

How to choose a smartphone



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Everyone's talking about smartphones these days. Getting one of your own is both exciting and daunting. There are so many to choose from, and it can be hard to know which features and functionality will best suit your lifestyle. How do you decide which to get? This guide outlines the key steps to take in coming to your decision.

Follow these step-by-step instructions to choose your smartphone

Step 1: Think about what you want from a smartphone. Do you have a lot of music or video you'd like to carry around with you? If you do, you might want to consider a phone with a relatively larger **memory**.

Step 2: Think about how important having a **camera** on your phone is to you. If you're a serious hobbyist, you may prefer to have a high-quality, dedicated camera and not really care if you have one on your phone. If you have no interest in taking pictures or video, you may not want one either. However, if the idea of taking casual snaps without the extra weight of a separate camera in your pocket appeals, it might be a good idea.

Step 3: Is **GPS** (global positioning system) important to you? If you have a terrible sense of direction, being able to get a map of wherever you are with a big red 'You are here' marker can be enormously reassuring, but if you're a navigational whiz, you might feel you don't need it. Also, if you already have a sat-nav for your car, you may find it redundant.

Step 4: Are you interested in **extending the capabilities** of your phone? The iPhone has by far the largest App Store – at over 500,000 apps, it has many more than its nearest competitor. This means you might prefer an iPhone if you want access to as many apps as possible.

Step 5: Do you have trouble with digital **dexterity**? If you have arthritis in your hands or just aren't as nimble with your fingers as you'd like, you may want to consider getting a phone with a physical keyboard, like most of the phones from Blackberry. Using the touchscreen keyboards on other phones can be a little fiddly, and some people find it easier to use buttons they can feel.

Step 6: How important is **ease of use** to you? The iPhone has the slickest and easiest to use interface, so if you're worried about being perplexed by high technology, it might be the one for you.

Step 7: How much of a **techie** are you? If you're minded to personally modify and tinker with your phone, you may want to consider a phone running the open-source Android system. It's far more amenable to poking about under the bonnet.

Step 8: Perhaps most importantly, what's your **budget**? Do you want the features you're interested in enough to pay extra for them? A contract phone can be as cheap as £50 (or even free!), but you'll end up paying a lot more over the length of a contract. Pay-as-you-go might be cheaper in the long run, but can be a very large initial pay-out – £500 or higher!

Step 9: It's time to bite the bullet and **buy your smartphone**. Just keep in mind the features you're interested in – you might want to write them down – and don't let yourself get swept up in a geeky frenzy. Remember that the different phone providers all have different prices, so try and get the best deal you can!

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