



TAKE CONTROL OF

Apple Watch

by JEFF CARLSON

\$14.99

**6TH
EDITION**

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Apple Watch, Sixth Edition*, version 6.0, published in November 2025 by alt concepts. This book was written by Jeff Carlson and edited by Joe Kissell.

This book helps you use an Apple Watch, Apple’s wearable digital device. It focuses on what an Apple Watch is (and isn’t), how it interacts with other Apple devices, and how you can incorporate your Apple Watch into your daily life.

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What's New in the Sixth Edition

Apple released new versions of the Apple Watch in September 2025, advancing the lines in a few ways. The Series 11 received a more incremental update from the year before, while the Ultra 3 finally paid off the patience of Ultra owners who saw only a color change in the last revision. And a new Apple Watch SE 3 brought the most affordable option closer to the rest of the line.

This book covers those changes, but more important, incorporates what's new in watchOS 26, the latest version of the software running Apple Watch models back to the Series 6 and the SE 2. Here are some highlights of what's changed in this edition:

- Added the new Wrist Flick gesture and why it's one of my favorite new features. See [Flick Your Wrist](#).
- Added a new sidebar about how you can set watch faces to change at set times and days. See [Automatically Change Faces Using Focus Modes](#).
- Added Facer, an app that takes a different approach to providing custom watch faces, to the sidebar [Customize Further with Clockology and Facer](#).
- Apple changed how you share watch faces: now can do it only from the iPhone, not from the watch directly. See [Share Watch Faces](#).
- Smart Stack hints are a new indicator that pops up at the bottom of the watch face when some actions are taken, like opening the Camera app on your iPhone. See [Use the Smart Stack](#).
- You can assert more control over which widgets show up in the Smart Stack. See [Configure Widget Suggestions](#).
- Speaking of control, there's a new way to add items to Control Center, including controls from third-party developers. See [Show and Hide Control Center Items](#).

- Added a section on how to enable Siri to read notifications from apps when you're wearing headphones such as AirPods. See [Announce Notifications](#).
- Apple came up with a way to record blood oxygen levels after the feature had been disabled in the United States due to litigation. I explain what's going on and how to use it in [Measure Your Blood Oxygen Level](#).
- Added instructions for setting up hypertension (high blood pressure) notifications. See [Check for Hypertension](#).
- The Workout app has been revamped with a new look and a few changes in how you add and edit exercises. Subsequently, the section [Work the Workout](#) has been extensively rewritten.
- Speaking of workouts, literally, the new Workout Buddy can talk to you during an exercise session to motivate you. See [Get Alerts and Workout Buddy Commentary](#).
- I wake up each morning and check my Sleep Score from the night before. I added a section about this new feature. See [Check and Understand Your Sleep Score](#).
- watchOS 26 supports Hold Assist, a feature also found in iOS 26 that saves you from listening to the poor quality, repeating music that companies play when you're on hold. See [Use Hold Assist](#).
- Apple changed some terminology in the Maps app (your Library became your Places, for instance). See [Use Maps and Directions](#).
- The new Notes app lets you view notes synced via iCloud and make new notes on the go. See [Read and Create Notes](#).
- Now that the Apple Watch Ultra 3 includes the hardware to connect directly to satellites, I wrote a new section about how that works, incorporating material from the previous edition that covered just connecting via a compatible iPhone. See [Connect to a Satellite](#).

Introduction

In the decade since Apple introduced the Apple Watch, which included an 18-karat Apple Watch Edition for \$17,000 that was functionally the same as the \$349 aluminum Apple Watch Sport, the smartwatch has undergone many changes. Turning on my original watch is now an exercise in patience, waiting for it to start up and doing even basic tasks.

Now, my Apple Watch Series 10 is lightning fast by comparison, and the “exercise” refers to literally all the ways it can keep tabs on my movements and workouts, vital measurements such as heart rate, and even checking for signs of hypertension or sleep apnea.

The Apple Watch Ultra line takes all that to another level, with multi-day battery life and the capability to operate at high altitudes and under water.

All throughout, the Apple Watch has combined function with fashion, saying, *Your personal technology can be more personal, and more distinctive*. Apple Watch cases have been made of stainless steel, ceramic, and titanium in addition to aluminum (the gold lasted just one generation).

As a wearable, the watch has found its own purpose. It’s not a sliver of glass you pull out of your pocket or bag. It’s a timepiece, a health and fitness aid, and a connection to your personal information that you wear all the time. And if your experience is like mine, you now see Apple Watches everywhere.

This book is your essential guide to your Apple Watch and its capabilities and possibilities. I’ve worn an Apple Watch every day since the original model was first available. It has surprised, delighted, and, yes, occasionally perplexed me—it’s my job, after all, to be confused and solve problems first, so I can guide you to the solutions.

My Apple Watch is one of my essential devices, and I think you’ll find that it becomes one of yours, too.

Big Changes Since watchOS 10

If you're using an older Apple Watch running watchOS 9 or earlier and are now upgrading to a new one with watchOS 26, you may feel like nothing works the same, with good reason: Apple moved around several of its core features in watchOS 10 in 2023, disrupting a lot of the muscle memory we'd built up from using Apple Watches over several generations. I go into details throughout the book, but here's a quick cheat sheet:

- ✦ **Version number:** That wasn't a typo above; Apple moved all of its system software to version 26 to match the year (2026), so last year's watchOS 11 is the predecessor to this year's watchOS 26. (Yes, it came out in 2025, but it will be active for most of 2026.)
- ✦ **Control Center:** Press the side button once. Previously you swiped up from the bottom of the screen.
- ✦ **Switch between watch faces:** Before watchOS 10.0, you could swipe left or right to quickly access other faces, but Apple removed that feature. After customer feedback, it returned in watchOS 10.2 and remains in watchOS 11. You can also touch and hold the watch face to access other faces you've set up.
- ✦ **Recent apps:** Double-press the Digital Crown. In earlier versions, this feature was called the Dock and accessed by pressing the side button, and double-pressing the crown would launch the last-used app.
- ✦ **Smart Stack:** This feature, introduced in watchOS 10, displays a rolling stack of widgets. On the watch face, turn the Digital Crown or swipe up from the bottom of the screen to reveal the widgets. In watchOS 11, the Smart Stack gains more smarts with Live Activities and more contextual widgets.

Apple Watch Quick Start

Your Apple Watch offers numerous capabilities, none of which need to be tackled in a specific order. Feel free to jump to any topic below, although I do recommend that you start with the first chapters.

Discover your Apple Watch:

- Is this your first Apple Watch? Start with [Apple Watch First Tasks](#) for my recommendations on settings that improve your experience.
- Already own an Apple Watch? Some core features may be in different places than you're used to, so review the [Big Changes Since watchOS 10](#).
- Read [Understand Your Apple Watch](#) to get an idea of how to think about it and how it can become part of your everyday life.
- If you don't yet own a watch, hit up [Which Watch?](#) for details on models, materials, sizes, and bands.
- The watch introduces new ways of interacting with an Apple device, so be sure to read [Interact with Your Apple Watch](#).

Make it your own:

- Start with what you'll see the most and [Personalize the Apple Watch Face](#) with different themes and *complications* (additional elements that display information on the face). Then, [Share Watch Faces](#) with your friends and add others' faces to your watch.
- Learn how to [Access Recent Apps](#) and quickly access system-wide features when you [Use Control Center](#).
- Learn why the Smart Stack can be so persistent (and useful). See [Use the Smart Stack](#).
- Install and run apps from your iPhone or the App Store on your watch in [Work with Apps](#).

- To take a deeper dive into the setup process, read [Customizations and Important Settings](#).

Push yourself:

- In [Stay Healthy with Your Apple Watch](#), learn how to track daily activity and how to use the watch with workouts.
- Stay on top of your personal health: [Monitor Your Heart Health](#), [Measure Your Blood Oxygen Level](#), [Monitor Your Hearing](#), [Track Your Cycle](#), and [Sleep Better](#).

Communicate with the world:

- Aside from checking the time, you'll probably interact the most with your Apple Watch as you [Manage Notifications](#); learn how to view the most important ones and limit which of the others get through so that you're not overwhelmed.
- In [Communicate with Friends](#), discover how to send text and audio messages, place and answer phone calls, and use Walkie-Talkie to chat directly in bursts.
- Manage, reply to, and compose email messages in [Communicate Using Mail](#).
- If you own an Apple Watch Ultra 3 (or a watch paired with a nearby capable iPhone), you can send and receive texts, share your location, and access emergency services when you [Connect to a Satellite](#).

Find your way:

- Your Apple Watch can help you get around when you [Use Maps and Directions](#), especially when you [Use the Compass](#) and its way-finding features.
- It can also keep you on task when you [Keep Track of Personal Information](#) and on time when you [Set Timers](#).

