

# The most common iPhone 16 problems (and how to fix them)

Jesse Hollington Published December 16, 2024 1:00 PM



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Apple's latest iPhone 16 lineup packs in some exciting new features. The latest and greatest A18 chip brings the standard iPhone 16 and iPhone 16 Plus duo closer to their iPhone 16 Pro counterparts than they've been in years, while the iPhone 16 Pro Max gets bigger than ever with a 6.9-inch display and the thinnest bezels of any smartphone yet.

The entire iPhone 16 family is more in harmony than ever this year, as Apple seems to have abandoned the trend of

artificially limiting features like the Dynamic Island and Action Button to its Pro models, only to bring them to the standard ones a year later. Instead, this year's marquee new feature, the Camera Control, can be found on all four models. Sure, there are plenty of things that are still exclusive to the iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max, like the 120Hz ProMotion Display and 5x telephoto camera, but those at least feel like valid differentiators for a "Pro" model.

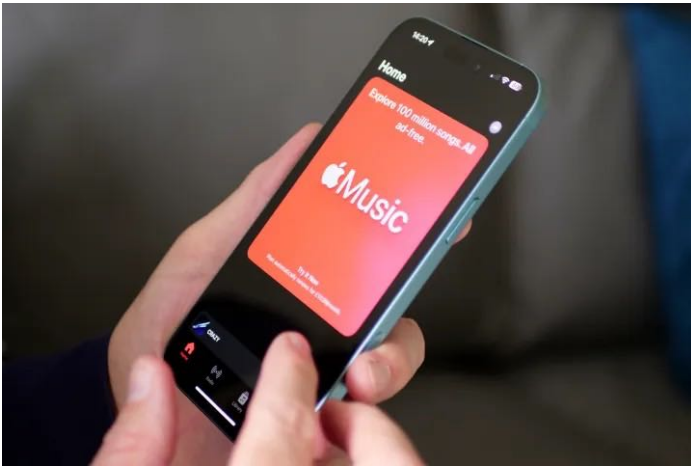
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However, like all smartphones, new iPhones can come with new problems, and sometimes it takes Apple a while to work out all the bugs. The good news is that most glitches early adopters run into are software-related, which is why nearly every iOS release offers what Apple calls "stability and performance improvements." While there's always a chance you got a defective iPhone 16, that's relatively uncommon. Apple's iOS is a complex piece of software, and early releases don't always play nice with the latest hardware.

So, before we get into the specific problems, it's worth mentioning that many of these may be solved in later software updates. In fact, some have already been solved in the iOS 18 point releases that are available now. We understand that some folks are reluctant to try new releases as soon as they become available for fear of encountering new bugs, but iOS point releases generally improve things. More significantly, each iOS update also typically includes important security fixes — vulnerabilities that are disclosed with that iOS update, letting every malicious hacker know how to attack iPhones running older iOS versions. This means the first thing you should do when encountering problems, no matter how small, is ensure that you've updated to the latest

version of iOS 18 by opening the Settings app and selecting General > Software update. If an update is available, install it.

## Your touchscreen becomes unresponsive



One of the first widespread complaints we heard when new iPhone 16 units began landing in customers' hands in September were problems with unresponsive touchscreens. Theories on why this was happening ranged from problems with the new Camera Control to the slimmer bezels causing skin to come into contact with the edges of the screen when holding the iPhone and thereby triggering the touch rejection algorithm.

Andy Boxall / Digital Trends

## Solutions

- Ensure you've updated your iPhone to the latest iOS 18 release. Apple officially fixed this in iOS 18.0.1, and we haven't heard any recent reports. However, new iPhone 16 units are likely still shipping with iOS 18.0 pre-installed, and updates won't necessarily be installed automatically.
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- Use a case on your iPhone 16. Many folks have reported this problem doesn't occur at all with an encased iPhone. That makes sense if it's being triggered by skin contact with the edges of the screen; the best iPhone 16 cases usually have raised edges to protect the screen from impacts, but these will also help keep the edges of your palms off the display.
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- If all else fails, reach out to Apple Support or visit your local Apple Store or Apple Authorized Service Provider (AASP). Although most of these issues have been addressed in software updates, unresponsive touchscreens can still be caused by hardware problems, too.

