



Tips to manage data usage on Apple devices

Description

. Tips to Manage Data Usage on your Apple Devices

There's a range of ways to prevent your iOS devices from using more mobile or wifi data than necessary. Here are some simple ways to change the built-in features on Apple devices to reduce data usage. Many of these relate to automatic or background functions of the device or its apps.

Changing these settings may also reduce the number of notifications you receive, slightly outdated apps, or stagnant news feeds. Finding the right balance may require toggling different features on and off. You might need to manually update content and consider data usage to maintain an optimal experience. Remember to reapply these settings after device updates.



• Parental and data usage control tips for Apple Mac



This information below provides basic tips on managing data and controlling the usage of your Apple Mac computer or laptop. It includes the use of parental controls and screen time systems. The [Apple support pages](#) can also be very helpful for general information, common tasks or issues.

- - 1 Parental controls for Apple devices
 - Parental controls allow you to control who can access what devices, services, or internet pages at any given time. They are particularly useful for managing child/student access to devices, keeping younger people safe online.

They are also useful in managing or preventing addictive internet behaviours or keeping you focussed on a particular task. These controls can form a key part of a cyber-safety program.

Please note that Regional Tech Hub are not specialists in this area. This page presents a small sample of the tools you can use to manage your own and your child's device. We encourage you to read widely on this topic if you have school-aged children and remind you that many social media platforms require children to be at least 13 years of age to join.

- 01
Apple Parental Controls explained for older Macs

These are available in older Macs, running MacOS Mojave or older. [Find out which macOS your Mac is using](#). Parental Controls apply only to the Mac on which they're running.

Open system settings and then select **Parental Controls**. You can control:

Category	Purpose
Apps	Restrict multiplayer game access, limit email to known contacts, control camera usage, and manage app access.
Web	Limit access to specific websites across all browsers.
Stores	Manage iTunes Store usage and restrict access to specific apps, movies, TV shows, music, and books.
Time	Set time limits for account usage, such as weekends, weekdays, or before bedtime.
Privacy	Control which apps and services can access user data.
Other	Prevent access to printer and scanner settings, disable Siri and Dictation, restrict disc burning, and modify the Dock.



- 02

For more information:

Visit these trusted links:

- MacUpdate: [The Ultimate Guide to Mac Parental Controls](#)
- Protect Young Eyes: [The Complete Guide to MacBook Parental Controls](#)
- Apple: [Use parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch](#)

- 2 Apple Screen Time explained for newer Macs

- Screen time is the time spent looking at a computer or device screen. It's widely known that too much screen time on any device can be bad for mental and physical health.

Apple's Screen Time is built-in to macOS Catalina and better. [Find out which macOS your Mac is using.](#)

The Apple Screen Time feature allows you to manage how you, your children, or your family use your Apple computers and devices. For example, you can:

- Access real-time reports about how much time you spend on your computer, iPhone or iPad.
- Set limits on how the device is used, and for how long.
- Block or limit specific apps and features on your and your child's device.
- Restrict access to explicit content, purchases and downloads,
- Tighten privacy.

Managing Screen Time is covered in detail in several places. We'll cover the basics, but please use the links below, Apple or other websites for more detailed information:

1. Apple: [Use Screen Time on your Mac](#). This has extensive instructions on turning on and using Screen Time.
2. Apple Help: [Track app and device usage in Screen Time on Mac](#)
3. MacRumors: [How to Use Screen Time on Mac](#)

- 3 How to use Apple Screen Time

- 01

Turn on Screen Time

1. Go into Settings or the Apple icon then settings; select Screen Time.
2. Click Options on the bottom left-hand side.
3. Click Turn On. Screen time is now turned on.



How you set up Screen Time depends on whether you're setting it up for you or a child.

Please visit: [Set up Screen Time for a child on Mac](#).

- 02
Set usage limits

Use the [Downtime](#), [App Limits](#), [Communication Limits](#), [Always Allowed](#), and [Content & Privacy](#) features in the Screen Time sidebar to schedule breaks and control usage of apps and websites. These limits affect not only your Mac but also other devices connected to Screen Time with 'Share' across devices enabled.

- 03
Setting up Family Sharing

Family Sharing creates a family group that up to six people with separate Apple accounts can join. Those people can share the iTunes Store, App Store and Apple Books purchases and an iCloud storage plan without having the same username and password.

