Smartphone Tips for Older Users

Adapted from an article by Kim Komando

Dry Skin and Touch Screens

As people get older, it is common for the skin to not retain moisture as well. This can make the use if touch screens difficult. If you are experience difficulties using the touch screen on your phone or tablet, consider using a stylus.

If you decide to use a stylus, it may be wise to select one with a rounded tip.

Accessibility Settings

It’s your phone! Set it up the way you like it!

Modern phones and tablets come with a suite of accessibility settings, which can make it easier to use. If you can’t read the screen, you can make the type larger. Many devices will read the screen aloud, if needed.

There are often settings to change that way the touch screen responds to the way you touch it, if dexterity is becoming an issue.

Are the buttons on the side of the phone difficult for you? There are likely settings to tweak them.

Emergency Settings

If you find yourself in a situation where you are sick or injured, and you cannot speak for yourself, your phone can. Emergency responders are trained to look for this information, but in order for them to find it, you need to set it up!

Look for Safety and Emergency section of your device settings. It may be called something else, but it will work the same way. Answer the questions, and this will provide the much-needed information for the first responders who are trying to take care of you, whether or not your phone is locked.

Yes . . . it's all personal stuff, but it is also the kind of information that a paramedic may need to save your life!

ICE . . . In Case of Emergency. Add an entry to your contact list, and call it ICE. In that entry, put the name and phone number of the person you would like to get a phone call, if you are sick or injured. First responders are trained to look for this, also.

Back Up Storage

Picture and movies consume space in your phone's storage, and will serve to slow down your phone, and eventually cause your device to lock up. It is wise to offload these files somewhere else.

Both Google and Apple provide free and fairly inexpensive storage space to store your pictures and movies. This has the advantages of both freeing up storage space on your device, and not losing your important photos, if your device is lost or damaged (and it's really easy to lose your phone).

There are other ways to offload storage, some requiring more technical knowledge than others, but Google and Apple already have a fairly easy solution, which can often be set up to happen automatically.

Blocking Unknown Numbers

Modern phones can be set up so that calls from an unknown number do not ring. They will still appear on your call list, and they may have the opportunity to leave a voice mail. Check your settings to see about doing this.

It is also possible to block calls and texts from phone numbers that you may want blocked. Your phone will intercept them before the phone rings.

You always have the option, when your phone rings, to either answer a call or to decline it. Some people look at the area code of an incoming call, and if it is not local or a number they recognize, that aids them in that decision.

There is one important caveat with this . . . you might inadvertently block a call from someone you want to talk to, and not everyone chooses to leave a voicemail. So, use care when blocking numbers or choosing to not answer phone calls.

Source credit: https://www.komando.com/smartphones-gadgets/senior-tech-skills/863447/?utm_medium=nl&utm_source=totd&utm_content=2023-06-15

Available online: youfoundterry.com