Control your media:

- [Listen to Music, Podcasts, and Audiobooks](#) directly on your watch, from your iPhone, or streamed from Apple Music.

- Since your watch is always on your wrist, it becomes a universal remote that won't get lost in the living room. Read [Control an Apple TV Remotely](#) and start controlling playback from your Apple TV. That also extends to controlling smart lights and other ways to [Control Your Home](#).
- The watch can control the camera in your iPhone, and you can view photos on your watch; see [View \(and Capture\) Photos](#).

Put your wallet away:

Read [Use Apple Pay and Wallet](#) and start buying goods and redeeming tickets with the press of a button.

Take care of your watch:

Don't neglect the [Care and Feeding of Your Apple Watch](#), which involves everything from cleaning the case and bands to resetting your watch to its factory defaults if necessary.

Invite the whole family:

If you're more comfortable giving a child a watch than a phone, an Apple Watch is a great way to communicate and keep tabs on them. [Use Family Setup](#) to activate a cellular-enabled model from your iPhone.

Understand Your Apple Watch

It would be easy to assume that an Apple Watch is like an iPhone for your wrist, but that's not really the case. The watch expressly emphasizes short, focused interaction with your information. For example, on your watch you can receive text messages and can send quick replies, but lengthy correspondence is best shifted to your iPhone.

It's important to understand this approach. We're so accustomed to devices that demand our focus that it's slightly jarring at first when an Apple Watch shuns attention. Don't be surprised if it takes a few days to adopt this mindset after you start using the watch, even knowing about it ahead of time.

The iPhone Connection

Although it does feature a touchscreen, wireless communication, and a microprocessor to run it all, an Apple Watch isn't yet an independent device. It still relies on a companion iPhone to be truly useful—though using it as a standalone device is possible in a few ways. For now, specifically, to connect and communicate with a watch running watchOS 26, the latest version, you need an iPhone 11 or later or iPhone SE (2nd generation or later) running iOS 26 or later. An Apple Watch works only with an iPhone, not an iPad, iPod touch or Android phone. It's possible to set up a watch using someone else's iPhone, such as for a child who doesn't have their own phone; see [Use Family Setup](#).

The core software functions of an Apple Watch—such as the clock and activity tracker—are dedicated apps that live in the watch's memory. Third-party apps can be installed using the wireless communication with an iPhone via Bluetooth and Wi-Fi, or downloaded directly from

the App Store app on the watch. In many cases, the data you see in those apps is fed from their iPhone counterparts.

The watch piggybacks on your iPhone's internet connection via Bluetooth or uses a local Wi-Fi network. Models equipped with cellular radios can also connect through cell networks when your iPhone is out of range (such as if you're out for a run). Or if you're even farther out, beyond cellular networks, a watch can connect to Apple's satellite service through an iPhone 14 or later, or directly if you own an Apple Watch Ultra 3; see [Connect to a Satellite](#).

A companion iPhone app, unsurprisingly called Watch, is used to configure your watch's Home app icon layout, enable fitness features, choose how messages display, install watchOS updates, and more, as I discuss throughout this book.

Apple Watch and Apple Intelligence

The latest technology focus in the industry is AI (Artificial Intelligence, though "AI" is more specifically a catchy shorthand for machine learning). Apple cleverly appropriated the acronym for its own AI technologies under the name [Apple Intelligence](#), a collection of features that use AI to do things like summarize messages, sort through your Photos library, and more.

Apple Intelligence features are available on iPhone 15 Pro and later models, but are nowhere to be found on any Apple Watch. You will see notifications with AI summaries on the watch, but those are just piped from your iPhone. Apple Intelligence is an evolving suite of features that Apple is rolling out slowly, so we'll see if it comes to the watch natively in the future.

Charge Your Apple Watch

Apple expects that the battery will last "all day," or between 18 and 24 hours of normal use, depending on the model. So, watch owners will charge the device once a day. (Exercise drains the battery faster; see [The Heart of the Sensors](#).) I usually end up with about 40 percent or more power left at the end of the day, so Apple's estimate is actually

Apple Watch First Tasks

Over my years of wearing an Apple Watch, I've discovered several things that improve my interaction with it. Some are small details, while others make a big difference to me. Feel free to pick and choose among these suggestions to see what works best for you.

Switch to the App List View

The screen that lists all your apps, which Apple calls the Home Screen, defaults to the Grid view layout. That changed somewhat in watchOS 10, with larger icons that scroll top to bottom instead of sliding around like poking at fish in a barrel. It's a novel idea for arranging apps on a small screen, but I prefer the List view, which displays larger icons and the app names.

To change the view on your watch, scroll to the bottom of the icons and tap the List View button. Or, press the Digital Crown to view the Home Screen, then go to Settings  > App View and tap the List View button to view the more sensible list (**Figure 5**).

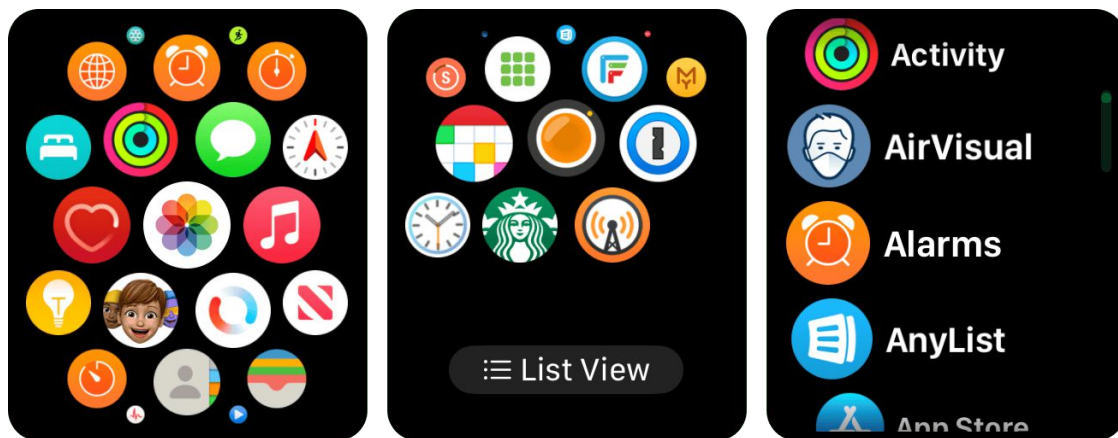


Figure 5: Switch to the List view for a more sane view of your apps.

If you have a lot of apps, the Grid View can be faster, especially for those that start with letters in the latter half of the alphabet. In that

case use the same steps to switch back to the Grid view. You can always [Customize the Home Screen](#) to group together the apps you use most.

Tip: Most settings can be applied on both your watch itself and in the Watch app on your iPhone. In this case, tap App View on the My Watch screen and choose List View as your preference.

Turn Off the Option to Auto-Add Apps

When you install an app on your iPhone that includes an Apple Watch version, the watch app is automatically added. The assumption is that you probably wanted both components, so Apple is doing some of the work for you.

However, this feature will quickly load up your watch's Home Screen with apps you probably don't want, including many that you didn't realize were available on watchOS.

Instead, open the Watch app on your iPhone, go to General, and turn off Automatic App Install. You can always [Install Apps](#) manually, which isn't difficult.

Set Your Watch's Default Wi-Fi Network

Your Apple Watch includes a Wi-Fi radio, and in theory, if your iPhone is out of range but on the same Wi-Fi network, the two can still communicate. Or, if your iPhone is turned off, your watch will still communicate with the internet using Wi-Fi. However, for the longest time I noticed that my watch acted as if Wi-Fi was just an invisible dream.

To make sure it can connect to your Wi-Fi network independently, do the following:

1. On your watch, go to Settings > Wi-Fi.

Interact with Your Apple Watch

When Steve Jobs introduced the iPhone, he explained that the ideal tool to use it was not a stylus or physical buttons, but our fingers. The responsiveness of the touchscreen made finger gestures—tapping, swiping, and pinching—the new language of interaction with technology. But fingers are usually too big to do the same with a watch, so Apple incorporated additional interaction methods.

The Digital Crown

Let's start with the watch's signature controller, the knob on the side called the Digital Crown. A *crown* is a staple of mechanical watch design, used to set the time and, on some models, to wind the mechanism that keeps it running.

Turning the Crown

Turning the Digital Crown scrolls content on the screen, zooms in and out when you're viewing photos or maps (**Figure 10**), and switches between other visible options.

