A beginner's guide to using apps

Helping you to get the most from your device

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1. Introducing you to apps

1. Introducing you to apps

Hello,

Welcome to Age UK's 'A beginner's guide to using apps'. This guide will show you how to search for apps, download and open them.

You might have heard of 'apps' but what exactly are they? Applications, or apps for short, are a type of program that you can download to your tablet or smartphone. From games and puzzles to shopping and banking, there are a variety of apps available on different devices. These are great for keeping your mind active and you can use apps to keep in touch with family and friends too. You can also download apps to catch up with news or your favourite TV channels, such as the BBC or ITV.

Apps can be intimidating if you haven't used them before, so I would recommend starting with one to build your confidence. I started with WhatsApp, and I use loads of apps now! I use WhatsApp, Facebook, and Zoom to stay connected to people, I use the NHS app to manage my health, Netflix to watch TV and even use apps to order a taxi sometimes.

Learning at your own pace

You can work through the guide by yourself, with the support of an Age UK Digital Champion, or friends, family and carers. It's best to work through it at your own pace, repeating any sections you want to focus on. Try to take the time to reflect on what you've learned and make notes, as this will help to build your skills and confidence.

If you've got any questions as you work your way through the guide, you may be able to get support from your local Age UK or local Age Cymru. You can find your local Age UK at **www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/**

Once you're feeling comfortable with the content in this guide, you can move onto our intermediate guide to learn how to use apps in public places, for example, to order food and drinks in a restaurant. We'll also show you how to turn on app notifications on your device and delete apps to free up space.

I hope you enjoy learning about apps.

Elsie, 82

1. Introducing you to apps

Types of apps

There are a variety of apps to download on your device:

Banking apps: Most banks offer apps to help you manage your finances on your smartphone or tablet.

Catch-up television: You can download apps, such as BBC iPlayer and ITV Player/ Hub to watch your favourite TV programmes.

Creating art: If you enjoy drawing or painting, you can take your hobby online with digital art apps.

Email: You can download email providers, such as Gmail and Outlook, to your phone to send and receive emails.

Games: If you enjoy doing puzzles or playing games, there are lots of apps available to download on your smartphone or tablet.

News: There are news apps you can download onto your smartphone and tablet to catch up with what's happening in the world.

Social media: If you use social media, then you can download apps for social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Travel: If you're booking a train or trying to navigate your way around a new city, you can download a travel app to help you get around.

Using your device more easily: If you have difficulties with hearing or eyesight, you can download apps to your device to make it easier to use. These include the Voice Access app on an Android, which you can use to set up voice activation. This allows you to speak to your device and ask it to carry out an action, such as writing a text message or email.

Video calling: Apps like Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp are great for keeping in touch with family and friends.

2. Using this guide

2. Using this guide

This is a beginner's guide for people who'd like to start using apps. We'll show you how to search for and download apps and open them on your device.

In this guide we're going to focus on smartphones and tablets. You can use some apps on laptops and computers, but there is a lot more choice on smartphones and tablets. Read **page 34** for information about using apps on a laptop or computer.

Before reading this beginner's guide, you should:

- feel comfortable using a smartphone or tablet
- have an internet connection
- know how to connect your device to WiFi or use an alternative, like mobile data.

If you're not comfortable with how to do this, you can read 'A guide to choosing a device' and 'A beginner's guide to connecting to the internet' which can help.

3. Understanding key terminology

3. Understanding key terminology

We've explained some key terms below to help you understand what is involved in using apps. These are in alphabetical order so you can refer to them when working through the guide:

Attachment: Any file, photograph, video or document you add to your email is known as an attachment. An email with an attachment is indicated by the symbol of a paperclip.

Android: The name of the software that many devices use to function. Phones and tablets from lots of different brands fall into the bracket of Android devices. These brands include Alcatel, Google, HTC, LG, Moto, Samsung and Sony.

Apple: A brand of phones and tablets. Apple phones are known as iPhones and tablets are called iPads. If your device isn't Apple, it's likely to be an Android device.

Application, or 'app': A type of program that you can download for your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. There are lots of apps available, from games and puzzles to banking.

App Store: An official, pre-installed program on all Apple devices, like iPhone and iPads, which gives you access to apps.

Cookies: Most websites pop up with a message asking you to 'accept cookies'. A cookie is a small piece of data that is stored on your computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet when you visit a website or app. They allow the website to track information about your activity, such as how many times you have visited and how long you spent on the website or app. Websites use this information to improve your experience but your personal information won't be shared with anyone. You don't have to accept cookies, but it might mean that you can't access some websites. You can find more information about cookies at **https://accessibility.campaign.gov.uk/cookies-and-privacy/**

Copy and paste: This is a way of replicating text so that it appears in exactly the same way in another place. For example, you might replicate a phone number from a document in an email. There are different ways to do this on different devices.

