

Maxxing, an internet trend in which people take any aspect of their life to an extreme, ascended to popularity in the early 2020s. Now, maxxing has become a viral suffix for optimizing a particular aspect of someone's life, and a variety of people have begun to use the word and even practice their own forms of maxxing.

"I saw it being used all over the place [on Instagram and TikTok]," said senior Jake Wang. "It was really stupid stuff. It was like milk-maxxing where you drink a bunch of milk or raw honey-maxxing, and you eat a bunch of raw honey."

Beyond internet challenges, the term carries a specific meaning when applied to everyday life.

"There has to be an element of willingly spending time doing [what they maxx] because one wouldn't say that they're office-maxxing if they have to go to their [9 a.m. – 5 p.m.] office job five days a week," said sophomore Dylan Shao. "If they're doing it in their own free time, then they definitely could say that they're maxxing."

Due to semantic bleaching — where a word loses its intensity — maxxing has lost its extremities, but the core idea remains.

HEALTHMAXXING

Healthmaxxing is a sect of the maxxing community that focuses on taking physical fitness to extremes. Followers take steps to maximize sleep quality, protein intake, exercise, vitamin consumption or other physical aspects.

"[Healthmaxxing] normally involves promoting eating healthy, and exercising, more stuff like that," said sophomore Kylie Huang. "It definitely promotes better physical health and mental health, and it's overall more positive on people [compared to] looksmaxxing."

However, healthmaxxers' methodology is not always backed by science. For example, while medical professionals almost always view increased sleep as a positive, techniques used by sleepmaxxers — such as taking significantly elevated doses of melatonin and putting tape over the mouth while sleeping — are considered dangerous by health experts and not recommended.

"Fact checking between other sources [helps me pick out good advice]," said senior Anthony Cardona. "There's a lot of research out there that you could corroborate it with. The stuff that doesn't have much research, then it's probably not worth it. For example, there's a lot of science that says, [raw milk] isn't good for you because of all the bacteria."

Professionals also note that exercise, protein, fiber intake and other elements of physical health are healthier in moderation, and that "maxxing" them may create more problems than benefits. Professionals from University of California Los Angeles Health warn that overtraining can lead to potentially deadly conditions. Researchers from Ohio State University say that oversaturating one's diet with certain food groups can lead to health problems, and that hyperfixating on it can lead to eating disorders.

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LOOKSMAXXING

Looksmaxxing, the original and most prominent community of maxxers, is the internet's version of glowing up taken to new extremes. Looksmaxxers analyze body characteristics into "hard" features — like bone structure, which is difficult to change — and "soft" features like hair, skin, fitness and style.

With any trend focused on the outward appearance, looksmaxxing may turn moderate insecurity into unhealthy obsession. Online sources often present these subjective beauty standards as a science, encouraging

users to rate strangers' faces. A 2025 study of a popular looksmaxxing forum analyzed 8,072 comments and found that users were regularly insulted, ranked and pushed toward extreme appearance changes.

"[Looksmaxxing is] what women have been looking at on social media for like the longest time ever," said senior Allison Hsu. "Now it's the guys, and it's so horrible. Like, who came up with the term strawberry legs? Are you fox pretty, or bunny pretty, or [deer] pretty? It's what women have been going through for the longest time ever, but translated to guys."

Looksmaxxers use a variety of methods to improve their hard and soft features. This includes mewing to straighten

the jawline and gua sha to reduce swelling, or more extreme procedures like rhinoplasty or bonesmashing to sharpen the cheekbones and taking off-label anabolic steroids.

"I don't think these [procedures] work," said senior Marshall Lim. "There's no evidence behind [bonesmashing]. There can be positive influences [of looksmaxxing] for self-improvement, like working out. But hitting your face is not gonna help with anything. It's probably just gonna damage your [facial] construction."

In the US, 4.07% of males (6.6 million people) had experienced an eating disorder at some stage of their lifetime.

National Eating Disorders Association

Looksmaxxing is synonymous with the polarizing influencer Clavicular, the online name of Braden Peters.

"[Clavicular] posts videos about teaching people how to improve their lives, just being healthier, working out more," Cardona said. "I really take some [of Clavicular's advice] to the heart, but the others that I can't do, I just ignore them. I do the working out stuff, but I don't do bonesmashing. I think he's the best influence possible. I don't think anyone could take his role better."

Clavicular has had significant influence on his fans, a majority of which are young men and adolescents, propagating vocabulary like "frame-mogging" as he livestreams on Kick.

"[Clavicular is] the father of looksmaxxing," Wang said. "He spread it across the younger generation. People take drastic measures to improve themselves, and [Clavicular's] one of those people. It's definitely having a negative influence on the younger generation, because, obviously, he's a grown adult. He can make his own choices. Younger people, when they see him, follow in his footsteps, [which] could harm them."