## You're experiencing poor battery life

It's quite common to hear complaints of battery life after a new iPhone or major iOS release lands, and first-day upgraders are likely impacted by both, since their new iPhone 16 comes with iOS 18 — an update they may not have installed on their older iPhone. However, even if you're coming over from an iPhone 15 Pro Max running the latest version of iOS 18, you may still take a hit on battery performance for a few days.

## Solutions



Joe Maring / Digital Trends

- Most often this problem just requires a bit of patience. New iPhones typically have a break-in period while they're still optimizing things in the background and calibrating the battery levels. This can take anywhere from a couple of days to a week or more. You may see an even greater impact on your battery life if you're moving data over from another iPhone. Caches and indexes aren't typically backed up or transferred, so these have to be rebuilt, which takes time and consumes more power.

- Ensure 5G Auto is enabled in Settings > Cellular > Cellular data options > Voice & data. 5G typically consumes more power than 4G/LTE, but since it's not needed most of the time — especially when your iPhone is idle — your iPhone can manage this intelligently and only power up the 5G radios when you need the best performance.
- Reduce your screen brightness and ensure Auto-Brightness hasn't been disabled, as this could cause your screen to run brighter than necessary, which consumes more power. This should be on by default, but you can find it in Settings > Accessibility > Display & text size to confirm.
- Open Settings > Battery and check for suggestions on settings such as screen brightness and auto-lock that could be negatively impacting your battery life. You can also use the information here to see which apps have consumed the most power over the last 24 hours and last 10 days. If anything stands out here, consider using those apps less or even deleting them. If a power-hungry app shows "Background Activity" you can switch it off under Settings > General > Background app refresh.

## Your iPhone 16 reboots randomly

We've seen a few isolated reports of folks who find their iPhones randomly restarting for seemingly no reason at all. In some cases, this can happen while the iPhone is charging — wirelessly or otherwise — while others have experienced sudden restarts while using the iPhone.

Note that two different things that can occur that may both seem like "reboots." If your iPhone screen momentarily goes blank with a spinning progress indicator but



Mateusz / Pexels

comes back after a few seconds, that's known as a "springboard restart," and involves only the user interface (e.g., the home screen and status bar). A full reboot will typically return you to the Apple logo and take a minute or two before you can use your iPhone again. You'll also be required to enter your passcode or password before you can use Face ID or Touch ID.

While both scenarios can be equally annoying, random full reboots are often the sign of a hardware issue while springboard restarts ("resprings") can be caused by corrupt settings or dodgy apps. This often happens when restoring an iPhone from older backups, as cruft can travel with those backups across every iPhone you've ever owned, and sooner or later hit an iOS version that doesn't know how to deal with it.

## Solutions

- If you're only experiencing resprings or reboots when using specific apps, check the App Store to ensure you've updated them to the latest versions and try removing and reinstalling them from the App Store. With cloud-based apps, you shouldn't risk losing any data, although you may need to sign in to the service and reconfigure your preferences. If the app stores data locally, be sure you've backed up anything you want to keep.
- Do a forced restart. This often helps to solve resprings by cleaning out anything deeper that could be causing problems with the high-level user interface apps like those that run the home screen and lock screen. If your iPhone is actually rebooting on its own, a forced restart may seem counterintuitive, but a deliberate restart flushes out data that may not be cleaned up when the iPhone abruptly reboots without taking the time to shut itself down properly.
- If resprings occur across multiple apps, try resetting some of your global preferences. In the Settings app under *General > Transfer or reset iPhone > Reset*, you'll find options to reset various categories of settings, along with *Reset all settings* to take care of everything at once. None of these will remove any data, although resetting the network settings (or all settings) will clear out any saved Wi-Fi networks, so be sure you have the passwords handy for any you need to reconnect to.
- Wiping and factory resetting your iPhone entirely can help to troubleshoot the problem, and we've encountered many cases where even restoring from the same backup causes these issues to go away. This is likely because backups only include permanent data and not caches and temporary files, both of which could contribute to the problem. Try setting it up as a new device without restoring a

backup to see if the problem recurs. If it does, then you're likely dealing with a hardware issue.

