Calm the Noise

A gentle reset for information and digital overload, for adults 55+

A large-print guide for adults 55+

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Start Here

Texts, emails, news alerts, ads, group chats, TV, newsletters and your own good intentions to “keep up.” If it all feels like too much, you are not behind and you are not broken. There is simply more coming at you than a person can sensibly handle.

This guide is a gentle reset. It will help you decide what deserves your attention, quiet what doesn’t, and feel more in charge of your day.

> **The goal**
>
> - Not to know less, but to feel less buried.
> - You choose when and how information reaches you.

Signs You May Be Overloaded

Overload often comes from caring and wanting to stay informed, not from laziness. Check the ones that sound like you.

- [ ] I check my phone or the news the moment I wake up
- [ ] I start things and don’t finish them
- [ ] I read a lot but can’t say what I learned
- [ ] I feel tired or on edge after scrolling
- [ ] I have many unread emails and feel guilty about them
- [ ] I put off decisions because I want “just a little more information”
- [ ] I find it hard to enjoy quiet

If you checked three or more, a reset is likely to help. If feeling overwhelmed is affecting your sleep, mood or daily life, please also talk with your doctor.

Why too much information makes decisions harder

When every source says something different, choosing gets harder, not easier. That is why people end up stuck, reading more instead of deciding. The fix is not more information. It is better filters.

The 5-Step Reset

Step 1: See what is coming in

For two days, jot down every place information reaches you. Don’t judge it. Just notice.

Sources I noticed (phone alerts, email, TV, mail, social media, group chats):

Step 2: Sort into Keep, Quiet and Quit

Keep	Quiet	Quit
Brings me joy, helps me decide, or connects me to people I love	Useful sometimes, but not every hour. Check it once a day or week	Leaves me worried, annoyed or no better informed
Example: a weekly call with a friend	Example: news, once in the morning	Example: constant alerts, junk email

Step 3: Set your schedule

Choose set times for news, email and social media. Outside those times, let them wait.

- Pick one or two news times a day, not all day.
- Check email at set times, such as late morning and late afternoon.

- Keep the first and last 30 minutes of the day free of screens if you can.

My information schedule:

Step 4: Quiet the noise

- [ ] Turn off notifications you don't need (ask a grandchild or a library tech helper if you need a hand)
- [ ] Unsubscribe from five newsletters or promotional emails
- [ ] Mute or leave a group chat that only stresses you
- [ ] Use "do not disturb" during meals, rest and quiet time
- [ ] Let unknown phone numbers go to voicemail

Step 5: Use a decision rule

When you are stuck on a decision, don't keep reading. Use this rule instead.

The Enough Rule

- Write down the decision.
- List the two or three things you truly need to know.
- Find those answers from one or two trusted sources.
- Decide, or set a date to decide. Then stop researching.

Making It Stick

You will slip. Everyone does. A new notification will grab you, or a worrying headline will pull you in. When that happens, don’t scold yourself. Simply return to your schedule.

A week of gentle practice

Day	One small thing
Monday	Notice and list your sources
Tuesday	Sort into Keep, Quiet and Quit
Wednesday	Turn off five notifications
Thursday	Unsubscribe from five emails
Friday	Set your news and email times
Saturday	Enjoy a screen-free hour
Sunday	Notice how you feel and adjust

What I noticed about how I feel after one week:

Replace, don’t just remove

If you remove a habit, give your attention somewhere good to go: a walk, a puzzle, a letter, a call, a hobby, a cup of tea on the porch.

Three things I would like to do with my reclaimed time:

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