

Google Contacts

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Introduction

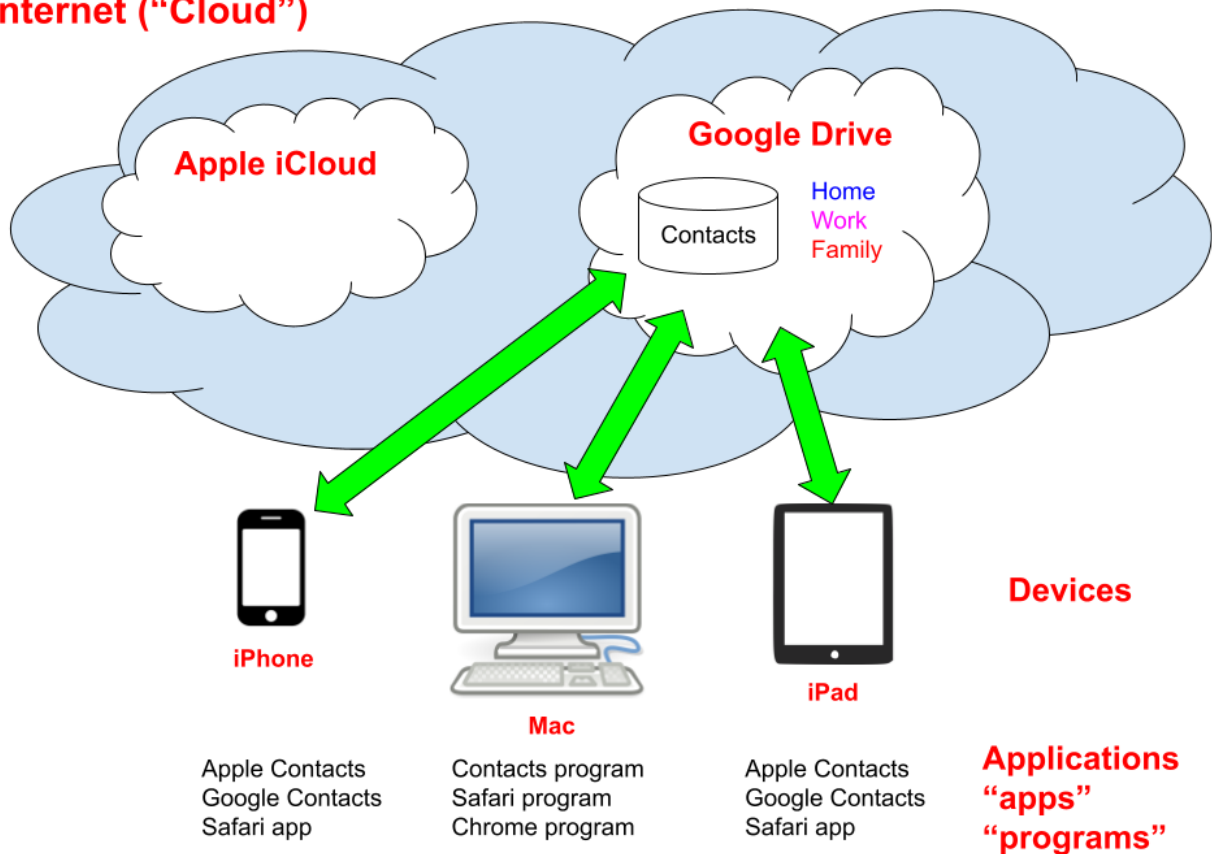
Google Contacts is a Cloud based contact storage system which is similar to others from vendors like Apple (iCloud), Yahoo and Microsoft. The advantages of these systems over traditional paper address books are:

- You only need to use one contact system and it can be viewed on all of your Internet connected devices (computer, tablet or smartphone).
- You can use your contact information in other apps, like your phone app to call people, your mail app to email them, your calendar app to invite them to an event and your map app to get directions.
- It is automatically backed up continuously and cannot be lost like a physical address book.
- It is easy to search for contacts by typing in part of the name or other information like part of a phone number or address.
- It is easy to change any contact information and have that shared with all your devices. You can do this on any of your devices since the data is stored on the Cloud and synchronized automatically.
- You can have your phone and messaging apps automatically block calls and messages from people who are not in your contacts.
- It is easy to store notes about a contact like children's names and birthdays
- If you put birthdays into your contacts, they can automatically appear on your Google Calendar if you like.

Cloud Contact Data Storage

Your contact data for Google Contacts and the other cloud based contact systems are stored on servers on the Internet. Many people have multiple Cloud accounts. You often get one for each of your email addresses.

Internet (“Cloud”)



For example, if you have a gmail email address, you have a Google account on their Cloud. If you own an Apple device (Mac, iPad or iPhone), you automatically have an Apple iCloud account. If you have multiple gmail addresses, each has its own Cloud storage account.

It is often best to store your contact information on only one of these cloud storage systems to avoid duplicate contacts.

Your contact information is stored on the Cloud and you can access it from any of your devices using many different programs or apps.

One problem some people run into is that they don't understand how many Cloud accounts they have and whether they are using the contact storage system on more than one Cloud. This can lead to confusion when you add a contact on one device which is not visible on another of your devices.

Each device has contacts account settings which control which contact storage systems are used on that device. The simplest approach is to choose a single Cloud contacts storage vendor and set up all your devices to use that system.

If you only have Apple devices, your best choice may be the Apple contacts storage system in your iCloud account. If you have a mix of vendors, like a Windows PC and an iPhone, the Google system may work much better for you.

Android phones use the Android operating system from Google and therefore automatically use Google Contacts to store their data.

I have worked with several people who ended up using a mixture of contacts on the Apple iCloud and the Google system and ran into lots of confusion.