- If you're experiencing reboots or hangs after restoring your iPhone data from iCloud, a Mac, or a PC, then you may be dealing with a corrupted backup. If this is a new iPhone, try transferring your data directly from your old iPhone. You can also try using a different backup to see if that helps; iCloud stored the three most recent backups, so you can select an older one. If you back up to both iCloud and your computer, try restoring the other backup.
- Check the system logs by going to *Settings > Privacy & security > Analytics & improvements > Analytics data*. You likely won't be able to decipher most of what's here, but the key is to scroll through the list and look for entries that mention the word "panic." These refer to kernel panics where the core operating system crashes entirely, and they usually indicate a hardware issue.

## Camera app lags or freezes



We saw a number of reports early on of folks having problems with the camera app lagging or freezing up entirely. In some cases, this happens even when performing basic actions like zooming in or taking a photo.

This problem hasn't been reported as much recently, so it's possible that Apple fixed it in an iOS 18 update or it was unique to new phones and settled down after the initial break-in period.

Christine Romero-Chan / Digital Trends

## Solutions

- Ensure you're running the latest iOS 18 release. Apple noted in the iOS 18.0.1 release notes that it fixed an issue where the camera would "freeze when recording macro mode video on the Ultra Wide camera in 4K with HDR turned off on iPhone 16 Pro models." That's incredibly specific, but it's possible that was whatever fix was applied for that situation cleared up the broader problem.
- If you're already up to date on iOS 18 and you're using a newer iPhone, wait it out. It's not uncommon to encounter performance issues while iOS is performing background optimizations.

## Apple Pay or other NFC features not working



Apple

Some folks have reported problems related to the NFC hardware on their new iPhones. While this sometimes manifests itself as problems making payments with Apple Pay, it's more commonly an issue only with reading NFC cards and tags. This includes stored payment cards like transit passes, security keys, and NFC stickers. In most cases, the iPhone refuses to acknowledge the existence of the tag entirely — nothing happens when you hold it up to the back of your iPhone, leaving you wondering if you're holding it properly.

### Solutions

- Grab a free app like NFC Tools and try using it to read your NFC security key, card, or tag. This will help you confirm if the app you're using — or the built-in iOS feature for security keys — is the problem.
- Try restarting your iPhone. It's a cliché, but it often works to solve problems like these.
- Some users have reported that toggling Airplane Mode, Cellular Data, or even AirDrop settings gets the NFC reader going again.
- Resetting network settings also helps in some cases. You can find this in the Settings app under *General > Transfer or reset iPhone > Reset > Reset network settings*. Note that this will remove all saved Wi-Fi networks and passwords, so you'll have to reconnect to your Wi-Fi network again after it finishes (be sure you have the password handy).
- If the problem is also affecting your ability to make payments with Apple Pay then it's more likely a hardware issue or a problem with the Secure Element. We recommend reaching out to Apple Support if simple troubleshooting steps like restarting your iPhone don't resolve the issue.

# Camera app opening randomly



Andy Boxall / Digital Trends

Some new iPhone 16 owners have found their camera app unexpectedly popping up at inopportune times, from the middle of serious gaming sessions to sitting idle in their pockets. This can be a distraction in the first case, and a potential battery killer in the second. This is an issue we've almost never seen on older iPhone models, so the most likely culprit is the new Camera Control that Apple introduced on this year's models. While the new button has several functions, its most basic one is to open the built-in Camera app (or another camera-

related app of your choice) when fully pressed.

## Solutions

- Try a different case. The case you're using may be putting too much pressure on the Camera Control button and inadvertently activating it. Most iPhone 16 cases are made to accommodate the Camera Control, but not everyone cares about the new button, and it can be tempting to use a cheaper case in that situation.
- You can require a double click to open the Camera app by going to *Settings > Camera > Camera Control* and selecting Double Click under "Launch camera." You typically require two clicks to launch the camera when your iPhone is sleeping at the lock screen — one to wake your iPhone up and a second to open the camera app — but this setting will require two presses in quick succession before the camera starts up. You can also adjust the Double Click Speed in the *Accessibility* section further down on that same screen.
- If you don't plan to use the Camera Control at all, you can turn it off entirely in the *Accessibility* settings. However, this doesn't just prevent the Camera Control from opening the Camera app; it renders the button entirely inert.