



iPhone AND iPad Basics

by **GLENN FLEISHMAN**
\$14.99

2ND
EDITION

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Read Me First

Welcome to *iPhone and iPad Basics, Second Edition*, version 2.1.1, published in December 2025 by alt concepts. This book was written by Glenn Fleishman starting in version 2.0 based on an earlier work by Josh Centers, and edited by Joe Kissell.

This book gives you all the information you need to get started with your iPhone using iOS 26 or iPad using iPadOS 26: How to turn it on and off, how to charge it, what the buttons and switches do, how the built-in apps work, and how to use basic features like the Lock screen, Home Screen, Control Center, and Siri.

If you want to share this ebook with a friend, we ask that you do so as you would with a physical book: “lend” it for a quick look, but ask your friend to buy a copy for careful reading or reference. Discounted classroom and user group copies are available.

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Updates and More

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What's New in Version 2.1 and 2.1.1

This update includes changes Apple made in the November 2025 release of iOS 26.1 and iPadOS 26.1 and the December 2025 release of iOS 26.2 and iPadOS 26.2.

For simplicity, this version assumes you have updated to iOS 26.2/iPadOS 26.2 and does not call out the changes in the text. However, here is a list of what's changed:

- **Liquid Glass tinting (iOS 26.1/iPadOS 26.1):** You can now use a setting to reduce the transparency and increase the contrast in the new Liquid Glass interface. See [Reduce Liquid Glass Effects](#).
- **Liquid Glass Lock screen time control (iOS 26.2/iPadOS 26.2):** The time display on the Lock Screen can now have its translucency adjusted with a slider or removed altogether. See [Customize Your Lock Screen](#).
- **iPad gets Slide Over back (iPadOS 26.1):** Apple removed some of the ways app windows can appear on an iPad with iPadOS 26.0 as part of an overhaul. They restored one of them, Slide Over, in iPadOS 26.1. See [Tile Windows](#).
- **Drag windows in Slide Over (iPadOS 26.2):** In this update, Apple lets you drag apps from the Dock, Spotlight, or App Library into an existing Slide Over window. See [Tile Windows](#).
- **Disable swipe to Camera from Lock screen (iOS 26.1/iPadOS 26.1):** Apple added an option for Lock Screen Swipe to Open Camera to the Camera app settings that lets you disable this feature. See [Open Camera from the Lock Screen](#).

- **Reminder alarms (iOS 26.2/iPadOS 26.2):** You can set a reminder with a date and time as Urgent, and your device alerts with a Clock-like alarm. See [Reminders](#).
- **AirDrop codes (iOS 26.2/iPadOS 26.2):** For security and convenience, Apple now requires a code when using AirDrop to receive an item from someone who not in your contacts. See [Share Locally with AirDrop](#). (Version 2.1.1 of this book fixed errors in the original description of this revised service.)

Previous versions of this book omitted Camera Control, a new button added to iPhone 16 models and found on all devices in the iPhone 17 series and the iPhone Air. See [Camera Control Button](#).

What Was New in the Second Edition

Apple made dramatic changes to iOS and iPadOS with their new Liquid Glass interface, which is unified across all the operating systems the company makes. Most interactions remain the same: tapping buttons, making selections, dragging items, and more. However, the appearance and location of controls are significantly different.

As a result, this new edition updates all the screen captures and instructions for iOS 26 and iPadOS 26—and better still if you’ve upgraded to iOS 26.1 or iPadOS 26.1 or later, release in November 2025.

If you’re using an iPhone or iPad with an earlier release—see Settings > General > About—you can download the previous version of this book, 1.1, which covers iOS 18 and iPadOS 18 and earlier, by following the link in [Ebook Extras](#), near the end of the book.

If you’re new to an iPhone or iPad, Liquid Glass is just what their interfaces look like; if you’re existing user, you’ll need to relearn how to identify some elements.

Other changes worth noting are:

- **Phone app:** The Phone app, formerly available only for iPhone, can now be used on an iPad. Its design was significantly changed, too. See [Phone](#).
- **iPad windows and multitasking:** Apple brought iPads much closer to Macs in how you manage windows and switch among apps. They also added menus to iPad apps. See [Multitask and Use Windows in iPadOS](#).

Important Concepts

As you read this book, you'll encounter certain terms and concepts over and over. Although I explain most of these in detail later, I wanted to briefly orient you to some things you'll need to know as you go along.

Lock Screen

The Lock Screen is usually the first thing you see when you turn on or wake up your device. At its most basic level, it shows the time, date, and notifications. It can also include shortcut buttons and widgets that offer quick access to apps and information. See [Explore the Lock Screen](#).

Lock and Unlock

When your device is *locked*, the Home Screen (see below) and information you consider private and personal information cannot be accessed. The Lock Screen shows previews of notifications but not the complete contents. When you *unlock* your device with Face ID, Touch ID, or your passcode, it displays the contents of those notifications and lets you move on to the Home Screen.

Notification Center

Notification Center is simply a list of the notifications sent by your iPhone or iPadOS and your various apps, typically grouped by app.

Notifications appear on your Lock Screen, but you can display Notification Center separately, no matter what you're doing on your device, via a swipe gesture. See [Manage Notifications](#).

Home Screen

Most of the time that you're using an iPhone or iPad, you see one of two things on the display: either the Home Screen (consisting of a grid of app icons, and sometimes other controls) or the app you're using at the moment; apps generally take up the whole display.

Tip: With the new iPadOS 26 option to resize windows, this no longer has to be the case on an iPad.

You may wind up installing more apps than will fit on a single screen. Each time you exceed a screen's worth of apps, your device automatically adds a page to the Home Screen. You can switch between pages by swiping left or right. See [Rearrange Your Home Screen](#).

Dock

Regardless of which page you're on, you see the same row of icons at the very bottom—that's the Dock, which is intended to provide a quick way to access your most frequently used apps. (I go into far more detail about all this, including how to get back to the Home Screen while you're in an app, in the [Rearrange Your Home Screen](#) chapter.)

The Dock on an iPad is more robust and similar to the Dock on a Mac. I cover it in detail in [Manage the iPad Dock](#).

App Switcher

The App Switcher displays all your open apps and—as the name implies—lets you quickly switch between them. See [Switch Between Apps](#).

Tip: The App Switcher can be used on an iPhone or an iPad, but an iPad must be set to Full Screen Apps in iPadOS 26. Read on for details or see [Multitask and Use Windows in iPadOS](#).

Manage Windows

In iPadOS 26, you can choose among styles for how apps appear in windows: full-screen, in which every app occupies the full screen and you see only one at a time; windowed, in which you can choose to resize apps as windows and arrange them in a space with other apps' windows; and Stage Manager, which groups app windows to one side, and provides some advantages if you use an external display with your iPad. I dig into each of these in [Understand Windows on an iPad](#).

Working with Settings

Throughout this book, I talk about a variety of settings you can change. You can change both systemwide settings and the settings for many apps in the Settings app, which is found by default on the first page of your Home Screen. The Settings app has a huge number of settings I help you navigate in the [Customize Your Device](#) chapter.

Often it's necessary to dive several levels down within the Settings app to find a particular setting. For example, you might open the Settings app, scroll down until you see General and tap that, then scroll again until you see Keyboards and tap that, and finally turn a switch on or off. As a shorthand way of describing this sort of navigation, I use the greater-than (>) symbol to mean “tap the next item in this sequence,” as in “go to Settings > General > Keyboards and turn Predictive Text on or off.”

Tip: Most apps have their settings nested in Settings. You open Settings, scroll down to Apps, then scroll to find the app alphabetically (as in Settings > Apps > *App Name*). You can also use the search field at the bottom of Settings.

Dynamic Island

Starting with the iPhone 14 Pro, iPhones have a feature called the Dynamic Island, which is a clever workaround to accommodate a front-facing camera and a Face ID sensor within a lozenge at the top of the screen instead of indenting a notch from the top.

Note: With iOS 26, the notch appears on the iPhone 11 and later series of full-sized phones through the iPhone 14 and 14 Plus.

Dynamic Island can display two activities at once: one in a pill on the left and another in a circle on the right.

Here are a couple of ways to interact with the Dynamic Island:

- **Open the associated app:** Tap the Dynamic Island entry.
- **Access quick controls:** Touch and hold the Dynamic Island entry to reveal a control panel (**Figure 1**).