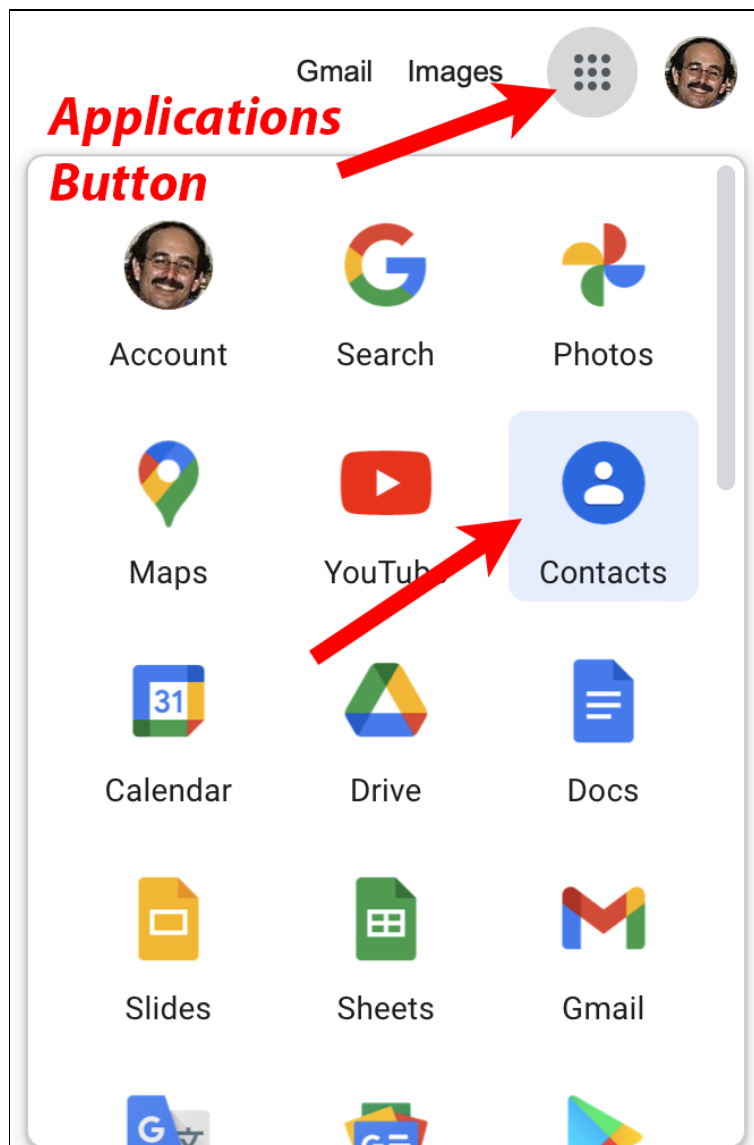
It is possible to consolidate your contacts into one Cloud contacts system to solve this problem. You can export the events from one contacts system and import them into another one and change the account settings on all your devices to use the one contacts storage system.

One major advantage of Google Contacts is that it is very easy to fix duplicate contacts or merge similar ones after you have imported the contacts from another system like Apple iCloud.

Google Contacts on a Computer

Google Contacts is one of the Google applications that run on web browsers. You do not need to download and install the application, just go to its webpage in your browser: <https://contacts.google.com>

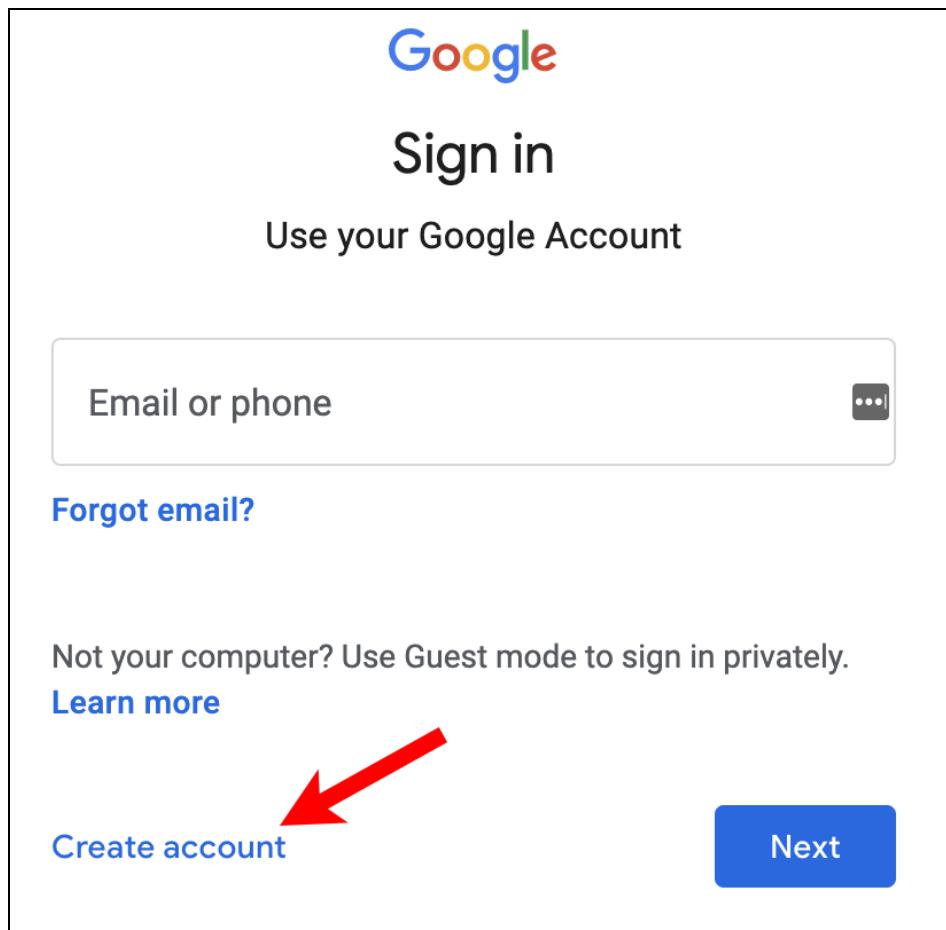
You can also get to the Google Contacts website by clicking on the Google Applications button on the Google or Gmail page



