

Things You Didn't Know Your iPhone Could Do

If you were lucky enough to find a new iPhone under the tree this year, here are some tips to help you get the most out of your new gift. USA TODAY



There's a lot more you can do with your new iPhone than simply take photos, listen to music and make calls. (Photo: Apple)

So you've scored a new iPhone over the holidays. Lucky you.

These new devices are Apple's best yet. Hopefully you've spent a few days playing around with its many features, downloaded a few apps, and used the iPhone's stellar camera to capture holiday memories with friends and family.

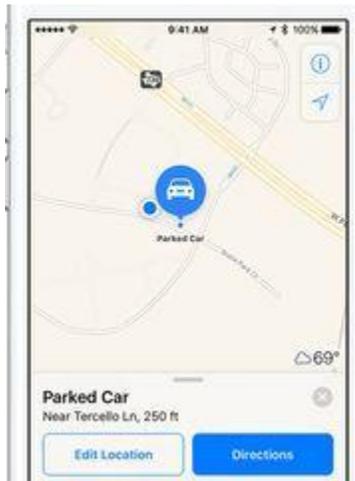
Because it's estimated we only use about 10% of what our consumer electronics are capable of — sort of like our brains, perhaps? — we've got a few lesser-known suggestions on getting the most out of your new device.

If you have any of your own tips and tricks to share, be sure to share them in the Comments section.

You probably know Siri, your voice-activated personal assistant, can be used to set a time-based reminder, like saying "Siri, remind me to call my brother at 4 p.m." But did you know you can set location-based reminders, too? You can say "Remind me to call mom when I get home," and you won't be notified until you step up to your door.

If you haven't done so already, for this to work you'll need to create a Contact card with your info on it, including your name, address, and relationships (who your brother is), and so on.

Similarly, you can say something like this before you walk into the mall: “Remind me to get gas when I leave here later,” and you’ll be notified when you drive away.



Can't remember where you parked? No worries, as Apple Maps now can help. (Photo: Apple)

Turn ebooks into audio books

Like most smartphones, the iPhone has a number of Accessibility options. One feature is called Speak Screen and it can read aloud any text on the screen at your command. While designed primarily for the seeing impaired, anyone can take advantage of this feature if they want to turn an e-book into an audiobook. Now you can listen while commuting to and from work, while closing your eyes in bed, or when jogging down the street.

To activate it, go to Settings, then General, followed by Accessibility, and finally, Speech. Now, activate Speak Screen. Then, any app you're in, swipe down with two fingers from the top of the screen to hear the contents of the screen read to you, such as an ebook, email, article, or notes.

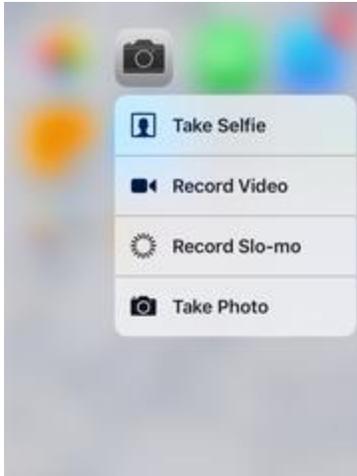
You can tweak the voice (gender, language), speaking speed, and more.

Take advantage of 3D Touch

Those new to iPhone — mom, I'm looking at you — might not know about 3D Touch available in 2015 and 2016 models of iPhone. In short, this feature can help you get more done in less time. Simply press down on app icons or notifications, and you'll likely see a list of shortcuts you can take advantage of.

For example, press and hold on the Camera icon from your home screen and you can choose to take a selfie, record video, shoot a slow-mo video, and so on. Or, even from your locked iPhone, press and hold on a notification and you will see some convenient options, such as replying to an iMessage without having to unlock your device.

Have fun experimenting with 3D Touch on various apps.



Press down on app icons and messages to pull up a number of convenient options. (Photo: Apple)

There's a hidden trackpad

Stop me if this sounds familiar: you're composing a message, email, or note, and you need to change something you typed before sending or saving. With your new iPhone, simply press and hold on the keyboard and the cursor will automatically become a mouse-like trackpad.

Now keep your finger or thumb on the screen and drag around the cursor to reach the part of text that you want to tweak – or to highlight text, just press a little harder while continuing to slide your finger — and then let go for the keyboard to return.