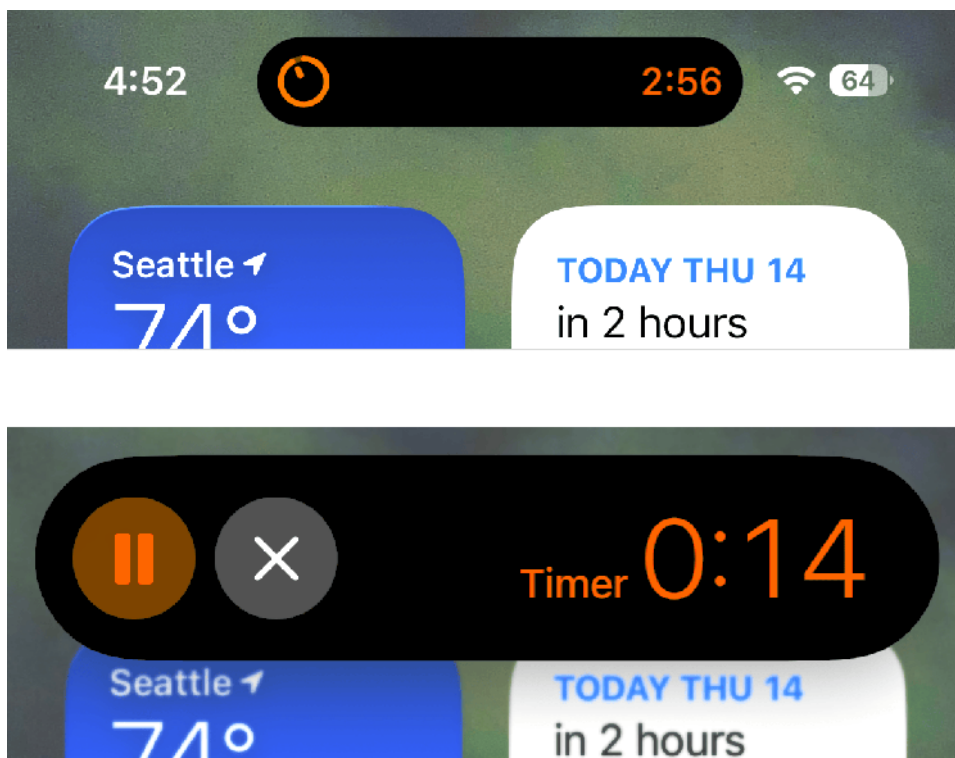


Figure 1: The Dynamic Island (top) showing a countdown timer in its minimized form; touch and hold to reveal a larger display and controls (bottom).

Some things you can expect to see in the Dynamic Island:

- Active timers
- Live Activities, like in-progress deliveries, ride-sharing trips, and airline flights
- Incoming phone calls

- Low battery alerts
- The current Music track playing in the background

Reachability

Apple once made iPhones small enough that most people's thumb could reach across the screen while they held it. But over time, iPhone screens became so big that many onscreen elements are difficult to reach single-thumbedly. Apple added a feature called Reachability that drops the top of the screen down so you can more easily reach it with your thumb (**Figure 2**).

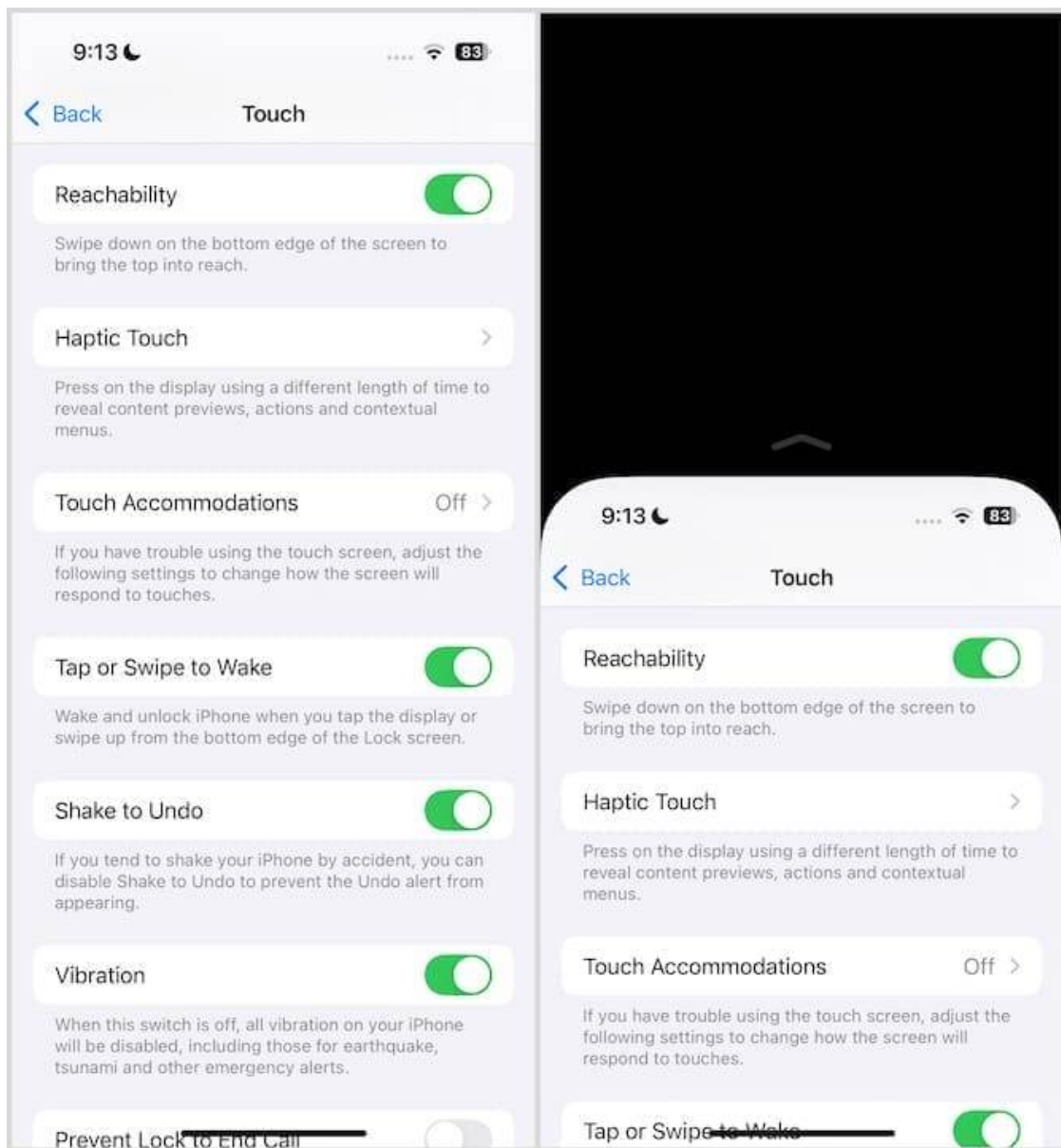


Figure 2: Reachability lowers the screen so you reach items from the top of the screen.

I discuss Reachability in [Get to Know Your Device](#).

Siri

Siri is Apple’s voice assistant, but the Siri brand is sometimes also used for other “smart” features. For instance, you can “type to Siri,” where you enter a query with a keyboard instead of relying on voice recognition. Siri can help you place calls, send messages, set reminders, create calendar appointments, and other helpful things. I discuss it in depth in [Get to Know Siri](#).

iCloud

iCloud is Apple's suite of online services for syncing information and storing it online. "Syncing" is when a service ensures that the same, up-to-date versions of your data are the same everywhere, such as contacts, calendar appointments, and photos.

iCloud has many components:

- Device backup for iPhones and iPads
- Online and synced file storage in iCloud Drive, which lets and access files and update files through the Files app
- iCloud for Messages, which stores your messages from the Messages app in iCloud to free up space on your device and enable smooth syncing between devices
- iCloud Mail, a basic email service
- Syncing of contact, calendar entries, Notes, and other apps' items
- iCloud Photo Library, which lets you back up and offload photos to iCloud

This is not an all-inclusive list, and Apple adds new functions to iCloud from time to time.

iCloud comes in free and paid versions. The free tier is set when you register an Apple Account, and includes the paltry amount of 5 gigabytes (GB) of storage, which is not even enough to back up an iPhone or iPad. For a monthly fee, you can pay for storage from 50 GB to 2 terabytes, and gain access to a few additional services, including security video storage. Apple calls their paid offering [iCloud+](#).

Apple offers many other paid services, such as [Apple TV](#) and [Apple News+](#). If you want all of Apple's services, you can subscribe to [Apple One](#), which bundles them at a discount.

Share Sheet

You can share content—like web pages and photos—with other people and other apps. Apple offers an interface called the *share sheet* to do this, which also bundles in other miscellaneous functions. For more, see [Share Stuff with the Share Sheet](#).

Introduction

The initial genius of iPhones and iPads was that they were simple devices. Anyone, even a toddler, could pick one up and instantly “get it.” Over nearly 20 years of maturity, the operating systems for both devices have become so complex that even experienced users may not know how to perform some actions.

