



ESCAPING SCREEN TIME— Therapeutic Benefits of Fly Fishing for College Students

photos-George Daniel

by Zack Andreykovich

Screen time (noun): time spent watching television, playing a video game or using an electronic device with a screen such as a smartphone, computer or tablet.

As technology usage become increasingly essential in everyday life, many people, especially college students, forget to step away from looking at a screen and go outside. Use of technology in education, digital entertainment and communication mean people must spend more time on screens. Outdoor activities, such as fly fishing, offer people the opportunity to disconnect from electronics and enhance their overall well-being.

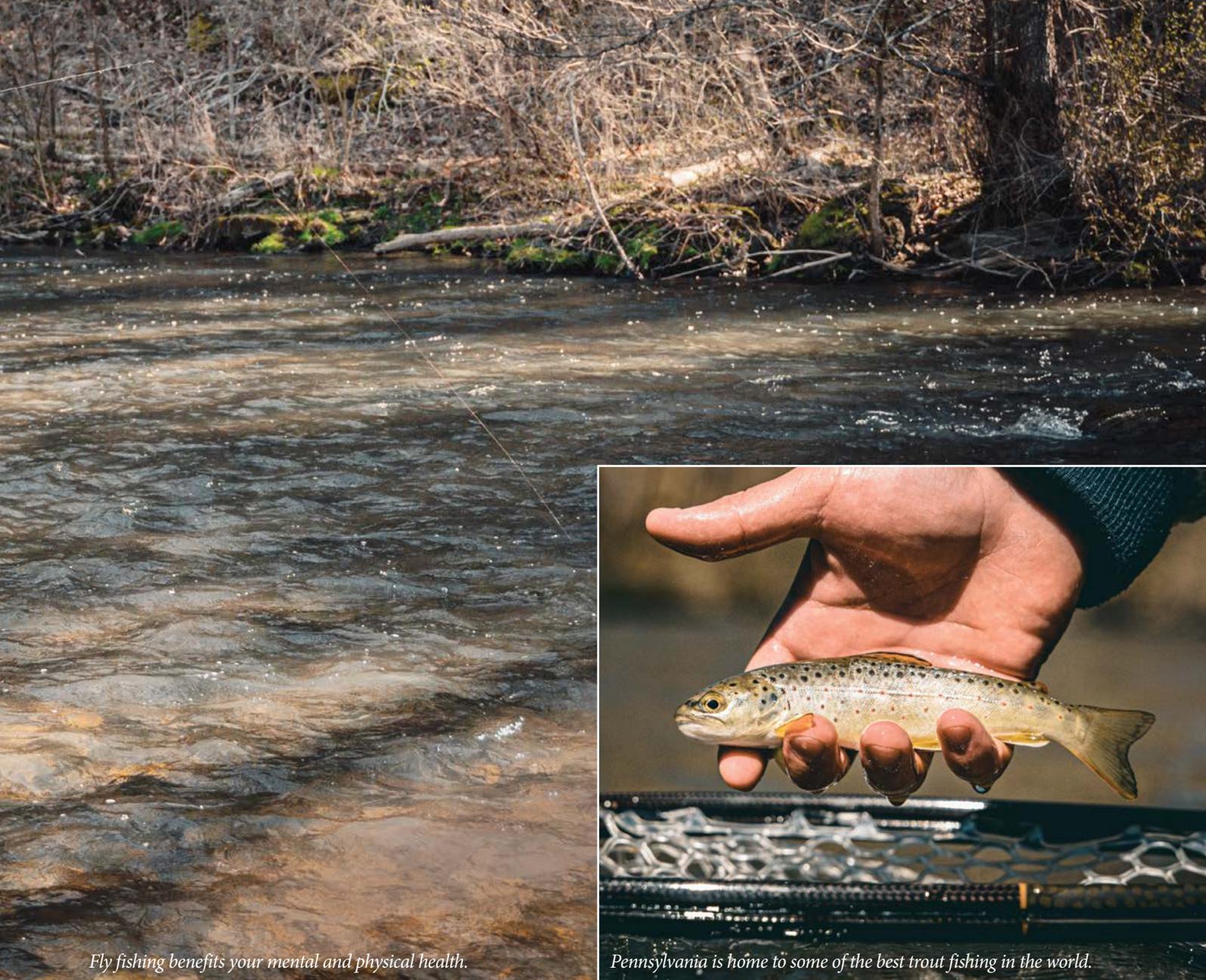
Negative effects and the detriment to overall well-being

