Why our hearts need more than likes

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IN an age where everything is measured in likes, swipes, and notifications, it's easy to forget the one thing that truly keeps us alive: our hearts. February isn't just the season of roses and candlelit dinners, it's Heart Month — a timely reminder that while technology amplifies our connections, it can also stress the very organ that keeps us going. As we tap, scroll, and double-tap our way through love stories online, real hearts deserve attention too. Our Cardiologist Dr. Rex Palma reminds us: "A healthy heart isn't something you can download."

Let's unpack what that means in a world where we sometimes value screens more than a beat.

Tech Life vs. Heart Life: The Screen-Time Conundrum

We now have tools that make it easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Even doctors find technology increasingly helpful: AI-assisted diagnostics, telemedicine consultations, and wearable data allow people in the medical industry to detect issues earlier and personalize care more effectively. In other words? Your heart appreciates it when you move more than when your finger scrolls endlessly.

5-2-1-0-0: The Heart-Healthy Tech Translation

During my interview before, Dr. Palma's mantra — 5-2-1-0-0 — sounds like a Netflix password but is actually a practical heart for mula:

5: Five servings of fruits and veggies daily. Colourful food is good food — and your heart loves colour just as much as your Ins tagram feed does.

2: Two hours max of sedentary screen time. Stand up, stretch, shake it off!

1: One hour of exercise. Think brisk walking, dancing, or even VR fitness challenges — whatever fits your vibe.

0 sugary drinks. That latte GIF might look cute, but excess sugar is heart kryptonite.

0 smoking. Yes, even virtual smoke rings in mobile games can't deceive your real lungs and heart. Simple, practical, and more fun when

Broken Heart Syndrome: Not Just a Meme

We've all joked about "dying of a broken heart" after a brutal breakup. But Broken Heart Syndrome is medically real and surprisingly connected to stress responses in our bodies. Its medical name is Takotsubo cardiomyopathy, a temporary weakening of the heart muscle that can mimic heart attack symptoms like chest pain and shortness of breath, usually triggered by intense emotional or physical stress.

Here's the twist: emotional stress isn't just about heartbreak — it can come from constant notifications, fear of missing out (FOMO), comparison culture, and relentless social media scrolling. When stress hormones surge, the heart can weaken temporarily, even in otherwise healthy people. So that "Why didn't they text back?" anxiety? It's not just dramatic, your body feels it. anyone experiencing intense chest pain or breathing difficulties should seek medical attention immediately. Early diagnosis can involve ECGs, blood tests, and stress tests.

But more importantly, don't wait until heartbreak—emotional or physical —turns into a medical episode. Use technology to your advantage: apps for meditation, stress reduction, sleep tracking, and community support can subtly support heart health. Since my husband experienced a mild heart attack and underwent angiogram tests, I've become even more conscious about protect ing our hearts—both physically and emotionally.

Love Your Heart Like You Love Your Feed

In a culture obsessed with instant gratification, we often forget that real life and real love aren't a highlight reel. Heart health isn't about perfect diets or flawless workouts; it's about consistency, self-awareness, and balance, the same things we crave in relationships, career, and digital interactions.

This February, let your heart be more than a symbol you send via emoji. Let it be something you protect, nourish, and celebrate —both in the biological sense and the emotional one.

Tech can help—from fitness trackers to stress-management apps — but it shouldn't replace the basics: moving your body, eating well, and spending quality time with real people. After all, even in a world mediated by screens, nothing compares to the real beat under your ribs. Dr. Rex Palma has been our family cardiologist for over 10 years, providing expert insights and care.