

Helpful apps for your smart device



Apps, also known as applications, are the computer software programs used on 'smart' or internet connected devices like mobile phones. Some apps are just for fun or connect us with family and friends, while others help us in our daily lives by providing up-to-date information and access to shops and services. There are millions of apps available and while they can seem confusing at first, these tips will help you to use them with confidence.

Using apps

Apps are programs that are designed to work well on the small screens of mobile devices. They appear as icons that you can tap to open.

Some apps have one specific use, such as allowing you to play a game, shop at a particular store, or check the weather. Other apps link you to websites with all the same information and functions that you find on desktop computers.

Some apps are free to download and use, and others charge a purchase fee or an annual subscription.

Most apps are developed for both Apple and Android devices, with millions available from the Apple and Google Play Stores. Apps usually require a stable internet connection or a large mobile data allowance to operate.

Downloading and installing apps

It's easy to browse or search for new apps and then download them onto your device. Apps can be downloaded from an online store that matches the operating system of your smart device.

eSafety recommends you download from one of two main sources:

- If you have an iPhone or iPad, you can get your apps from the Apple App Store.
- If you have an Android phone or tablet, you can select your apps from the Google Play Store.

Tip: Apps from the App Store and Play Store are almost always safe to use. Apps from other sources may not be safe.

You can use the 'Search' function in the online store to look for different apps by typing in the name, topic, or company or organisation that created it.

Apps that are free to download are often funded by advertising shown when you use them, or by requiring you to make 'in-app' purchases that allow you to access particular content or functions. Other apps charge an initial purchase fee or an annual subscription cost. Make sure you understand the costs involved before you choose your app.

What is the right app for me?

The best way to find the right app for you is to read reviews and do your own research. You should check the app's rating, how many times it has been downloaded within the store and read a full description of what it does. You can also seek recommendations from trusted sources like family, friends or reputable news outlets.

Once you have found the app you want, you need to install it, which means downloading it onto your device. To do this, press 'Get' in the Apple App Store or 'Install' in the Google Play Store.

Tip: It is best to download apps when you are connected to a wi-fi network as the data rates are much cheaper than mobile data. Downloading apps using your mobile data is more expensive and will quickly use up your data allocation.

Helpful apps

Many apps perform similar functions to each other. Select the best one for you based on your research, your specific requirements, your device type and the pricing.

Examples of different types of apps available:

- Communication apps: WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Zoom.
- News and entertainment apps: Audible, TV streaming services such as ABC iView.
- Travel and lifestyle apps: Citymapper, Google Translate, Petrol Spy, Uber.
- Health apps: Health Direct, Senior Safety, St Johns First Aid.
- Games and brain training apps: Words with Friends, Luminosity, Solitaire.
- Exercise and fitness apps: Daily Yoga, My Fitness Pal, Map my Walk.
- Money management apps: Stock exchange apps, banking apps like Westpac and NAB.
- Shopping apps: Gumtree, eBay, supermarket apps like Coles and Woolworths.
- Senior-specific apps: Speech Central Voice Reader, Magnifier, Ear Scout.



Managing apps

Updating apps

It's important to regularly update your apps to ensure they work properly. Updates enable you to install new features or security measures, fix bugs and keep the operating system on your device up to date. Your app store should notify you when updates are available.

You can set your phone to update automatically.

- **iPhone:** tap on 'Settings' and 'App Store'. Then tap on the button next to 'App Updates' so it slides to the right to turn on automatic updates.
- **Android:** switch on automatic updates in the 'Settings' section of the Play Store app.

Tip: Only update apps while you are connected to wi-fi. Make sure updates do not use mobile data without you knowing by adjusting the settings on your phone.

Deleting apps

If there are apps on your device that you never use, you can delete them. Deleting apps releases storage space to use for other things. Remember, if you delete an app it may delete all the data associated with that app, including any images, records or information you created or stored in it.

- **iPhone:** tap and hold the app's icon until all the icons on your screen start shaking. Then tap the X that appears in the corner of the icon you want to delete.
- **Android:** tap and hold the app's icon until a delete option appears. Then tap 'Uninstall' or drag the icon to 'Uninstall' near the top of the screen.

Tip: If you delete an app that you have bought, the store will remember you paid for it and you can install it again later without any charge, if your subscription fee or membership is still current.

Managing in-app purchases

Some apps are free to install but have in-app purchases, which can trick you into buying things without realising. You can turn in-app purchases OFF in your device settings to prevent this.

- **iPhone:** go to 'Settings' and tap 'Screen Time'. Then tap 'Content and Privacy Restrictions'. Select 'iTunes and App Store purchases' and then 'In-app Purchases' and set to 'Don't allow'.
- **Android:** go to 'Settings' then tap 'Require Authentication for Purchases'. This defaults every 30 minutes, but you should change it to, 'For all purchases through Google Play on this device'.

Managing notifications

Most apps notify you when new content or information is available. Some app notifications are essential, but others are not. Important notifications include system alerts, which might warn you about an app draining your device battery, or notify you about reaching your mobile data limit.

You can switch off notifications that are not essential.

- **iPhone:** go to 'Settings' then select 'Notifications'. Tap on 'Show Previews' then select from the options. You can choose to always receive notifications, receive notifications only when your phone is unlocked, or never receive notifications.
- **Android:** go to 'Settings' then select 'Apps and Notifications'. Here you can manage the notifications for all of your apps. Select an app to turn notifications on or off.

Online personal safety tips

Remember the following tips to help you stay safe while using apps on your smart device.

- Don't share your Apple App Store or Google Play Store login details or password with anyone.
- Never give out your personal or financial details or send money to anyone you meet on an app, including Facebook or Words with Friends.
- Check your app settings to control how much information you share with others. For example, limit who can see your location.
- Be careful of people who become very friendly online and then imply they are experiencing financial difficulty – they may be trying to trick you into trusting them so they can steal your money or identity information.
- For security reasons, only download apps from the official store recommended for your operating system.

For more information about this topic visit the Be Connected website at beconnected.esafety.gov.au/topic-library/essentials

Take the time to discover Be Connected

Be Connected is a comprehensive website with free resources specifically designed to support older Australians to connect online safely and navigate the digital world confidently. The site is also useful for families and community organisations who want to help older community members access all the benefits of the internet.

beconnected.esafety.gov.au