It's a flatbed scanner

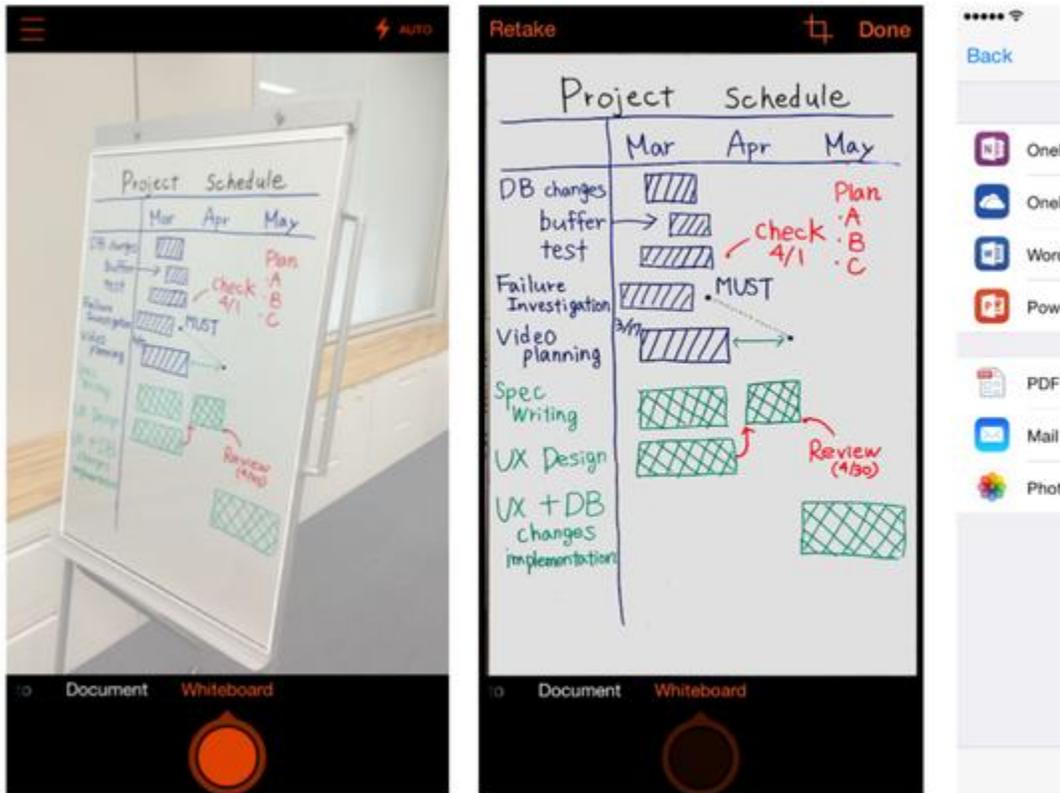
A number of apps, such as Microsoft's free Office Lens, turn your smartphone into a flatbed scanner.

Simply snap a pic of a document, whiteboard or blackboard, receipt or business card, and it'll be immediately digitized onto your device.

Not only can you trim each document once imported, but printed and handwritten text can be automatically recognized using OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology, so you can then search for text by keyword, as well as copy, edit and share digitized text. If desired, you can also import what you've scanned into Office apps (Word, PowerPoint, OneNote), save to OneDrive or other cloud storage, or convert into a PDF.



Your iPhone is also a flatbed scanner. Use the free Office Lens app to “scan” documents, business cards, whiteboards, and more. (Photo: Microsoft)



Use the free Office Lens app to “scan” documents, businesses cards, whiteboards, and more. (Photo: Microsoft)

Record phone calls

While it’s not easy to do this without the help of an app, many people like the idea of recording a phone call.

Available for \$7.99/year, TapeACall – as the name suggests – is an app that lets you easily record phone calls, whether it’s calls you’re already on, or calls you’re about to make. Once you’re done, the recordings show up instantly, and ready for you to save or share. Simply open the app and press the big red record button, then tap to add call (merge), dial a number or select a name from your contacts, hang up when you’re done the conference call, and a recording of it will immediately download from TapeACall’s secure servers to your phone (and time-stamped).

Tap the recording to hear or share via text, email, cloud account, social media sight, and so on.



In case you want or need to record a phone call, the handy TapeACall app can assist you. (Photo: TapeACall. All Rights Reserved. Made by TelTech.)

And a few more...

- The fastest way to take a picture when iPhone is locked? Simply swipe left to access the camera.
- When iPhone is connected to your car via Bluetooth or by plugging in (CarPlay), Apple's Maps app automatically marks where you park. Tap Parked Car to find your way back to it!
- You can change the feel of the circular Home button. Go to Settings, then General, and finally Home Button, to pick the option you like.
- iPhone has a hidden bubble leveler in case you want to hang a picture frame in your home. Launch the compass, swipe right to reveal the leveler, and it'll use your iPhone's built-in gyroscope sensor to see if something is an object is perfectly level (horizontal or vertical).