



It's Personal: How to make Instagram work for you.

Use these **Pressure to be Perfect** tips and Instagram tools to customize your experience and keep things positive.

1. Follow your feelings

Check in with yourself after you've been online for a bit. If you're thinking about all the things you need to change—your hair, your body, the way you dress—maybe you need to adjust the way you are experiencing Instagram. Look for people and accounts that connect you to new and existing interests and make you feel good about yourself.

2. Perform routine maintenance

Try going through the list of accounts you follow every once in a while and edit. As you go through them, consider unfollowing any accounts you're no longer interested in or accounts that bring you down in some way. Trimming your follow list periodically can open up space for new people who lift you up.

HOW TO: On your profile, click “Following.” Scroll through and tap the “Following” button next to anyone's name you want to unfollow. The button will turn blue. You can also go to someone's profile and tap “Unfollow.”

3. Find new follows

You can enrich your experience by regularly looking for new and interesting people to follow. Explore is one way to browse through accounts and topics—tap the magnifying glass when you open the app and try searching on a tag for something you enjoy like #baking, #bookstagram, #photography, or #nailart.

4. Mute people you don't want to unfollow

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HOW TO: Tap the “...” menu in the corner of one of their posts. You can choose whether to mute feed posts, story posts, or both from an account. You can also mute someone by pressing and holding on a story.

5. Use "Restrict" to protect your account from unwanted interactions

If someone is being aggressive or negative in your comment section, you can put them on a “Restricted” list. Comments from people you restrict will only be visible to them unless you approve them. Restricted people also won't be able to see when you're online or when you've read their messages. If you aren't ready to unfollow or block someone, you could try starting with “Restrict.”

HOW TO: You can restrict someone by swiping left on a comment, through the Privacy tab in Settings, or directly on the profile of the account you intend to restrict. Tap “Restrict” to add the account to your restricted list.

6. Block when necessary

If someone's behavior is impacting you negatively and muting isn't enough, block them. It's the best way to stop drama in its tracks. They won't be able to view your posts or find you in search, and they won't be notified that you did it.

HOW TO: Tap "⋮" on their profile, then tap "Block."

7. Make connections, not comparisons

You want to get inspired to make changes and explore new things, but not get into a space where you feel like you can't win because you are lacking something someone else has. Try to keep in mind that you're just seeing one part of their life, one that they've perfected and polished.

8. Choose your audience

Being public on Instagram is public in the true sense of the word. Anyone can see what you post—and once something is out there, it's pretty much impossible to get it back. You might want to make your account private so the only people who see your posts are the people that you want to see your posts.

HOW TO: Tap "profile button" on the bottom right and then either "options button" (for iOS) or "⋮" (for Android). Scroll down to "Private Account" and move the slider to the right. The slider will turn blue once the account is private. The accounts following you will still be following you—new followers will have to request access. If there is someone following you on private that you want to exclude, go to your followers list and tap to the right of their handle to remove them.

9. Report bullying

If someone is being aggressive online, consider if and how you want to respond. You can mute, unfollow, or block them using the tools on this page, or set your account to private. You can also report posts and profiles that are engaging in abusive or harassing behavior. If bullying is affecting your well-being, try reaching out to a friend or family member to talk about it. The Jed Foundation has created [#LovesLouder](#) to address bullying and promote kindness—visit their page for more resources.

HOW TO: Tap “...” above the post or at the top right of profile. Tap “Report,” and follow the instructions. Reporting is anonymous.

10. Avoid extreme stans

It’s cool to link up with the folks in your fandom—it’s how many great friendships are made. It’s probably best, though, to stay clear of the toxic side of fan culture, where people gang up on others and bully or harass them. Who wants to be a part of that?

11. Fine-tune your story sharing

Remember that—even if you have a private account—there are ways to post that are even more selective. You can use the “Close Friends” setting on stories so that only certain people see them. People who are unable to see the story won’t know that they are missing something.

HOW TO: Create a “Close Friends” list by tapping “☰” in your profile, then tapping “Close Friends.” Then, when you create a story, choose “Close Friends” at the bottom of the screen instead of “Publish to your profile.” You can also create a specific list for individual stories.

Threads from Instagram, a new camera-first messaging app, is another private space just for your close friends. Once you install the app, messages from people on your Close Friends will come straight to Threads, so that you never miss something from your inner circle.

12. Be direct

Sometimes you really just want to share with a few people. That’s smart! When things are really personal, you can feel really vulnerable. Instagram Direct is the most private way to share on Instagram, so consider using it in these situations.

HOW TO: To send a message (text, image, or video), click the “✈️” icon at the top right of your Feed and choose who to share it with (up to 15 people). You can also message someone by clicking that same icon from their profile.

13. Control comments

Your comment section is a great place for interaction and conversation, and for people to react to what you're posting. And because it's your comment section, you can proactively set it up to be the kind of space you want it to be. Some people are fine with a free-for-all. Some people never read their comments. There's also the option to allow only certain people to comment. This can be a great compromise if you want to stay public but don't want to let the entire world weigh in on what you're up to.

HOW TO: Go to settings and choose "Comment Controls." You can choose to allow comments from only your followers, or only the people you follow, or turn off comments entirely. You can also filter out comments that use any specific words or phrases that you find upsetting or prefer not to see.

14. Calm down conflict

Sometimes the comments on a post can get out of hand and even go places that have nothing to do with what you put up. If you're uneasy with a conversation going on in your comments, you can try letting people know by saying something like, "Hey, I think this has run its course. Let's move on." If that doesn't work, you can also delete comments or change your comment settings. (See above.) It's a good idea to let people know you are doing this, so it doesn't seem like an invisible hand suddenly began doing things. You can post, "I'm going to freeze these comments now," or message someone and say, "Hey I deleted your comment because...." A little communication can prevent hurt feelings.

HOW TO: To delete a comment, swipe left and tap "Delete." To turn off comments on a post, tap "... " at the top right, then choose "Turn off commenting."

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