You should create a Family Sharing group to manage your child's device if they have their own Apple login.

For more information:

- [What is Family Sharing?](#)
- [Set up Family Sharing on Mac](#)
- 4Other parental control systems
 - In addition to the systems built-in to the Apple operating systems, there's a range of other services you could look at.
 - [Microsoft Family Safety](#). This app offers similar features to the controls found in iOS but is compatible with Microsoft 365 accounts. It can be accessed via a web page on computers and has dedicated apps for both Android and Apple devices. It's handy for managing various devices and computers efficiently.
 - [NetNanny software](#). Available for Mac, Windows, and mobile devices.
 - [Best Parental Control Apps: Best Mac Parental Control Software](#)
 - TechRadar: [Best free parental control software and apps in 2024: protect your kids online](#)
 - PC Mag Australia: [The Best Parental Control Software for 2024](#)



- 5Other time-tracker apps
 - If youâ??re solely focused on tracking your time, you might find Parental Controls or Screen Time systems too restrictive. These built-in tools are primarily designed for parental monitoring. Instead, consider researching other apps or software specifically designed to track, record, and manage your time, especially if itâ??s for work-related purposes.



Xero Apps & Add-Ons

Inven


CRM Apps

Cons

The best time tracking apps

- Toggl Track for a free time tracking app
- HourStack for integrating with your team's project
- Timely for automated time tracking for large team
- Memtime for simplified automated time tracking
- TrackingTime for visualizing time differently

6 best time tracking apps in 2024 | Zapier

 zapier.com/blog/best-time-tracking-apps/

See more ▼

How do I sync them with my calendar?

How do I sh

Type a message...

6Controlling Apple data usage

- There are a range of ways to prevent your Apple computers and devices from using more Wi-Fi data than youâ??re expecting. Here are some simple ways to



reduce data usage. Many of these relate to the device's automatic or background functions or apps.

By changing these settings, you may also reduce the notifications you receive, have apps that are a little out-of-date, or have news that doesn't refresh.

This may mean you need to experiment with turning various features on and off until you've found the right balance between being kept informed and up-to-date, manually updating content, and keeping data costs low. You may also need to re-apply these settings after completing an update to your device.

Let's get started with these simple steps:

■ 01

Use the Activity Monitor

Closing, exiting, or cancelling any unused background process gives more space back to the computer itself and may prevent unnecessary apps and software from using up data. However, use this very carefully.

If you do not know what a process does, search its name. Do not disable processes if unsure, as some processes are necessary for your computer to function normally.

You can stop applications like Skype, printer applications, camera updaters, etc., from being automatically loaded at start-up. Applications like your antivirus software need to be loaded at start-up.

For more information:

- MacOS User Guide: [Activity Monitor](#)

■ 02

Disable or defer updates

Operating system software and all apps in the Mac App Store will automatically download and update themselves.

If you have an nbn® Sky Muster® Plus plan, note that operating and software updates are not metered. However, if you have a metered internet plan or are trying to reduce data usage, you'll probably want to stop these updates from downloading in the background.

■ 03

Turn off automatic operating system updates



It is recommended to leave Install system data files and security updates on.

For MacOS Catalina and upwards:

1. Open System Preferences.
2. Click Software Update.
3. Click the check box next to “Automatically keep my Mac up-to-date” to turn this option off. You may need to enter your main password.
4. You can also click Advanced to turn specific options on or off.

For MacOS Mojave and older:

1. Open System Preferences.
2. Click App Store.
3. Click next to the options you want to turn on or off.

■ 04

Manually install apps and software

In MacOS Catalina and newer:

1. Open System Preferences.
2. Click “Software Update”.
3. Click “Check for updates” or “Update now”, depending on the option available.

For MacOS Mojave and older:

1. Open System Preferences.
2. Click “App Store”.
3. Click “Show Updates”. This will list the updates available. You can then decide on which updates are the most important and click on “Update” or “Update all” (if you have the required data available).

We always recommend having your computer backed up to an external hard drive before making any major updates, whether automatic or manual.

For more information:

- MacOS User Guide: [Keep your Mac up-to-date](#)

■ 05

Disable notifications

Notifications on your Apple device can consume a small amount of data each time they appear. Since your Mac continuously checks for new notifications, this



data usage can accumulate quickly over time.

You have the option to hide notifications for specific applications or for your entire computer.

