

Learning the Language of Your iPhone: Five Essential Gestures

Five Gestures Worth Learning on Your iPhone



An iPhone doesn't come with a mouse or keyboard, and modern models don't even have a Home button. Instead, you communicate with the phone primarily by touching its screen.

Fortunately, you don't need to learn dozens of complicated finger movements. Master these five basic gestures and you'll be able to navigate almost everything on your iPhone.

Tap: The iPhone's Version of a Mouse Click

A **tap** is the most basic iPhone gesture. Briefly touch something on the screen with one finger and immediately lift your finger.

Tap an app icon to open it. Tap a button to activate it. Tap a box to enter information. Tap a photograph to view it. If you've used a computer mouse, think of tapping as the iPhone equivalent of a single click.

Touch and Hold: Give Me More Choices

A **touch and hold** begins like a tap, except you leave your finger on the screen for a moment.

This frequently reveals additional choices. For example, touch and hold an app icon and a menu of options may appear. Touch and hold an empty area of the Home Screen and the icons begin to jiggle, allowing you to move, remove, and organize apps.

When you're exploring the iPhone, remember this useful rule: **If tapping something doesn't give you enough choices, try touching and holding it.**

Swipe: Move from One Place to Another

To **swipe**, place one finger on the screen and move it quickly in a particular direction.

Swipe left or right to move among Home Screen pages. Swipe down from the upper-right corner to open Control Center. Swipe up from the bottom to return to the Home Screen.

You'll use swiping constantly, so it quickly becomes second nature.

Scroll: Move Through a Page

Scrolling is similar to swiping, but instead of moving to another screen, you're moving through information that's too long to fit on the display.

Place a finger on the screen and move it upward or downward to read more of a webpage, email, document, list, or collection of photographs. A quick swipe makes the page continue moving; touch the screen again to stop it.

If you've used the scroll wheel on a mouse, you're already familiar with the idea.

Pinch and Spread: Zoom In and Out

Sometimes that little iPhone screen makes things a bit too little. That's when you use two fingers.

Place two fingers close together on the screen and **spread them apart to zoom in**. Move them back toward each other—often called a **pinch**—to zoom out.

This works particularly well with photographs, webpages, and maps. In many apps you can also **double-tap** an item to zoom in and double-tap again to zoom out.

Practice Makes These Gestures Automatic

Tap. Touch and hold. Swipe. Scroll. Pinch and spread.

That's most of what you need to remember. The gestures may seem awkward when you first use an iPhone, particularly if you're accustomed to a mouse and keyboard. But after a little practice, you stop thinking about them.

Your fingers simply know what to do—and that's when using an iPhone starts to feel natural.