Phone Zone

Apple, Android

- Making Your Phone Dumb

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[Editorial / How-To from Cam Vokey]

Want to go dumb phone?

I hate using my phone and being so addicted to it. There are a ton of solutions out there : either buying an alternative phone or "dumbing" down what you already have.

You can:

- Get a flip phone
- Buy a "Dumb Phone" which is a smart phone with less features
- Buy a second phone that you switch to when not working
- Convert your existing phone into a phone that is less sexy and more utilitarian

There are positives and negatives to all of these. For me, it's about cost versus life requirements. Annoyingly, we are living more and more in a world where you need a smart phone to do certain

things (or to do things "easier") : paying for parking, concert tickets, boarding passes are a few that doing old-school are now way more annoying. Also, I listen to podcasts constantly and bike everywhere so google maps bike directions are critical. **Beyond that, I'm a Creative Technologist so I often have to use a smart phone for work things.** I also don't want two phones (I hate having more "stuff"), and I know I need a smart phone a lot of the time. I also *like having a smart phone*. Until Apple makes a dumb device (they should), I've landed on converting my existing phone to be dumb(er).

My Recommended Version

To use my phone less (iPhone) here's what I've done:

- Remove all social media apps. The mobile browser versions of these apps is a pretty terrible experience. If you just stick to "don't install the app" you'll quickly remove it from muscle memory. If you want to go next-level : delete all your social media accounts. Though, I generally keep mine but rarely / never check them unless I'm depressed and looking for work.
- Remove all endless scroll apps. There's crossover here with social media, but I'm thinking mainly about news apps and things like Reddit. This one is way harder to me, and I've kept NYT and Reddit.
- Remove all shopping apps from your phone. It's hard to shop in black and white, anyway.
- Disable all notifications except the ones that matter : probably just text messages and phone calls.
- Disable "Raise to Wake" – this means that you now need to specifically turn your phone on rather than the screen turning out automatically every time you pick it up. Settings > Display & Brightness
- Turn on color filters and make your iPhone grey scale. Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size
- Add an accessibility shortcut to your home screen so you can turn on color when you absolutely need it (taking a photo or whatever).
- Not really for the dumb phone, but a good practice is to delete apps you don't need and unsubscribe from every marketing email you get. Sorry capitalism!

Alternative Phone Resources

The Dumb Phone Finder is a filterable website that can help you find a phone that meets your dumb requirements. Popular models out there are the Light Phone and the Minimal Phone. I'm not endorsing either but I've heard them mentioned so that's gotta mean something.