

# How to Clean Your Smartphone the Right Way



It's always a good idea to maintain good hygiene, but especially so in the midst of the ongoing [spread of Covid-19](#). But while you're hopefully already washing your hands—and not touching your face—make sure to extend those efforts to the phones, tablets, and laptops you handle every day.

The [science shows](#) that bacteria are very happy breeding on computer keyboards and smartphone screens, particularly when they're used by more than one person. And viruses [can cling](#) to glass surfaces for up to 96 hours, multiple days' worth of potential infection. So whether you want to minimize your [risk of coronavirus](#), the flu, or a bacterial infection, some regular cleaning is advised.

Indeed, some of the most dangerous bugs have [been found](#) on the plastic and glass surfaces of smartphones. From there they can make their way to your fingers, your face, your desk, the local restaurant, and all the other places you put your phone down. So, just about everywhere.

*Read all of our coronavirus coverage [here](#).*

The good news is that disinfecting your phone and your other electronic gear doesn't need industrial-strength chemicals or hazmat suits. You can do a very decent job of cleaning up your gear using the materials you've already got at home. It's also not necessary to clean your phone every time you go out—in fact it's probably bad for it to be scrubbed and wiped so often—but it's a good idea to do a quick wipe-down when you've been traveling, or after other people have used it, or at the very least every week or so.

### Sanitize Your Smartphone

When it comes to cleaning a smartphone, gentleness is key. These are expensive and delicate bits of electronics, so you don't want to dive in with abrasive cleaning solutions and materials. Clorox wipes and the like aren't just excessive; they can eat away at the oleophobic coating that keeps fingerprints from smudging your display. Simple, common cleaning materials are all you need to get your handset germ-free—although as of Monday, you also have [Apple's blessing](#) to use 70 percent isopropyl alcohol wipe or Clorox disinfecting wipes on hard surfaces if you insist.

Before you start, power down the device, remove any cases, and unplug any accessories so you've got full access to the phone. Your main cleaning tool should be a [microfiber cloth](#). Anything that's soft and that won't scratch your phone will do, though Apple [specifically recommends](#) a [camera lens cloth](#), if you want to follow its advice.

It's a good idea to start without any fluids at all, just a little pressure, but if needed then you can add warm and soapy water to the mix. Use it sparingly, applying it with your cloth, and drying off the device carefully with another cloth. Be sure to avoid getting excess moisture around ports and buttons.

Generally speaking, cans of compressed air aren't recommended on phones, though you can use them on your keyboard. The powered jet of air might interfere with the inner workings of your handset, and you don't want to take the chance. If you find your phone's ports have been cluttered with debris, try using cotton swabs or toothpicks to tease it out, again taking care not to cause any damage.

If your phone is fully IP68 rated for waterproofing—and triple-check the specs before you attempt this—then you can place the phone in a bowl of clean water for a few minutes, then leave it to dry on a paper towel or dab the moisture off with a cloth.

We'd recommend looking online for device-specific instructions, too. [Google says](#) it's OK to use cleaning wipes on Pixel handsets, but use them sparingly, well away from the ports and buttons. If possible buy ones that have been specifically approved [for use on electronics](#).