Device: A general term for a smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Download: To transfer files or data stored on the internet onto your smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer. For example, you might download a picture that a friend has emailed to you, a document to read from a trusted website or an app from the online app store.

3. Understanding key terminology

Encrypted: If an app or a website is encrypted, it means all the communication between you and the website is secure and can't be read or heard by anyone else. Encrypted websites have web addresses that start with 'https'. The 's' stands for secure. A web address is at the top of the screen.

Icon: An image or symbol which represents an app or function on your phone, tablet, laptop or computer screen. You usually ' tap' (see definition below) on an icon to open an app.

Internet: Also known as the worldwide web, this is a large network that connects computers and devices around the world through which you can access information. You'll see the abbreviation 'www' at the beginning of web addresses. For example, our website is **www.ageuk.org.uk**.

Macintosh (Mac): A type of operating system for some devices. If your device isn't a Mac, it's likely to be Windows.

Mobile data: This is what you use to access the internet on your phone. It's measured in megabytes (MB) and gigabytes (GB). Most phone and tablet contracts have monthly allowances for how much data you can use. Once you use up your allowance, you may get charged for any extra data you use. Or your amount might be capped to prevent you from overspending, and you won't be able to use the internet until your allowance renews the next month. You can also pay for more data just for that month.

Play Store: An official, pre-installed program on Android devices which gives you access to apps.

Screen: This is where information or pictures are displayed on a laptop, computer, smartphone or tablet. Some devices have touch screens which allow you to interact with them using your finger or a special pen called a 'stylus'.

Smartphone: A mobile phone which connects to the internet. You can use it to do everything from sending emails to making video calls.

Software: This is a catch-all term for something that runs on your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. Examples include apps on your phone and tablet, or anti-virus programs. You might also see them described as 'programs'.

Swiping: Moving your finger across the screen of a smartphone or tablet. You can read more about this in 'A guide to making your device easier to use'.

Tablet: A small portable computer with a touch screen. You tap the screen with your finger or a special pen, often referred to as a 'stylus' rather than using a keyboard and mouse.

Tap: To quickly touch and then lift your finger off the touchpad to carry out an action. This could be to move to a new screen or open an app on your device. It's the equivalent of clicking a 'mouse' on a computer. You can read more about this in 'A guide to making your device easier to use'.

3. Understanding key terminology

Web/internet browser: A program that runs on your device. It allows you to access web pages on the internet. Common web browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer or Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari.

Windows: An operating system for some devices, developed by Microsoft. If your device isn't Windows, it's likely to be a Mac.

Wireless network, or 'WiFi': How your phone, tablet, laptop or computer connects to the internet without using wires or cables. You can access public WiFi networks, for example when out and about, or arrange a contract with an internet provider so you can use WiFi at home.

TOP TIP

Is your device Android or Apple?

If your device is an iPhone or iPad, then it's an Apple brand. It will have the Apple logo on the back. All other phones and tablet brands are more than likely to be Android devices.
If you aren't sure, then here are some ways to find out:

- Check the handbook that came with the device.
- Search for the brand of your device online.
- Go to your phone menu. Tap 'Settings', then 'General', then 'About'. There, the version will be listed. Some phones will only need you to tap 'Settings' and then 'About phone' – there isn't a middle step.

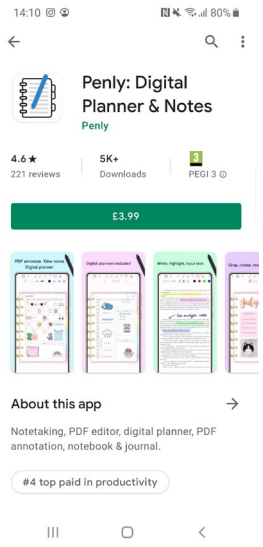
The Apple logo

4. How do you know which apps are free or paid-for?

4. How do you know which apps are safe?

Some apps are free to download and use. Others charge you to download them. You'll either need to pay upfront or for a monthly/ annual subscription. The cost can vary from around 60p to £5. Others are free to download but give you the chance to buy extras.

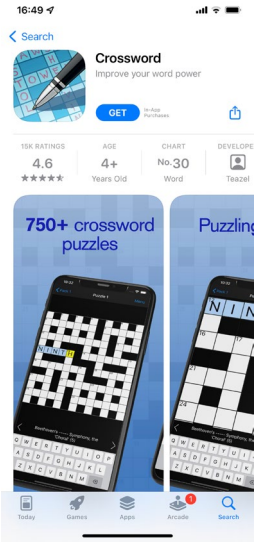
On an Android device, there is a green button underneath the name of the app which has the price of the app in it.



