Roughly Five Super-Handy iOS Usability Tips That Even the Experts Don't Know About
Cove Apple Club — November 14, 2018

1. Switch off incessant pop-ups to join unknown Wi-Fi networks.

Annoyed by those persistent wi-fi network popups that show up on the iPhone or iPad screen every time a wireless network is in range? You can disable the wi-fi joining alerts completely by preventing the iPhone from searching for unknown networks. This works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch the same way, and it has no effect on the regular cellular internet connection or joined and accepted wireless networks. Instead it simply stops the nagging pop-ups when a new network is visible and a known network isn't already connected.

Settings ➔ Wi-Fi ➔ Ask to Join Networks ➔ Off

2. Set default text size larger to increase readability.

You can set the default text size of almost all iOS apps with a simple setting. Apps that conform to Apple's "Dynamic Type" specification will use your chosen size. If in doubt, set the text size a little bigger than you think you need — you're setting this to be able to use in a worst-case scenario, i.e., you can't find your glasses.

Settings ➔ Display and Brightness ➔ Text Size ➔ Adjust the slider

3. Fill out the Medical ID section of the Health app.

If you are incapacitated or are in an emergency, first responders or family members can access critical health information about you in the Health app or from the iPhone lock screen. But you have to fill out this information first! You can also choose to donate your organs through Donate Life America from within the app.

Health app ➔ Medical ID icon on bottom toolbar ➔ Edit

4. Specify your own contact info and that of your close relatives in the Contacts app, then set Siri to work with a side-button press from the lock screen.

Siri can call your spouse or close relatives in case of emergency, and use that info for many other functions, IF you tell Siri who you are and who they are.

First, set up your personal Contact Card in the Contacts app if it doesn't already exist. Add a Contact with all of your personal contact info: name, full address, email, phone number, birthdate, etc. Then make sure you have a correctly filled-out contact card for your spouse and any other close relatives you'd like to be able to contact quickly.

In the Contacts app, find your card, tap Edit, tap "Add related name," choose "Spouse" from the list, and then tap the Contact card entry for your spouse's Contact card. You can do the same for other relatives, including mother, brother, son, etc.

Next, open Settings ➔ Siri ➔ My Information, and choose your card from the Contacts list.

Finally, set Siri to work from a side-button press on iPhone X-series models: Settings ➔ Siri & Search ➔ Press Side Button for Siri ➔ On and Allow Siri when Locked ➔ On.

Now you can ask Siri to "Call Mom," "Call my wife," "Call my brother," etc. And if your phone is lost, anyone can invoke Siri (by pressing the side button on iPhone X-series models), and ask "Whose iPhone is this?" Your contact info will pop up. If you have added your spouse's phone number to your card with the label "Spouse," they can call them without unlocking the phone.

5. *Use Siri to get written or spoken directions from the lock screen.*

Whether you're walking or driving, Siri can get you home or tell you where you are with written or spoken directions with a single push of a button, and you can send your location to a friend or relative with just one tap.

On iPhone X-series models and with Siri configured as in Tip #3, press the side button and then say, "Where am I," "Get me home," or "Send my location to my husband."

6. *BONUS ITEM! Instantly turn the keyboard into a trackpad when entering text into any app.*

If you need to move the editing/insertion cursor around in any text field in iOS, you can instantly turn the on-screen keyboard into a trackpad.

Simply ***press and hold*** on the on-screen keyboard, and then slide your finger around to move the editing cursor freely around the text area.

7. *DOUBLE BONUS ITEM! LED Flash for Alerts.*

You can set your iPhone to flash the camera flash LED when an alert, call or message comes into your phone. This can work even if your phone is on Silent (Ringer switched to Silent), and is handy if you need to be attentive to your phone in noisy environments like bars.

Settings ➔ General ➔ Accessibility ➔ LED Flash for Alerts ➔ On

Tap into the setting to choose whether you want the LED flash to alert even when the phone is set to Silent.