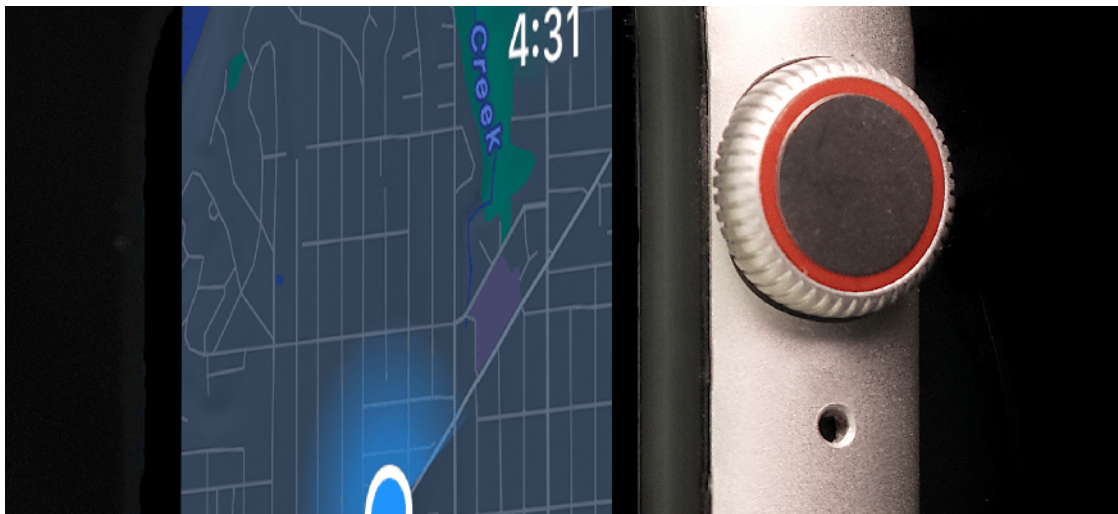


Figure 10: Turn the Digital Crown to zoom into a map.

With the watch face visible, turning the crown up (clockwise) activates the Smart Stack, a collection of widgets. See [Use the Smart Stack](#). Press the crown or turn it down (counterclockwise) to return to the watch face.

Also, while viewing the watch face, turning the crown down (counterclockwise) displays notifications. See [Manage Notifications](#). Press the crown or turn the opposite direction to get back to the watch face.

Pressing the Crown

Pressing the Digital Crown has various effects, depending on the context:

- When the watch face is visible, a single press of the Digital Crown displays the Home Screen.
- On the Home Screen, or while viewing a notification or the Dock, pressing the crown returns to the watch face.
- On the Home Screen in Grid mode, rotating the crown scrolls through the app icons from top to bottom.
- Pressing and holding the crown for a second initiates Siri's voice-activated interface.
- Double-pressing the crown displays a stack of recent apps. Be aware that the timing isn't very forgiving: if you don't scroll to another recent app quickly, the previous app opens after one second. To get around this, go to Settings > Accessibility and turn off Auto-Select Focused App. (In watchOS 9 and earlier, double-pressing the crown opened the last-used app.)
- In Sleep focus, pressing the crown displays the low-power sleep screen. Press it again to unlock the watch. (Prior to watchOS 11, you'd need to hold the crown for a few seconds to unlock.)

On the Series 4 and later models, including all Ultra watches but not the SE models, the crown also acts as part of the electrical connection used to take an ECG measurement. See [Monitor Your Heart Health](#).

Personalize the Apple Watch Face

Personalizing your Apple Watch goes beyond merely choosing the case material and watch band. Its Retina screen can display digital, analog, and even several whimsical watch faces. When you’ve found a combination that works for you, share it with friends or add their watch faces to yours.

Pick a Watch Face

Your Apple Watch offers several watch faces, from simulated traditional chronographs to Snoopy animations to an astronomical design that lets you explore our solar system.

Activate a Face

To switch faces, touch and hold the current watch face until you see the Edit button, swipe to highlight the face you want, and then tap to select it or press the Digital Crown (**Figure 16**).



Figure 16: If you touch and hold the watch face, an Edit button appears below most faces.

Tip: When you're viewing faces on the watch, turn the crown to quickly zip through them, instead of swiping between each one.

In watchOS 10.0, Apple removed the option to swipe left and right to switch faces, presumably because it was getting activated accidentally. That behavior returned in watchOS 10.2 and remains in watchOS 26, but you need to enable it: go to Settings > Clock and turn on Swipe to Switch Watch Face.

Note: Missing a face...or nine? If you've owned an Apple Watch for more than a couple of generations, a face you used might be gone. Apple removed five faces from watchOS 26: Fire/Water, Gradient, Liquid Metal, Vapor, and Toy Story. They previously removed four from watchOS 11: Siri, Chronograph, Explorer, and Numerals.

For a broader view of the available faces, open the Watch app on your iPhone and tap the Face Gallery button. This screen displays every face type, organized by categories such as New Watch Faces, Pride Collection, and Dress Watch ("Faces to go with formal attire") (**Figure 17**). You can also scroll to the bottom and tap See All Watch Faces to view them in a scrolling list.



Figure 17: Browse the Face Gallery in your iPhone's Watch app.

Use the Smart Stack

Apple has gone widget-crazy, which is great for quickly accessing apps, shortcuts, or information at a glance. I have to admit, I initially wasn't fond of the so-called Smart Stack feature introduced in watchOS 10.

But now the Smart Stack has become one of my favorite features, because it lives up to its name. It's more intelligent about showing widgets and information that are relevant. When I want to avoid clutter and wear a minimal watch face with no complications, I bring up the Smart Stack and it usually gives me what I'm looking for.

From the watch face, turn the Digital Crown clockwise, swipe up from the bottom of the screen, or use the Double Tap gesture to bring up the Smart Stack. As you turn the dial, continue to swipe, or use Double Tap (if you've configured it this way; see [Double Tap](#)), more widgets in the stack appear (**Figure 29**).



Figure 29: The top of the Smart Stack (left) and exploring the widgets in the stack (right).

The widgets present live information, such as the current weather or your exercise rings. Tapping one takes you to its app.

The “smarts” in the Smart Stack depend on context. The order of widgets depends on criteria such as the time of day, your current activity, and your location. If you have an appointment coming up,

you'll see a calendar widget for that event; or if it's morning, you may see a weather widget showing the upcoming forecast. When you travel internationally, the Translate app automatically appears in the Smart Stack (see [Communicate in Other Languages](#)).

New in watchOS 26, the watch pops up a Smart Stack hint at the bottom of the watch face depending on the context of what you're doing. Tap the hint to display the Smart Stack with a related widget.

Note: Apple says you can swipe up on the hint to mute it for 24 hours, but I haven't gotten that to work yet.

For example, when you open the Camera app on your iPhone, you see a small camera icon appear, which leads to a widget that opens the Camera Remote app on the watch for controlling the camera (**Figure 30**). (See [View \(and Capture\) Photos](#).) Or, if you go for a run at about the same time every day, you may see a hint appear reminding you to go open the Workout app. (It can take a while for the watch to pick up on your schedule.) You can turn off hints; see [Configure Widget Suggestions](#).



Figure 30: A widget suggestion appears when the Camera app is opened on your iPhone (left). Tap it to view a widget that opens the Camera Remote app on the watch (right).

Use Control Center

Many of the things you find yourself doing on your watch are quick commands or peeks at information. Control Center collects them into one place. To reveal it, press the side button in any app.

The icons range from the merely informational (your battery level) to highly functional (icons for toggling on and off Airplane Mode, Mute, Do Not Disturb, and so on). Icons that represent a state you can toggle change color when you tap them to turn them on.

Not all of the items listed here may be visible on your watch; see [Show and Hide Control Center Items](#) to learn how to add them.

Connection Info

The top of Control Center displays info about your watch's connection status. Tap the icons to reveal more information about the following:

- A red phone  icon means your watch is disconnected from your iPhone and a trusted Wi-Fi network or cellular network on compatible models (**Figure 35**).

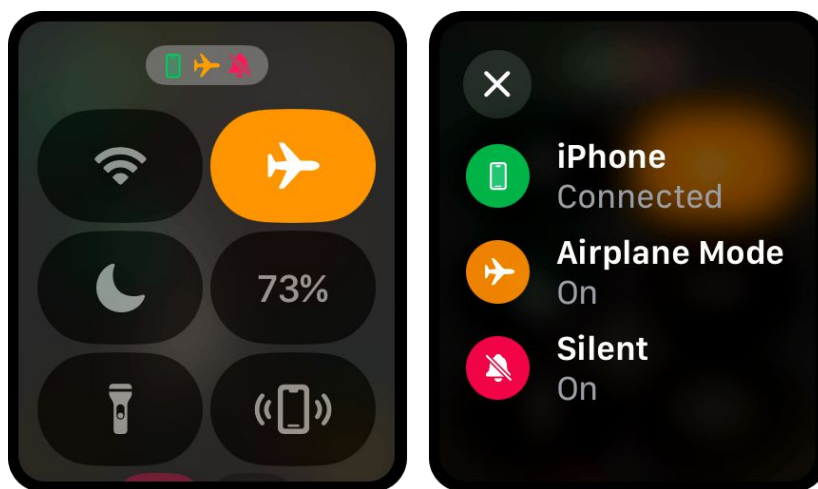


Figure 35: Control Center shows the connection status above a set of icons (left). Tapping the connection status icons displays more information (right).