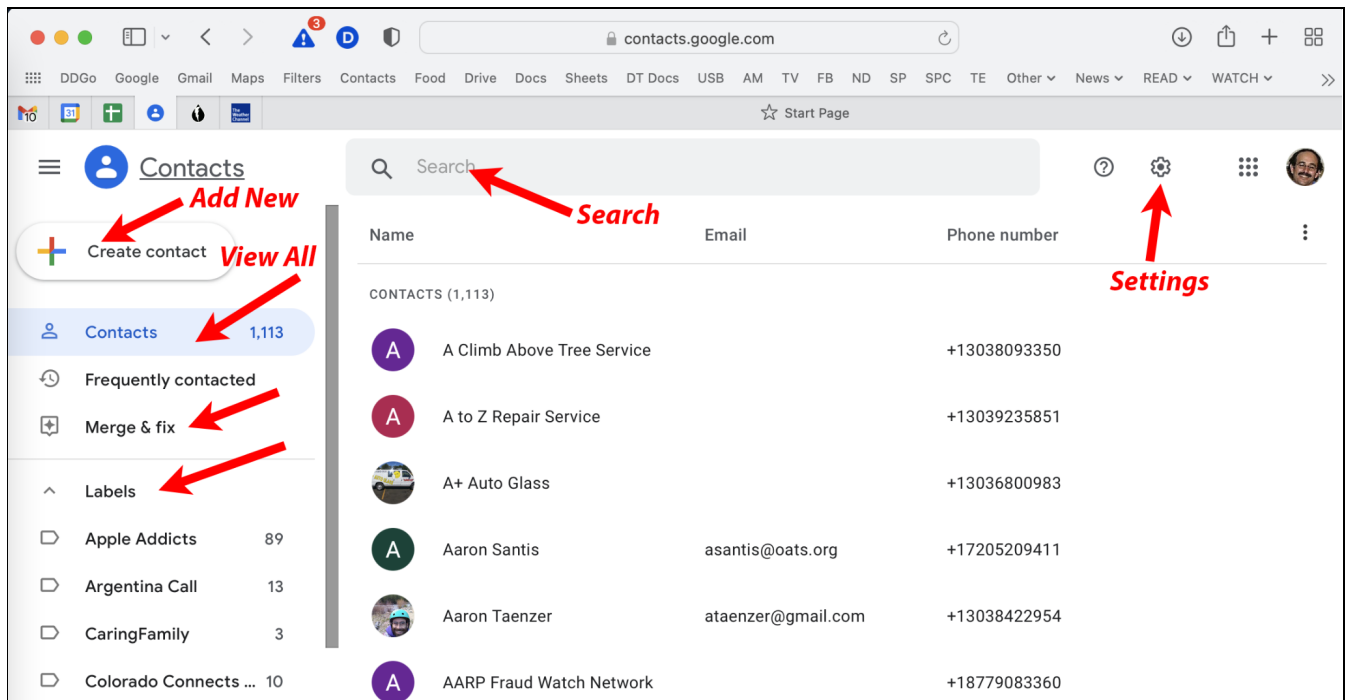
In order to use any of the Google Apps you will need to have a Google account (normally a @gmail.com email address). These are free and you don't need to use the Google mail address or the Gmail program. To create a google account, go the to the Google homepage (<https://www.google.com>), click the blue Sign In button:



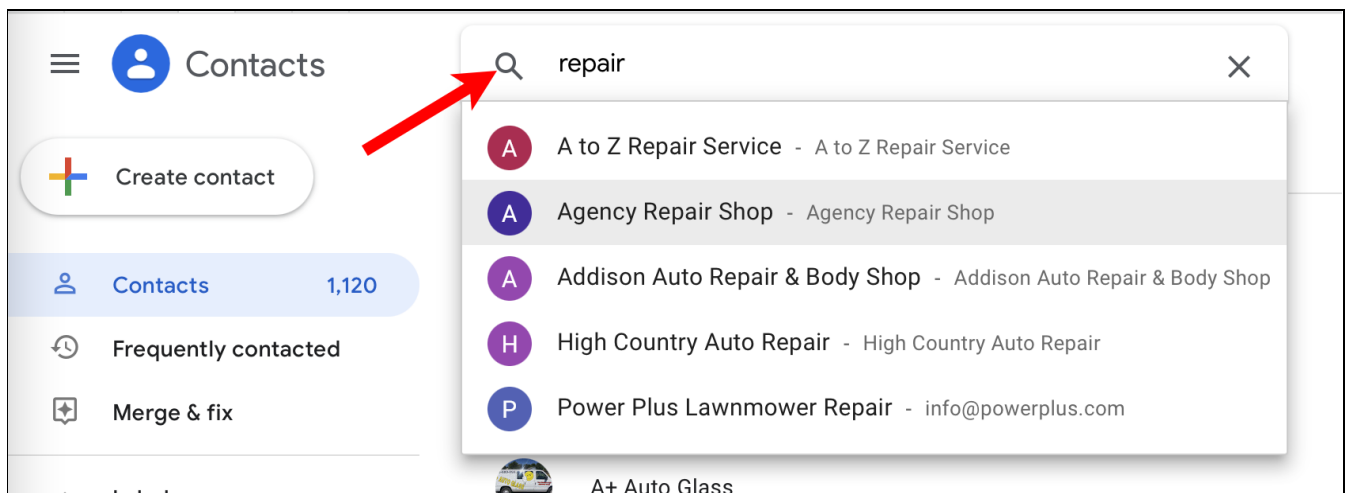
And then the blue Create Account link:



When you open the Google Contacts web page it will display a list of your contacts and let you easily search for one:

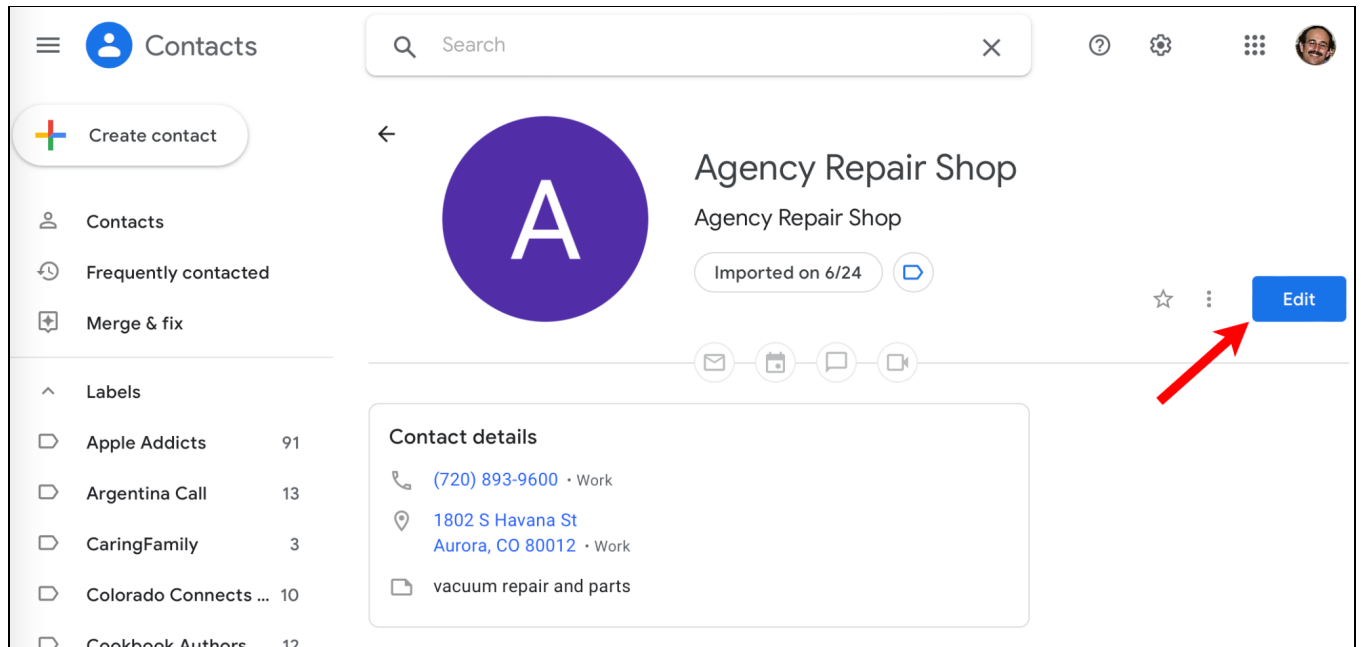


The search button (magnifying glass) at the top lets you search for contacts that contain specific words or numbers, e.g:



The results are displayed in a pop-up window.

You can click on a contact to view the details:



You can click the Edit button to make changes.

This displays many fields which you can change and there is a “Show more” button on the bottom to see even more fields, e.g birthday, website, relationship, etc.

You can add extra phone numbers or addresses with the plus (+) buttons next to each field:

Search

?