For those of you new to an iPhone or iPad, this book is for you. (If you’re trying to reacquaint yourself after the huge changes with Liquid Glass in iOS 26 or iPadOS 26, you might consider my [*Take Control of iOS 26 and iPadOS 26*](#).)

Here, I cover all the very basics of using your iPhone and iPad from the outside in, touching on every built-in app and all the features that form the core of the experience.

This book is current as of iOS 26 and iPadOS 26. iOS 26 requires an iPhone 11 series or later an iPhone SE (2nd generation or later). Apple has a more diverse array of iPads that can handle iPadOS 26:

- iPad Pro (M4)
- iPad Pro 12.9-inch (3rd generation and later)
- iPad Pro 11-inch (1st generation and later)
- iPad Air (3rd generation and later, including M2)
- iPad (8th generation and later, and the 11-inch A16)
- iPad mini (5th generation and later, and the A17 Pro)

Tip: Not sure of your model or generation? Go to Settings > General > About, and Model Name reveals the details.

If you have a supported iPhone or iPad that isn’t yet running iOS 26 or iPadOS 26, see [Update iOS and iPadOS](#).

iPhone & iPad Quick Start

You don't need to read this book cover to cover, though you can do so if you choose. This book has been designed to take you on a tour of your device, from the outside in. However, if you do skip around, I highly recommend at least peeking into [Learn Basic Gestures](#) and [Learn Text-Editing Basics](#) because they'll save you a lot of time, and if you trigger them by accident, knowing what has happened will keep you from being confused.

Learn more about your iPhone and iPad:

- Learn what the your device's buttons and switches do in [Get to Know Your Device](#).
- Explore essential settings in [Customize Your Device](#).
- Migrating from Android? Jump to [Appendix A: Migrate from Android](#).

Get started:

- Find out what you can do with your device before unlocking it in [Explore the Lock Screen](#).
- Discover how to arrange your Home Screen and create shortcuts to your favorite apps in [Rearrange Your Home Screen](#).
- Learn about Apple's [Built-In Apps and What They Do](#).

Search and command your device:

- Spotlight lets you search your device, search the web, launch apps, find contacts, and more. See [Search with Spotlight](#).
- Siri is your voice interface to your device, and it lets you trigger common actions and look up information. See [Get to Know Siri](#) and learn about the voice commands it can accept.

Go deeper:

- Control Center lets you quickly access common functions and settings. See [Use Control Center](#).
- Learn how to make the most of the onscreen keyboard and use an external hardware keyboard with your device in [Work with Keyboards](#).
- Send things to other apps and people when you [Share Stuff with the Share Sheet](#).

Interact with the outside world:

- Focus lets you set up special modes to cut out unnecessary notifications and other noise. See [Reduce Distractions with Focus](#) and take your life back from digital distractions.
- Learn how to switch between apps and use Handoff in [Work with Apps](#).

Get to Know Your Device

In this chapter, I discuss all the ins and outs of the physical hardware on your device, including what all the buttons do, what you need to know about charging ports, a brief explainer on cameras, and common gestures.

Know Your Buttons and Switches

Here's an overview of the twiddly bits—buttons and switches—on your iPhone and iPad.

Skip Ahead for Home Button

If you have a Home button on your iPhone or iPad, a round button centered below the display while holding it in portrait view, Apple only supports four remaining models with iOS 26 and iPadOS 26: the iPhone SE (2nd and 3rd generation) and the iPad (8th and 9th generation). Because the vast majority of iPhone and iPad users lack a Home button, I have put all the details for those of you who have one late in this section; see [How To Use the Legacy Home Button](#). This section otherwise assumes you have an iPhone 11 or later or an iPad without a Home button.

Side/Top Button

All iPhones and iPads have a button that is used mostly to wake up or lock the screen. It's on the right-hand side on iPhones; on iPads, it's on the top when you hold it in portrait orientation or on the side when held in landscape orientation. Some iPad models include a Touch ID sensor that is an invisible part of the side/top button, too.

In most cases, this button performs the same reaction when pressed regardless of where it's located, though there are a few qualifications, as noted below.

Here's what the side/top button can do by itself:

- **Lock the device:** While the device is unlocked, press the side/top button once.
- **Wake the device:** While the device is locked, press the side button once.
- **Turn on the device:** If the device is completely powered off—not just locked—press and hold the side/top button until the Apple logo appears.
- **Activate Siri:** Press and hold the side/top button until the Siri interface appears (see [Summon Siri](#)).

Other options require combining the side/top button and the volume buttons, described next:

- **Take a screenshot:** Press the side/top button and the Volume Up button simultaneously.
- **Emergency SOS:** For iPhones only, press and hold the side button and either volume button until the Emergency SOS slider appears, then slide to initiate SOS. See [Deal with Emergencies on an iPhone](#) and [Set Up a Medical ID](#).
- **Power off the device:** Press and hold the side/top button and either volume button until the power off slider appears, then slide to power off.

Volume Buttons

The two volume buttons' primary function are to turn the volume up or down. Some iPads offer dynamic volume buttons, which change their function based on the orientation of the iPad. For example, in portrait orientation, the uppermost button increases the volume, but in landscape orientation (buttons at your right) the same button lowers the volume if it's the leftmost volume button.

On some iPads, you can disable dynamic volume controls by turning on Fixed Position Volume Controls in Settings > Sounds.

Customize Your Device

In this chapter, I cover the most-important iPhone and iPad settings, as well as how to update, reset, and secure your devices.

Change iOS and iPadOS Settings

The Settings app in iOS and iPadOS offer an overwhelming number of settings. I cover many throughout this book, but here I discuss some especially important ones that most people should be familiar with.

Search for a Setting

It's not always obvious where to find the setting you're looking for. Thankfully, you can search the Settings app, which is the best way to navigate it.

In the Settings app, tap in the Search field at the bottom of the app, and enter your query. Even if you don't know the exact name of the thing you're looking for, search results are usually helpful.

Results appear automatically as you type. Tap the one you want to adjust it. To exit the search results, tap the Cancel  icon.

Tip: Even though there's a Search  button, tapping it just dismisses the keyboard—it doesn't perform an additional search.

Reduce Liquid Glass Effects

Apple introduced the Liquid Glass interface in fall 2025 to all of their operating systems, including iOS and iPadOS. If this is your first exposure to an iPhone or iPad, it's just how things work. Both previous users (to whom it was a shock) and new users may find that the amount of transparency and reflection makes some buttons, labels, menus, and other elements hard to read or see.

You can reduce the transparency and increase contrast via Settings > Display & Brightness > Liquid Glass and choose Tinted instead of Clear to see whether that works better for you (**Figure 5**).