For more information:

- Apple User Guide: [Receive, pause or stop notifications on Mac](#)
- How-to Geek: [How to Quickly Turn Off App Notifications on Mac](#)

■ 06

Stop syncing to iCloud

iCloud stores Mac-based data remotely. It's a good way to get information off your hard drive, but can use up a lot of data, as it's constantly transferred between your computer and iCloud.

You can choose which apps or software synchronise (sync) their content to iCloud or not.

Note that this may impact information synchronised between your iPhone/iPad and your desktop – for example, contacts, photos, and notes.

1. Go into Settings > iCloud (for more recent computers, click your name first).
2. Turn appropriate apps on and off, so you have the right balance between using data and having shared information.

Apple: [Change your iCloud settings](#)

Note that the same applies to any other cloud service you might use, such as Dropbox, OneDrive, or Google Drive.

○ 7 General data saving tips

- Most of the options you need to change are in the 'Settings' section of your device.

■ 01

Use home Wi-Fi

Even if you have mobile access to your property, connect your mobile phone to your home or property Wi-Fi network, as this internet connection likely includes more data.





11:38

< Settings

Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi

✓ Optus_78485B_5GH

MY NETWORKS

Optus_78485B



- 02

- Use Telstra hotspots

- If you use Telstra, look for [Telstra Air](#) hotspots. This provides free internet access.





Ask to Join Networks

Known networks will be joined if known networks are available before joining a new network.

Auto Join Hotspot

Allow this device to automatically join personal hotspots when no Wi-Fi is available.



■ 03

Restrict notifications

Turn off “push notifications” for emails, social media and GPS apps. Notifications can use just a small amount of data each time, but your device is constantly checking to see if there’s anything to be downloaded, so it can rapidly add up. This can exhaust both battery and data.

To prevent excessive data usage, modify notification settings for each separate app:

1. Go to Settings and tap on Notifications.
2. Tap the app to open its notifications settings – for example, Facebook.
3. Tap Allow Notifications off to disable notifications altogether.
4. Or change the notifications to a method that works best for you.





10:13

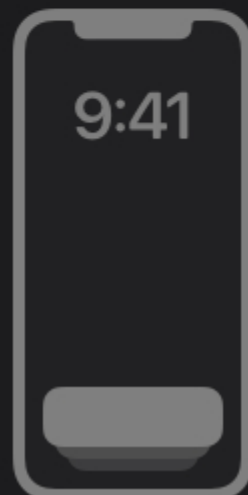
< Settings

Notificati

DISPLAY AS



Count



Stack

Choose the default for how n



■ 04

Restrict autoplay

Turn off video autoplay for social media. Change your settings in apps like Facebook and Instagram so videos do not automatically start playing.





11:52



Videos and p

Optimised

Adjust the resolution to network

Data saver

Lower the resolution for all videos

Autoplay

When your battery is low, videos
automatically.



- 05
Use SMS

Use SMS (text messages) rather than iMessage or apps like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. These apps use internet data to send messages.





11:58

< Settings

Message

ALLOW MESSAGES TO ACCE



Focus



Siri & Search



Notifications

Critical Alerts, Vibration

**■ 06****Use low data mode**

With iOS 13 and later, you can turn on Low Data Mode to restrict background network use and save mobile and Wi-Fi usage. You might want to use Low Data Mode if your mobile or internet plan limits your data usage, or youâ??re in an area with slow data speeds. You can turn on Low Data mode separately for mobile and Wi-Fi connections.

Mobile:

1. Go to Settings and tap Mobile
2. Tap Mobile Data Options, then turn on Low Data Mode.

Wifi:

1. Go to Settings and tap Wifi.
2. Tap the Info button next to the Wifi network that youâ??re connected to.
3. Turn on Low Data Mode. Your Low Data Mode preferences for each Wifi network are kept up to date across all your devices through iCloud.

Apple resource: [Use Low Data Mode on your iPhone and iPad.](#)





10:08

< Back

Data Mo

Allow More Data on 5G

Standard

Low Data Mode

Allow More Data on 5G may p
use it for software updates, a
backups and higher-quality m

Standard allows automatic up



■ 07

Disable or defer automatic iOS updates

By default, your iPhone or iPad will automatically download and install updates to the operating system when it's night-time, plugged into power, and connected to a Wi-Fi network. Updates can take up a lot of data, however.

They're not counted under an nbn® Sky Muster® Plus plan, but they are counted under any other data plans. You can therefore turn off updates until you're connected to a less-restricted network.