On an iPhone or iPad, if the app is free, you will see 'Get' next to it in a box to the right of its name in the App Store. If you have to pay for the app, it will show the cost in the button instead of 'Get'. There are a lot of free apps that might require you to pay for additional features within the app. This is called 'In-app purchases'. See below for how to check for these.

4. How do you know which apps are safe?

There are also many free apps that are initially free but that come with a subscription service. You might get a week or so for free and then there's a recurring fee for them. If you have authorised the subscription, it may begin to bill automatically after the free trial. So, if you don't want the subscription, make a note to cancel it or delete the app. Please see below for how to cancel a subscription.



If you need to pay upfront, a message will come up on your screen asking you to sign in or verify your account before paying for it. This stops people from buying an app by accident. Please see the instructions below for how to download apps.

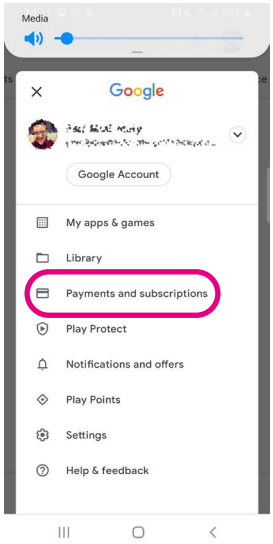
You can pay for an app upfront using your bank card. Once you have added a payment method, it's possible to purchase apps or buy things from within an app without adding any additional information. So, be careful about apps that have paid-for extras in case you lose track of your spending.

How to find which apps you've paid for on an Android device

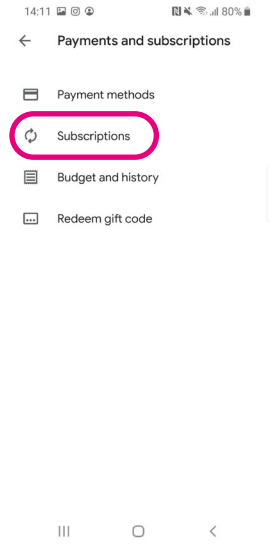
To see apps you have monthly subscriptions for:

1. Tap on the Play Store app on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on the menu at the top of the screen. Depending which device you have, this may be in the top left corner of the screen or the right. On some devices, you may have to tap the round profile picture of yourself in the top right corner to bring up the menu.

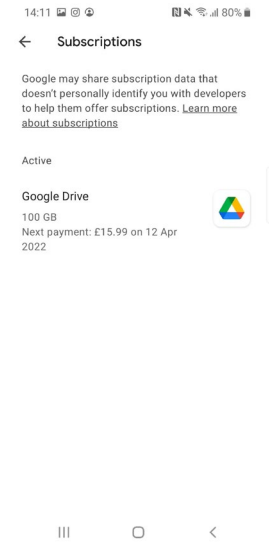
3. Next, tap on ‘Payments and subscriptions’ in the menu.



4. Then tap on ‘Subscriptions’.

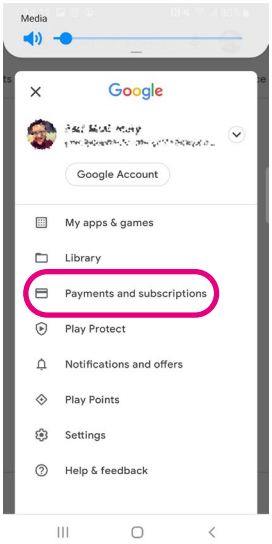


5. On the screen, you'll see the apps you have subscriptions for.

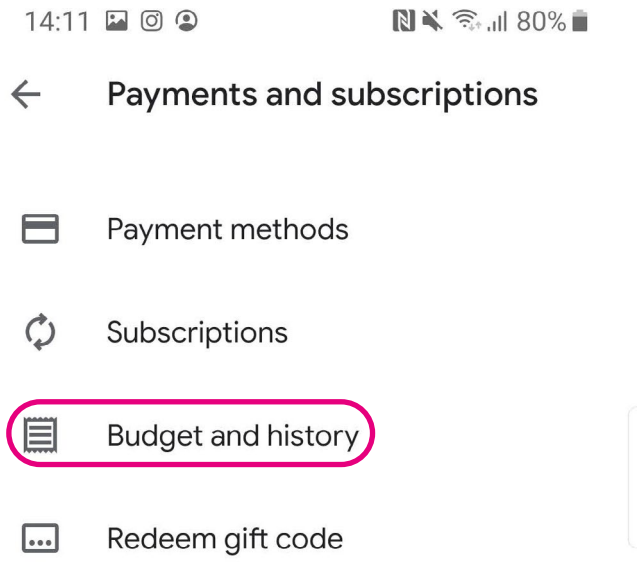


To see apps you've paid for (upfront payments and in-app purchases):