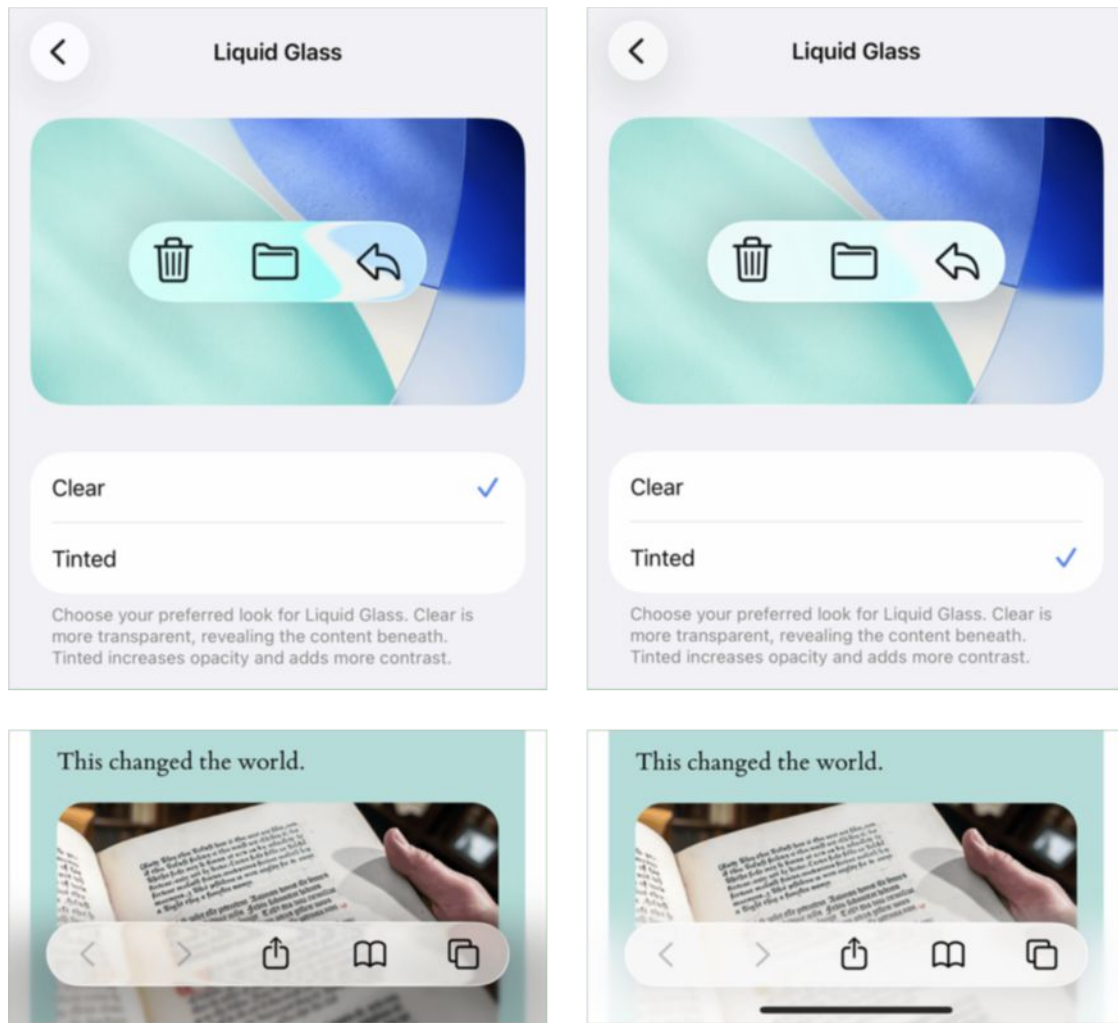


Figure 5: Liquid Glass set to Clear (left) allows a lot of bleedthrough and may make text harder to read or images harder to perceive clearly; shift to Tinted (right) if you prefer that style.

You can also use Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size to enable Reduce Transparency and Increase Contrast, which provide an even starker improvement. Experiment with these settings to see which is right for you.

Note: You can't switch between Clear and Tinted for Liquid Glass without first disabling Reduce Transparency and Increase Contrast.

Work with Apps

In the next two chapters, learn how to work with apps. First, in this chapter, I tell you how iPhones and iPads let you switch among apps with App Switcher, the new iPad approach to windows and the choices you can make, and how iPhones and iPads (and Macs!) hand information off between devices using Handoff.

Then, the next chapter, [Built-In Apps and What They Do](#), tells you all about the apps that come with your iPhone or iPad, as well as how to add new apps from the [App Store](#).

Before reading on, open any app by tapping it on the Home Screen.

Switch Between Apps

The App Switcher lets you switch to a recently used app, force-quit a malfunctioning app, or work with Handoff (see [Learn About Handoff](#).) App Switcher works on all iPhones and iPads set to Full Screen Apps in Settings > Multitasking & Gestures (see [Understand Windows on an iPad](#) for alternatives).

Here's how App Switcher works:

1. Swipe up from the bottom of the screen to open the App Switcher (**Figure 6**). (On an older device with a Home button, double-press the Home button.)
2. If you don't see the app you want, flick left or right to find it.
3. Tap the app you want to switch to.

To force-quit an app, flick its image toward the top of the screen.

Tip: Force-quitting can be useful at times, such as when an app freezes. However, don't make a habit of force-quitting apps, as doing so is usually a waste of time and can hurt battery life.

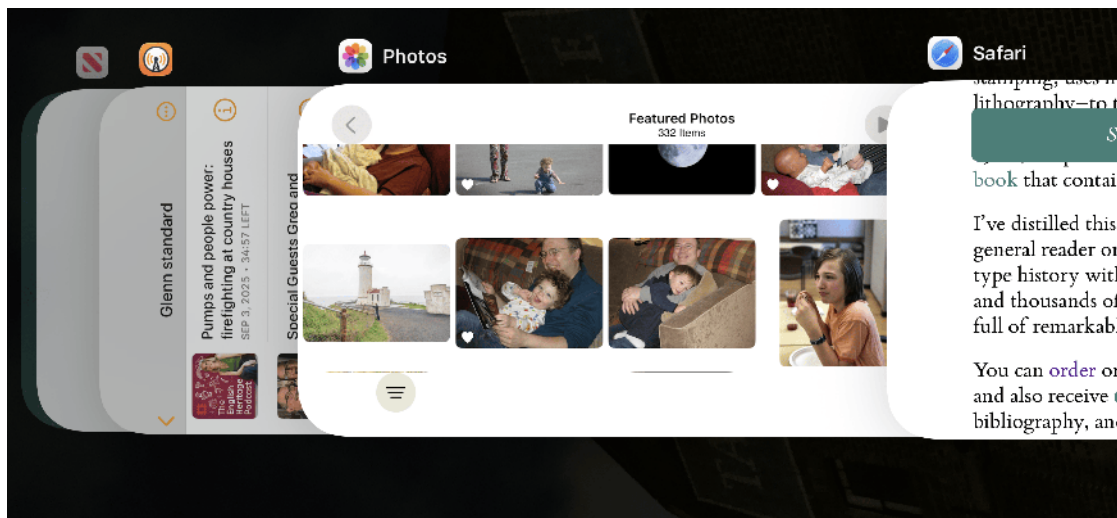


Figure 6: The App Switcher lets you select recently used apps.

Things look a little different on an iPad in Full Screen Apps mode: open apps are presented in a grid with the Dock at the bottom, but things work pretty much as they do on an iPhone (**Figure 7**).



Figure 7: The iPad App Switcher in Full Screen Apps mode displays open apps as a grid.

iPads have other multitasking windowing modes worth learning about at this point before we move on to Handoff.

Built-In Apps and What They Do

This chapter is a very quick guide to the built-in apps in iOS/iPadOS and their basic functions. In some cases, I recommend books that discuss various apps in more detail. For other apps, see Apple's [iPhone User Guide](#) and [iPad User Guide](#).

Tip: With many apps, Apple uses a Home or main icon on iPhones, which you tap to reveal all the view options. For instance, in Music, tap the Home  icon to reveal New, Radio, and Library. On an iPad, apps typically show most views as buttons at the top. Tap a sidebar  button to reveal a full sidebar with more options.

App Store

The App Store is your destination for new apps and games, as well as updates to existing apps. Apps can be free, paid, or, as is often the case, free on a limited basis with full functionality requiring an in-app purchase or subscription.

The main view of the App Store has five buttons, each of which is a different lens to browsing or accessing apps:

- **Today:** The Today  screen shows a curated set of apps with write-ups from Apple staff about why they might be fun or fit your productivity needs.
- **Games:** The Games  screen is mostly lists and categories, letting you see what's coming soon, what editors recommend, what's popular, and what's recommended for you algorithmically.
- **Apps:** Strangely to the right of Games, despite its importance, the Apps  screen provides top-level browsing and recommendations, including incorporating streaming video releases and events.

- **Arcade:** Apple's Arcade 🎮 subscription service, part of Apple One bundles, can be accessed here when you want to browse what's available and download apps that are included in the subscription.
- **Search:** Tap the Search 🔍 icon at the bottom of the screen and enter keywords or app titles to search for apps and see suggestions. You can also browse from this view.

In any of these views or when tapping on an app for more information, you see one of four icons or text labels, depending on how the app is priced and whether you have previously downloaded it (**Figure 16**):

- **Get:** Download the app for free. If it offers in-app purchases, it says so under the button. Even if free, you're prompted with Touch ID or Face ID to install (**Figure 17**).
- **Redownload app:** Tap the download ☁️ icon. This is an app you've previously installed or paid for. Downloading it again does not incur an additional charge.
- **Open:** The app is installed. Tap to open.

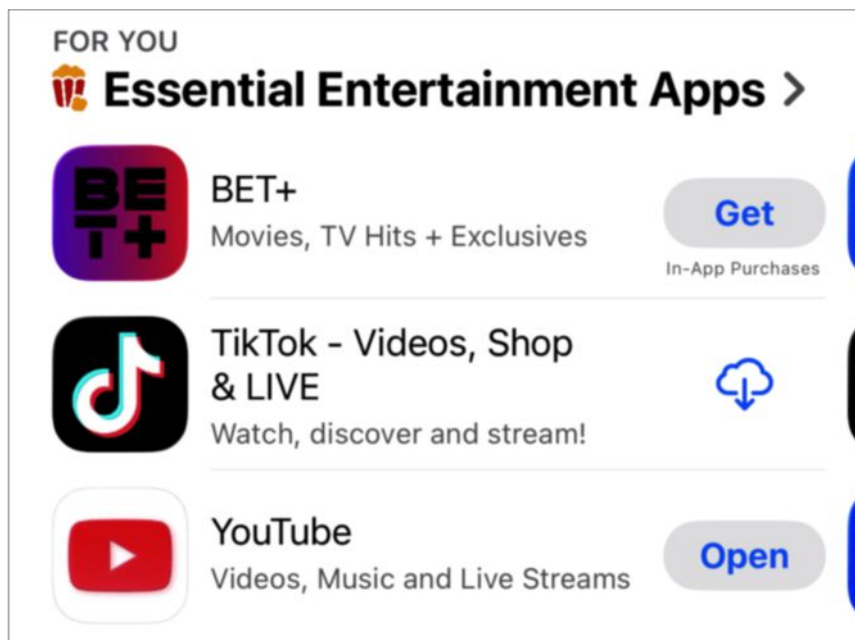


Figure 16: In one category, you can see three different button options: I've never downloaded BET+, I once downloaded (and quickly deleted) TikTok, and I have YouTube installed.

