

Apple's AI suite may be the star, but there are lots of quality-of-life improvements coming to every iPhone this week.

By Jason Cross Senior Editor, Macworld DEC 11, 2024 8:44 am PST



Image: Foundry

iOS 18.2 is rolling out to all compatible iPhones today, and most of the focus is on the new Apple Intelligence capabilities, and for good reason: AI is Apple's big marketing hook but the features are rolling out gradually over several months. The iOS 18.2 (and macOS 15.2) adds long-awaited image tools and ChatGPT integration that make Apple Intelligence a lot more useful.

But if you don't have an iPhone 16 or iPhone 15 Pro (or just don't care about AI), none of that matters to you. Fortunately, iOS 18.2 isn't just an Apple Intelligence drop, it adds a host of other great quality-of-life features and improvements as well. Here are all the new things in iOS 18.2 coming to your iPhone that have nothing to do with Apple Intelligence.

**Update December 11:** *Apple has announced that iOS 18.2 will arrive today. OS updates generally appear at 10am PT/1pm ET.*

## Camera Control improvements

After months of criticism, Apple is making several tweaks to the Camera Control button in iOS 18.2, for those with an iPhone 16. First, pressing and holding the button will launch the new Visual Intelligence feature.

But there are some other quality-of-life improvements, too. In *Settings > Accessibility > Camera Control* you'll be able to adjust the double-click speed. You can also enable an autofocus/exposure lock in *Settings > Camera > Camera Control*, so a light press on the button locks exposure and focus much as it usually does on the shutter button of a DSLR.

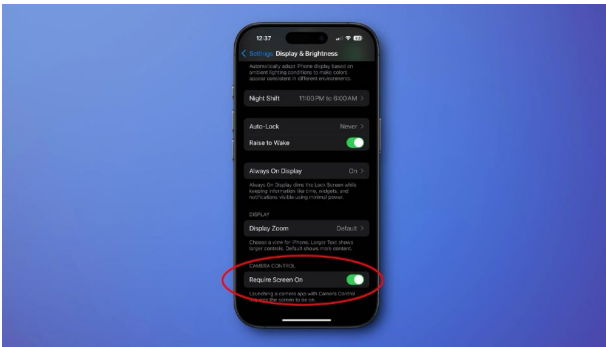


Image: Foundry

Finally, there's a new toggle that requires the screen to be on for the Camera Control button to launch a camera app. You'll find that in Settings > *Display & Brightness*, which is sort of a confusing place for it.

## New Mail app with smart categories

The Mail app will analyze the content of your emails and automatically categorize them into four categories:

- **Primary:** Your personal mail or mail that needs to be acted on right away.
- **Transactions:** Receipts, order confirmations, shipping notices, etc.
- **Updates:** News and newsletters, social media notifications, and the like.
- **Promotions:** Coupons, marketing offers, and so on.

The four categories will exist as buttons at the top of the Mail app, and you can swipe left on them to show All Mail.

And no, Apple isn't reading your emails. All of this happens on the device.

## Volume limit and lock screen slider

In the *Settings* > *Sound & Haptics* menu, there's a new Volume Limit feature for your iPhone's built-in speaker (volume limits for headphones have been around for a long time). It only affects media playback, not calls/FaceTime, alerts, or system sounds.

There's also a new option in *Settings* > *Accessibility* > *Audio & Visual* called "Always Show Volume Control." This will put the volume control slider back on the bottom of the media playback controls on your Lock screen. That volume slider was removed back in iOS 16 (unless you were using AirPlay), and if you miss it, you can have it back now.

## Default messaging and calling apps

In iOS 18.2's *Settings* > *Apps* you'll find a new selection at the top, before your list of installed apps, called Default Apps.

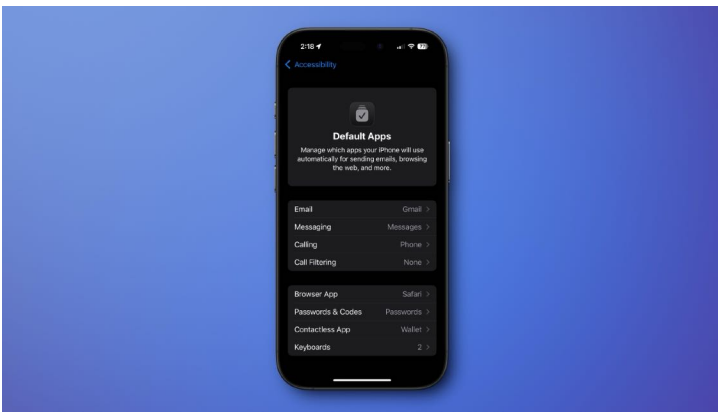


Image: Foundry

In this menu, you'll choose default applications for things like email, browser, passwords & codes, and more. Most are options you had before (albeit scattered throughout Settings), but Messaging and Calling are new.

There are no applications that qualify to populate those areas right now, but that's probably just a matter of existing apps needing new versions that use new frameworks.

## Sudoku puzzles in News+

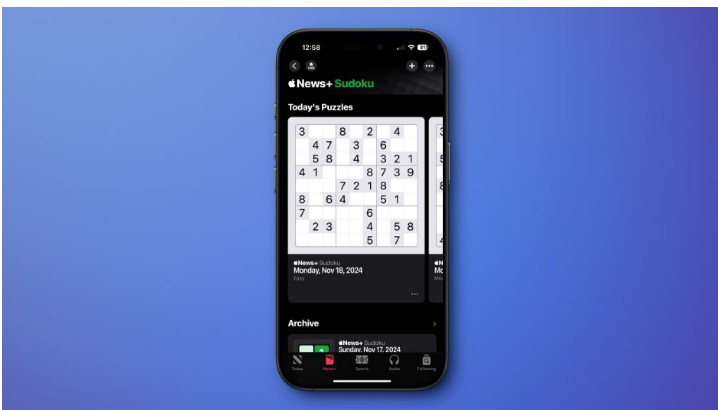


Image: Foundry

If you're a News+ subscriber, you have access to several puzzles in the News app. Apple publishes daily crosswords, crosswords mini, and a word game called Quartiles.

Now, daily Sudoku puzzles join the list. There is an easy, moderate, and challenging puzzle available each day.

## AirTag item location sharing



Image: Apple

You've been able to share an AirTag with another iPhone user, but that's only really helpful for family members or trusted friends.

With iOS 18.2, Apple is going to

let you create a secure link you can share with someone else to let them see the location of an AirTag. They'll be able to open it on any device, even just a web browser on any computer, and see the location of that AirTag.

The link automatically expires after 7 days or when the AirTag is reunited with its owner, and of course the owner can turn off the sharing at any time.

What's more, Apple is working with a bunch of major airlines to make this sharing process a part of their customer service flow for lost luggage.

### **Charge time estimates?**

This isn't yet available in the iOS 18.2 beta, but 9to5Mac discovered code that suggests Apple will soon show you how much longer your iPhone has until it reaches a full charge. It's a feature that's been present on Android phones for a while and would be a welcome overdue addition to the iPhone.

However, while the feature first popped up in one of the early iOS 18.2 beta codes, it's not live yet. There's a chance it will be switched on when iOS 18.2 is available for all on Monday. If not expect it in iOS 18.3 sometime in February.

**Author: Jason Cross, Senior Editor, Macworld**

Jason has written about technology for more than 25 years - first in the gaming press, then focusing on enthusiast PCs and general technology. He enjoys learning how complicated technology works and explaining it in a way anyone can understand.