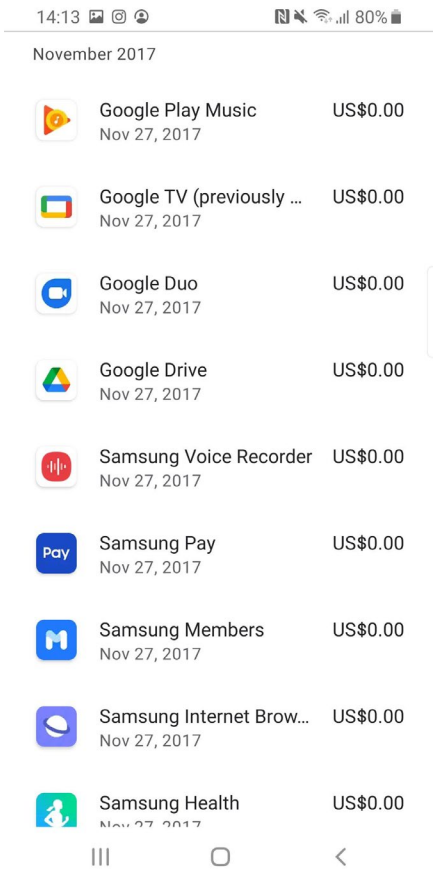
1. Tap on the Play Store app on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on the menu at the top of the screen. Depending which device you have, this may be in the top left corner of the screen or the right. On some devices, you may have to tap the round profile picture of yourself in the top right corner to bring up the menu.
3. Next, tap on 'Payments and subscriptions' in the menu.



5. Then tap on 'Budget and history'



6. Here, you'll find a list of any apps you've paid for.

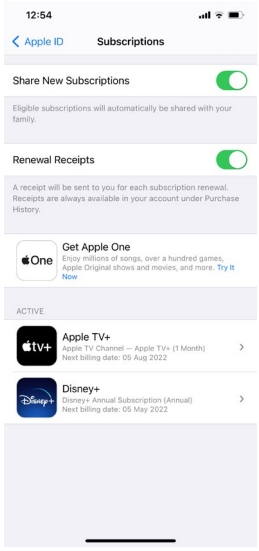


4. How do you know which apps are safe?

How to find which apps you've paid for on an iPhone or iPad

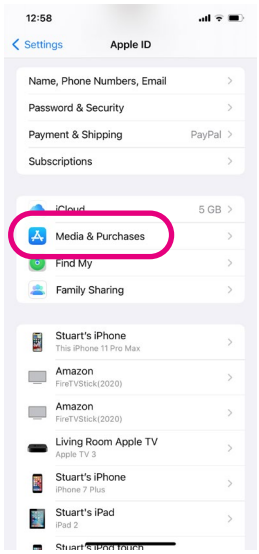
To see apps you have monthly subscriptions for:

1. Tap on the 'Settings' icon on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on your name at the top of the screen.
3. Tap on 'Subscriptions'.
4. You'll then see a list of all the apps you have paid subscriptions for.

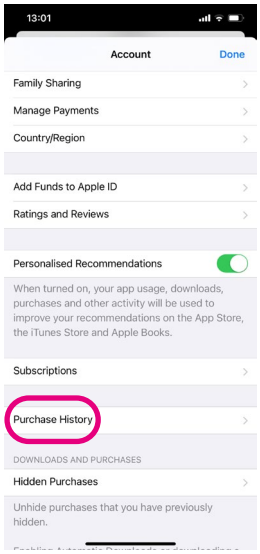


To see apps you've paid for (upfront payments and in-app purchases):

1. Tap on the 'Settings' icon on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on your name at the top of the screen.
3. Next, tap on 'Media & Purchases'.



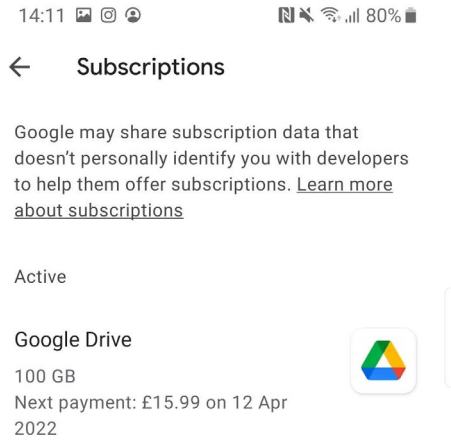
4. Then, tap on ‘View Account’.
5. Next, tap on ‘Purchase History’.



