



iOS 15 Tips 2.0

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After much anticipation, Apple's newest operating system, iOS 15, has finally hit mobile devices worldwide. Users are getting their hands on the numerous novel features, functionality, and capabilities on display in this latest update. Though we covered some of the broader strokes of the update in a previous article, which you can check out [here](#), in this article we'll take a second look at some of the more subtle, specific tweaks and tips that, despite their humble appearance, can go a long way to improving the user experience of iOS 15.

1) Add Password Protection to your PDFs

Apple has now built in a quick and easy way for users to add an extra layer of protection to their documents with the Lock PDF feature. While in the Files app on your iPhone or iPad, tap on a document to open it, then tap the Actions button (a box with an arrow pointing up) and scroll through the pop up menu for the action Lock PDF. Type in and verify your selected password, and it's as easy as that. Now your sensitive files will be just a bit more protected.

2) Customize your Safari Home Page

Chief among this update is Apple's refresh of the Safari layout, including a floating search bar that hovers semi-helpfully at the bottom of the screen. More subtle, though, are the added options that lets users swap what they see on first opening the app. You can choose to show your bookmarks, frequently visited pages, and even add a wallpaper for your home screen. To do so, open the Safari app to your start page, scroll to the bottom and tap Edit. Then use the toggle switches to find your perfect page. You can even have these page settings sync to the rest of your devices after you've set them up.

3) Move Safari Search Bar to Top of Screen

As previously mentioned, the Safari search bar in iOS 15 has become unmoored from its familiar spot at the top of the screen and now hovers expectantly right under your thumb at the screen's bottom. Though Apple seems to feel this change will make it easier for users to interact with the search bar, old habits die hard. And if you can't shake the feeling that you want that search bar back where it belongs, this tip is for you. To make this change, tap the aA icon on the search bar, then tap Show Top Address Bar in the popup menu.

4) Set Custom Text Size for Apps

Who among us hasn't held their phone screen two inches from their face to decipher a particularly hard to read font? No longer! In this new update, you can control the exact text size across the iOS 15 platform or set it larger or smaller for specific apps. Swipe down from top right corner to bring up the Control center, then press the aA button to bring up the text size shifter. Set your desired size, and choose whether to implement it across all apps or just your current one. Now, if you like, you can read internet articles with 150% text size, but keep your texts at a discreet 50%. The choice is yours.

5) Split View and Shelf View for iPad multitasking

After introducing multitasking in iPadOs 14, iOS 15 is giving users even more options to control their app views and arrangement. At the top of screen, tap the ellipsis icon (...) to bring up options for Split View, Fullscreen, and Slide Over. This option makes switching between open apps a breeze and provides a bit more flexibility in balancing the screen area between two applications.

6) Get Augmented Reality Walking Directions in Maps

As Apple continues to innovate and integrate augmented reality software into their device ecosystem, the Maps app has become one of its most practical applications for this nascent tech. Now, in selected cities, users can move their phones around their environment and get immersive directions displayed on their device, including illuminated pathways and directional arrows that shift with movement. Though the features aren't available when driving, they are certainly most useful and least distracting when walking and trying to orient oneself in a new city or area. Simply bring up maps, raise your phone when prompted and scan your environment. iOS 15 will take it from there.

7) New Audio Modes for FaceTime Calls

As the era of video conferencing rolls onward with no sign of stopping, Apple took care to update their FaceTime interface to catch up with popular programs like Zoom and Teams, adding new audio modulation features that can suppress background noise, isolate voice frequencies, and altogether drastically boost the quality of both your personal FaceTime calls and your work meetings. To alter these settings, bring up the Control Center while on a video call of any kind, including a Zoom or Teams meeting, and press the Microphone Mode button, and select an option from the popup.

8) Turn Off Automatic Camera Night Mode

Apple's camera technology is perhaps the last remaining product area where innovation and improvement have not slowed in recent years. And with the addition of their new Night Mode, crisp, well-exposed low-light photos are now within reach for many iPhone users. However, the technology requires users to hold quite still for up to 3 seconds after taking a photo anytime the sensor detects low light. For those who are simply looking to snap a quick pic at night or indoors, this can sometimes be annoying and inconvenient. To stop Night Mode from automatically enabling, first disable Night Mode in your Camera app by tapping its yellow icon at the top of the screen. Then, to prevent it from automatically re-enabling itself once you exit the Camera app, go into the Settings app and select the Camera tab, then tap the option labeled Preserve Settings. Inside that menu, simply toggle the Night Mode switch to ON.

9) FaceTime with Android Users

In addition to the improvements to call quality, Apple has widened the accessibility of FaceTime by now allowing Android and non-iPhone users to join FaceTime calls via a shared link, similar to a Zoom meeting. With this change, Apple is doing its honest part to quell the ever-heightening tensions between green text and blue text users.

To share a link with an Android user, simply open the FaceTime app, select Create Link, name it, and then tap the Share button to distribute it however you choose.

10) Background Sounds

Whether you use them to stay on task or drift off to sleep, the new Background Sounds in iOS 15 are a great way to introduce ambient noise to your routine in a subtle, satisfying way. All sounds can either be set to play on their own, or mixed into existing system audio like alerts, music, or podcasts. Great for running, napping, or working, this feature is one of our personal favorites. To enable Background Sounds, launch the Settings app and navigate to the Accessibility tab. From there, select Audio/Visual, then Background Sounds. Tinker with the settings and sounds however you choose until you find the perfect one for your mood. Once you've set them up, you can also add the Hearing tab to your Control Center for easier access.

No matter how you use your iPhone or iPad, these tips should illuminate just how customizable Apple's new operating system is, and allow you to tailor your iOS experience to your exact specifications. With a bit of patience and information, the user experience can be drastically improved. Or at least, we hope so!

About the Author

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