

Google Android Tips and Tricks

The Android OS is an open-source operating system. It is a free license to flash Android onto smartphones and tablets. Over 150 manufacturers worldwide build phones and tablets running Android. This is where the similarities end, as there are currently 3 different versions of the OS being used, along with the unique system tweaks and features added by the manufacturer, such as “HTC Sense”. While Sense gives the user some impressive ease-of-use features, they are unique to the HTC devices. Other manufacturers do the same, so many screens and menus differ by model.

The tips and tricks for this handout are those built into the main Android OS kernel and should easily be accessed on all devices.

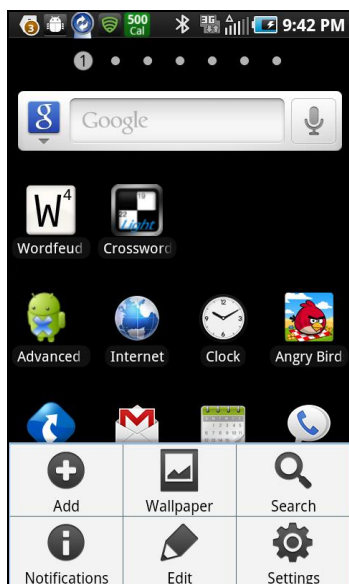
Some Facts About Android

As of January, 2012:

- 250 million total Android devices sold, up 50 million since September 2011
- 700,000 Android phones are activated every day
- 3.7 million Android devices were activated over last year’s two-day holiday weekend
- A total of 11 billion downloads from Android Market

How to perform the initial setup


From the main screen, press the menu key:



Set up Accounts in Accounts and Sync

1. Add your Gmail account(s) and other email clients

If you have a Twitter or Facebook account, you have the option to sync automatically (be aware these syncs use up battery power)

1. Select Settings
2. Start in Accounts. Add your Gmail account(s), Twitter, Facebook, etc.
3. When done, press the home key 
4. Remember to make sure you go to your Google apps on your PC to activate and customize them. Your Android phone calendar will not sync with your Google calendar until you sign up and sign in on your computer.

Customize your Home Screen

The native Android OS allows you to customize the screen with the following steps. Your device may slightly differ or have other custom features for your screen.

1. From the main screen, press down on the screen

Add to Home Screen will appear, to choose from Widgets (see above), Shortcuts, Folders or Wallpapers.

2. Select Widgets

Any apps you have that can also work as a widget will show on the list. Widgets, as opposed to apps are connected to the internet and update information throughout the day. The Facebook widget, for example is shown here:




What is a Widget?


Widgets are “living apps” on your Android Home screen. Unlike an app icon, a widget typically offers some type of dynamic activity. One common example would be the huge clock that comes standard on many Android devices’ Home screen. Because the clock on the screen continually updates the time, it is considered a widget. The Facebook widget displays your friends’ status updates almost as fast as it is updated on your Facebook page on your laptop. Be aware that widgets typically cause your phone’s resources to be used faster, and may increase battery drain and slow your phone’s overall processing speed.

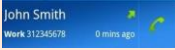
Some of my favorite Widgets


I always talk about how I am a productivity guy. Applications and tools that help me stay on schedule and get things accomplished are what I look for.

Here are a few of my favorite Android widgets (yes, they are on my phone)

Google Search  This widget is most useful to use voice to perform a Google Internet search, or for any item on your phone or tablet.

Power Control  is a very useful tool to make it easy to toggle those features that use battery power the most. WiFi, Bluetooth GPS, Sync and screen brightness are controlled from a the tap on the screen.

Last Call  this widget displays the last call (in or out) on your phone, for easy redial or return call. Also displays the elapsed time since the call.

Evernote  is easily one of the most popular tasks and memo management apps available. Cloud based, any entries made on your Android phone or tablet will display on the other, and your computers.

3. **Select Shortcuts**

Add a number of different shortcuts to make access to information even easier by placing them on the Home screen as an app icon.