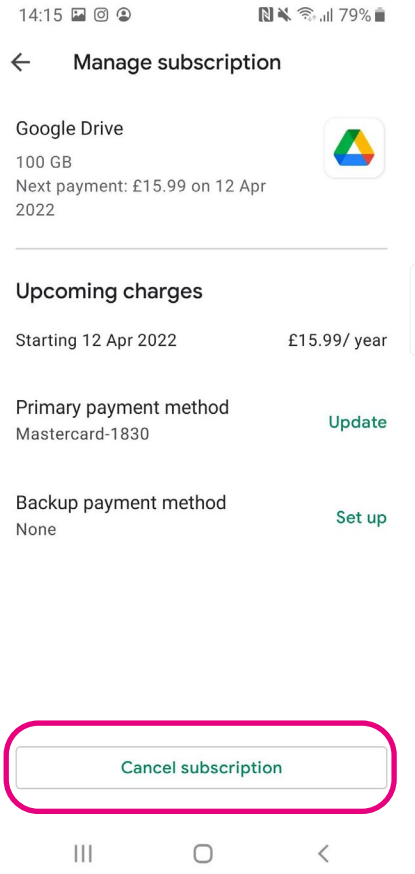
6. A page will then open listing all the apps you’ve downloaded, both free and paid for.
7. You can use the ‘Date Range’ tab at the top of the screen to search by year or to review the last 90 days.

How to cancel an app subscription on an Android device

1. Tap on the Play Store app on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on the menu at the top of the screen. Depending which device you have, this may be in the top left corner of the screen or the right.
3. Next, tap on 'Payments and subscriptions' in the menu.
4. On the screen, you'll see the apps you have subscriptions for.
5. Tap on the subscription you'd like to cancel.

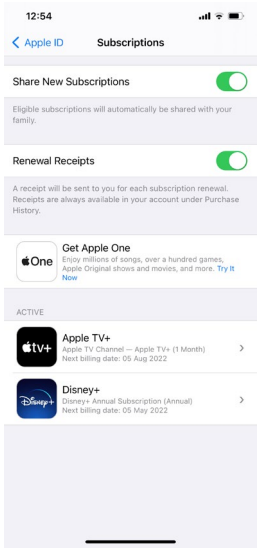


6. Tap 'Cancel subscription' and follow the instructions to complete the process.

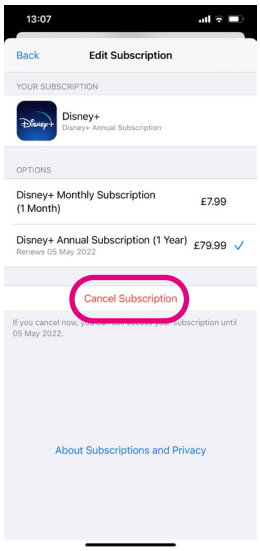


How to cancel an app subscription on an iPhone or iPad

1. Tap on the ‘Settings’ icon on your phone or tablet.
2. Tap on your name at the top of the screen.
3. Tap on ‘Subscriptions’. This will take you to a page listing all your active app subscriptions.

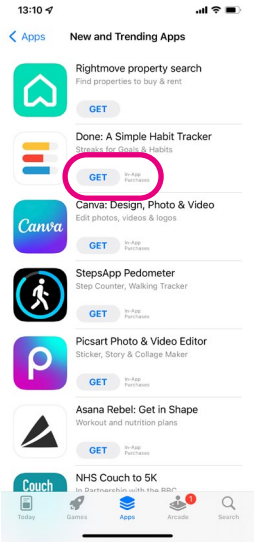


4. Tap on the subscription you’d like to cancel.
5. Tap ‘Cancel Subscription’ and follow the instructions to complete the process.

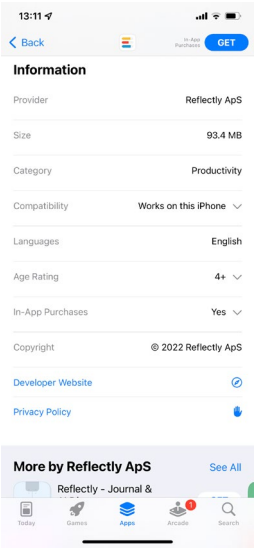


How to check which in-app purchases are available before you download an app on your iPhone or iPad

1. Go to the App Store.
2. If an app offers ‘In-app purchases’, you’ll see the words ‘In-app purchases’ near the price or the ‘Get’ button.



3. Tap the app’s name to bring up a description of the app. Then scroll down to the ‘Information’ section in the listing.
4. Look for the ‘In-app purchases’ tab in the ‘Information’ section. If you have to pay for extras when you download a free app, it will say ‘Yes’ and have a downward-pointing arrow beside it.