Explore the Lock Screen

The Lock Screen is the first thing you see when you power on or wake up your iPhone or iPad, and it contains a wealth of functionality, such as the current time, notifications, and various optional widgets.

Lock and Unlock Your Device

When you turn on or wake up your device, it's initially locked, so you have to unlock it before you can do most activities. All iPhones and iPads that use iOS 26 or iPadOS 26 are equipped with either [Touch ID](#) or [Face ID](#), which you can use to unlock them:

- **Face ID (iPhones and iPad Pro):** Lift the device or tap the screen to wake it, look directly at the screen, and swipe up from beneath the bottom of the screen to the Home Screen.

In some cases, your device won't unlock fast enough to allow the swipe. If that happens, wait until you see the lock  at the top of the screen go from locked to unlocked  when your face is recognized, granting full access. Then you can swipe.

If your face isn't recognized, you are prompted to enter your passcode. You can tap Cancel and swipe up from beneath the bottom of the screen to try Face ID again, but it will be disabled after five unsuccessful attempts.

- **Touch ID (iPad):** Lightly rest your finger on the top button, which wakes the device. If the scan fails, you're prompted to enter your passcode. (If you try to unlock without resting your finger, your iPad prompts you to do so.)

Note: If you have one of the oldest supported devices for iOS 26 and iPadOS 26 with a Home button, the Touch ID sensor is in the Home button. See [How To Use the Legacy Home Button](#).

Tip: If you're wearing an Apple Watch paired with your iPhone, you can use it to unlock your iPhone when you use Siri commands or you can't immediately trigger Face ID. Go to Settings > Face ID (or Touch ID) & Passcode and, under Unlock with Nearby Devices, flip the switch next to your Apple Watch.

To lock your device again, press the side/top button. Otherwise, your device locks automatically after the amount of time chosen in Settings > Display & Brightness > Auto-Lock.

Deal with Emergencies on an iPhone

In an emergency, press and hold the side/top button and a volume button until three sliders appear for power, Medical ID, and Emergency Call. Note that this also disables Face ID and Touch ID, which can be handy since in some jurisdictions law enforcement can compel you to use biometric logins (Face ID or Touch ID) but not hand over passcodes.

If you [Set Up a Medical ID](#) in the Health app, you or a medical responder can access this screen and swipe the Medical ID slider from right to reveal vital info like blood type and emergency contacts.

Swipe the Emergency Call slider from left to right to call emergency services. If you are in the United States, your iPhone automatically sends your Medical ID to emergency responders if the 911 system supports Enhanced Emergency Data. (You can turn this off by disabling Emergency Calls & SOS in Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services > System Services > Emergency Calls & SOS.)

For more mobile safety tips, see my book [Keep Safe Using Mobile Tech](#).

Manage Notifications

Notifications give you snippets of key status information. Notifications gather in reverse chronological order on the Lock Screen and in Notification Center. Here's how to see those:

- To display Notification Center, Swipe down from the top-center of the screen.

Manage the Home Screen

Once past the Lock Screen, you're presented with the Home Screen—the grid of icons that you tap to launch apps. Resting at the bottom of the Home Screen is the Dock, which makes it easy to get to a fixed set of your most-used apps regardless of which Home Screen page you're on. You can also add widgets to your Home Screen, and the App Library lets you corral all your apps in one place.

There's one additional element I need to cover that isn't quite the Home Screen, but it has a similar nature: Control Center. Control Center can be invoked from anywhere—not just the Home Screen—and uses icon-style controls for easy access to actions and information.

Learn Home Screen Basics

To return to the Home Screen from any app, swipe up from the bottom of the screen. (Press the Home button if your device has one.) The Home Screen is divided into pages, which iOS and iPadOS automatically add and remove as you install and delete apps. The small white dots near the bottom of the screen indicate which Home Screen page you're viewing (**Figure 52**). To flip between pages, flick the screen left or right.

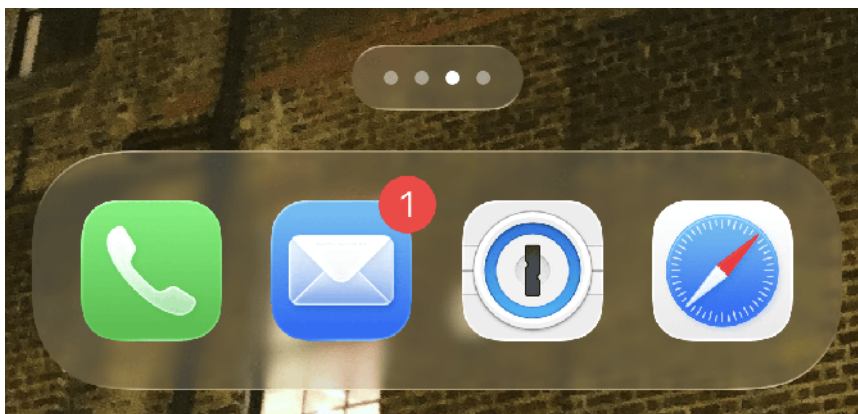


Figure 52: The dots above the Dock tell you which Home Screen page you're on. They appear on an iPhone only when flipping between pages.

On an iPhone, the dots appear only when moving between pages. Otherwise they're replaced by the Search button (see [Search with Spotlight](#)). They're always present on an iPad.

Tip: To jump to the first ("main") page of the Home Screen from some other page, swipe up from the bottom of the screen.

Below those dots (or the Search button) is the Dock, which lets you store up to four apps on an iPhone that remain easily accessible at the bottom of the screen no matter what Home Screen page you're on. The iPad Dock is a bit more involved (see [Manage the iPad Dock](#)).

You can move apps (or folders) in and out of the Dock just as you would any other spot on the Home Screen. See [Rearrange Your Home Screen](#) ahead for instructions on moving apps and creating folders.

Clean Up Your Home Screen with App Library

The last page of your Home Screen contains the App Library, which displays all of the apps available on your iPhone or iPad in automatically sorted folders. You can also move pages or hide unwanted pages to streamline your Home Screen.

Tip: On an iPad, the last Dock  icon opens the App Library.

This means that you can have apps installed on your device without their icons taking up space on the Home Screen.

Note: You can set whether new apps appear on your Home Screen by going to Settings > Home Screen & App Library and selecting either Add to Home Screen or App Library Only.

Each App Library folder shows four icons. All four icons in the Suggestions folder are apps. In the other folders, three are apps and tapping the fourth (which features a grid of smaller icon thumbnails) reveals the contents of that folder (**Figure 53**).

Search with Spotlight

A simple yet powerful feature on your iPhone and iPad, Spotlight lets you swiftly search everything in your device: apps, files, messages, and content inside your apps. Spotlight can act as a quick app launcher, and it includes a number of other tricks as well.

Access Spotlight

There are three ways to access Spotlight search:

- Swipe down on the middle of the Lock Screen or Home Screen.
- *iPhone only:* Tap the Search button above the Dock.
- If you have a keyboard attached, press ⌘-Space.

Use Spotlight

When you invoke Spotlight, you're first presented with a number of apps based on Siri Suggestions, some actions (like Scan Document or a person to call), and the results of recent searches, if any (**Figure 61**). Tap any app icon or result to proceed, if you see what you need.

Tip: Siri Suggestions use time of day, location, and other cues to show a set of apps you have used before or might need. Sometimes, it just seems like your most-used apps; other times, it's downright eerie how the suggestions are contextually appropriate.

To search your device and connected apps and storage (like iCloud Drive via the Files app and Dropbox), type a search term into the Search field and tap the Go → or magnifying glass 🔍 button on your keyboard (or press Return on a physical keyboard). You can also start typing a query and see matches as you type. In the results list that appears, tap any entry to open it.



Figure 61: When you swipe down on the Home Screen to reveal the search box, you also see Siri suggestions for recent and frequently used apps, and you may see other suggestions like regular actions you take at the current time or suggested searches.

Tip: If using a physical keyboard, you can press the arrow keys to scroll through results and press Return to open one.

