

Your Apple Watch Is About to Get a Pretty Cool New Ability

Tucker Bowe. June 20, 2025

Apple is gearing up to give your Apple Watch some of your iPhone's standout features.



Photo by Tucker Bowe for Gear Patrol

Apple has a habit of rolling out new features to the iPhone and then spreading similar features to its other devices the following year. And that holds true this year, as well.

Last year, with iOS 18, Apple gave users the [ability to customize their iPhone's Control Center](#) in vastly new ways. And with the upcoming watchOS 26, some similar significant changes are coming to the Apple Watch's Control Center for the first time.

Superior wrist control



To date, you've had very few options regarding customizing your Apple Watch's Control Center in a few ways. Photo by Tucker Bowe for Gear Patrol

The Control Center on your Apple Watch provides quick access to essential settings. You can turn on your flashlight, toggle Wi-Fi on or off, or ping your iPhone if it gets misplaced.

So far, you've managed to customize the Control Center on your Apple Watch, but just barely. You've been able to rearrange various icons or add a setting from one of Apple's default apps.

But thanks to watchOS 26, your iPhone's Control Center is coming to your Apple Watch's Control Center for the first time. This is pretty neat for two reasons.

Control your iPhone ... from your wrist



Last year, with iOS 18, Apple gave your iPhone's Control Center significantly more customization options. Now it's bringing similar capabilities to the Apple Watch. Photo by Tucker Bowe for Gear Patrol

First, it lets you better control and monitor your iPhone from your Apple Watch. With watchOS 26, your Apple Watch's Control Center will have access to the same toggles as the ones on your iPhone's Control Center for the first time.

This means that as long as your Apple Watch is paired with your iPhone, you'll be able to use the Apple Watch's Control Center to do things like: turn on your iPhone's flashlight, toggle your iPhone's Wi-Fi or Bluetooth on and off, or even monitor your iPhone's battery life.

Basically, Apple Watch's Control Center isn't going to be stuck with only watch-specific tasks anymore.

Support for third-party apps

Second, your Apple Watch's Control Center will have access to third-party controls for the first time. This is a big change from just Apple's default toggles.

In its keynote presentation, Apple used Dark Noise (a popular ambient noise app) as an example. With watchOS 26, you'll be able to add a custom control to the Apple Watch's Control Center that allows you to turn on a sleep soundscape without picking up your iPhone.

(Note: Third-party developers will be able to create custom APIs specifically for the Apple Watch's Control Center, and not all will be available at launch.)

If the third-party app *doesn't* have a corresponding Apple Watch app — which Dark Noise does — you're *not* out of luck.

Since your Apple Watch will have access to the same Control Center toggles as your iPhone, you'll have access to many of its third-party toggles too. When you toggle them on your Apple Watch, the action will occur on your iPhone.

Other upcoming features?



Dark Noise is one of the third-party apps that will be supported in the Apple Watch's Control Center at launch. Apple

In addition to the Control Center changes, watchOS 26 will bring quite a few other features to your Apple Watch.

This includes a “Wrist Flick,” a quick movement of flicking your wrist, which dismisses things like app notifications and incoming calls, as well as silencing timers.

The other standout upcoming feature is called “Workout Buddy.” When doing an exercise in the Workout app, an AI-powered assistant will talk to you, feeding you real-time data and words of encouragement.

Apple will officially release watchOS 26 this fall, most likely in early September, when it announces the next-gen Apple Watch models. To learn more about all the upcoming features, check out [Apple's blog post](#).

About the Author:

Tucker Bowe has been on Gear Patrol's editorial team since 2014. As a Tech Staff Writer, he tracks everything in the consumer tech space, from headphones to smartphones, wearables to home theater systems. If it lights up or makes noise, he probably covers it.

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