

INSTAGRAM X NEDA:

A guide for a healthy and positive experience on Instagram



Instagram has always been a place for exploring your passions, sharing your interests, and connecting with the people and things you love. We want you to feel comfortable to express yourself, and to feel enriched and empowered as an individual by what you experience. Sometimes, however, the content you see on social media can make you feel pressured to present a perfect or unrealistic version of your life — or maybe you find yourself comparing your life and body to others.

That is why Instagram and the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) have teamed up to create this resource to give you the tools and information you need to ensure your time on Instagram is healthy, supportive, and empowering.

This is a resource to help you:

- Understand the tools available to protect your space and well-being on Instagram
- Create positive communities on Instagram

How to Protect Your Space and Well-Being on Instagram

Own Your Feed

Be aware of the people you follow and how they make you feel as you scroll through Instagram. Some make us laugh, give us advice, and inspire us with their confidence. However if anyone you are following makes you feel bad about yourself, directly or indirectly, carefully review their place on your feed and consider unfollowing them. No notification is sent when you unfollow someone.

How to: Go to the profile of the person you'd like to unfollow and tap "Unfollow".

Mute the Noise

If you want to hide posts in feed from certain accounts without unfollowing them, you can use the "Mute" feature. The accounts you mute will not be aware that you've muted them, and you can always unmute an account to get their posts back in your feed.

How to: To mute an account, tap the "..." menu in the corner of the post. From there, you can choose whether to mute posts, or mute posts and stories from an account. You can also mute posts and stories by pressing and holding on a story in your tray, or from a profile.

Block Negativity

If a follower is impacting your experience negatively, you can block them to remove them from your followers. When you block someone, that person can't view your posts or search for your Instagram account. The blocked person isn't notified when they're blocked. You can unblock an account at any time.

How to: Block an account by tapping “...” on their profile, then tapping “Block.”

Set Limits

The time you spend on Instagram should be positive and intentional. When you find you aren't getting as much joy from it, the “Activity Dashboard” gives you tools to help you set boundaries and manage the time you spend on the platform.

How to: Go to the settings page and tap “Your Activity.” At the top of the page, you'll see a dashboard showing the average amount of time you spend on Instagram. Tap any bar to see your total time for that day. Below the dashboard, you can set a daily reminder to send yourself an alert when you've reached the amount of time you want to spend on Instagram for that day. You can change or cancel the reminder at any time. You can also tap on “Notification Settings” to quickly access the new “Mute Push Notifications” setting.

Keep the Comments on Your Posts Supportive

It's important to feel comfortable with the comments left on your posts. That is why Instagram built anti-bullying comment filters to automatically hide offensive and bullying comments. To keep the comments in your post positive, you can control who can comment on your posts and create a list of words and/or emojis that you don't want to appear in comments.

How to: You can find all of these tools in the “Comment Controls” section of the app settings. There, you can choose to allow comments from: everyone, people you follow and those people's followers, just the people you follow, or your followers. To manually add specific words and phrases to be blocked from your comments, save them in the “Manual Filter”. The “Offensive Comment” filter is defaulted on.

Look Out for Others

If you're worried about a post you see containing potential self-harm, you can anonymously report the post. The next time the person opens the app, they will see a message connecting them to support resources, such as talking to friend, contacting a helpline, or finding additional resources. These support tools also appear when a person searches for upsetting content on Instagram.

How to: To report a post for self-injury, tap “...” above the post, tap “Report”, and select “It's Inappropriate > Self injury.”



How to Create and Engage in Positive Communities on Instagram

Come as you are

Life can be wonderful and beautiful, but it can also be messy and difficult. Consider how you might want your online life to reflect that reality. For example, posting an unfiltered photo or selfie can be difficult, but it is important to recognize that in doing this, you are showing others that filters are not needed to make a photo worthy of posting online. Your story is valid — flaws and all. How do you choose to #comeasyouare and share your full self online?

"I always wanted to put on this persona, but it wasn't reality. It was almost a fake life. Then I started being real, and that's what people were able to relate to, and it took the pressure off."

— @binge eaterconfessions

"Body positivity has taught me that I don't have to change. My body, being that it's fat and it's black, means that I deserve as much respect as anyone else — and I bring that to Instagram."

— @thefriendineverwanted

Encourage self-respect

When your friend posts something positive and healthy, praise it by leaving a #kindcomment. When commenting, try complimenting inner beauty and strength, instead of their exterior body.

Create Community

You can now follow hashtags, and there are plenty that connect you to communities of support and add empowering images to your Instagram feed. Some commonly used hashtags for inspiration include #EDRecovery, #RecoveryWarrior, #RecoveryIsPossible, #BodyPositivity, #BodyPosi, #BodyLove, #SelfLove, #BodyNeutrality, #FatAcceptance, #HAES, and #HealthAtEverySize.

"When I want to find new people to follow, I'll look at the account of someone I deeply admire and who they follow for ideas."

— @samdylanfinch