Spotlight shows a number of different kinds of results, sometimes in varying order (**Figure 62**):

- **Top Hit:** At least one matches appears under this singular label, often finding what you need—sometimes with a single letter! The more you type, the better the “hit” is. Up to four apps and some other categories of items appears, but typically just one webpage. After the Top Hit appears, you should have a Go ➔ button that can be tapped to immediately open that app or result.

Get to Know Siri

Siri is a voice-activated personal assistant, capable of making phone calls, playing music, reading your email messages, telling you if it's going to rain, and even controlling your home. This chapter offers a basic overview of Siri.

Tip: For in-depth coverage, see [Take Control of Siri](#).

Summon Siri

You can summon Siri in several ways:

- Say “Siri” or “Hey Siri.”
- Press and hold the side/top button or the Home button.
- Reveal Control Center and tap a Siri control (see [Use Control Center](#)).
- With devices with Apple Intelligence available and enabled, double-tap the bottom edge of your display and then type in your request. (See [Understand Apple Intelligence](#).)

When you do one of these things, a colorful animated border appears around the screen on an iPhone while a glowing orb appears on the screen on an iPad—both indicate that Siri awaits your queries. You can start speaking; if you double-tapped the bottom of your screen, you can type in a request.

When you pause for a few seconds while speaking or tap the send  button, Siri answers your request. With the spoken version, Siri remains active afterwards until the display sleeps, you tap the screen, or you perform any other task.

Set Up Siri

There are other important settings to check. On devices with Apple Intelligence, go to Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri; otherwise, go to Settings > Siri. Take a look at these items you can adjust:

- **How Siri activates:** You can adjust the terms Siri listens for in Talk & Type to Siri or Talk to Siri. You can tell it to listen for “Siri” or “Hey Siri,” or only “Hey Siri,” or turn off listening entirely. On devices with Apple Intelligence, you can disable Type to Siri, if you prefer to not have that shortcut.
- **Don’t use side/top or Home button:** If you prefer to only activate Siri by voice (or by typing), disable Press Side/Top/Home Button for Siri in Talk & Type to Siri/Talk to Siri.
- **Your spoken language:** Tap Language to select the language that you want to speak to Siri with. You should choose the language you are most fluent in, but this is also a fun way to practice speaking in a foreign language.

Note: If you change Siri’s language, you’ll have to reenable Hey Siri.

- **Siri’s accent and voice:** Tap Voice. Depending on the selected language, you may see accent options. Tap the accent that you want to hear when Siri speaks, and then choose one of the voice options. Whenever you tap an option, it plays a preview of the voice.
- **Introducing yourself:** You can tell Siri “Take me home” to get directions to your residence, but first, Siri must know who you are. Tap My Information and then pick your contact entry from the list. If you don’t have one, make one in the [Contacts](#) app.

To check who Siri thinks you are, you can ask “Who am I?”

Tip: To create a new contact card, whether for yourself or a family member, open the [Contacts](#) app and tap the Add  button at the top of the main screen (cancel the Search field if you don’t see an Add  button).

Work with Keyboards

The iPhone and iPad keyboards are deceptively simple, but there are many hidden features for typing and editing text. This chapter covers some of the finer points of editing text on an iPhone or iPad, including hidden editing gestures, using emoji, installing third-party keyboards onscreen keyboards, and dictating text. For information on using a hardware keyboard with your device, see [Use an External Keyboard](#).

Learn Text-Editing Basics

You have many useful text-editing gestures on iPhone and iPad:

- **Display the insertion point:** Tap in a text area where you want the insertion point to appear.
- **Move the insertion point:** Tap where you want to type or place a finger on the insertion point and drag it where you want to go.
- **Select text:** Double-tap to select a single word. Without lifting your finger, you can drag it to continue selecting text. Triple-tap to select an entire line or quadruple-tap to select a paragraph. After text is selected, you can drag the handles to shrink or expand the expansion (**Figure 63**).

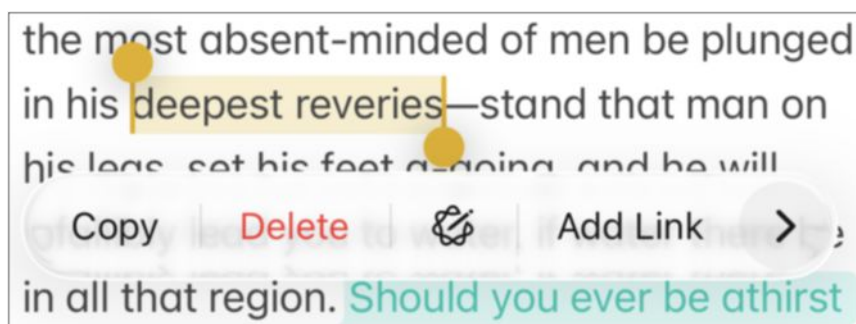


Figure 63: After selecting text, move the handles on each end to adjust the selection. The edit menu also appears with common actions like Copy and Select All.

- **Edit menu:** After you select text, an edit menu appears above the selection with common options that makes sense contextually for the selected text and in that app, like Copy, Delete, Writing Tools , and Add Link in the figure above. You can tap the arrow  to cycle through additional options, like Look Up and Translate. On narrower screens, a back  arrow might appear on the left to cycle backward through the options. In some cases, you may be presented with more extensive options in a popup menu (**Figure 64**).

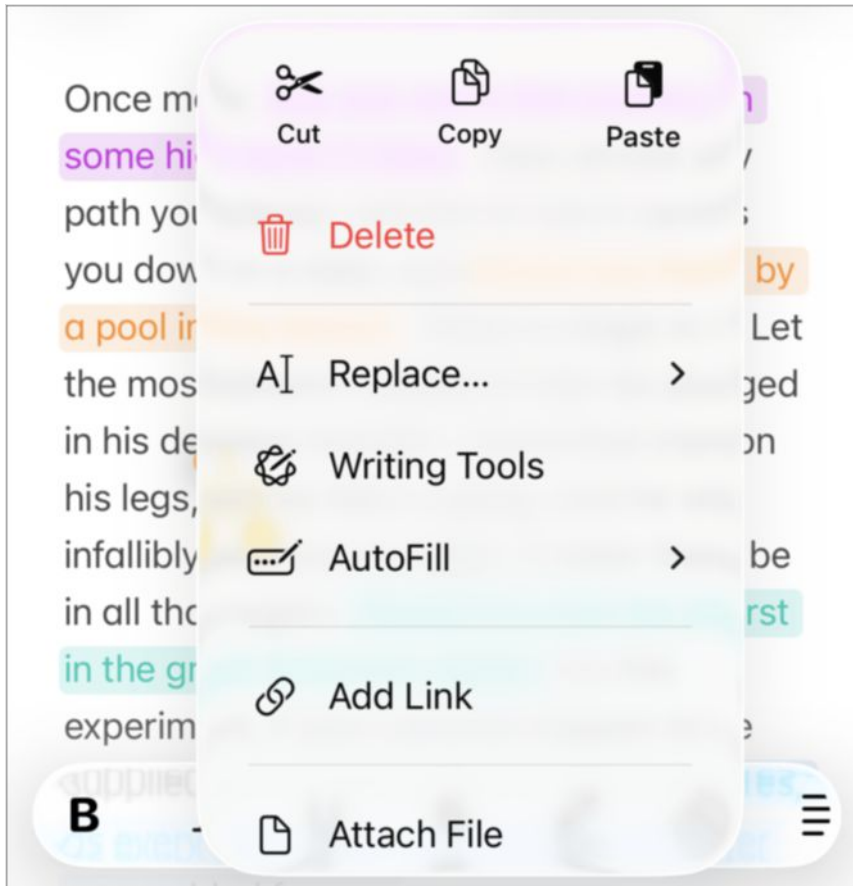


Figure 64: You may see a full popup menu when there are too many options to present in a sliding bar.

- **Copy text:** With text selected, you can also pinch in with three fingers to copy it. You'll see Copy appear at the top of the screen.
- **Cut text:** With text selected, pinch in once with three fingers to copy, and then again to cut. You'll see Cut appear at the top of the screen.

Share Stuff with the Share Sheet

The share sheet is a core feature for sharing content with other people and for triggering miscellaneous actions. You can not only share webpages, photos, and other items through messages, email, and on social media, but you can also transfer a file (like a PDF displayed in Safari) to another app (like Books) or execute actions like searching a webpage or launching a shortcut. Here are the ins and outs of how the share sheet works in iOS and iPadOS.