5. A list will show all of the app’s ‘In-app purchases’ and the price of each one.

4. How do you know which apps are safe?

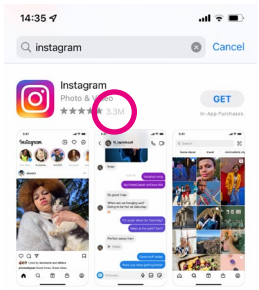
Most apps on the Play Store or App Store will be safe to download. The stores aim to remove any unsafe apps. But unfortunately, some do slip through the net, and these can carry computer viruses or try to access your personal or financial information.

There are also fake apps designed to look exactly like popular apps, such as WhatsApp. This tricks people into downloading them, then the app bombards the phone with adverts or computer viruses.

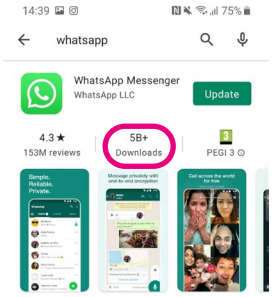
Here are some tips to keep your phone and information safe:

1. Check how many people have downloaded the app. Next to the app in the Play Store or App Store, you can see how many people have downloaded it. If an app has been downloaded millions or billions of times, then it's likely to be safe. Be wary of apps with only a few hundred or thousand downloads – they may not be genuine.

On iPhone:

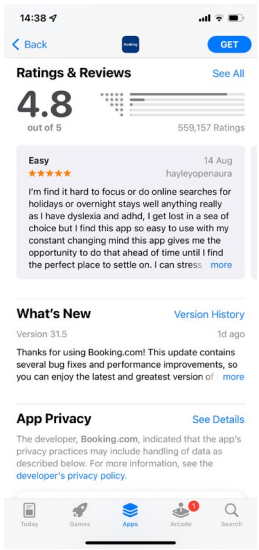


On Android:

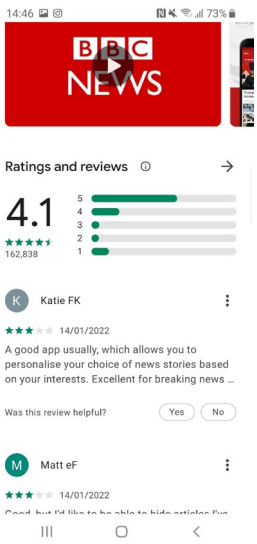


2. Read the reviews and check the ratings. Each app has a user rating and reviews that you can read. Be cautious about downloading apps with negative reviews.

On iPhone:



On Android:

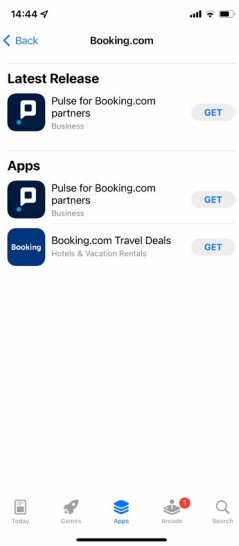


4. How do you know which apps are safe?

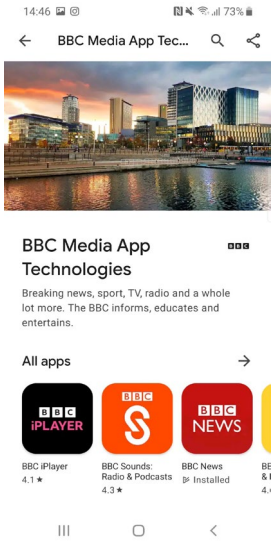
3. Read the description. Look out for spelling mistakes or anything which doesn't seem quite right. If something doesn't feel genuine, it probably isn't.

4. Double check the source. Only download apps from reputable sources (the company that made the app). Underneath the name of the app, you can tap on the source, check which other apps they provide, and view their ratings too.

On iPhone:



On Android:

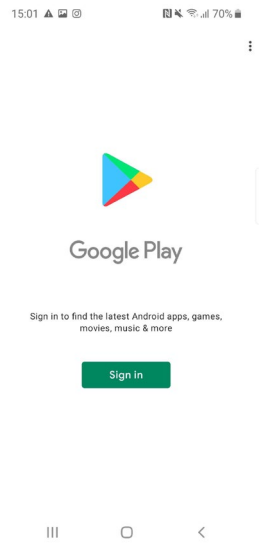


5. How to find and download an app

5. How to find and download an app

How to find and download an app on an Android device

1. Open the Play Store in your phone or tablet's menu by tapping on the Play Store icon.



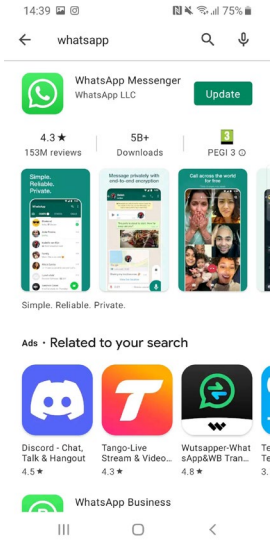
2. First, you'll need to set up a Google account or log in to your Google account. This is the account you will use to access other Google services, like Gmail, a type of email account. You'll automatically stay logged into your Google account. So next time you download an app, you'll be logged in to the Play Store.