1. Go to Settings, tap General and then tap "Software Update".
2. Tap "Customise Automatic Updates" (or Automatic Updates).
3. If "Download iOS Updates" is green, tap the button so it turns grey.
4. When you want to download an update, repeat these steps and turn "Download iOS Updates" back on again.

You can delay iOS updates by turning off Wi-Fi entirely as the update won't download over a mobile connection.

1. Go to Settings and tap on Wi-Fi.
2. Click the green button next to Wi-Fi so it turns grey.

You'll need to click the button again to turn on Wi-Fi for internet access.

Note: when you turn off Wi-Fi, you won't have internet access unless you have mobile phone reception in your location.





10:09

< General

Software U

Automatic Updates



iOS 17.3.1

Apple Inc.

658.2 MB

This update provides bug
iPhone including:

- Text may unexpected



■ 08

Turn off automatic app updates

Apps will update automatically unless you tell them otherwise.

If you have multiple Apple devices using the same Apple ID, any apps downloaded on one device will automatically download to the other ones, unless you tell it otherwise.

1. Go to Settings and tap on the App Store.
2. Change the settings in this section to limit what's downloaded automatically.





10:09

< Settings

App Store



Mobile Data

PREFERRED LANGUAGE



Language

English

AUTOMATIC DOWNLOADS

App Downloads

Automatically install free and paid apps



■ 09

Turn off Wi-Fi Assist and stop apps using mobile data

Wi-Fi Assist automatically defaults to using your mobile data when the Wi-Fi signal is poor. This means your mobile data could be used without you realising, meaning you can run out of data more quickly, and possibly be charged excess data fees.

Wi-Fi Assist is particularly notorious for chewing up your data, and it's turned on by default in iPhones and iPads with a mobile connection.

You can also specify which apps can use mobile data, and which must wait for a Wi-Fi connection to update.

1. Go to Settings and tap Mobile
2. Go through your apps and uncheck (tap so they turn grey) those you don't need constantly accessing mobile data.
3. Uncheck the Wi-Fi assist option at the bottom of the screen.





10:10

< Settings

Mobile



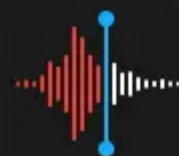
Swag



Tips



TV



Voice Memos



Watch



Welcome to Courthouse



■ 10

Turn off Background App Refresh

Apps use background refresh to look for new information. It's particularly used by news and information apps, but all apps have the option available.

It's turned on by default, but most apps don't actually need it in order to do their job.

Go into this setting and adjust it to suit your requirements. You can turn it off entirely, or to work just over Wi-Fi, or over Wi-Fi and mobile networks. You can also turn it off or on for every app on your phone.

1. Go to Settings, tap on General
2. Tap Background App Refresh and select whether you want it on at all.
3. If you do leave it on, scroll through your apps and turn it off for anything except those you really want kept updated (e.g., ABC News, email, or weather apps).

When Background App Refresh is turned off, apps will still refresh when you open and use them.





10:10

< Settings

Mobile



Swag



Tips



TV



Voice Memos



Watch



Welcome to Courthouse



■ 11

Syncing or backing up your device

We recommend backing up your device to a desktop computer or a remote location.

iPhones and iPads naturally synchronise and back up to either iCloud, Apple's remote storage service, or your local computer.

Syncing to iCloud means your information is available for you anywhere. However, it uses data every time you back up or synchronise your device.

Consider backing up and synchronising to your desktop computer instead, by plugging your device directly into it and using either iTunes (older MacOS versions, or Windows) or Finder (MacOS Big Sur and more recent).

You can change these settings on both your devices and your computers.

Apple: [Sync your iPhone, iPad or iPod using your computer](#)





10:10

< Settings

Mobile



Swag



Tips



TV



Voice Memos



Watch



Welcome to Coun



- 12

- Close apps after use

- An easy tip is also to shut down all your apps and browser windows when you have finished with them.

