

Does an elderly relative or friend need an iPhone? Are you an older person looking for an iPhone that fits your needs? Here are our recommendations.

By [Karen Haslam](#) Managing Editor, Macworld JAN 1, 2025 3:31 am PST



Image: Apple

The old trope that old people are hopelessly illiterate when it comes to technology is somewhat unwarranted. The home computer revolution is decades old at this point, and smartphones have been around for over 15 years. Seniors may not operate their smartphones as adroitly as their grandkids, but they aren't just sitting around pining for the days of rotary dial phones. Social media has, in particular, provided a way for seniors to more easily keep in touch with family and connect with friends, and smartphones help make it all possible.

It's also an increasingly important part of healthcare services.

Seniors need iPhones, too, but they may have unique needs. They're often on fixed incomes and may have difficulty reading small text, or suffer from arthritis or have other accessibility needs. The best iPhone for seniors is one that won't cost an arm and a leg and will continue to be updated for at least a few years. Beyond that, we're going to make two recommendations: a small iPhone for seniors who find large phones difficult to carry and manipulate, and a large iPhone for those who need larger text and images.

Right now buying an iPhone for an older person is a little less simple than usual. We would normally recommend the iPhone SE for the elderly because it has a Home button, which simplifies the iPhone interface for the less techie, and is cheaper. However, Apple is likely to update the iPhone SE in the spring of 2025, so our advice is to wait to see what the replacement for the iPhone SE will bring. However, if you want the Home button the new iPhone SE may not feature that, in which case we recommend buying one while you still can.

Speaking of being able to buy an iPhone SE that phone has already been removed from sale in the EU as it charges via Lightning instead of USB-C. And it's not the only iPhone that has been removed from sale in the EU: the iPhone 14 and 14 Plus are also no longer sold in the EU. These are also iPhones that we tend to recommend for the elderly, due to their lower price.

Another complication is the fact that the only iPhones currently sold by Apple that support [Apple Intelligence features](#) are the iPhone 16, 16 Plus, 16 Pro and 16 Pro Max. If you want Apple Intelligence features only these phones support them, but the new iPhone SE replacement is likely to support Apple Intelligence when it launches.

1. Apple iPhone SE (2022) – Best for the elderly



Price When Reviewed: \$429 (64GB) | \$479 (128GB) | \$579 (256GB)

The iPhone SE is a godsend for seniors or anyone on a fixed income. Starting at only \$429/£429, you get an iPhone with an A15 processor (same as the iPhone 13 and 14). Battery life runs around 15 hours, so they will need to remember to plug the iPhone in at the end of the day.

Even with just a single lens, the camera is quite good with features like Deep Fusion for better low-light photography, and Photographic Styles if they want to get creative.

Some seniors will find Touch ID easier to deal with than Face ID (especially if their previous smartphone was an older iPhone).

The iPhone SE is small. If a senior is coming from an iPhone 8 or older, that size will be familiar and comfortable. However, the small 4.7-inch display may be too small for someone with failing eyesight.

The iPhone SE supports 5G and comes in 64GB, 128GB, and 256GB capacities. We'd usually dissuade buyers from the 64GB model if they are likely to take a lot of photos and store music on the device. Since the 128GB model only costs \$50/£50 more we recommend the extra storage, but you could instead set them up with an iCloud account for additional storage.

Before you rush out to buy one though you should be aware that the iPhone SE is likely to be updated in 2025, and when it is it is likely to no longer feature a Home button. So if it is the Home button and Touch ID you want then you might not have the opportunity for long. If you don't mind if there is no Home button then we'd recommend that you wait until the new model launches, more here: [iPhone SE 4: Everything you need to know](#).

Also note that in the EU Apple is no longer able to sell the iPhone SE because it has a Lightning port rather than USB-C for charging.

Read our full [Apple iPhone SE \(2022\) review](#)

2. Apple iPhone 14 – Budget iPhone



Cons

- Older processor

Price When Reviewed: £599 (was £699)

Note that in the EU Apple is no longer able to sell the iPhone 14 or 14 Plus because it has a Lightning port rather than USB-C for charging.

Not every senior wants an iPhone as

small as the iPhone SE. An iPhone with a larger display will be *much* easier for old eyes to see clearly. There is big and there is bigger though. If it's the biggest iPhone you want then there is a Plus version of the standard handset with a 6.7-inch screen, but if that is too heavy then the best choice is one of the 6.1-inch iPhones. That could include the iPhone 16, iPhone 15, or iPhone 14.

We're recommending the iPhone 14 as the top choice here primarily because it represents the best value for money right now. At \$599/£599 it costs \$200/£200 less than the iPhone 16, and \$100/£100 less than the iPhone 15. The iPhone 14 offers the same A15 chip that's in the iPhone SE), but the iPhone 14 has a dual camera system. It can also shoot 4K video at 60 fps. The iPhone 14 also offers Emergency SOS via satellite, Crash Detection, Roadside Assistance via satellite, and Messages via satellite—that's a lot of stuff not on the iPhone SE.

That processor is more than fast enough for email, checking social media apps, taking pictures, making FaceTime calls, and everything else a senior wants an iPhone for. And it'll still get several years of iOS software updates.

Face ID might take a little getting used to if the user is used to Touch ID and the Home button, but could prove to be an easier way to secure an iPhone for those with arthritis.

Before you purchase the iPhone 14 bear in mind that Apple is likely to remove this phone from the lineup in 2025 when it introduces the replacement for the iPhone SE, which is expected to support Apple Intelligence, which the iPhone 14 does not. For that reason we recommend waiting to find out what the new iPhone SE will offer.

Read our full [Apple iPhone 14 review](#)

3. Apple iPhone 15 Plus – Big screen iPhone



Cons

- Bulky and heavier than smaller iPhones

Price When Reviewed: \$799 (was \$899)

The large display of one of the Plus-sized iPhones will be *much* easier for old eyes to see clearly. Excluding the iPhone 16 Pro Max, there are three choices with a

6.7-inch screen here: the iPhone 14 Plus, iPhone 15 Plus, and iPhone 16 Plus. Again, you can save \$100/£100 by buying the iPhone 15 Plus (at \$799/£799) instead of the newer iPhone 16 Plus (at \$899/£899). This time we recommend spending the extra money if there is budget available because the iPhone 15 generation is a leap ahead of the iPhone 14 in terms of processor and camera. Another reason to choose the iPhone 15 Plus: it is lighter than the iPhone 15 Pro Max and the iPhone 14 Plus.

The iPhone 14 Plus and iPhone 15 Plus do not support Apple Intelligence, which is a new feature of the iPhone 16 range and the iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Max. The Apple Intelligence features may not appeal to you now, but they turn out to be useful in the future. If you want Apple Intelligence and a larger iPhone then the best option is the iPhone 16 Plus.

Also keep in mind that Apple may likely to remove this phone from the lineup in 2025 when it introduces the replacement for the iPhone SE, which is expected to support Apple Intelligence. For that reason we recommend waiting to find out what the new iPhone SE will offer.

Read our full [Apple iPhone 15 Plus review](#)

For more advice about accessories for your Mac, iPad or iPhone see all our [Best Picks](#).

Author: Karen Haslam, Managing Editor, Macworld

Karen has worked on both sides of the Apple divide, clocking up a number of years at Apple's PR agency prior to joining Macworld more than two decades ago. Karen's career highlights include interviewing Apple's Steve Wozniak and discussing Steve Jobs' legacy on the BBC. Having edited the U.K. print and online editions of Macworld for many years, more recently her focus has been on SEO and evergreen content as well as product recommendations and buying advice.