Some of Clavicular's looksmaxxing tactics seem successful, but he has faced health setbacks from various looksmaxxing attempts. He has stated that he has injected himself with methamphetamine to dull his appetite and testosterone since the age of 14, the latter of which may have resulted in sterility. He seemingly overdosed on drugs in April, though the facts of the situation have not been confirmed.

The "looksmaxxing" movement is also tied heavily to the involuntarily celibate, or incel, community, where the name and other slang originated — for example, being "blackpilled" refers to the belief that physical attractiveness is genetically fixed and largely determines a person's social and romantic value. The group's ideologies rely heavily on sexist principles, coining terms like "foid," shorthand for "female humanoid," to refer to members of the opposite sex. Clavicular himself has

faced multiple charges against women, including assault, and is known to have interacted with influencers Andrew Tate and Nick Fuentes, both known for their overt misogyny.

According to board-certified oral and maxillo-facial surgeon Dr. Young Jun, facial restructuring doesn't happen through "repeated impact" like bonesmashing.
CBS

#studytok and #studywithme have gotten ~23 billion views

WHIMSYMAXXING

Whimsymaxxing refers to adding more playfulness, imagination and childlike joy into daily life to fight off burnout common in teens and adults. It serves as a way to push back against the monotony of school and corporate workplaces.

"I've seen my friends naming their personal devices like Lamborghini and then their phone connects to it and [they say] 'my phone on Spotify is connecting to my Lamborghini,'" Hsu said. "That's pretty funny. It's a nice use of free will. [Another] common example is decorating everything. In middle school, I used to make a collage with my notebook [cover] and decorate it a lot."

Whimsymaxxing opens up new routes of self-expression, from style upgrades to creative fashion experiments.

"Honestly, we're kind of in a beige mom epidemic, where everyone's wearing the same basics," Hsu said. "Spruce it up a little. Use some more accessories. Don't just wear a t-shirt and a chain. Try cool accessories and statement pieces, not just stuff that you think fits with

everything. I've seen people wear scarves over their pants and I think it's really cool."

As with all subcultures, whimsymaxxing may lead to gatekeeping or an inner circle claiming their superior knowledge on the topic.

"Sometimes, I do see some maliciousness [online] when people start accusing others about not being whimsical the correct way because, apparently, there's a correct way to do this now," Huang said. "[Online], I saw some girls were telling people, 'oh, you guys can't be unicorns, you're not a unicorn,' because they notice that someone's dressed in a way that they see as more popular in society."

PRODUCTIVITY/STUDYMAXXING

Studymaxxing transforms learning into a gamified and sometimes performative subculture. On platforms like TikTok, academic labor is converted into a distorted system of validation, defined by aesthetic desk setups, stationery hauls, black highlighters on black paper and "Study With Me" timelapses. Followers are encouraged to lock in with viral endurance trends, filming themselves studying outside in the snow or until a block of ice melts to unlock a beverage. Apps such as FlipClock and Ice-Study: Focus Timer similarly turn study time into something visible and measurable.

"Social media makes everything a lot more competitive," Shao said. "You can compare yourself to other people just by picking up the phone. Whereas before that, you would actually have to go somewhere to see people that are smarter than you. The point of learning is not in itself to be competitive. If you're just learning how to compete with others, then

what's the point?"

Studymaxxing is just one branch of a broader "productivity-maxxing" movement, found in 5 a.m. morning routines, "day in my life" videos, and LinkedIn posts announcing the next internship or leadership title. For high school students, being productive can mean filling every hour with something impressive, especially when college applications loom.

By incentivizing discipline and tracking hours like high scores, this performance of productivity turns personal habits into public validation. The content is undeniably motivating for some, but it can also glorify all-night work sessions and romanticize sleep deprivation; only 24% of U.S. high school students reported getting at least eight hours of sleep on an average school night in 2025, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Maxxing steady productivity has negative health impacts," Shao said. "Some people might think that they're inadequate because they're not as locked in as many of the people that they see online. But that is not really an achievable goal because no one with a healthy social life and actual interests wants to study for 12 hours a day."

When keeping balance in mind, a mindset aiming for more productivity may bring improvements to one's life. A planner, to-do list or a consistent sleep schedule can make school and extracurriculars feel less overwhelming. But there is a difference between using routines to make life easier and treating every minute of life as something to optimize.

"The healthiest version of productivity is not waking up earlier, tracking every habit or trying to turn yourself into a machine," said Steve Zhang, junior and president of Productivity Club. "It's a mindset to have that when you're trying to be productive, you're not [simply] trying to finish all your work. You want to be in the mindset that, 'I'm doing this so that I can actually learn this.'"