Forbes   # Android And iPhone Security Attacks—All Users Warned To Do This Now

Davey WinderDec 31, 2024,
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Run these security checks now if you use an Android or iPhone device.

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With Gmail attacks ongoing, as well as warnings being issued as Google users are impacted by new security threats, users of Android smartphones are increasingly in the crosshairs of hackers and scammers alike. And it's not just Android smartphone users and Google account holders who are at risk, recent research suggested that iOS devices are being targeted more than Android, and warnings have been issued for iPhone users about Apple ID attacks. The FBI has even urged all Android and iPhone users to implement a secret word strategy with family and friends to help reduce the chance of a successful attack. But there's a straightforward and free check from both technology behemoths that you could, and should, employ to help mitigate the possibility of falling victim no matter which device you use. Here's what you need to do.

ForbesCritical Gmail Warning—Don't Click Yes To These Google Security AlertsBy Davey Winder

The Simple Security Check All Android And iPhone Users Are Urged To Do Immediately

Although there is a simple, effective and relatively non-time-consuming security checkup tool available for both Android and iPhone users, it remains somewhat of a mystery to both smartphone devotees if my inbox is anything to go by. Whenever I refer to these security resources, I am met with a flood of emails and messages thanking me for bringing them to the attention of the sender. And it's not just me who thinks they are worthy of not only being on the radar of every smartphone user but should be completed right now if you haven't already done so. I spoke with Jake Moore, global cybersecurity advisor at ESET, who agreed that the "Google and iPhone security checks are a simple yet crucial way to check whether any of your accounts are potentially vulnerable," and "looking at your device's safety checks are a great way

to double down on protecting your personal data, reviewing your privacy and account access and making sure your passwords are all unique."

Google's Account Security Check

Google's account security checkup tool is a must-use resource for anyone wishing to protect their Android smartphone against attack. It's the one thing I always recommend for all-around Google account protection, whether you are explicitly worried about Gmail hackers or those looking to compromise your Google account and device in a broader way. This straightforward resource walks you through several steps to better security, including enhanced safe browsing, recent security activity, account recovery options, sensitive settings and so on. Google might prompt users to take it every now and then, but in my never humble opinion, doing so should be a mandatory exercise for all Android users at least once a month.
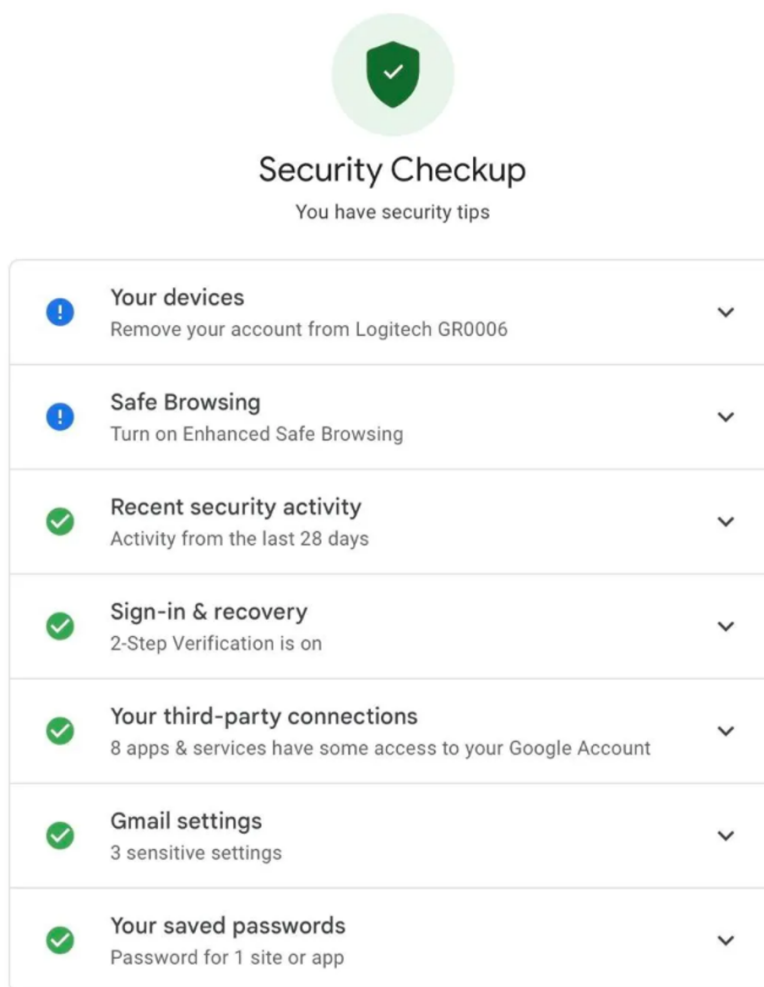

Google's Account Security Checkup tool in action.

