



Tips for Tech Savvy Seniors

An Introduction to Tablets: Android

Tablets are a way of accessing the internet, playing games and communicating. An Android tablet can do a lot of the things your computer can do, and can be used or carried pretty much anywhere.

Types of tablet

Tablets come in a variety of different sizes and shapes from all different manufacturers. They are differentiated by screen size, and by operating system:

- **iPadOS:** This is exclusive to Apple's iPad range of tablets and is similar to the iPhone's system, which is called iOS.
- **Android:** Created by Google but implemented on a range of tablets from different manufacturers in slightly different ways. The same as Android on a smartphone.
- **Windows:** Tablets that run Windows are just ultra-slim laptop computers, with the same software as a conventional PC.

The hardware of a tablet

A tablet has a large **touchscreen display**, a **charging port**, and usually **volume** and **power switches** on the side. Some have an additional switch you can program. An Android tablet has the following on the screen:

- **Status bar:** A strip at the top showing the time and battery status, where notifications from apps will appear.
- **Navigation buttons:** At the bottom of the screen, including a **Back** button, a **Home** button, and a button to show current apps. If your tablet doesn't have these, you can use **touch gestures** to navigate.

If your tablet has 4G, there's also a slot for a **SIM** card, just like a smartphone.

Turning on a tablet

Unlike a computer, you don't need to turn a tablet on and off each time you use it. When you turn it on the first time, it will take a few moments to start up. After that, you can push the **Power button** to blank the screen, then put it aside or connect it to the charger. When you press the power button again, the screen will light up, but the tablet will be **locked**. **Unlock** it, either just by **swiping up**, by entering a **PIN**, or by touching a **fingerprint sensor** or looking at **the camera**.

Touchscreen gestures

Simply **tap** an icon to open an app, tap a **button** to activate it, or tap a **text field** to bring up a virtual keyboard to enter text. As well as tapping, there are some other useful gestures.

- **Swipe:** Slide your finger up and down to scroll the screen. Swiping from the very bottom of the screen shows a list of all your apps, and is how you navigate Home on newer Android tablets.
- **Pinch-to-zoom:** Place two fingers on the display and move them apart or pinch them together. This will zoom whatever the screen is showing in and out.
- **Double tap:** Some functions require you to tap the screen twice, in quick succession.

All about apps

Tablets run **apps**, just like a smartphone. Launch an app by tapping its icon on the **Home** screen. To see every app in one place, swipe up from the very bottom of the screen to open the **App Drawer**. Some older Android tablets have a button for this, which looks like a grid.

When you launch an app it fills the tablet's screen. To go back to the **Home** screen, either press the **Home button**, tap the **Home navigation control** at the bottom of the screen, or **swipe up** from the very bottom of the screen.

The Settings app

Look for the Settings app in the App Drawer. This lets you access a wide range of options for your tablet, including:

- **Security:** You can turn on a Lock screen, choose a **PIN** to secure your tablet, or enable **biometrics**.
- **Display:** Lets you make the default text size bigger, to make reading easier.

Browsing the web on a tablet

Your tablet is especially good for browsing the internet and has a built-in **web browser**. You can also download different browsers from the **Google Play store**.

The default browser on Android is called **Chrome**. Tap its icon to open it. When you tap the **address bar** at the top of the screen, the **virtual keyboard** will appear and you can enter a web address you know, or some words to search for. When you tap **Enter**, the keyboard will disappear so you can read the web page. Tap any link to follow it.

Use the **Back** button at the top or bottom of the screen to go back one page. On recent model tablets, swipe all the way from the left side of the screen to go back.

Other things to do on your tablet

The **Google Play store** lets you download apps, music, movies, and more. You might have to pay for some items with a credit card, but there's plenty of free content.

The **Calendar app** is handy because you can set it up to sync with the cloud and your Android smartphone if you have one. Make an appointment on your tablet, and you'll get a reminder on your phone.

The **Camera** on a tablet is usually not as powerful as on a smartphone, but it's worth experimenting with. The front camera makes a tablet ideal for **video calls**.