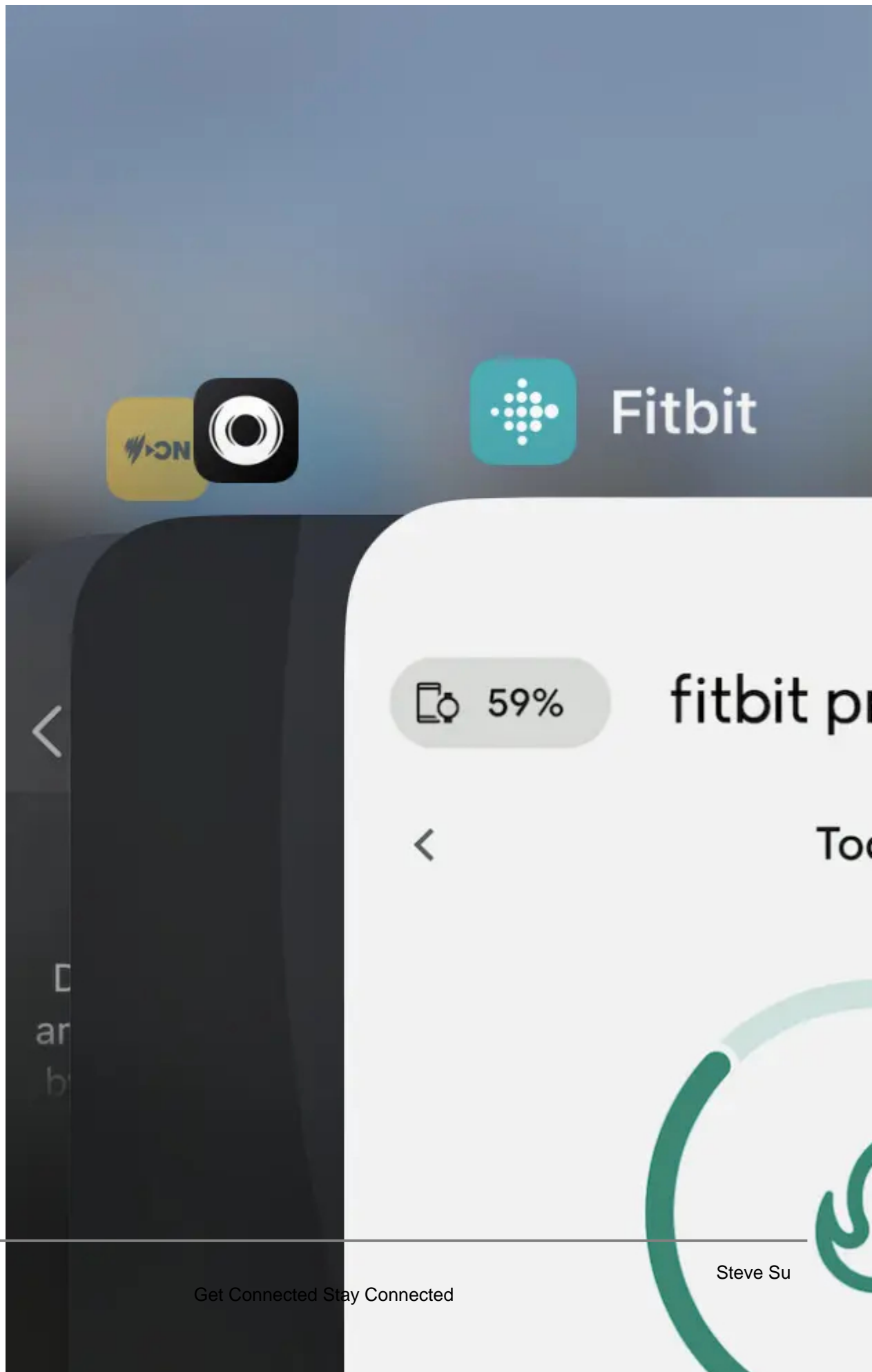
- Apple tends to suggest you don't need to do this with the more recent versions of the iOS or iPadOS; however, an open app can potentially be refreshing and using data.

- Closing apps is done slightly differently depending on the version of your device: use the Apple article to do it correctly.

