

Lifewire **Harness Siri for Maximum Efficiency: 20 Essential Tricks You Didn't Know You Needed**

Our tested savvy Siri tips will make you wonder how you ever lived without them



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Siri is an excellent [personal assistant](#), and its powers range from keeping you more organized to helping you figure out where you want to go and give you directions to get there.

These are our favorite ways Siri can improve our productivity at work, at home, or wherever we roam.

Launch an App

Perhaps one of the most simple tasks Siri can perform and often one of the most overlooked. Just think of the number of times you've gone through page after page of app icons searching for the right one when all you needed to say was "Launch Facebook."

Answer Questions

You can use Siri to search the web by prefacing your question with "Google," which lets you "google the [best iPad games](#)," for example.

Don't forget that Siri can answer many basic questions without pulling up a web browser. Just ask it, "How old is Paul McCartney?" or "How many calories are in a doughnut?"

Even when it doesn't know the exact answer, it can pull up relevant information. Asking "Where is the Leaning Tower of Pisa?" may not give you "Pisa, Italy," but it will provide you with a related Wikipedia page.

Mark an Event or Meeting on Your Calendar

You can also use Siri to put a meeting or event on your calendar. This event also shows up on your notification center on the designated day, making it easy to keep track of your meetings. Just ask it to "schedule a meeting" to get started.

Set a Reminder

We use Siri for setting reminders more than anything. We've found it to be great at keeping us more organized. It's as simple as saying, "Remind me to take out the trash tomorrow at eight AM."

Initiate a Timer Countdown

We often discover new uses for Siri based on how friends use her. Soon after it was released, a friend was over and used Siri as a timer to cook eggs. Just say "Timer two minutes," and it gives you a countdown.

Set an Alarm

Siri can also keep you from oversleeping. Just ask it to "wake you up in two hours" if you need a good power nap. This feature can be convenient when you travel.

Take a Quick Note

Siri's helpfulness can also be as simple as taking a note. "Note that the average airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow is twenty-four miles-per-hour." Any notes that you take, including Monty Python trivia, is stored in the Notes app.

Make a List

Siri also makes lists. You can create a checklist by saying, "create grocery list." After Siri starts it, you can add things by saying, "add tomatoes to grocery list." You can find the list in the Reminders app, and items will have a checkbox next to them so you can mark them off as completed.

Use Siri as a Calculator

Another often overlooked feature that falls into the "answer questions" category is using Siri as a calculator. It can be a simple request of "What is six times twenty-four?" or a practical query like "What is twenty percent of fifty-six dollars and forty-two cents?" You can even ask it to "Graph X squared plus two."

Siri the Translator

Perhaps the greatest trick while traveling, Siri can translate from English into many other languages, which keeps you from fumbling through a phrasebook or looking for a specific translation app. Just say, "Translate 'Where is the restroom?' into Spanish."

Location Reminders

Putting addresses in your contact list may sound like a lot of work, but it could have a massive productivity bonus. Indeed, you can use addresses to make finding directions

much more effortless. "Get directions to Dave's house" is much easier than giving Siri the full address.

You can also set yourself reminders.

"Remind me to give Dave his birthday present when I get to his house" actually works, but you need to have reminders turned on in your location services settings. (Don't worry. Siri will point you in the right direction the first time you try to use this feature. Isn't it lovely?)

Place Phone Calls and Send Text Messages

As part of the hands-free features, you can easily place phone calls ("call Tom Smith") and send text messages ("text Sally Jones") to your contacts. If a connection has multiple phone numbers, such as a work phone and a mobile phone, you can place one of them in your favorites list, and Siri uses it by default.

Email

Siri can also pull up recent email messages and send an email. You can tell it to "Send Email to Dave about The Beatles and say you've got to check this band out." You can break this into chunks by saying "Send Email to Dave," and it asks for the subject and body of the Email, but the keywords "about" and "say" will let you put everything in your original request.

Voice Dictation

You can use Siri's voice dictation just about anywhere that you can type. The standard on-screen keyboard has a microphone button. Tap it, and you can dictate rather than type.

Play Music

Similar to launching an app, Siri can control your music. You can tell it to play a song, an album, or a playlist. "Play awesome eighties mix playlist." You can also ask Siri to "turn shuffle on" or "skip this song."

Find a Place to Eat

The best thing about Siri is that when you ask it to "recommend a restaurant," it sorts them by their Yelp rating, which makes narrowing down your choice easy. You can also specify a specific type of food, such as "find nearby pizza places."

Check Nearby Traffic

Don't want to get stuck in a traffic jam? You can ask Siri to check nearby traffic to see what roads are congested, which works great when connecting your iPhone to your car via CarPlay.

Apple Maps users can now report an accident, hazard, or speed check by telling Siri on iPhone or CarPlay.

Teach Siri Pronunciation

Is Siri having a problem pronouncing one of the names in your contacts list? If you edit the contact and add a new field, you see the option to add a Phonetic First Name or Phonetic Last Name. Doing this helps you teach Siri how you pronounce the name.

Give a Contact a Nickname

If phonetic spellings don't help, then nicknames come in handy. In addition to searching contacts by name, Siri also checks the nickname field. So if it has a problem understanding your wife's name, you can use the nickname "my wife."

If you think there's a chance she's ever going to see your contacts list, make sure you use "love of my life" rather than "old ball and chain." Just our two cents.

"Hey Siri"

You don't always need to hold the home button down to activate Siri. Many devices support "Hey Siri," a voice activation that tells it to listen for a command without using the home button.

This feature allows your iPhone or iPad to act like an Amazon Alexa or a Google Home smart speaker. In iOS 17 and later, you can also just say "Siri."

Need more help? Tap the question mark at the lower-left corner of the screen when you have Siri activated, and you'll get a list of topics Siri can cover, including example questions to ask it.

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