How to Speed Up iPhone Guide

1. INTRODUCTION

Want to speed up a slow iPhone? Here's how to spring-clean an older or just slower iPhone model, and restore the speed of an iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, iPhone 5, iPhone 5c, iPhone 5s running iOS 6, iOS 7, iOS 8 or iOS 9.

2. Is Your iPhone up to Date?

On older smartphones, it's possible that upgrading will slow down your iPhone a bit, but on some occasions it may even help it run faster. (The iPhone 4 and earlier aren't compatible with iOS 9 upgrades at all).

Check whether your iPhone is up to date by heading to Settings > General > Software update.

3. Shut Down all Open Applications

Let's start with the easiest solution: closing down all non-essential apps.

Double-click the Home button to bring up the currently running apps in iOS 7 or later. Swipe upwards to close them. You can swipe with up to three fingers to speed up the process a little bit. Irritatingly, there's no way to close them all at once.

4. Restart

Let's restart the iPhone completely. Press and hold the Sleep button (the one on the top right of the iPhone) until the Power Off slider appears. Swipe it and wait for the iPhone to power down.

Once it's finished (it'll take about 10 seconds or so), start the iPhone up again by pressing and holding the Sleep button for about 5 seconds. You'll see the Apple icon for a minute or so, then the iPhone will restart.

You shouldn't have to do this very often, but when you do it'll clear out the memory space and can often fix unruly apps. The occasional power cycle helps keep iOS ticking over.

5. Delete Apps

Delete apps you don't need by going to Settings > General > Usage and then tapping Manage Storage. You'll now see a list of apps and how much space they are taking up on your phone.

You should aim to have at least 1GB space left, so delete any apps you don't need by tapping on it, and then tapping delete app.

6. Clear Your Safari Cookies & Data

Open the Settings app and scroll down to Safari. Here you can choose Clear History and Clear Cookies and Data. (Bear in mind, that Safari will no longer suggest URLs as you type, unless they're bookmarked. And clearing the data may mean some websites forget your preferences.)

7.   Kill Automatic Background Processes

Getting rid of automated features will help keep your iPhone running faster in iOS 7, iOS 8 and iOS 9, and help extend your battery life as well. If you're running iOS 6, you can skip this step as Apple didn't introduce these features until iOS 7.

Turn off Automatic Downloads. Tap Settings > iTunes & App Store > and turn Automatic Downloads off. If you spend a lot of time uploading Music, Apps and Books you might want to turn off those as well.

Turn off Background App Refresh. Tap Settings > General > Background App Refresh. Turn Background App Refresh off and tap Disable Background App Refresh.

Both of these are luxury items. You don't need them and you'll see a big boost in battery life as well as a noticeable increase in performance.

8.   Turn Down the Graphics

Again, iOS 6 users can skip this step because it only relates to iOS 7, iOS 8 and iOS 9, which introduced some fancy new visual effects.

Turn off Motion. Tap on Settings > General > Accessibility > Reduce Motion and set Reduce Motion to On. This turns off the parallax effect of icons and alerts (many people find it easier to use in this setting).

Increase Contrast. Tap on Settings > General > Accessibility > Increase Contrast and set Reduce Transparency to On. This disables the see-through background effects, which speeds up iOS 7 and later. It's most noticeable on Control Centre which will now have a solid background and should work much faster.

Both of these will help with battery life, but are especially helpful for speeding up iOS 7, iOS 8 and iOS 9.

9.   Delete Text Messages

Next up try going through the Messages app and deleting everything that we don't need to save.

Open Messages and scroll down to find any message threads that you can manage without. Swipe to the right and tap Delete. It's worth noting that deleting threads with only text-based messages won't free up much space on your device, so it's worth concentrating on threads that include a lot of images, videos and voice notes.

There's also a relatively easy way to stop the back-log of videos and voice notes building up in the Messages App. Open the Settings app, navigate to the Messages menu, scroll to the bottom and change the expiry of video messages and voice messages from "Never" to "After 2 minutes".

With this setting, any video/voice messages you send or receive from that device will automatically delete themselves after two minutes of being opened, which will keep your storage free.

10.   Delete Unnecessary Songs, Photos & Videos

Open the Settings app, then tap General, and Usage like you did when we were uninstalling apps. You'll see how much storage space is left and which apps are using up most of the space.

If you're anything like our Vfast Support Team, the top two culprits will be Music and Photos & Camera, because these apps' storage usage includes music, images and videos. We'd suggest keeping at least 1GB free just to make sure there's some free space for iOS to move files around without having to do too much juggling.

Don't forget to back up the iPhone to avoid loosing data, or music you may want to keep: either back up to iTunes, or to iCloud. (To back up to iCloud, Open the Settings app, then scroll down to iCloud, then Storage & Backup, then Back Up Now in iOS 6 or turn on iCloud Backup in iOS 7, iOS 8 and iOS 9).

Open the Music app and find the non-vital track, album or artist that you want to delete. Swipe to the right and press Delete.

Open the Photos app, find the images you want to delete, tap 'Select' and then tap on the images you want to delete. Then tap the bin icon and confirm to delete the photos and videos you've selected.

11.   Reset

A more drastic step than restarting the iPhone, a full reset takes longer but is a more effective way of solving problems with the way an iPhone is running.

Press and hold the Home and Sleep buttons at the same time. Keep holding them while the screen goes black (the red power-off slider may appear; if it does, just carry on holding the buttons), right up until the silver Apple logo appears. When that appears you can let go.

12.   Restore to Factory Settings

Finally, the most drastic step of all is to perform a full restore, which deletes all the data on the iPhone and returns it, in effect, to the state it was in when you bought it. (Except that the hardware components will still have suffered a number of years of wear and tear.)

Since we are deleting all the data, it's vitally important that you back up the iPhone: either back up to iTunes, as described above, or to iCloud. (To back up to iCloud, Open the Settings app, then scroll down to iCloud, then Storage & Backup, then Back Up Now in iOS 6 or turn on iCloud Backup in iOS 7, iOS 8 and iOS 9).

Now you can restore the iPhone to its factory settings by going to Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings. You'll then have to enter your passcode if you've got one, and then confirm that you want to delete all media and data, and reset all settings.

After a few minutes of restoring, you'll be presented with the welcome screen you saw when you first started up the iPhone.