⚙

☰

×

Agency Repair Shop

Imported on 6/24

⏏

Save

×

First name

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Middle name

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Agency Repair Shop

Job title

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(720) 893-9600

Work

United States

Street address

1802 S Havana St

Street address line 2

City

Aurora

Colorado

ZIP code

80012

PO Box

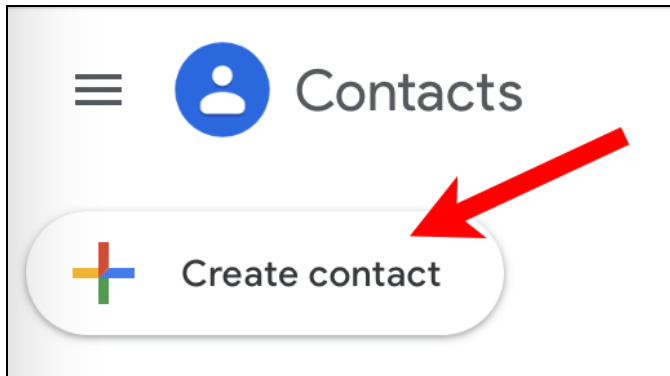
Work

Notes

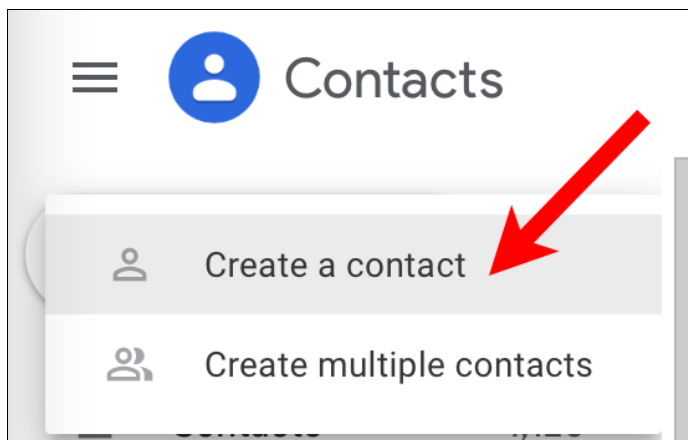
vacuum repair and parts

Show more

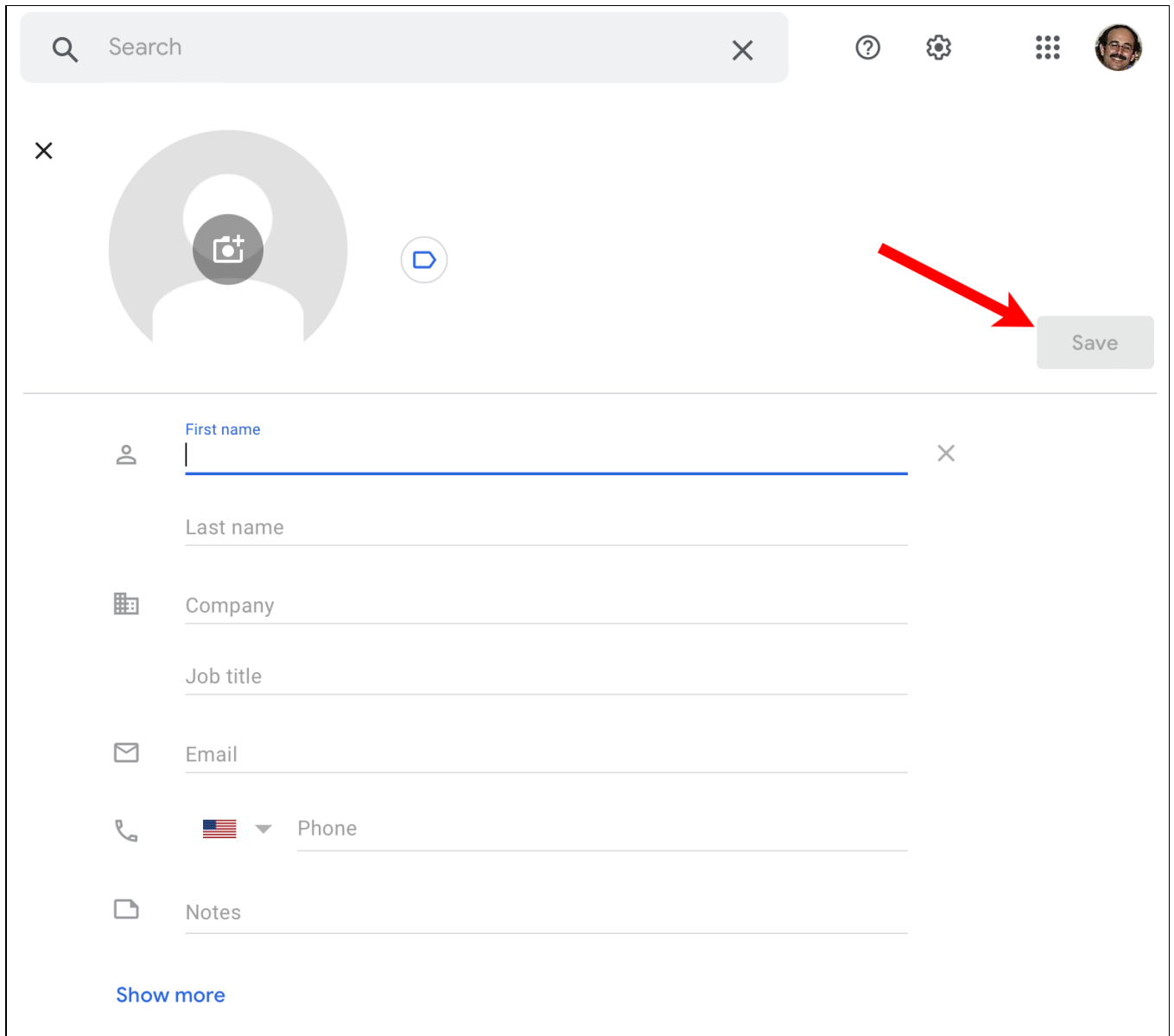
You can create a new contact by click the the “Create Contact” button



And selecting Create Contact from the drop down menu



This brings up a page like the edit page which lets you enter the first name, last name, company, job title, email, phone and notes fields. There is a “Show more” link to enter more fields. All the fields are optional.

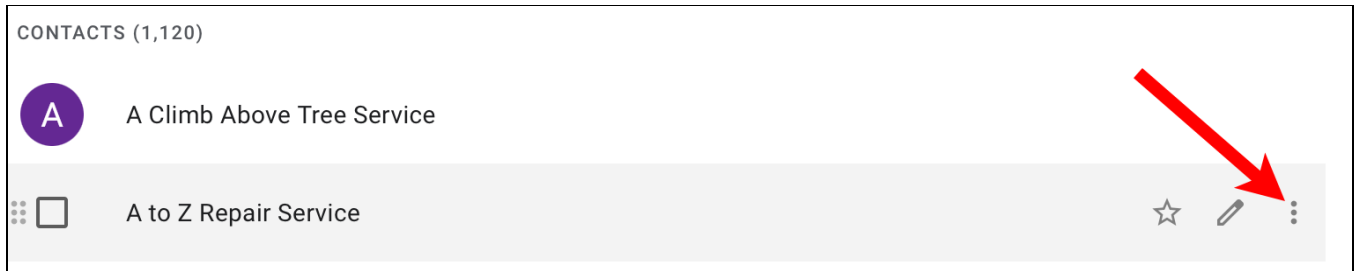


The screenshot shows a contact editing interface. At the top is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the text "Search". To the right of the search bar are icons for help (question mark), settings (gear), a grid of dots, and a user profile picture. Below the search bar is a large circular profile picture placeholder with a camera icon and a plus sign. To the right of the profile picture is a small circular icon with a document and a plus sign. A red arrow points from the right side of the form to a "Save" button. The form contains several input fields: "First name" (with a person icon and a close 'x' button), "Last name", "Company" (with a building icon), "Job title", "Email" (with an envelope icon), "Phone" (with a phone icon, a US flag, and a dropdown arrow), and "Notes" (with a document icon). At the bottom left of the form is a "Show more" link.