- A blue Wi-Fi  icon indicates that your watch is connected to a trusted Wi-Fi network, but not to your phone. This might happen, for example, if you are at home and your iPhone is powered off, or if the phone isn't with you but you're connected to a known Wi-Fi network such as a friend's house.
- A green phone  icon appears when your watch is connected to your iPhone.
- A solid blue location  icon indicates that your watch is receiving location data. A blue outline location  icon notes that an app or the system has requested location data.

Cellular

On Apple Watch models equipped with cellular radios, the Cellular  button turns white to indicate that cellular is on but not currently in use due to a Bluetooth or Wi-Fi connection (**Figure 36**). If the button is dark, tap it and turn on the Cellular option.

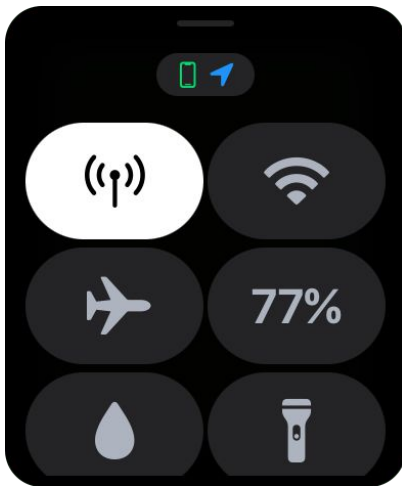


Figure 36: Your watch can take calls and messages and access the internet via its cellular connection when the button is white.

When cellular is the only connection, such as when you're out and your iPhone is at home, the button turns green and indicates the connection type (such as 5G or LTE). The signal strength appears at the top of Control Center.

Work with Apps

“There’s an app for that” became a catch phrase because of the incredible variety of apps that sprang up with the iPhone. Developers also create watchOS versions of iPhone apps for the watch, and in some cases, apps that run only on the watch. In fact, many apps you already own probably have a watch component.

Locate and Open Apps

In most cases, pressing the Digital Crown displays the Home Screen, where you access all your apps (**Figure 47**). The exceptions are when you’re viewing notifications or are already on the Home Screen.

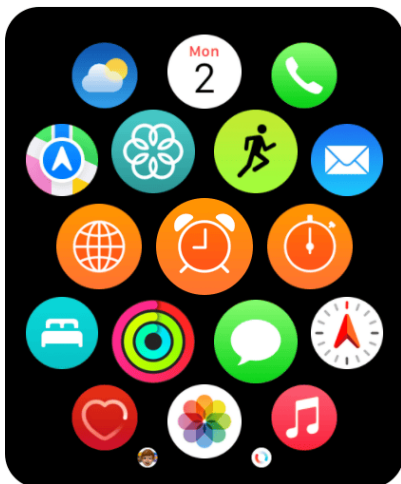


Figure 47: The Home Screen as it normally appears.

Scroll up or down to view apps that are currently outside the screen edges.

To open an app, do either of the following:

- Tap its icon on the Home Screen.
- Raise the watch (or press and hold the Digital Crown) and say “Hey Siri, open *app’s name*.”

Tip: Here's a sneaky way to get to your apps: using the Digital Crown or swiping with a finger, scroll up to view the Smart Stack and keep scrolling to the end...then scroll some more to bring up the Home Screen.

Access Recent Apps

Double-press the Digital Crown to view the 15 most recent apps, displayed three at a time like stacked cards (**Figure 48**). Swipe up or down, or turn the Digital Crown, to switch among the apps. Tap one of the visible apps to open it.

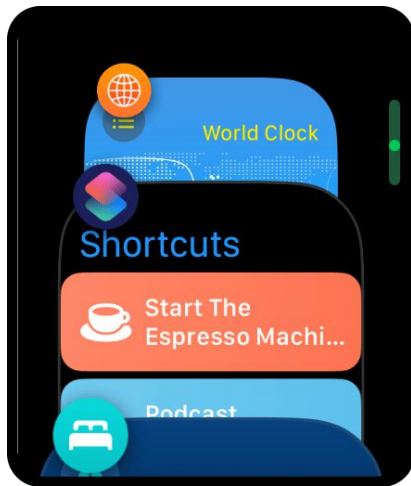


Figure 48: Access to up to 15 recent apps.

Tip: If you hold on an app for one second, it automatically opens. You can turn off this behavior in Settings > Accessibility > Auto-Select Focused App.

Every recent app is stored in a suspended state in the watch's memory, making it even quicker to launch than other apps.

Note: In earlier watchOS versions, recent apps were available via the Dock, which was accessible by pushing the side button. As of watchOS 10, the Dock has been removed.

Manage Notifications

Of the many Apple Watch features, I take advantage of notifications the most. When a text message, bank card alert, or other notification arrives, it appears on my watch; in fact, my iPhone, asleep in my pocket, doesn't chime or vibrate. (Conversely, if you're actively using your iPhone, notifications don't appear on your watch.) This is the heart of your watch's interaction: you can quickly, and discreetly if needed, check a notification on your wrist without pulling out your iPhone.

Act on a Notification

When a notification arrives, your watch taps your wrist and the notification appears (**Figure 55**).

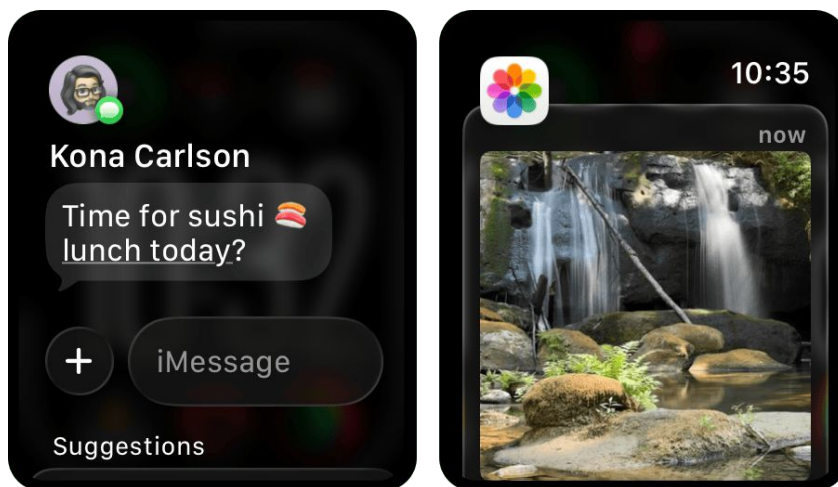


Figure 55: Several types of notifications appear on your watch, identified by the app icon at the top.

Depending on the type, you can take several actions:

- Tap the app icon to open that app—if it exists—on your watch. In the figure above, tapping the Photos app icon in the second screen displays the attached image.

- Tap the Dismiss button to acknowledge you’ve read a notification. You can also swipe down from the top of the screen or use Wrist Flick to dismiss it.
- Tap an action, depending on the app. On the first screen above, you could tap the iMessage field to compose and send a text in Messages (see [Reply to Messages](#)).
- Do nothing: the notification disappears after a few seconds of inaction. It’s then added to Notification Center.

Keep Notifications Private

If you want to ensure that no one can see notification text as messages arrive, open the Watch app on your iPhone, tap Notifications, and turn on Tap to Show Full Notification.

Now, each new incoming notification arrives with only the sender and the associated app. Tap it to view its details.

View Missed Notifications

If you have any unread notifications, a red dot appears at the top of the watch face (**Figure 56**). If that’s too intrusive, turn it off in the Watch app on your iPhone by tapping Notifications and turning off Notifications Indicator; on your watch itself, find the switch in Settings > Notifications.



Figure 56: The red dot has become my Skinner lever. When it appears, I must check Notification Center!

Swipe down to reveal Notification Center and catch up on notifications you’ve missed (or ignored) (**Figure 57**). Use the Digital Crown or swipe to scroll through the list. When several notifications belong to the same app, they appear in a stack; tap the stack to expand it.

Stay Healthy with Your Apple Watch

Your Apple Watch is as much a fitness companion as it is a timepiece or communication device. Sensors measure movement and track your heart rate, while the GPS chip provides location and acceleration data. Included apps, such as ECG and Blood Oxygen (on some models) use this data to help you be more active and health-focused.

