

Is technology your

# FRENEMY?

Pull the plug on modern-day maladies



**Smartphones,** tablets, and computers enhance our lives, but they also put us at risk for many ailments—poor sleep, neck strain, and an aching back, just to name a few. Here, three experts from Kettering Health Network talk about how to prevent and combat these perils of modern life.

**Poor sleep** After sunset, darkness signals our brain that it's time to produce melatonin, the hormone that controls sleep and wake cycles. But artificial lighting—especially the “blue” light that comes from many electronic devices—suppresses melatonin production, making it more difficult to wind down.

“Research shows that this disruption to our internal clock affects sleep not just that night but the next night as well,” says Kevin Carter, DO, a family medicine physician who is fellowship-trained in sleep medicine. “Unfortunately, many people use their devices before bed, thinking it will help them relax, but it’s doing just the opposite.”

To help your brain wind down for sleep naturally, Dr. Carter recommends the following:



Kevin Carter, DO

- Dim the lights in your home after the dinner hour.
- Establish a “digital curfew” starting two hours before bedtime.
- If you or your children must use devices at night (such as for homework), dim the screens. Some devices have a “night mode” function that blocks the more stimulating types of light.
- If you prefer reading on a screen, use an e-reader that mimics the appearance of ordinary ink on paper rather than a tablet or smartphone. This technology is easier on your eyes—and your brain!

**Still having trouble sleeping?**

Learn about the services our sleep centers offer at [ketteringhealth.org/sleep](http://ketteringhealth.org/sleep)

