off
- Watch something you actually want to watch, not just what autoplay gave you
- Call someone: text first if it's late

## PHONE SETUP CHECKLIST

- Set app time limits on social media apps (15–30 min/day)
- Move social media apps off your home screen
- Turn off all non-essential notifications
- Enable Do Not Disturb from 9pm–7am (allow calls from favorites)
- Set up a grayscale shortcut: color is part of what makes apps addictive
- Charge your phone outside your bedroom (use an alarm clock)
- Set a consistent "phone down" time and treat it like a meeting
- Delete apps you open out of pure habit with no payoff

*You're not trying to eliminate your phone. You're trying to stop letting it use you. These are just rules you set in advance so you don't have to make the decision at 11pm when your willpower is lowest.*