While the Activity app is a reminder to stay active, the Workout app is the personal trainer pushing you to the next goal. Workout tracks your performance during several common exercises such as walking, running, swimming, cycling, and wheelchair workouts.

Your health includes more than just how you move your body. On the Series 8 and later models, temperature sensors track your body temperature at night, which can be used by women to [Track Your Cycle](#). The Medications app helps you [Stay on Top of Your Medications](#) and the Mindfulness app reminds you to take deep-breathing breaks and regularly pause for reflection as a way to [Be More Mindful](#). Or check in with your [State of Mind](#), a way to track how you're feeling each day to help identify moods and their causes.

And some health features aren't tied to apps. By analyzing sensor data for 30 days, recent watch models (Series 9, Series 10, Series 11, Ultra 2, and Ultra 3) can detect signs of possible hypertension (high blood pressure) or sleep apnea so you can get them checked out more thoroughly by a physician.

Tip: On the Series 9, Series 10, Series 11, Ultra 2, Ultra 3, and SE 3 models, you can ask Siri for health metrics, such as "Siri, how much sleep did I get last night?"

Activity Tracking

Open the Activity  app (from the Home Screen or the Activity complication on some watch faces) to view your daily activity progress (**Figure 64**).



Figure 64: Try to fill all the activity rings during the day.

Three rings represent the day's activity. Rings close as you meet goals:

- **Calories:** The red Move ring on the outside tracks calories burned during activity (computed based on your age, weight, sex, and activity amount).
- **Activity:** A full circle of the green Exercise ring in the middle indicates 30 minutes of activity involving a consistently elevated heart rate and motion “at or above a brisk walk,” according to Apple. The algorithms are based on your general health information and change over time as you track more data. If you think your watch isn't accurately tracking your activity, [Calibrate the Sensors](#).
- **Standing:** The blue inner Stand ring keeps count of how often you've stood up from a sitting position and moved around; the goal is to be in motion for at least one minute an hour out of 12 hours in a day. However, “stand” is somewhat misleading: the watch is really encouraging you to move, not just stand up. Moving your watch arm for about 30 seconds will often count toward the Stand goal.

Communicate with Friends

As a communications device, your Apple Watch is almost as capable as your iPhone, incorporating text and audio messages via the Messages app, and making and receiving phone calls. Send text and emojis in the same line, along with stickers and GIFs. To put this into context, let's see how it works when replying to incoming messages and composing new ones.

Reply to Messages

When someone sends a text to you, you're initially notified by a tap or tone on your watch. To reply to the message, do the following:

1. Raise your watch to display the sender and the message (**Figure 106**).



Figure 106: This incoming text message includes a question with two options.

2. Tap the iMessage field to compose a reply or tap the Apps  button for more options (discussed below). Or, scroll down to view preset replies.

Reply via Preset Text

Apple has developed an interesting feature called *smart replies* that analyzes the message and presents you with likely preset replies based on the original message (**Figure 107**). (Although, to be honest, this feature seems inconsistent in my experience.)

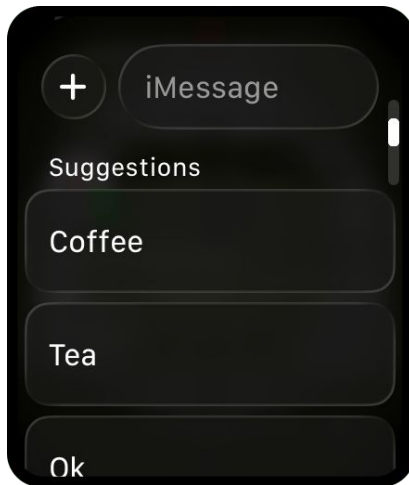


Figure 107: Scroll to see contextual responses based on what the message said.

Scroll down to choose from more-generic preset replies, such as “Sure!” “What’s up?” or “In a meeting. Call you Later?” Tap one to send it.

To create your own preset replies, open the Watch app on your iPhone and go to Messages > Default Replies, tap Add Reply, and enter your own text (including emoji). Tap Messages to return to the previous screen.

Tip: You can also tap Edit to delete existing replies or rearrange the default replies so that the ones you use most appear at the top of the list. Or, turn off Smart Replies if they’re getting in the way.

Reply with Scribble or a Keyboard

With the larger display of the Apple Watch Series 7 and later, and the Ultra models (but not the SE series), replying brings up a QWERTY keyboard (**Figure 108**). Tap to type or use QuickPath technology by dragging your finger across the letters to form words.

Communicate in Other Languages

This is still amazing to me. Imagine you're traveling in a country where the predominant language is not your own...a language you either do not speak, or have difficulty understanding. Instead of getting frustrated when trying to communicate with someone, you lift your watch, say what you want to say in English, and then your watch repeats the message in the local language.

An iPhone Translate app has existed for a while, but a dedicated Translate app is also available on your Apple Watch.

Tip: If you're traveling in a region where the language is different from yours, Translate appears as a suggested widget in the Smart Stack.

Note: If your watch is paired with an iPhone capable of running Apple Intelligence, texts in the Messages app are automatically translated live when communicating with someone who is writing in another language.

Translate Text

Open the Translate  app on your watch to get started. The top listed language is the input, and the bottom is the translated version. For this example, I'll translate from English to Italian.

To translate a phrase or word, do the following:

1. Tap the bottom language button and choose a one of the options, such as Italian.

2. Tap the Microphone  button and speak what you want translated (**Figure 126**).
3. To play an audio version of the translation that appears, tap its Play  button.

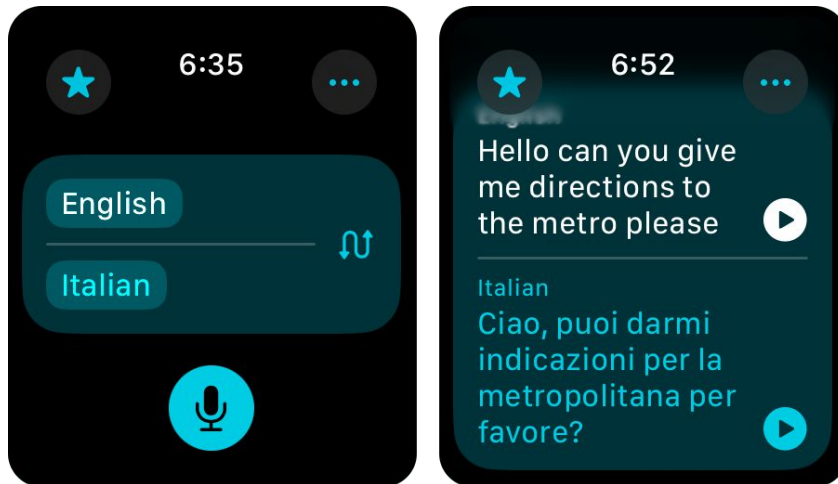


Figure 126: Speak a phrase and get a translation in seconds.

Tip: Can't hear the translation? Go to Control Center and use the Volume  button to adjust the loudness of your watch's speaker.

Each time you create a translation, it shows up as its own block. Scroll down and return to the Microphone  button to translate another phrase.

To record the other person's answer, tap the Switch  button to make the other language the input and your language the output.

The default input method is to speak the phrase you want translated, but you can also type it using the onscreen keyboard: tap the More  button, tap Preferred Input, and choose Text.

While you're there, you can also make the spoken pronunciations faster or slower, and choose whether they're spoken automatically.

Tip: If you need a quick phrase or question translated, bypass the Translate app and use Siri. Activate Siri on your watch and say something like, "How do you say 'I like your dog's raincoat' in Italian?" (Siri tells me it's *Mi piace l'impermeabile del tuo cane.*)

Communicate Using Mail

Email on your Apple Watch is a curious thing—you’re actually *discouraged* from engaging too deeply with your mail. Your watch ties into the Mail app on your iPhone primarily to help you read and sort your Inbox, as well as dash off quick replies. That’s not a bad thing. The goal is to stay up to date on your correspondence and engage as needed, saving more extensive communication for your iPhone or a computer.

Read Email

To take a peek at your waiting messages, do this:

1. Open the Mail  app from the Home Screen.

Your inbox(es) and a couple of messages are displayed. Even in a small space, the app delivers quite a bit of information:

- ▶ A blue dot indicates a message is unread.
- ▶ Icons in the lower-right corner note whether it’s from a VIP, contains attachments (which in most cases can’t be displayed on your watch), has been forwarded or replied to, or is flagged (**Figure 129**).

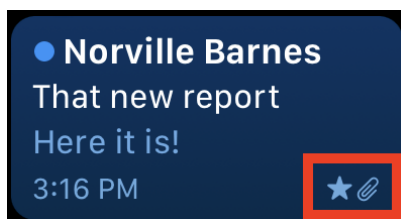


Figure 129: The star and paperclip (highlighted here) let you know that the message is from a VIP and carrying an attachment. The blue dot next to the sender’s name indicates that the message is unread.