TOP TIP

It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

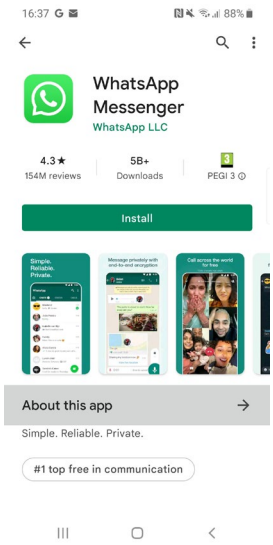
5. How to find and download an app

3. Search for the name of the app by typing it into the search bar at the top of your screen. For example, ‘WhatsApp’ or ‘Gmail’.



4. When you see it in the list that comes up, tap on the name of the app. If you need to pay for the app, a green button will appear under the name of the app with the price in it.

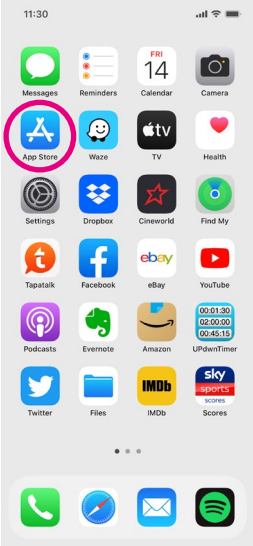
5. Tap ‘Install’, which is a green button underneath the name of the app. It will say the app is ‘Pending’ and then ‘Installing’.



5. How to find and download an app

How to find and download an app on an iPhone or iPad

1. Open the App Store in your iPhone or iPad's menu by tapping on the App Store icon.



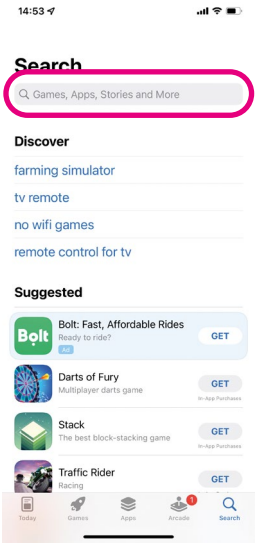
2. You'll need to set up an Apple ID or login to your existing Apple ID account. This is the account you will use to access Apple services. You'll automatically stay logged into your Apple ID account. So next time you download an app, you'll be logged into the App Store.

TOP TIP

It's important to set up a strong password to stay safe when using the internet and to never write it down as someone could find it. If you need a written reminder, try to write a hint that only you'll understand, rather than the actual password.

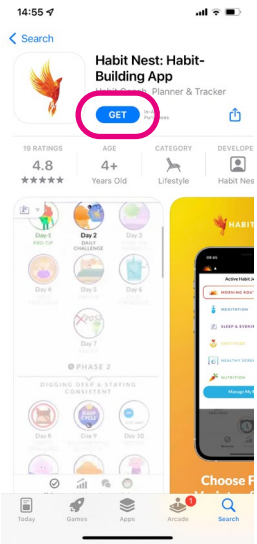
5. How to find and download an app

3. Click the ‘Search’ icon at the bottom right of the screen. It has a magnifying glass icon. Search for the name of the app by typing in the search bar. For example, ‘WhatsApp’ or ‘Gmail’.



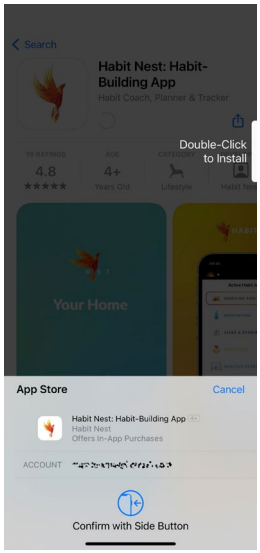
4. Tap on the name of the app.

5. Tap ‘Get’ which is a blue button next to the icon symbol. If the app is free, you will see ‘Get’ next to it in a box in the App Store. If there is a cost for the app, it will show the cost in the button instead of ‘Get’.