Share with the Share Sheet

Whenever you can share content, you see a Share  icon. Tap it to reveal the share sheet, which displays three rows of icons plus a scrollable list of other options at the bottom (**Figure 72**). Here's how these break out; tap an icon or option to choose it:

- **Top row:** This row includes AirDrop and recent contacts in various apps. Swipe left to reveal more contacts. Tap to select.
- **Middle row:** The middle row displays apps you can share to. Swipe left to see more apps.
- **Bottom row:** You see actions—of the sort that would normally appear in menus on a Mac—that make sense in context for the current app. For Photos, shown in **Figure 72**, the share sheets displays Copy Photo, Save to Dropbox (I have Dropbox installed and use it regularly), Add to Shared Album, and Add to Album.
- **More actions:** This long vertical list starts with even more contextual options that may extend to as many as around 20 options.

Tip: I explain how to customize this list in [Edit Share Sheets](#), next.

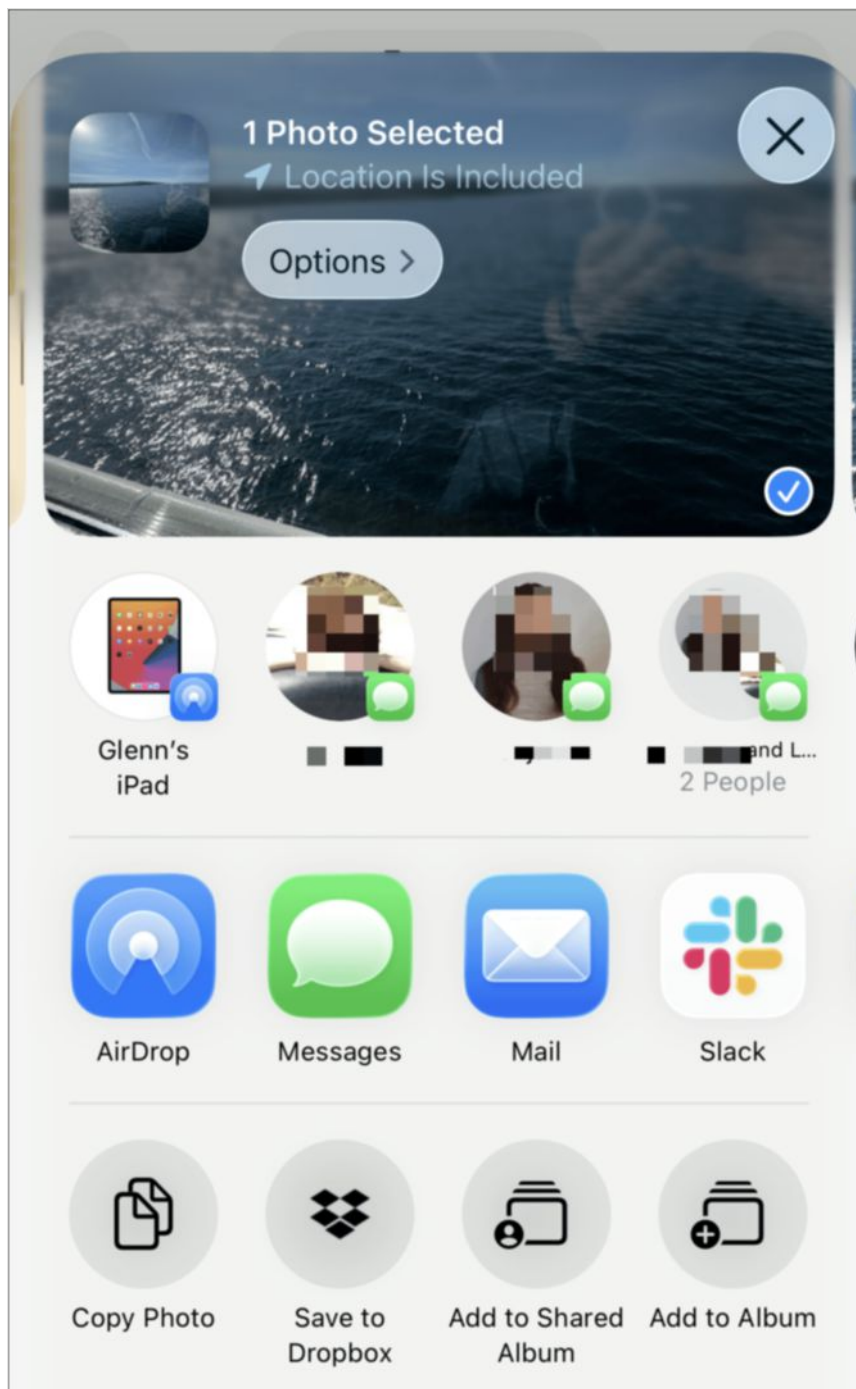


Figure 72: The share sheet let you do things like share a webpage from Safari with AirDrop or a text or email message.

What You Can Share

Here are some examples of what you can share with the share sheet:

- Webpages in Safari and other browsers
- Images in the Photos app

Reduce Distractions with Focus

Our devices distract us but Apple wants to help. The Focus feature gives you total control of notifications you receive and apps you see. The default settings may be enough for most people (they are for me), but power users can tweak Focus to their heart's content.

A Focus is a named group of settings that control what notifications and calls get through, including exceptions you may set. For example, let's say you have two Focuses: Work and Personal. In your Work focus, you might exclude all contacts except your manager, the company CEO, and your coworkers, which means calls and messages from anyone but them won't reach you when that Focus is enabled. You could also exclude notifications from all apps except Mail and Slack. Your Personal focus, on the other hand, could block all of your work apps and contacts so you can exercise that work/life balance that so many life coaches advocate (and maybe a few businesses).

Or, you could set up a Focus called Reading that activates whenever you open the Books or Kindle app and shuts off all notifications and enables Dark Mode.

Focus also lets you hide certain Home Screen pages to further block distractions. For instance, if you have your work apps on page one and games on page four, you could set up a work Focus that hides that page of games.

Focus is powerful, but can also be confusing. For instance, if you accidentally trigger your Work focus, you might start wondering where the heck your apps are!

But most of us, most of the time, just want to block out unwanted notifications while we watch a movie, go on a date, or spend time with family. That's what the Do Not Disturb focus is for. When you sleep, there's a special Sleep focus that's Do Not Disturb on turbo.

Just Turn On Do Not Disturb

Let's say you don't want to mess with Focus's advanced features and simply want to block out all notifications. That's easy: pull up Control Center (see [Use Control Center](#)) and tap the moon  icon.

If you don't see the moon  icon, tap the Focus panel, and choose the Do Not Disturb option to turn it off or on. Choosing Do Not Disturb shows you the time through which it will remain on, typically the next day at 8:30 A.M.

Note: When you choose a Focus, the button's icon and label change to show it in Control Center. After you turn off that Focus or it times out, the button shows the previously selected icon next to "Focus."

But how do you turn on Do Not Disturb temporarily? Do this:

1. Open Control Center.
2. Tap the Focus button (but not the moon button), which displays a Focus list.
3. Tap the More  button on the Do Not Disturb bubble.
4. Choose "For 1 hour," "Until this evening," or "Until I leave this location."

Do Not Disturb turns on and will turn itself off based on whatever you chose.

You can change your Do Not Disturb settings in Settings > Focus > Do Not Disturb. Let's dive deeper into Focus settings.

Set Up a Focus

You can see and set up a Focus in Settings > Focus. There are several alphabetically listed built-in Focuses to get you started: Do Not Disturb, Driving, Reading Time, Sleep, and Work. Tap one of these to be guided through the setup.

Pick an iPad Interface

Technically, iPhones and iPads run different operating systems: iOS and iPadOS. While they are mostly the same, iPads have options for a Dock, window management, adding apps menus, and multitasking that let it act quite differently from an iPhone when you're working with the Home Screen and apps.

Multitask and Use Windows in iPadOS

You can set your iPad to one of three windowing and multitasking modes, two of which let you display multiple open apps at once. Go to Settings > Multitasking & Gestures to choose among them.

You're presented with three options (**Figure 83**):

- **Windowed Apps (default):** Your iPad works somewhat like a Mac or other desktop operating system. You can use windows at full-screen size or resize them to smaller dimensions. You can see multiple apps at once on a single screen. You also have access to app menus. This may suit many people, but Apple has given you two other options, just in case. (If you've used an iPad before, you should note that Windowed Apps first appeared in iPadOS 26.)
- **Full Screen Apps:** Full Screen Apps works mostly like an iPhone: all apps are full screen, and you use App Switcher to move among them. If you always want your apps to take over the screen while using them, change to this method. (A version of this was the default method for several releases through iPadOS 18.)