- ▶ A chevron character (») in the top-right corner of a message tells you it’s part of a thread.
2. Tap a message to read it.

3. With the message open, scroll to the bottom of message to reveal additional options: reply, flag the message, mark it as unread, or send it to the Trash.

You can also act on a message in the Inbox view by swiping left and tapping either the Trash 🗑️ or the Flag 🚩 button (**Figure 130**). (Depending how your email is set up, Trash may be replaced with an Archive button.) Or, swipe right to toggle a message from read to unread (or vice versa).

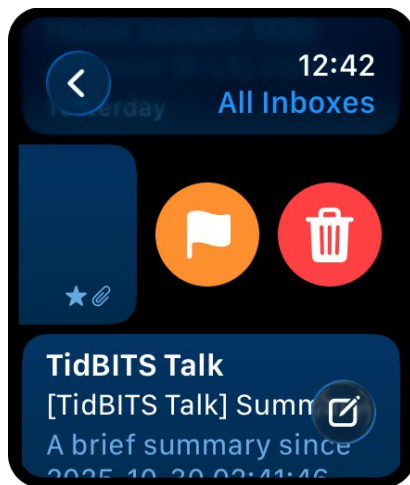


Figure 130: Take action from the message list.

Tip: To manually check for new mail, scroll to the top of the mailbox and turn the Digital Crown toward you or drag the messages down with a finger, mimicking the “pull to refresh” gesture on your iPhone.

Note: Oddly, if you ask Siri to check whether you have any unread email—as you would using the feature on your iPhone—it offers only to use Handoff to check on the phone. However, Siri works fine for simply opening the Mail app on your watch.

Reply to a Message

Quickly compose a reply using the following steps:

1. In a message, scroll to the end and tap Reply (or Reply All in the case of multiple recipients) (**Figure 131**).

Control Your Home

Apple's HomeKit technology is designed for convenience. When you add smart devices like lights, motion sensors, door locks, and security cameras, you can activate them from your phone or with a Siri request. So it just makes sense to be able to do that from your wrist. The Home app lets you control HomeKit-enabled home automation accessories you own.

Accessories and scenes that you mark as Favorites in the Home app on your other Apple devices also appear in the Home app on your watch. You can then control them with a tap or by using Siri.

Control Lights and Accessories Using the Home App

Open the Home  app to view your accessories. A row of shortcut icons appears at the top, depending on the types of things in your home, and devices themselves show up as large buttons (**Figure 136**).

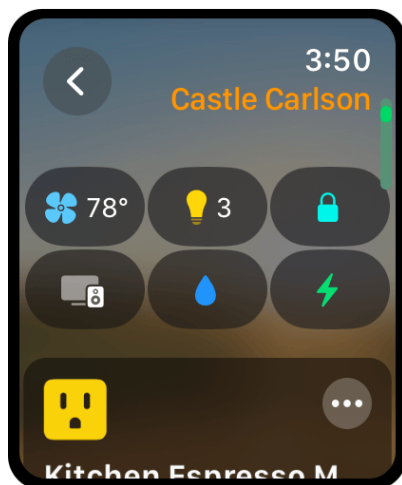


Figure 136: A quick look at the Home app tells me how many lights are on and the temperature in my office.

For instance, my shortcuts show (from left to right) that my office temperature is 78° and three lights are on. Tapping one brings up those devices.

To access individual devices and scenes, tap one of the shortcut buttons for that category, such as lights. Or, tap the Back ◀ button to access rooms, scenes, and favorites.

To turn a device on or off, tap its button. If it has additional controls, such as a degree of brightness or color, tap the More ⋮ button and use the Digital Crown or your finger to adjust the setting (**Figure 137**).

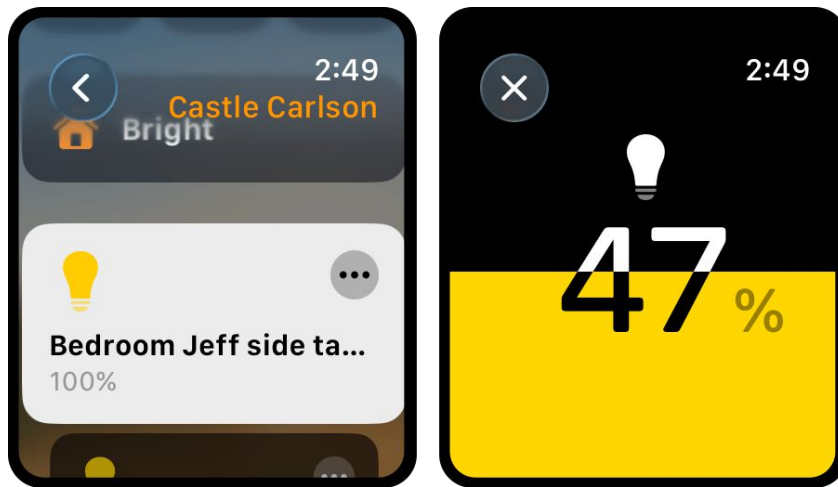


Figure 137: Tap the accessory button to turn it on or off (left), or access its settings for more precise controls (right).

For HomeKit-enabled cameras, tap the camera to view its video feed.

Tip: Tap the Energy ⚡ button to view the Grid Forecast for your area. This is an estimate of when energy usage is “cleaner,” typically when demand is lower and when some providers charge less for non-peak hours. Consider charging your devices or running power-hungry appliances in the green times (**Figure 138**).

Use Apple Pay and Wallet

The first time you use your Apple Watch to pay for something feels almost like science fiction: You activate Apple Pay, move your wrist close to a payment terminal, and then...well, that's it. You may have to enter your card's PIN, but otherwise you're done. "Frictionless" is a perfect description. It's also extremely safe. Instead of handing a credit card number over to be stored in a merchant's database, Apple Pay sends a token that matches up with the card you set up; even if the data were to be intercepted, it's useless to an attacker.

Even more convenient? In some cities, such as New York City, you can tap your watch on the terminals that grant access to the subway. No need to fumble for a card or discover that its balance needs to be refilled.

The Wallet app, where your credit card data is stored, is also a convenient holding area for items that use barcodes for transactions, such as store loyalty cards and tickets for flights, movies, baseball games, and more.

Tip: This isn't a Wallet feature, but it's money-related: the Calculator app has a tip feature. Enter the amount of a bill and tap the Tip button. Use the Digital Crown to adjust the tip percentage. If you're in a group, change the number in the People field to see how much each person contributes.

Set Up Cards for Apple Pay

If you've set up Apple Pay on your iPhone, your cards are not automatically added to your watch. You can add up to eight cards:

1. In the Watch app on your iPhone, tap Wallet & Apple Pay.

To add a card already on your phone, tap the Add button next to its name, follow the prompts, and skip the remaining steps below.

2. To add a new card, tap Add Card.
3. Follow the instructions provided, which entail scanning your credit or debit card using your iPhone's camera—which is incredibly slick—or entering the details manually, and accepting terms of service.

You will also need to complete the verification process, which can be done via email, phone call, or text, depending on the provider.

4. To use your watch to [Use Apple Pay on a Mac](#), turn on Allow Payments on Mac.

When you're done, the cards appear in the Watch app and on your watch: open the Wallet  app to view them (**Figure 140**).