- Apple:** [Close an app on your iPhone or iPod touch](#)

- Apple:** [Close an app on your iPad](#)



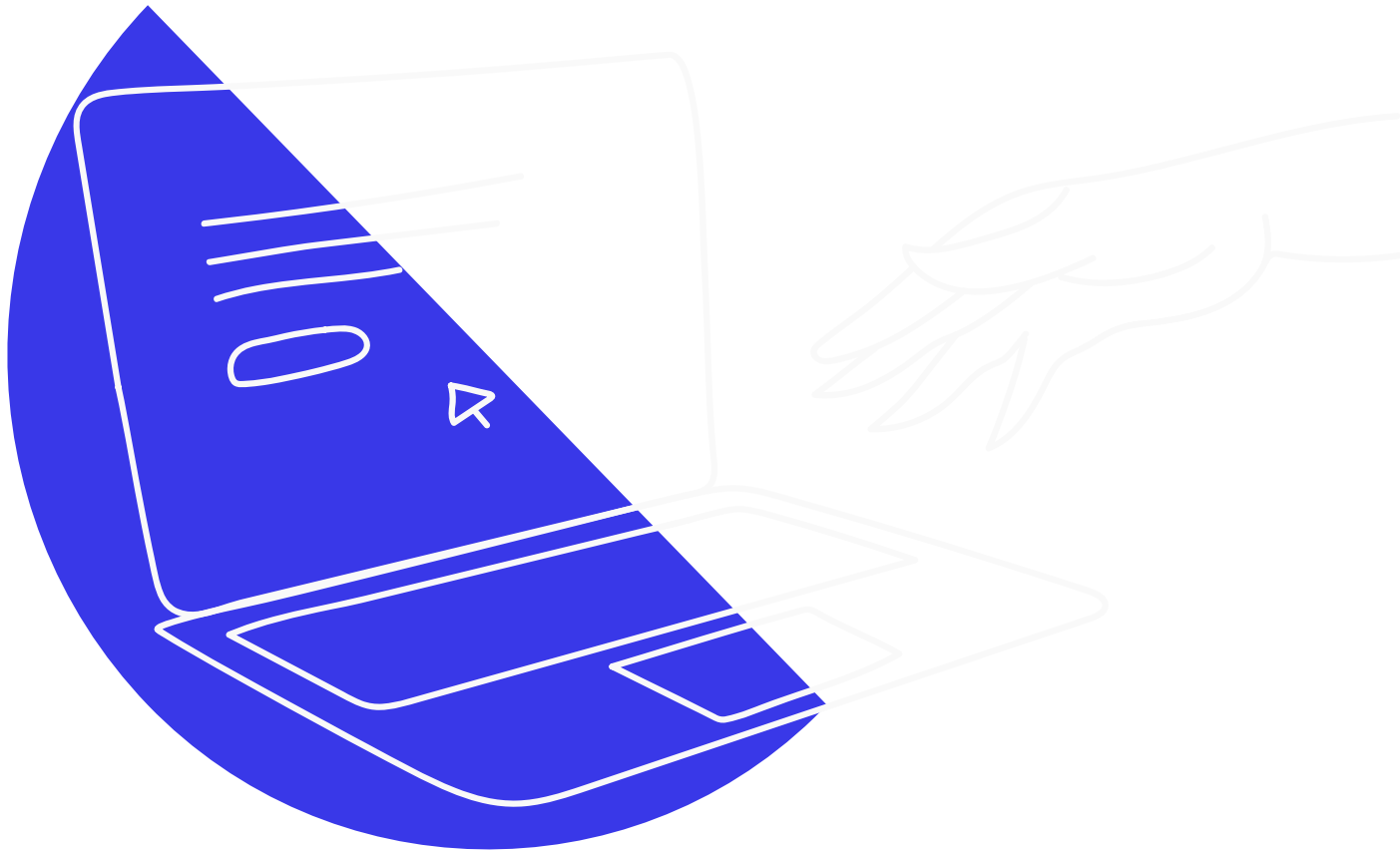




• Need more tips?

These articles provide further information on managing data on Apple iOS devices.

- WhistleOut: [6 ways to cut down data usage on your iPhone](#)
- MacReports: [How To Reduce Your Data Usage On iPhone](#)
- Lifewire: [Ways to Reduce Your Mobile Data Usage](#)
- Macworld: [How to save data on iPhone or iPad](#)
- Protect Young Eyes: [12 Ingenious iOS Screen Time Hacks \(and how to beat them!\)](#)
- PCMag Au: [How to Use Apple's Screen Time on iPhone or iPad](#)
- Apple: [Use Screen Time on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch](#)
- Techradar: [Parental controls on iPhone and iPad: how to make an iOS device child friendly](#)



• Explore more of our resources

- ◦



News

November 4, 2024

Telstra 3G shutdown is now complete

◦ News

October 25, 2024

Phones using the 3G network to call triple zero will be disconnected on 28 October 2024

