

# 12 texting tricks you didn't know the iPhone could do

Share your location, silence chatty group messages and hide embarrassing notification previews.

"Hey, can I call you?" I bet millions send this text every day. It's common etiquette. You text first and see whether someone is busy. If you get a "Sure," or "Y," or "K," you can ring that person up.

Texts used to be handy; now they're an integral part of our lives. We hold entire conversations via text. We exchange GIFs, emojis, and videos with ease. Not sure what kind of butter to buy? Text your spouse a picture of two brands to get the answer.

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## Reply directly from a notification

If you have an iPhone 6S (or later model), you're probably familiar with 3D Touch even if you don't use it very much. This feature lets you press your screen with different amounts of finger pressure to access more options. This is kind of like hovering over an icon with your mouse, but better. Once you start using 3D Touch, you get it.

For example, with 3D Touch, you don't have to open the Messages app to reply to a message. Just do a long hard press on the lock-screen text notification itself to reply. If you're in a hurry, this feature will save you time, although 3D Touch does require some practice.

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## Use 3D Touch for quick replies

You can also use 3D Touch for a long hard press on a text within the Messages app to send quick fun replies such as "like," "heart," "unlike," "laughter" and question mark icons. This will spare you the task of browsing the full catalog of emojis for just the right one.

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## Know how to copy and forward

Copying messages in Messenger can be tricky because it's always hard to highlight a body of text on your phone using only your finger. But sometimes you want to forward the entire contents of text – to show it to someone else, to re-submit deleted info, or to archive important correspondence.

Instead of copying and pasting a message's text to forward it, you can simply "long press" a message (similar to quick reply). Tap More on the bottom menu, and then select the arrow on the bottom left corner to forward it. The original message's content will be copied as a new message. Just select the recipients as usual.

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## Share your location with a tap

Why would you need to share your location with anyone on the Messages app? Parties, for one. You can easily direct lots of people to an obscure location, such as a cabin at the end of a spidery gravel road in the middle of the night. In theory, you could also use it for emergencies.

(For privacy reasons, you probably don't want this feature on all the time. But in case you need it, you can easily share your location with anyone within the Messages app).

To share your location in the Messages app: Open a conversation thread then tap the little "i" icon in the upper-right corner of your screen to open the contact's details.

To send your current location (including a map) to the particular contact, tap Send My Current Location.

If you want to send someone regular updates about your location, you can tap Share My Location instead.

On your kid's phone, go to Contacts, and select your name.

On your own contact page, scroll down and tap Share My Location.

Choose between Share for One Hour, Share Until End of Day, or Share Indefinitely.

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## Save data with this quick fix

Sending photos via text messages can be data-intensive. If you have a mobile data cap, you can eat through it in no time. You don't always need to send megabytes-worth of material by text message, especially when you're not connected to Wi-Fi.

To save bandwidth, you can opt to send low-quality photos in your iPhone text messages instead. Here how's you do it: Go to Settings >> Messages >> and scroll all the way down and toggle Low Quality Image Mode to On.

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## Stop the irritating alerts

The good news is that iPhones will send you two text alerts when you receive a message, as well as the optional accompanying sounds. This is a default setting, and you'll receive the two alerts within a two-minute interval. While this is great for most occasions, I personally found it redundant.

To have your iPhone send single text alerts only, do this: Go to Settings >> Notifications >> Messages. Scroll down to Repeat Alert then set it to Never.

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## Silence maddening group messages

We often join a group-texting session, and we get the information we need, and then we think, “Okay, I’m done. No need for more texts.” But still the alerts ping, ping, and ping away, and they can easily get overwhelming. Thankfully, you can silence these group alerts on your iPhone.

To mute group message alerts, swipe left on the group message then tap Hide Alerts. You’ll then see a moon icon on the left side of the group to indicate that it’s muted. Nice.

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## Make it harder to respond to the wrong message

Even seasoned texters can get confused about which conversation they’re responding to, especially if you have several group-texting sessions happening simultaneously. To avoid embarrassing miscommunications, you can organize your group-texts by giving them individual labels.

To name a group, simply open the conversation thread, tap the “i” icon on the top right then tap, Enter a Group Name.

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## Know who texts without looking at your phone

Similar to having special ringtones for your special someone, you also can set special text tones for specific contacts. This is great for knowing exactly who just sent you a text.

To set up a special text tone on your iPhone, select the specific Contact (on the Contacts app or the Phone app), then tap “Edit” on the upper right. Now on the “Text Tone” section, change it from “Default” to something else. You can also change the specific contact’s vibration alert in this section.

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## Block and silence the annoying ones

Do you have contacts who keep annoying you with text messages? Well, on the iPhone, you can simply block that contact and silence them.

Here’s how you do that: From the text conversation, tap the “i” icon on the top-right then tap the name or number at the tap. Select Block this Caller, then Block Contact to confirm. Don’t worry; you always have to option to unblock the contact later.

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## Hide embarrassing notification previews

Text notification previews are convenient. You can see the first few lines of a text before unlocking your phone, and thereby determine whether a response is urgent. The downside: Anyone can read your texts from the lock screen.

If you want to keep your text previews hidden on the lock screen and save yourself from potential embarrassment, go to Settings >> Notifications >> Messages then scroll down to Show Previews to set to When Unlocked or Never.

## Start using this alternative to long texts

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Don't have time to tap away and send a long message to one of your friends? No problem.

You can record a voice note using Messages, so your friend will receive an audio clip. It saves you time on long messages and also gives them the personal touch of hearing your voice.

Launch the Messages app on your iPhone or iPad.

Tap on an existing conversation with the person you would like to send a voice note to.

Tap and hold the microphone button and begin speaking into your phone's microphone.

Swipe upwards to the quick send button (looks like a message bubble with an arrow in it).

If you mess up while recording, swipe your finger to the left in step 4 instead of upwards to cancel the voice message. Just tap and hold again to start the recording over.