- **Applications** will display the list of all of the applications installed on your device. Press on the app and it will now be on your Home screen
- **Bookmark** Selecting Bookmark will open the list of all bookmarked web pages you have saved in your Android Browser. One convenient solution is to bookmark the MLS on your phone and then save it as an icon on the Home screen.
- **Contact** Your often-used contacts can be placed on your Home screen. No more searching! Add a photo to the contact and select by photo. Tapping the icon offers the choice to call, message, or open the profile.
- **Direct Dial** Allows you to call your frequently dialed numbers from the home screen. Particularly useful if you have multiple numbers for a contact.
- **Direct Message** Like Direct Dial, allows quick access to SMS text messaging a contact. When searching for the contact, it will only display mobile numbers.
- **Gmail Label** Is great for accessing particular email messages that have been assigned to a Label. Set this feature in Gmail settings first, then choose the label you want.
- **Settings** Will allow you one-touch access to the settings menus on your Android phone.

4. **Select Folder**

Add folders to organize often used numbers, documents, or a number of different shortcuts to make access to information even easier by placing them on the Home screen as an app icon.

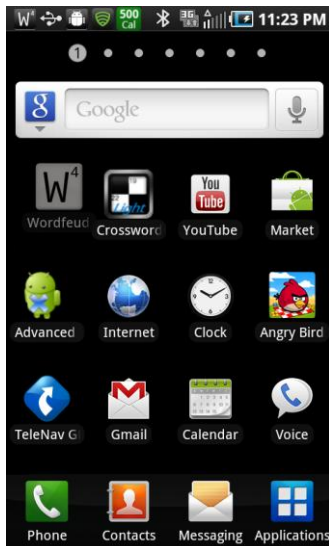
- **NewFolder** Create a custom folder to store a category or applications or files

5. **Select Wallpaper**

Add images as the background to your Home screen. Choose from a number of photos from the stock gallery, ID wallpaper, Live wallpapers (animated), or choose one from your own pictures in Gallery. Search for Android wallpapers on the Internet to find thousands of unique and innovative wallpaper designs for your devices

6. Move apps around your Home screen with ease

Application icons can be placed in any order or on any of the multiple pages simply by moving them with your finger. Start by pressing down on the icon to move, then simply drag to the desired location, or to the edge of the screen to move to the next page. While in screen edit mode, you may drag an icon to the bottom of the screen to the trash can to remove it from the screen. **This does not delete the application.**

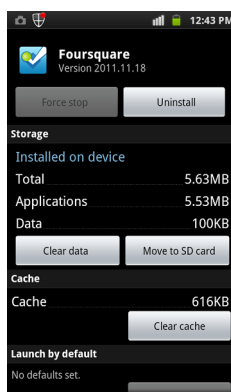


Warning: If you don't know what any feature is, DON'T CHANGE IT!

Improve Your Memory Management

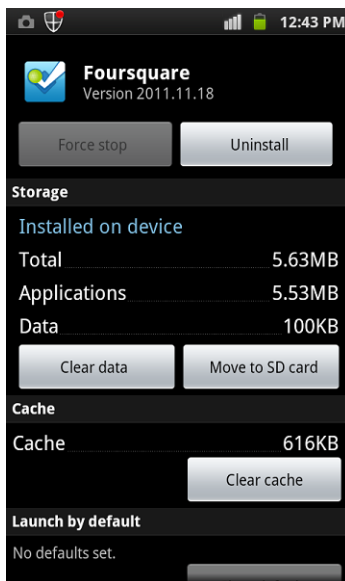
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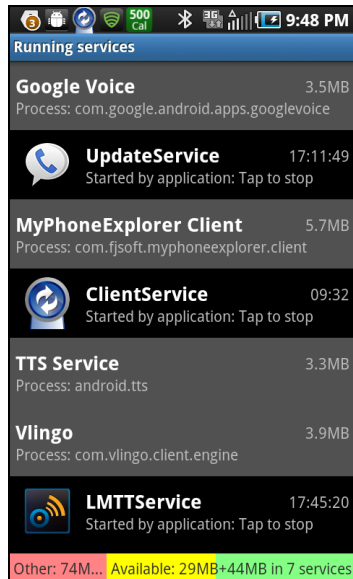
If you don't know or uncomfortable with making changes here, DON'T CHANGE IT!

1. From the Home Screen, select Menu > Settings
2. Select Applications
3. Select Manage Applications
4. Open any **Downloaded** app (avoid the system apps)
5. Clear cache (releases stored memory from app).