◦ News

October 25, 2024

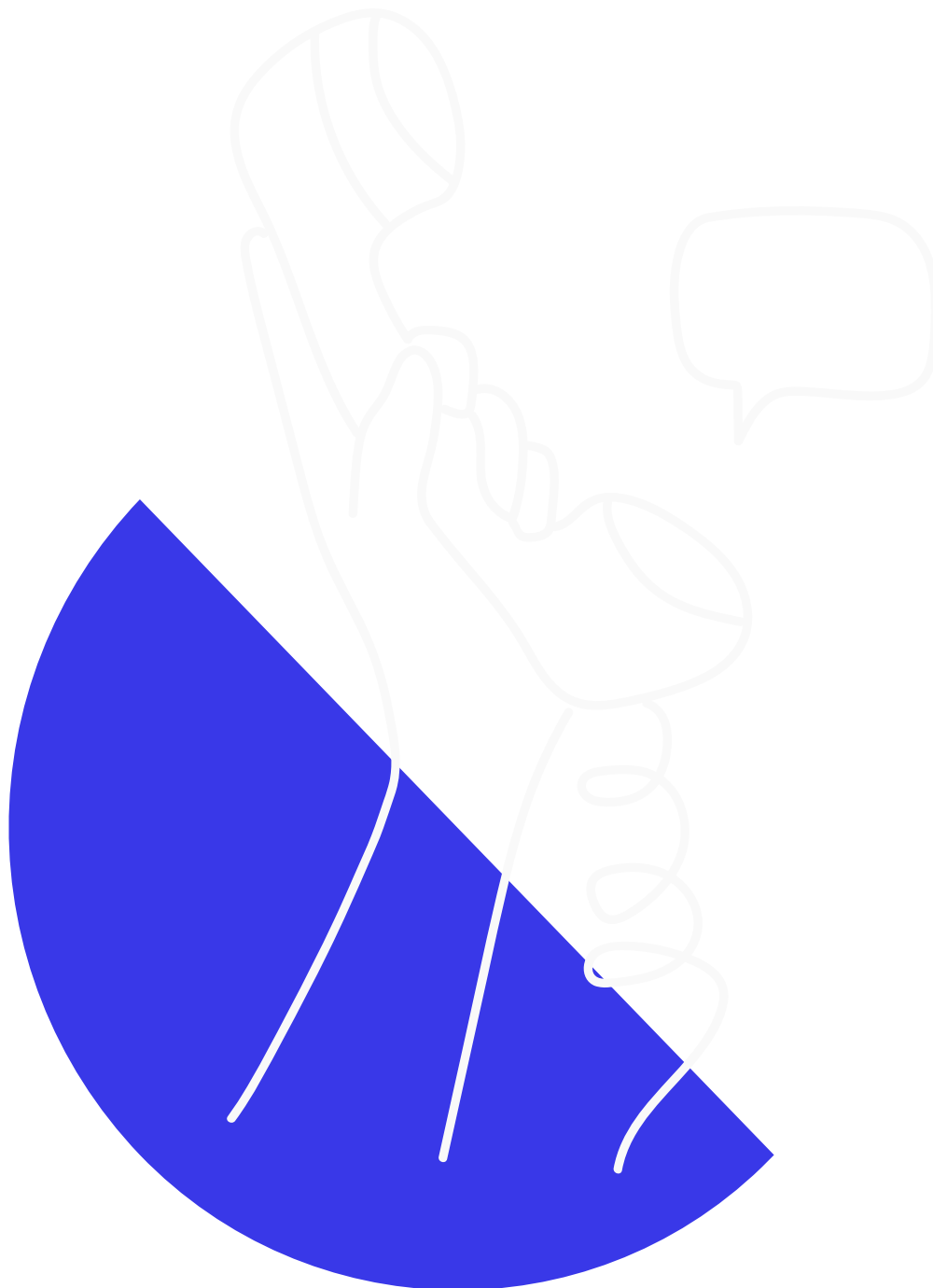
NBN Co accelerating higher speed tiers in September 2025

◦ Guides

October 17, 2024

Connectivity definitions

- [Back to resources](#)



Didn't find the answers you were after?

Chat to us on our hotline with one of our team members and let's get the conversation started. If we don't answer, we'll get back to you in no time at all.



[1300 081 029](tel:1300081029)

Category

1. Tech Tips

Date

10/09/2025

Date Created

13/03/2024