As it stands, college students juggle numerous responsibilities. They must perform at a high level to

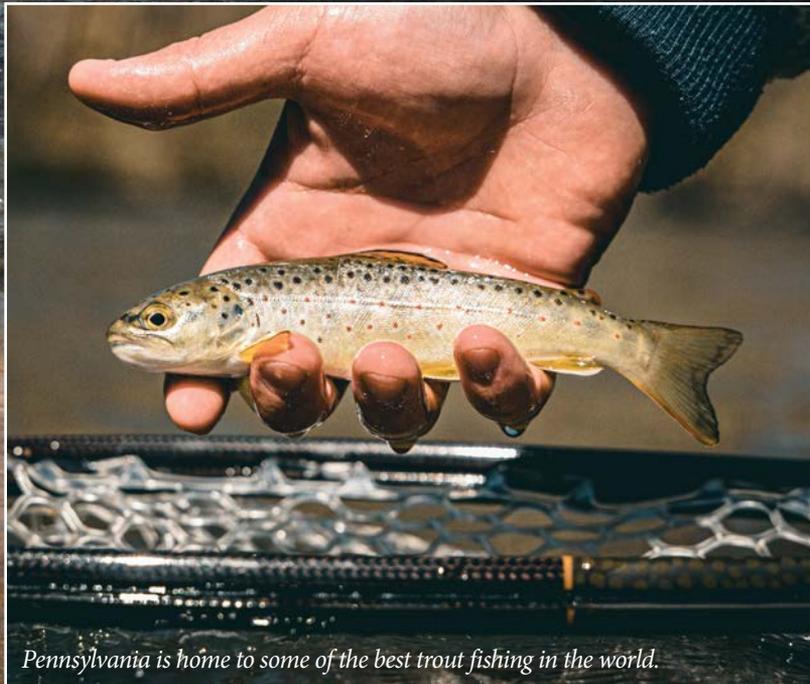
complete academic requirements, enjoy a social life and live on their own for the first time. While this lifestyle can cause high levels of stress, adding 6 to 7 hours of screen time a day gives the brain no time to rest. In turn, mental health is negatively affected.

Much has been published about mental health issues and the negative effect of excessive screen time. An article from Forbes Health shows that 36.2% of college students (aged 18-25) have experienced a mental health condition or problem, while only 13.9% of individuals aged 50 plus have experienced a condition. Studies have indicated college students can spend as much as 8 to 10 hours per day on their phones, not including the time spent on computers or watching television.

The negative effects of screen time are not only impactful on your mental health, but they affect your physical health as well. An excerpt from an article on the American Heart Association's website mentions the



Fly fishing benefits your mental and physical health.



Pennsylvania is home to some of the best trout fishing in the world.

correlation between screen time and increased risks of cardiovascular diseases and obesity. To escape from screen-induced stress, it's important for people to engage in outdoor activities.

Get on the water

Get on the water!
Pennsylvania is heralded as the home to some of the best trout fishing in the world. With around 16,000 miles of wild trout streams, plus lakes and large rivers, there is no shortage of fish to catch or waters to venture into.

Benefits of fly fishing

Fly fishing is often considered a stress-relieving activity, because it enables you to disconnect from

American Heart Association:



heart.org

electronics, immerse yourself in nature and avoid distractions from the “real world.” Many have compared fly fishing to meditation over the years, since fly anglers “perform a simple, repeated task, often for hours on end” (Harvard Medical School). This simple repetition allows the mind to focus on one thing. And, studies show fishing, or going outdoors, can be a way to reduce the “mental fatigue” that stems from extensive hours of screen time.

Fly fishing does not only benefit your mental health, it does wonders for your physical health as well. Wading in a stream exercises your legs, core, and back and improves your balance. During the act of casting, you use muscles in your arms and shoulders that you may not typically work in the gym. The low impact nature of the activity is helpful for longevity.

Make fly fishing your remedy for the negative effects of screen time and foster improved mental and physical wellness. ☐