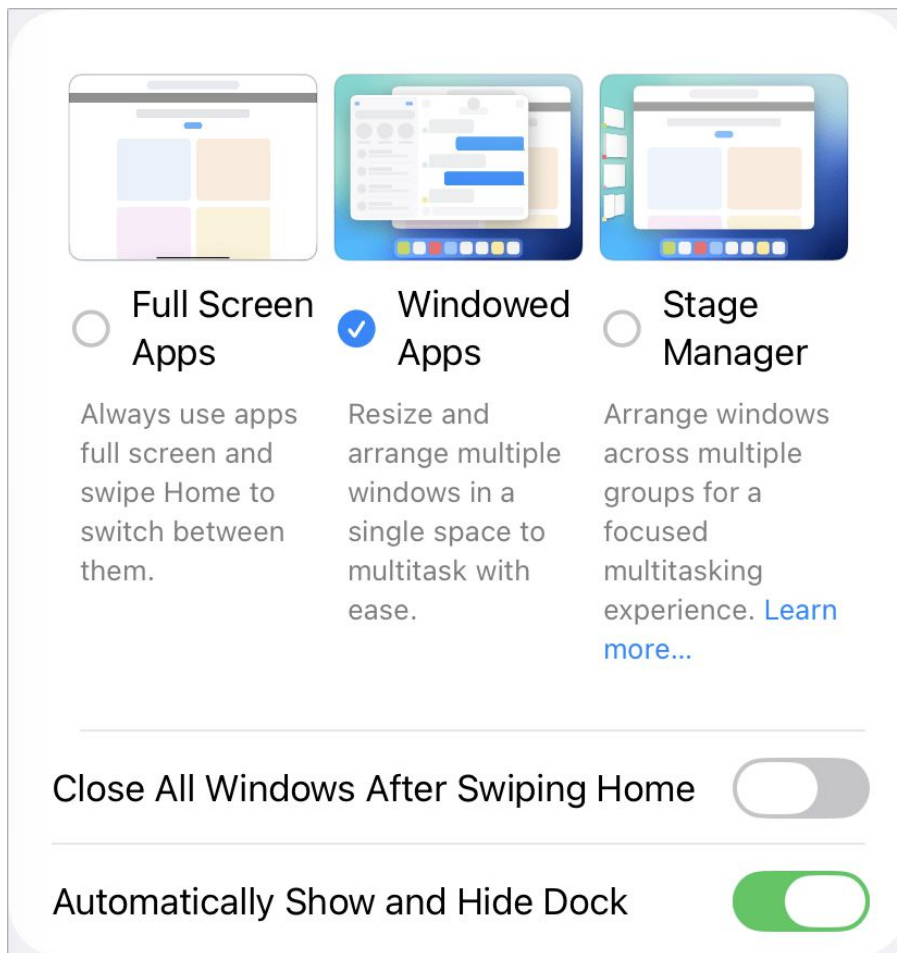


Figure 83: Revert to Full Screen Apps, close to the previous flavor, or move to Stage Manager.

- **Stage Manager:** Stage Manager was one of Apple’s attempts to impose order on windows in iPad, particularly when an iPad user had multiple displays. They’ve updated it to make use of window resizing and menus. It lets you apps and windows as stacks at the left edge of the screen, access the dock, and have a central window, plus a window on another display.

Note: The two options below the interface choices appear only if you don’t pick Full Screen Apps.

The simplest of three, Full Screen Apps, was described earlier in Switch Between Apps. That’s all you really need to know if you opt to use that version. In the next two sections, I describe how to work with Windowed Apps and Stage Manager.

Discover Extra iPad Features

An iPad has even more features that distinguish it from an iPhone. Let's dig into those remaining items.

Manage the iPad Dock

The iPad's Dock (**Figure 94**) functions more like the Mac Dock than the iPhone's Dock. It's split into two sections. The left-hand section holds the apps you place there—up to 15 of them. The right-hand side presents recently and frequently used apps and Handoff apps, denoted by the Handoff  badge on the app icon (see [Learn About Handoff](#)). You can turn that off with the Show Suggested and Recent Apps in Dock setting in Settings > Home Screen & App Library.



Figure 94: An iPad's Dock holds your favorite apps, suggests apps iPadOS thinks you'll want quick access to, and offers access to App Library. It's also how you access Handoff apps on an iPad.

The icon on the far-right side of the Dock opens App Library (see [Clean Up Your Home Screen with App Library](#)). You can turn that off with the Show App Library in Dock setting in Settings > Home Screen & App Library.

Reveal the iPad Dock

The Dock is always visible on the Home Screen, but is hidden when viewing an app. Swipe slightly up from the bottom of the screen to reveal it without invoking App Switcher or Exposé; likewise you can swipe slightly down from the Dock to hide it again. In some apps, you

must first swipe up to reveal an arrow , and then swipe up again to reveal the Dock. Tapping an app in the Dock switches to that app.

Add and Remove iPad Dock Apps

To add an app to the Dock, enter jiggle mode by touching and holding an empty spot on the Home Screen, and then drag the app icon to the Dock—see [Move Apps](#). Items added to the Dock are removed from the Home Screen. You can also drag in apps from the App Library.

Tip: An iPad’s Dock can also hold folders. Moving them in and out of the Dock works just as it does with apps.

Removing an app from the Dock works the same way: drag the app out of the Dock. Note that you cannot do this in an app—you must be viewing the Home Screen.

Expand the Dock with Folders

You can use the Files app to add folders to the Dock for ready access (**Figure 95**). In the Files app, find any folder, touch and hold it, and then choose Add To > Dock. To remove a folder, touch and hold it in the Dock, and choose Options > Remove from Dock.

Touch and hold the folder in the Dock to set sort options and whether it appears as a grid or fan (shown in **Figure 95**) when tapped. You can also tap Open *Folder Name* to jump to that folder in the Files app.

Appendix A: Migrate from Android

Considering the switch from Android to an iPhone? Or maybe you switched recently and aren't yet comfortable in Apple land? In this chapter, I compare the two platforms, offer tips for switching, and highlight some of the functional differences between the two so you can switch as painlessly as possible.

Compare Android and iPhone

Before migrating, it's good to understand the differences between Android and iPhone. They grow closer and closer in features and flexibility every year, but there are still important differences.

In summary: Android is wilder and more chaotic. An iPhone is more locked-down, simpler, and more straightforward. Both platforms have their pros and cons and the choice is a matter of personal preference. We here at Take Control are mostly iPhone people.

What Android Offers that iPhones Don't

If you're switching from Android to iOS Here's a summary of what Android offers that iPhones still do not:

- **Expandable storage:** Many Android phones let you expand storage with a microSD card. iPhones previously didn't offer this, though they do now allow the use of external USB storage devices.
- **Hardware choices:** Android phones are produced by several vendors and come in all kinds of different configurations. An iPhone is just...an iPhone. An iPhone might come in a different color or size, or have more or less storage, but it's still the same basic device.

- **Home Screen customization:** Android lets you download and install entirely different Home Screen launchers that overhaul the device experience. iPhone is locked into the Apple Home Screen.
- **Multiple user accounts:** Android devices can often have more than one user account. Neither iPhones nor iPads allow this, which is frustrating, especially on an iPad.
- **Sideload:** With Android, it's easy enough to install apps downloaded directly from the web or third-party app marketplaces. This isn't possible on iPhones outside Europe. (See [About European App Store Differences](#).)
- **Split screen:** Android phones can display two apps side by side. iPads now far exceed this (see [Multitask and Use Windows in iPadOS](#)) but not iPhones.

What iPhones Offer that Android Doesn't

We've covered what Android does that iPhones don't. Now let's try the shoe on the other foot:

- **Apple integration:** One of the beautiful things about the Apple ecosystem is how well everything ties together. Some examples:
 - ▶ You can control an Apple TV from the Lock Screen of an iPhone.
 - ▶ You can “hand off” tasks from one Apple device to another.
 - ▶ You can AirDrop files and other items from one Apple device to another.
 - ▶ With the Universal Clipboard feature, you can copy text and images on a Mac and paste them to an iPhone, and vice versa.

These are just a handful of hundreds of examples of how well Apple devices work together in the ecosystem, and it's one of the primary features that keeps me in the Apple family. It removes friction and makes getting things done so much easier.

- **Better security:** It's just a fact that iOS is a much more secure platform than Android, and numerous studies support this. Apple

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Take Control Books Executive Editor Glenn Fleishman never stops writing about technology and its implications. He's in his third decade of writing for publications as varied as *American History*, *Fast Company*, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, *Macworld*, and TidBITS, and many others. In 2012, he was a two-game champion on Jeopardy!

You can find Glenn on [Mastodon](#) (@glennf@zeppelin.flights) and [Bluesky](#) (@glennf.com). Reach him by email at glenn@glennf.com.

Shameless Plug

I have two recent books about technology that—mostly—aren't about computers. [Six Centuries of Type & Printing](#) is a brisk yet thorough look at the technological development that has taken us from Gutenberg (and even before) to the present day. You can order a copy of the print, ebook, or audiobook edition [directly from me](#).

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