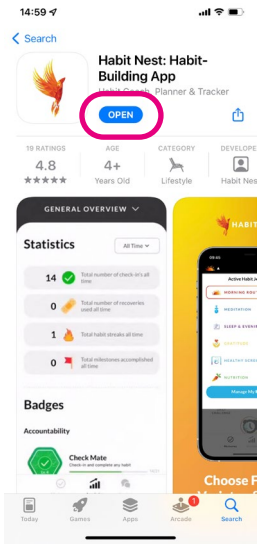


5. How to find and download an app

6. You will then be asked to tap ‘Done’ or ‘Double-Click to install’. To do this you need to click the button on the right of your phone twice. A circle will appear next to the app showing you that the app is downloading.



7. When the app has finished downloading, you will be able to tap ‘Open’.



TOP TIP

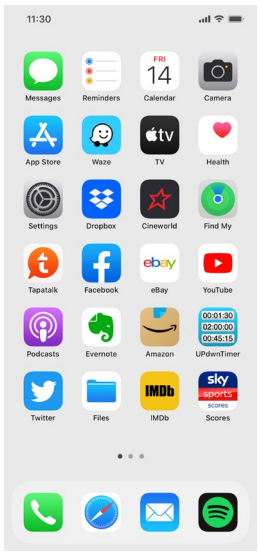
Make sure you are connected to WiFi before downloading any apps. This will stop additional charges from your mobile phone network. If you don’t use WiFi, you’ll use the mobile data on your phone which you may need to pay for if you go over your data usage.

6. How to open an app

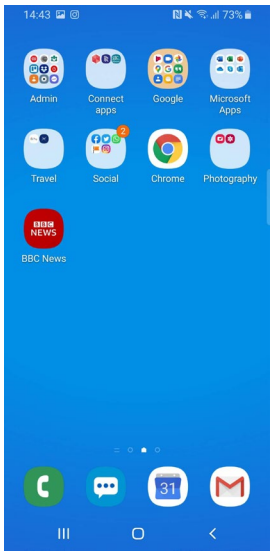
6. How to open an app

1. When you download an app, it will automatically be added to your menu. If you have a lot of apps in your menu, you may run out of room for new icons, and you'll need to 'swipe' across the page to see the new icon.

On iPhone or iPad:



On Android:



2. Tap on the app to open it.

TOP TIP

Popular puzzle apps

Sudoku: This app gives you access to lots of Sudoku puzzles. The basic app is free to use but if you want to remove the ads and get unlimited hints, you can pay for a weekly, monthly or yearly subscription. On an Android and iPhone, the app is called 'Sudoku – free classic sudoku puzzles'.

Words with friends: Just like Scrabble, this can be played with family and friends online. On an Android and iPhone, the app is called 'Words with friends classic: Word puzzle challenge'. It's free to download.

Wordscapes: If you like word puzzles, this is a good app to download. Free to download, you can find it on Androids and iPhones by searching for 'Wordscapes'.

7. How to update apps on your device

7. How to update apps on your device

Once you've downloaded an app, you'll need to make sure that it stays updated to access the latest security features. You'll get notifications come up on your device saying when an app needs to be updated.

Updating apps on an Android

You can update your apps manually in the Play Store menu, by tapping 'My apps and games'. Apps will be labelled with 'Update' if there is one available. Tap on 'Update' to install the update.

You can also set up your phone so apps are automatically updated, as and when the updates are available. To do this:

1. Open the Play Store.
2. Tap 'Menu', then 'Settings'.
3. Choose either 'Update over WiFi only' or 'Update over any network'. It's best to choose WiFi only, to avoid additional charges from your mobile phone network.

Updating apps on an iPhone

Apps downloaded from the App Store are updated automatically by default. But you can also update apps manually if you want to:

1. Open the App Store.
2. Tap 'Updates'.
3. To update a specific app, tap 'Update' next to that app, or tap 'Update all'.

You can make sure your apps only update when you're connected to WiFi to avoid additional data charges from your mobile phone network:

1. Go to 'Settings'.
2. Scroll to 'iTunes & App Store'.
3. Scroll to 'Use mobile data' and switch off this option.

8. Using apps on a laptop or computer

8. Using apps on a laptop or computer

We've focused on smartphones and tablets in this guide as there are more apps available on these types of devices.

If you want to try using apps on a laptop or computer, some of the best options are video calling apps like Skype and Zoom. These apps provide a better experience than logging into Skype and Zoom on a web browser. Our 'Intermediate guide to video calling' provides step-by-step instructions to download the Skype and Zoom apps on a laptop or computer.

Next Steps

Once you feel comfortable downloading and using apps, read our intermediate guide to learn how to:

- use apps when you're out, for example in restaurants and other public places
- turn app notifications on and off
- manage the storage space on your device and remove apps.

We hope you've enjoyed working your way through this guide and feel comfortable using apps.

My Age UK Digital Champion

Telephone number:

Notes

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 678 1602

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.
You can find more information at **www.ageuk.org.uk**

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