



Tips for Tech Savvy Seniors

An Introduction to Tablets

Beginners Guide

Looking (and working) a lot like super-sized smartphones, tablets are a way of accessing the internet, playing games, and communicating. Although they fit in your hands and are light enough to carry around, a tablet can be powerful and versatile.

Top things to know about tablets

- They are lighter than a laptop and are designed to be carried around in a bag and used on the move.
- You can do lots of things with a tablet, much like a computer, from browsing the web to reading, watching movies, chatting via video or voice, and more.
- Like a computer, you can install new programs on a tablet to make it do more things. These are called **apps** and are similar to smartphone apps.
- Most tablets have cameras built in, including one on the front for video calls.
- Tablets come in different sizes, measured by length of the diagonal of their screen.
- Access to the internet on a tablet is via home wireless (**Wi-Fi**) or some have **4G/5G** mobile data too.
- Tablets all work the same basic way, but there is some variation between different models and brands.

Three main kinds of tablet

Tablets can be differentiated by their operating system:

- **iPadOS:** This is exclusive to Apple's iPad range of tablets and is similar to the iPhone's system, which is called iOS.
- **Android:** Created by Google but implemented on a range of tablets from different manufacturers in slightly different ways. The same as Android on a smartphone.
- **Windows:** Tablets that run Windows are really just ultra-slim laptop computers, with the same software as a regular PC.

Touchscreen gestures

Tablets are controlled via the touchscreen.

Simply **tap** an icon to open an app, tap a **button** to activate it, or tap a **text field** to bring up a virtual keyboard to enter text. As well as tapping, there are some other useful gestures:

- **Tap and hold:** Touch your finger to the screen and leave it there until something happens. A menu might open, or it might let you move icons around on the home screen.
- **Scroll:** slide your finger up and down to scroll the screen vertically, or left and right to scroll it horizontally.
- **Swipe:** Similar to scrolling, but starting from the edge of the screen and with a faster movement. This can flip pages in a book or album, show extra home pages, or for new tablets, show the Home screen or go Back in a web browser.
- **Pinch-to-zoom:** Place two fingers on the display and move them apart or pinch them together. This will zoom whatever the screen is showing in and out.
- **Double tap:** Some functions require you to tap the screen twice, in quick succession.

Connect the tablet to the internet

Tablets work best when connected to the internet. You can use the **Settings app** to connect your tablet to your home wireless (Wi-Fi) account. To do this, you'll need to know the network name (SSID) and password for your Wi-Fi.

- The **Settings app** includes a section for Networks or Connections.
- Check that the tablet's **Wi-Fi** is switched on.
- Search for a network and find your home Wi-Fi from the list.
- Provide the **password** and check an option to **Always Connect** so you don't have to do this every time.

Browsing the web on a tablet

Your tablet is especially good for browsing the internet, and has a built-in **web browser**. You can also download different browsers from your tablet's app store.

The default browser on Android is called **Chrome**, while on iPad it's called **Safari**. Tap its icon to open it. When you tap the **address bar** at the top of the screen, the **virtual keyboard** will appear and you can enter a web address you know, or some words to search for. When you tap **Enter**, the keyboard will disappear so you can read the web page. Tap any link to follow it.

Use the **Back** button at the top or bottom of the screen to go back one page. On recent model tablets, swipe all the way from the left side of the screen to go back.

Other things to do on your tablet

The **Google Play store** on Android and the **App store** on iPad, let you download apps, music, movies, and more. You might have to pay for some items with a credit card, but there's plenty of free content. Other things that come with your tablet include:

- A calendar, clock and weather app
- Email, and a notepad
- A music player
- A camera app and picture viewer
- A book reader (called iBooks on the iPad)
- Maps (if your tablet has GPS built in)
- Video chat (on the Apple iPad, this is called FaceTime)