Google

Apple's iPhone Security And Safety Check

Although Apple's Safety Check for iPhone users, specifically those running iOS 16 or later, isn't as comprehensive as the Google one, it's still highly recommended that you complete this on a regular basis. In fact, I'd say you need to check in with it now if you haven't before. So, what is it then? According to Apple itself, web the iPhone safety check "allows you to quickly review, update and stop sharing your information with individual people and apps." It does this by way of two distinct options: an emergency reset to stop all sharing of all information and a management option to review your sharing and access configurations. It will also tell you if you have stolen device protection enabled; hint, enable it. As long as you are running iOS 16 or later, the safety check feature can be found by heading to: Settings|Privacy & Security|Safety Check.
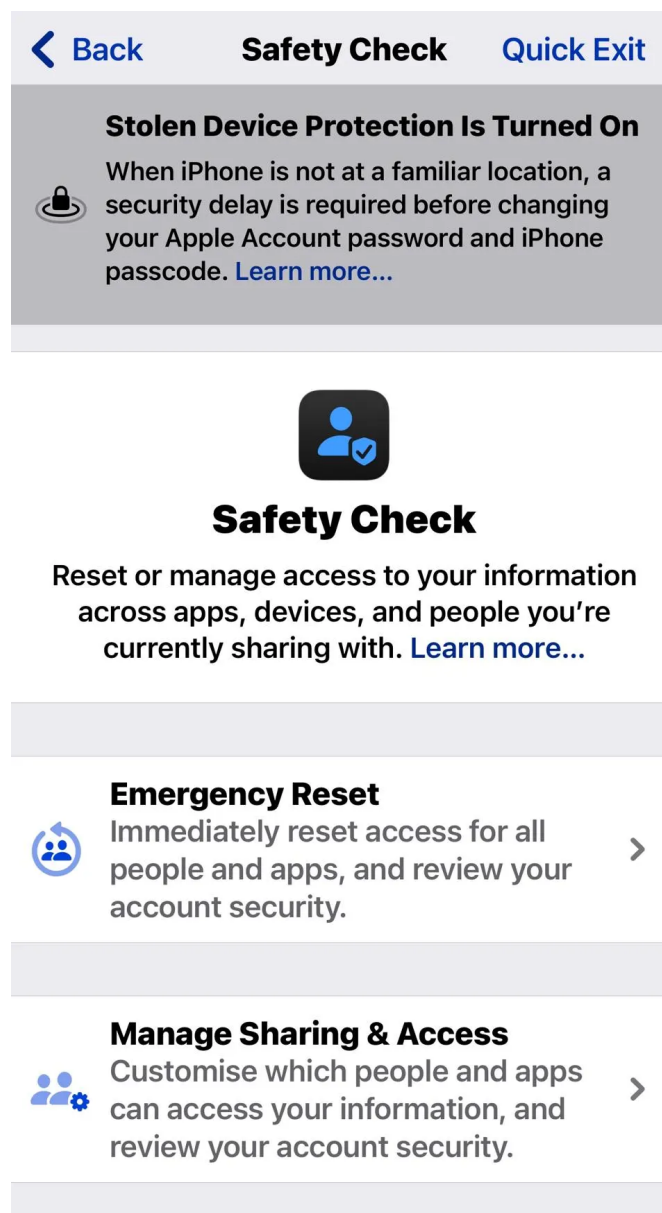
Apple's iPhone Safety Check screen. APPLE

"Regularly updating your device's operating system is essential but these generic updates will only go as far as patching known device vulnerabilities," Moore said, "Google and Apple safety checks go the extra mile and offer you the ability to check where security issues may arise in the future."