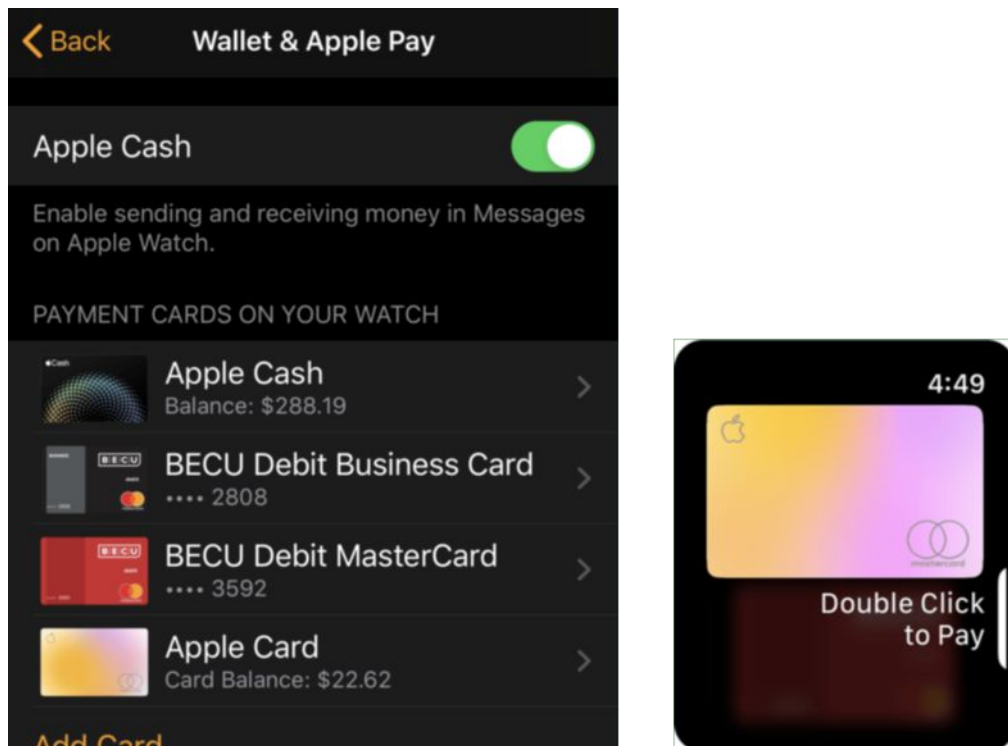


Figure 140: Apple Pay cards set up in the Watch app on your iPhone (left) appear in the Wallet app on your watch (right).

If you have multiple cards, tap Default Card in the Watch app on your iPhone and pick the one you want to use most.

Use Maps and Directions

Instead of staring at your phone while you follow directions in the Maps app (which I can't recommend, from a safety perspective), your Apple Watch can guide you from your wrist. Is that really better? Perhaps not, but it's better to glance quickly at one prominent piece of information on your wrist than parse everything on your phone screen.

Find a Location Using Siri

Let's start with a common task, searching for a place nearby:

1. Raise your watch and say, "Hey Siri" or "Siri," or press and hold the Digital Crown, and ask to find a location: a landmark or business, a contact, or a query like, "Where's good coffee near here?"
2. Use the Digital Crown to scroll through the initial few results and tap one. For more options, tap Open Maps, which displays the results on a map in the Maps app (**Figure 144**). Turn the Digital Crown to view the results, or tap the List  button to view them without the map.

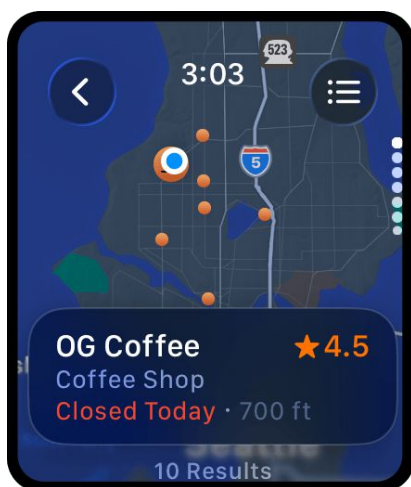


Figure 144: Siri returns a list of answers to your query.

3. From the results, tap a location to view more details.

4. Tap the Directions button (which shows the travel type, such as a car, and time estimate) to [Get Directions](#).
5. To exit the location details and return to the map, tap the Close  button.

If you want to view the place on the map without the other search results, tap the map thumbnail at the bottom of the details screen.

Find a Location Using the Maps App

Opening the Maps app directly gives you access to favorite and recent locations, in addition to searching via your watch's input mechanisms:

1. Open the Maps  app to view your current location (**Figure 145**).

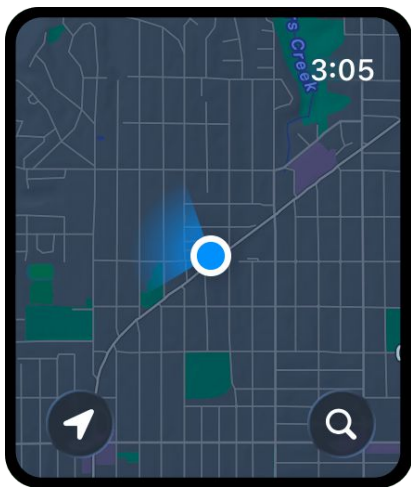


Figure 145: The Maps app starts with—surprise!—a map.

2. Tap the Search  button.
3. Enter a query in the Search field using the keyboard or Scribble. Or, scroll down to view favorites, recent locations, and lists of nearby categories (such as Restaurants, Fast Food, or Gas Stations) of businesses of that type within your vicinity (**Figure 146**). The Search Categories  button in the Search field is a shortcut to display a screen full of nearby categories.

Keep Track of Personal Information

From the Newton and PalmPilot to the iPhone, iPad, and now the Apple Watch, personal technology products all wrangle our schedules and personal information. For this task, your Apple Watch has an advantage. What better place to be reminded of an event than on the object you use to check the time? Schedule reminders and read notes without having to find your phone, or set timers to alert you when something is done in the kitchen (or to wake up from a short nap).

Open the Calendar App

Most watch faces I use include a Calendar complication to see what's next on my schedule. There are several ways to open the Calendar app:

- Tap the Calendar  app on the Home Screen.
- Ask Siri to open the Calendar app: “Hey Siri, open Calendar app.”
- Tap a calendar complication or a date on some faces (**Figure 171**).

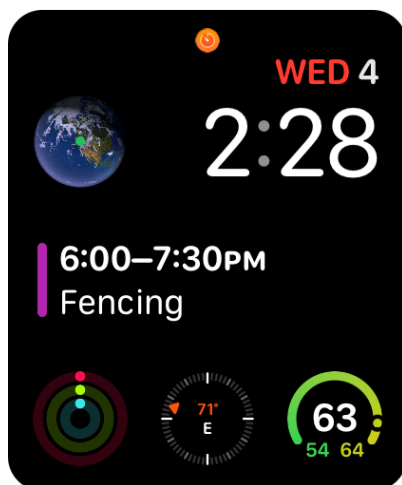


Figure 171: The Calendar complication in the center shows the next item on your schedule; tap it to jump to the Calendar app. On this face, you can also tap the date above the time.

Views in the Calendar App

The Calendar app displays three possible views of your daily schedule, plus a weekly and monthly graph. Tap the More  button and choose one of the following views:

- **Up Next:** View only the next item on your schedule. Turn the Digital Crown to flip between the cards for each item.
- **List:** Calendar's default view is List view (**Figure 172**). Scroll using the Digital Crown or via touch to reveal events in the future.

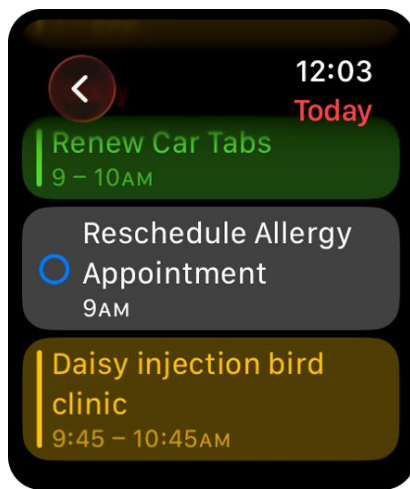


Figure 172: Events are listed in the Calendar app. If you've scrolled to another day, tap the time to return to today's schedule.

- **Day:** Day view is an alternative to the scrolling List view that shows today's schedule in a single scrolling screen, color-coded according to the calendars you use on your iPhone. Switch between days by swiping left or right.
- **Week:** See your week rendered in blocks for appointments (**Figure 173**). Tap a day column to jump back to the daily view.
- **Month:** View a grid of the dates, not events. Tap a week to switch to the Week view.

Experience Media on Your Apple Watch

Just the name of this chapter sounds like the setup for a punchline. Some people have a hard time adjusting to how much media we consume on phones, and now we're turning to an even smaller device? We're not watching movies on our wrists (yet?), but your Apple Watch works well as a music and podcast player, a way to control other media such as an Apple TV, record voice memos, and, yes, even view and capture photos (with some help).

Now Playing

When you play any type of media on your iPhone, the Now Playing  app on your watch jumps forward to give you quick playback access. You can play or pause, skip ahead or back, choose the audio output, adjust volume, and more (**Figure 185**). (I cover the controls just ahead.)



Figure 185: Control whatever is playing on your phone.

Tap the More  button to reveal other nearby devices you can control, such as a HomePod or Apple TV.

Moving your watch within four meters of a HomePod (2nd Generation) or HomePod mini that's playing music or podcasts launches Now Playing to control the playback. This works for Series 6 and later and Ultra models.

Listen to Music, Podcasts, and Audiobooks

If your iPhone is usually in range, your watch plays songs, podcast episodes, or audiobooks from the phone. However, you can also [Sync Media to Your Watch](#) and play items when your iPhone is nowhere nearby, such as while exercising. Or, on cellular models, you can stream tunes from the internet using an Apple Music subscription.