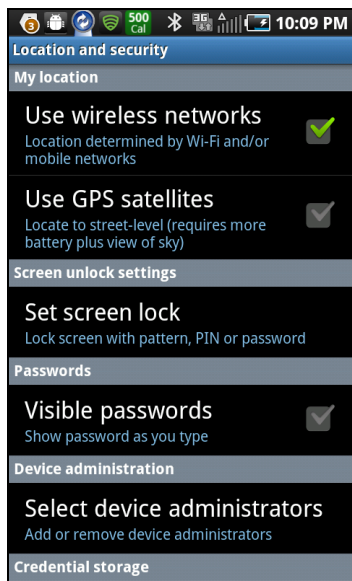
From here, you may clear the memory cache of an application, or uninstall the app. On select Android devices, with certain applications, you may also opt to move the application to the SD card, which will free up internal memory, yet still allow the app to run on the device.

6. Select Running Services



Here, you can see what apps are currently using the device memory. I would not recommend you make any changes here unless you clearly understand what you are doing. Stopping certain services may affect the operation of applications or the proper function of the phone itself.

7. Select Location and security



Here, you can set up Wi-Fi services, enable the GPS Satellites access, set device passwords and screen locks.

How To Perform Device Maintenance

1. Clear the Internet Cache, History, and Cookies

Open the Internet browser

Tap the menu, select **More**

Select **Settings**

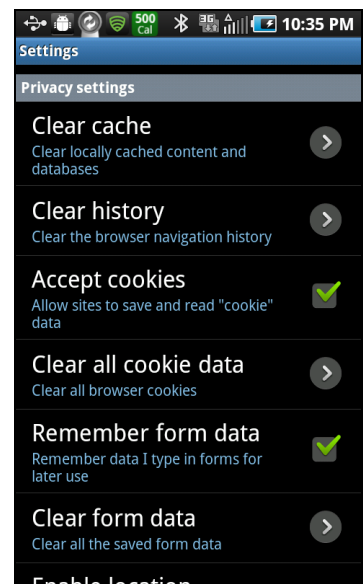
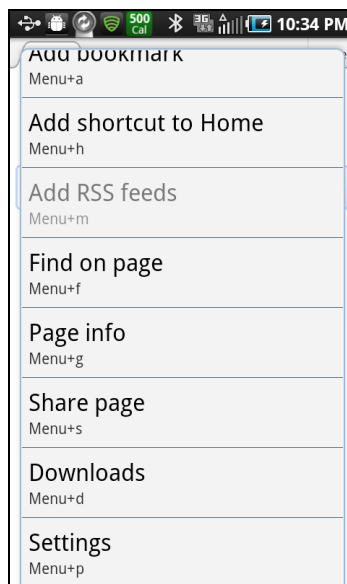
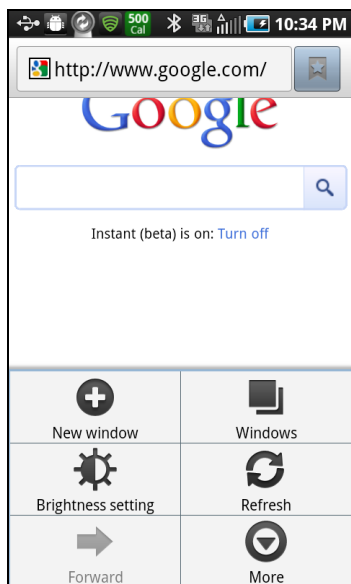
Scroll down to Privacy settings (the gray separator)

Press Clear cache, tap Yes

Clear History, tap yes

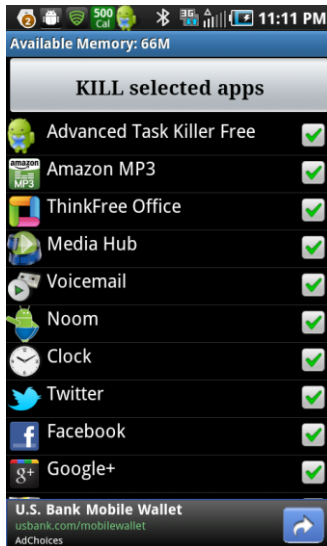
Clear all cookie data, tap yes

Tap the escape key or home key



2. Kill running apps

Download the **Advanced Task Killer Free** from the Android Market
Run the app to stop programs running a few times a day, or as prompted by the app.
They will come back, some almost immediately, so don't fret, it's just Android being android!



3. Reset your phone

Remove the back cover and take out the battery. Wait 5 seconds and replace. This only refreshes the processor, with no loss of data or settings.

This handout updates regularly, so come back often to see the latest information.

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