

Securing Your Devices

This resource provides some practical first steps for securing devices against common forms of device tracking and covers actions such as turning off Bluetooth, WiFi and location sharing; renaming your device; checking for spyware and app permissions; and doing a factory reset.



These are general tips on keeping your devices secure. The exact steps may be different for different devices and may change over time.



On iPhones and iPads, you can usually find a setting by tapping “Settings” on the Home Screen, then swiping down to show the search bar. (For help, see <http://tiny.cc/iphonesearch>.)



On Android devices, swipe up from the Home Screen: a search bar will appear that says “Search Your Phone and More”. Type the setting you’re looking for in the search bar.

Turn off Bluetooth and WiFi when you’re not using them

Bluetooth and WiFi make your device visible to other devices. When you’re not using them, turn them off by going into **Settings** or tapping the **Bluetooth** and **WiFi** icons.

You can also go to your Bluetooth settings (**Settings > Bluetooth**) and look for any devices that are paired with your phone. If there are any you don’t recognize, unpair them.

Turn off location sharing

Location sharing and apps like “Find my Phone” still work if your phone is turned off, so you have to switch them off in the settings. On an iPhone, open **Settings > Privacy > Location Services** or search for “Location Services”, and turn off location sharing.

On an Android device, open **Maps**, tap your profile picture and then Location sharing. Tap the profile picture of anyone who *shouldn’t* see your location, and then tap “Stop”.

Icon key



Settings



Bluetooth



WiFi



Toggle



Maps



Three dots

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Rename your devices

Even if you never changed your phone's name, it still has one that identifies it. On an iPhone, tap **Settings** > General > About > Name, or search for "Name", then enter a new name and tap "Done".

On an Android device, tap **Settings** > About phone > Device name, or search for "Name", then put in the new name and tap "OK".

Check for spyware

"Spyware" means apps that let someone else spy on your device. Check to see if there are any apps that you don't recognize. On an iPhone, swipe right on the Home screen until you see the App Library.

Tap the search box at the top of the screen, then scroll through the list of apps and remove anything you don't recognize.

On an Android device, go to **Settings** > Apps and notifications > See all apps, or search for "Apps".

There are also apps you can use like *Certo* and *Incognito* that will scan your devices for spyware, but you should know that there is always a chance that spyware may still be on your phone.

Check app permissions

You can also stop any app from collecting or sharing things like your location. On an iPhone, tap **Three dots** > Privacy & Security > App Privacy Report to see what each app is sharing, or search for "Privacy Report". Tap each app to change the settings.



On an Android device, download the *DuckDuckGo* app from the Play store and then open it. Tap **Settings** > App Tracking Protection and then slide the **toggle** to the right.

Factory reset

If you've done everything else and still think someone might be tracking your phone, you can do a factory reset. However, this will delete all data, including any evidence on your phone. If you reset your phone, you can't restore from a saved backup because whatever was tracking you might be reloaded: you have to start over completely.

If you're sure you want to do this, on an iPhone, you can tap **Settings** > General > Transfer or Reset iPhone, then Erase All Content and Settings. You can also search for "Reset" to find this setting.

If you have an iPhone you can also turn on Lockdown Mode, which protects you from most kinds of spyware. It also limits how much you can use apps like FaceTime and Safari. See <https://support.apple.com/en-ca/HT212650> for more about Lockdown Mode.

On an Android device, start by going to **Settings**, then search for "Reset". Look for a result like "Factory reset" or "Erase all data" and tap it.



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