Listen to Music

The process of playing audio is mostly the same with music, podcasts, and audiobooks, so I'll use the watch's Music 🎵 app as the example. Here's how to do it:

1. Open the app, which initially displays the Home Screen.
2. To play one of the items, such as an album, tap its card (**Figure 186**).



Figure 186: From the Home Screen (left), tap an album to begin playing it (right).

Use Family Setup

Until watchOS 7, every Apple Watch needed to be paired with an iPhone. It's been possible to pair multiple watches with one iPhone, but with the expectation that the same person is using them. I know friends who use older watch models at night to track their sleep, for example; or, you might have a stainless steel watch for wearing at the office and an aluminum Nike model when exercising. Your data is shared among all paired watches.

This model falls apart if you want to give a watch to someone in your family who does not have an iPhone to pair it with, such as a child or an elderly parent. The Family Setup option makes it possible to pair several watches with one iPhone, and keep the data on each watch separate.

The family member gets most of the features of your Apple Watch—such as activity tracking, running apps, setting alarms and reminders, and of course telling time—while you're able to communicate with them via text or voice, use Find My Friends to know where they are, and be alerted if anything happens (like detecting a fall or needing to [Use Emergency Features](#)).

Family Setup does have [several important caveats](#):

- It works only with Apple Watch Series 4 and later models, including the Apple Watch SE.
- It requires a cellular-enabled model with an active cellular plan for that watch (with the condition that a “cellular plan isn't required to set up an Apple Watch for a family member, but is necessary for some features”).
- Some standout features of those watch models aren't active for devices configured under Family Setup. According to Apple, those are “medications, respiratory rate, irregular heart rhythm notifications, ECG, AFib History, Cycle Tracking, Sleep, Wrist Temperature, Blood Oxygen, Walking Steadiness, Audiobooks, News, and Short-

cuts.” (So if you’re setting up a watch for a family member, save your money and buy an Apple Watch SE or a compatible used model—cellular models, remember.)

- You must have Family Sharing turned on for your Apple ID.
- If the family member’s Apple ID is being used on a Mac, that device must be running macOS 14 Catalina or later.

Add a Watch Using Family Setup

If the watch is not already unpaired and erased (in the case of a supported hand-me-down model), be sure to [Reset Your Watch](#) first.

Then, follow these steps:

1. Put the watch on your wrist or the family member’s wrist. Position the watch close to your iPhone until you see the option to set it up; tap Continue. If that option doesn’t appear, go to the Watch app on your iPhone, tap All Watches, and then tap Add Watch.
2. On the setup screen, tap the Set Up for a Family Member button. Tap through the successive screens about how the feature works and how Apple uses your data.
3. Scan the cloud animation on the watch face to pair the watch with your iPhone, then tap Set Up Apple Watch.
4. Follow the standard setup steps, such as choosing a font size, and creating a unique passcode for the wearer.
5. Choose the family member who will be wearing the watch, and have them sign in using their Apple ID.
6. After signing in, step through the screens that ask you to enable features such as Siri, the cellular connection, and others. Most of the options can be set up later if you choose.

When the setup is complete, tap All Watches at the top of the Watch app’s main screen to find the new device listed under Family Watches (**Figure 198**). To adjust its settings from your iPhone, tap the watch;

Customizations and Important Settings

When it comes to your Apple Watch, details matter. Some details are large and important, like your watch's orientation or passcode. Other details are small but make a big impact on your daily experience, like the size and appearance of text. This chapter is all about how to customize your Apple Watch so that it works best for you. (I discussed how to [Personalize the Apple Watch Face](#) in an earlier chapter.)

Watch Orientation

Most people wear a watch on the left wrist, with the crown facing the hand. But your Apple Watch is ambidextrous—you can wear it on either wrist, or in a different orientation on the same wrist.

On your Watch, go to Settings > General > Orientation (**Figure 203**). Or, on your iPhone in the Watch app, go to General > Watch Orientation.



Figure 203: What madness is this? Some people find this “reverse crown” orientation better for pressing and turning the Digital Crown.

Choose to wear your watch on your left or right wrist, and then choose whether the Digital Crown is on the left or right.

Gestures

Depending on the model of your Apple Watch, you may see up to three options in this setting:

- **Double Tap:** For Series 9, Series 10, Series 11, SE 3, and all Ultra models, this enables the Double Tap gesture. See [Double Tap](#) for details.
- **Wrist Flick:** On the same models as Double Tap, this option turns on the Wrist Flick gesture. See [Flick Your Wrist](#).
- **Cover to Mute:** With this option enabled, quickly rest your palm on the screen for three seconds to mute alerts and notifications, such as when an alarm goes off while you're watching a movie.

Wake Screen Options

When you raise your wrist, the watch face appears; in the case of the Series 5 and later, the always-on face switches to the active version. To change this behavior in the Watch app on your iPhone, go to Display & Brightness (**Figure 204**). Or, on the watch itself, go to Settings > Display & Brightness.

Care and Feeding of Your Apple Watch

It may be a sharp-looking timepiece, but your Apple Watch is also a piece of highly technical electronics. Taking care of it involves more than a polish here and there.

Recharge Your Watch

Expect to top off the battery every day or so by connecting the included charging cable to the back of your watch.

While your watch is recharging, tap the battery indicator  icon to view the current percentage and the status of the charging, such as “Charging to full” (**Figure 221**). To conserve the overall life of the battery and to save energy, your watch will sometimes charge to 80% and then turn on Optimized Battery Charging, which trickles the remaining 20% in a more efficient manner.

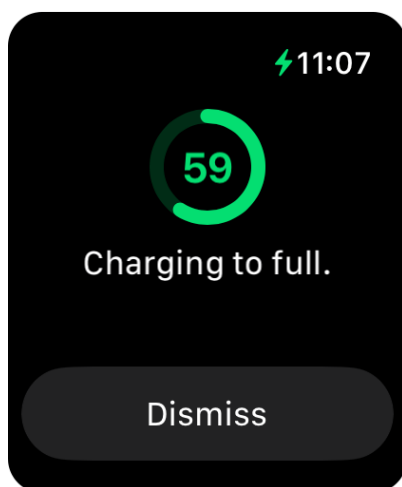


Figure 221: View the current percentage and charging mode while your watch is on its charger.

Tip: The Series 7 and later, SE 3, and Ultra models support fast charging, which gets the battery up to 80% in 30-45 minutes (depending on model). You need the included Apple Watch Magnetic Fast Charger to USB-C cable (or one that supports fast charging) and a power adapter that's 20W or higher.

Low Power Mode

If you want to actively conserve battery life, you can manually put your watch into its Low Power mode, which turns off the Always On Display feature, limits sensors and Wi-Fi connections, turns off background heart rate measurements, and more. When the battery level drops to 10%, you're asked if you want to enter Low Power mode.

To enable Low Power mode, do this:

1. Press the side button to show Control Center.
2. Tap the battery level.
3. Tap the Low Power Mode button (**Figure 222**).

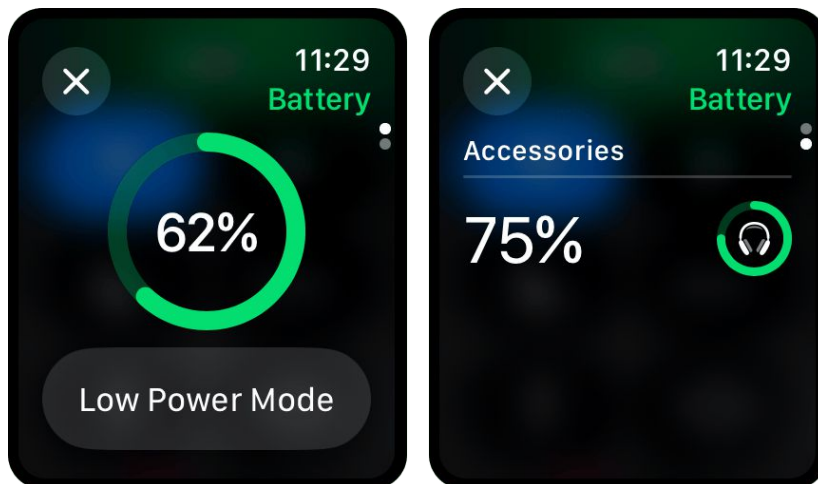


Figure 222: Tapping the battery level in Control Center leads here. As a bonus, you can see the battery power of connected AirPods when you scroll down.

4. Scroll to the bottom of the message that explains which features are limited and choose Turn On. Or, choose Turn On For and activate the feature for 1, 2, or 3 days.

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To stay current with his projects, go to jeffcarlson.com and [sign up for his newsletter](#).

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