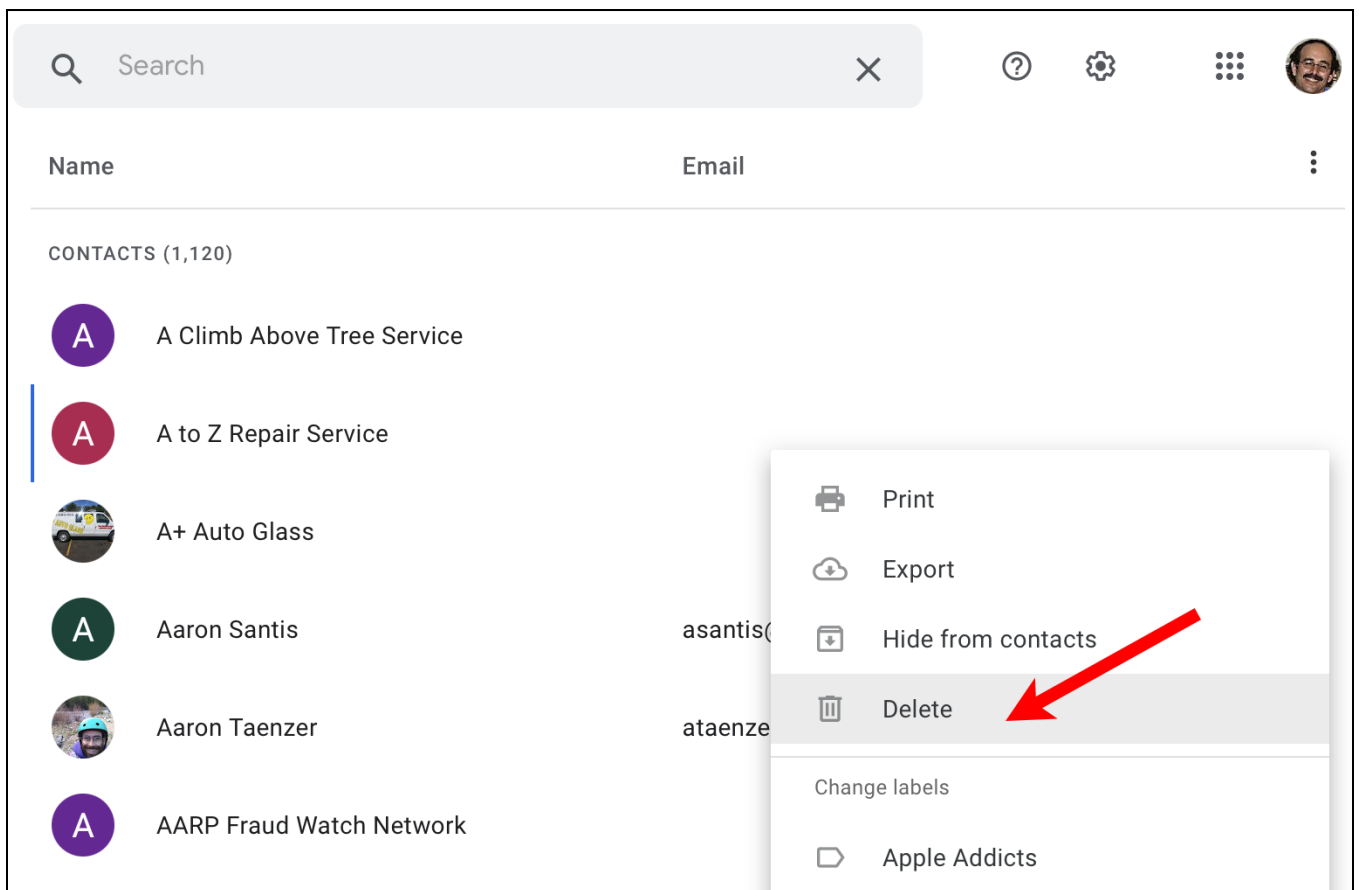
Remember to click the Save button when you are finished entering the new contact.

Deleting a Contact

To delete a contact, you click on the three dot (More) button on the right side of the contact



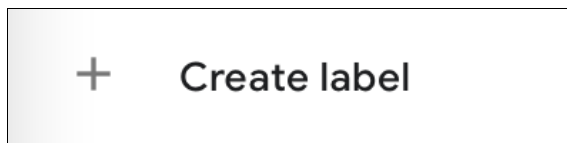
and select delete:



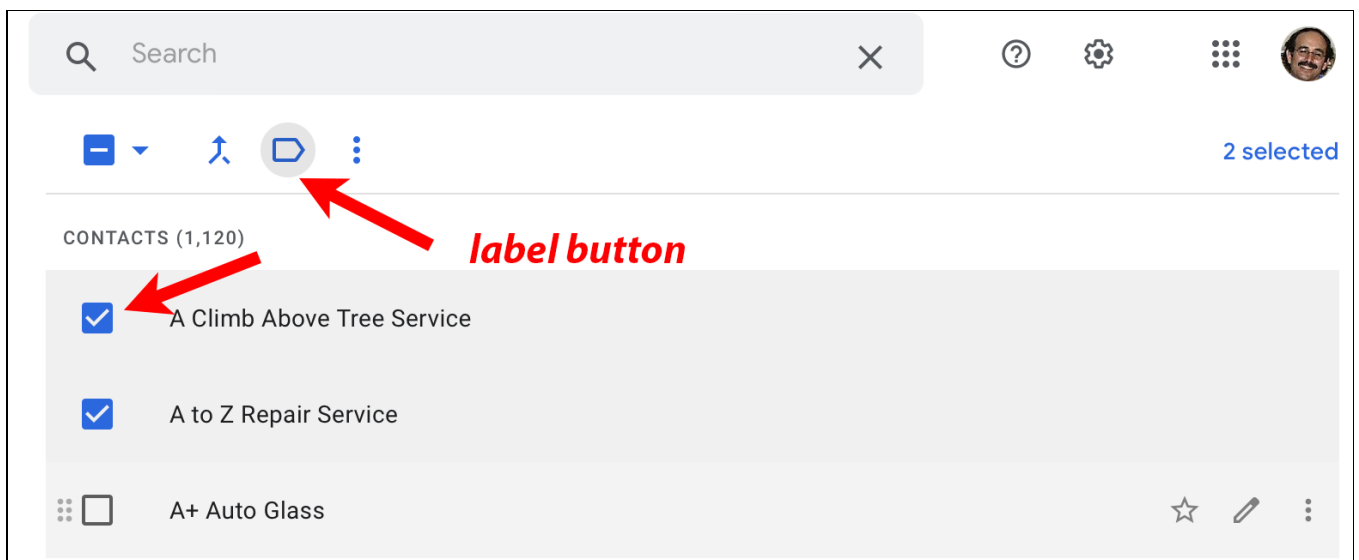
Labels

You can create Labels in Google Contacts which are ways of grouping together contacts to make it easier to send an email to all the contacts that have that label. These are called “Groups” in Apple Contacts and several other systems.

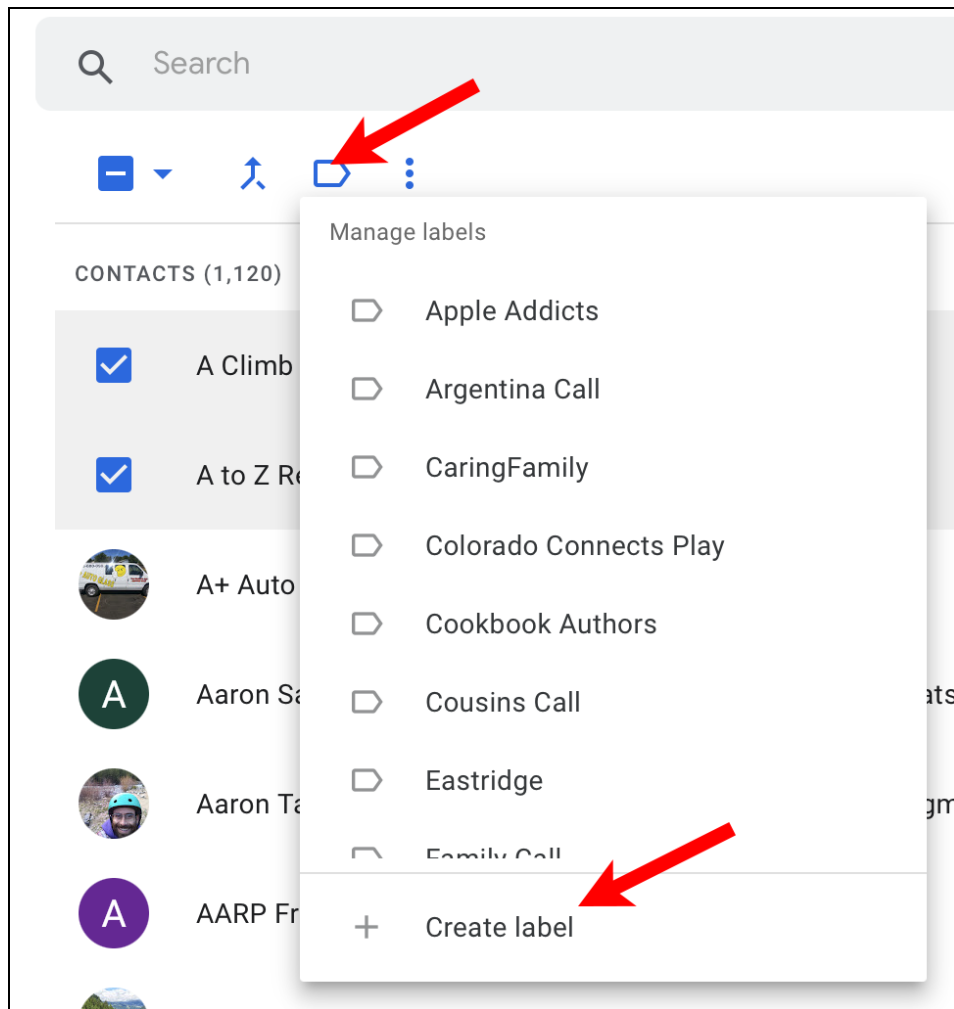
To create a label, you simply click the on Create Label button at the bottom of the left side panel:



To add contacts to the label, simply select them in your contacts list (by clicking the square to the left of the label, and then clicking on the label button above the list:

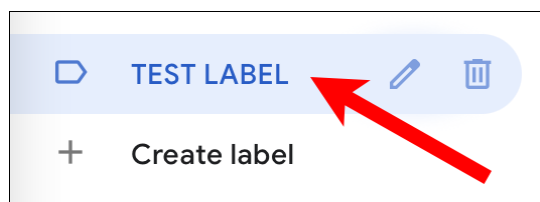


You can then select the label (or labels) you would like to add the selected contacts to:

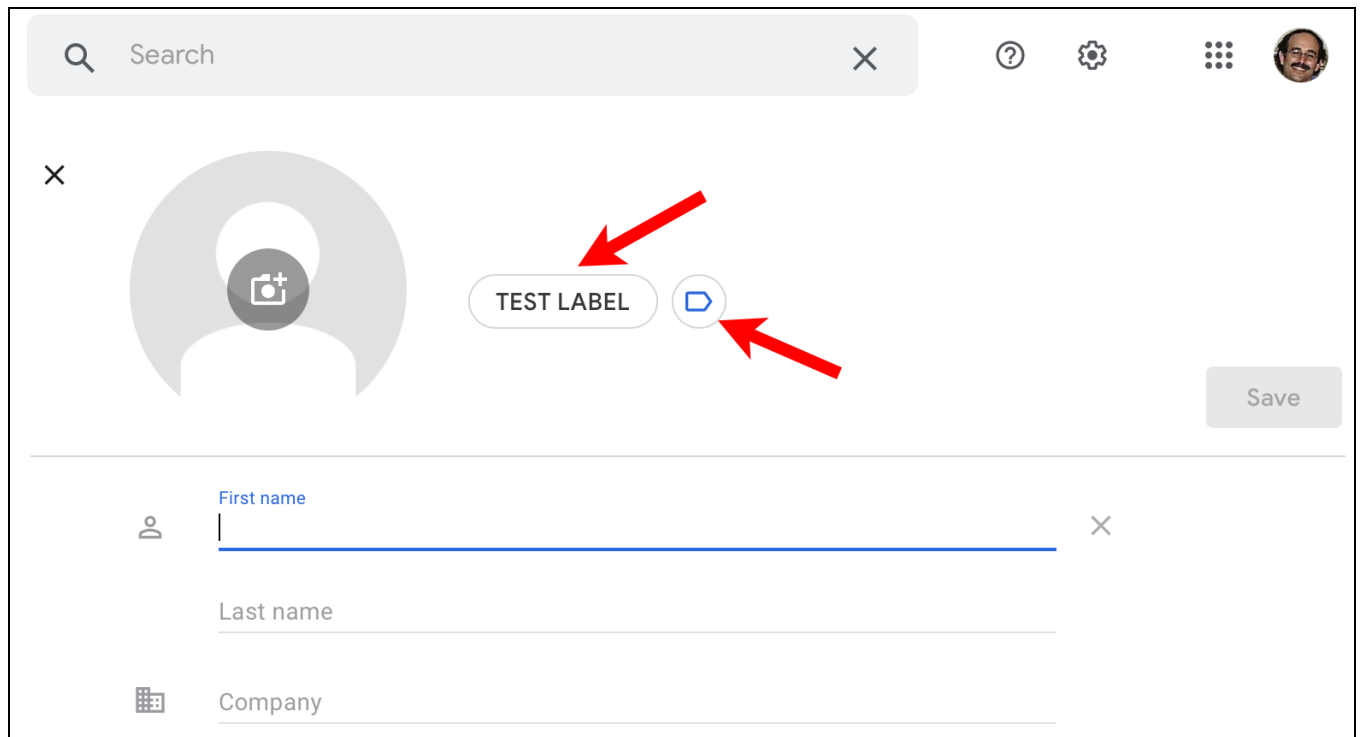


Labels can contain any number of contacts and each contact can have any number of labels.

You can see the contacts in a label by clicking on it.



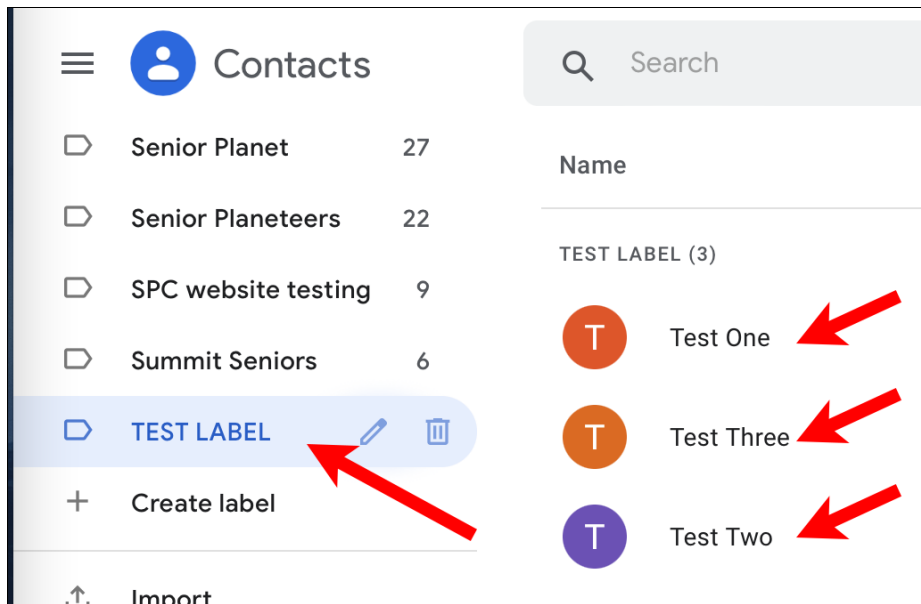
If you have a label selected and then click the Create Contact button, the new contact will be placed into that label:



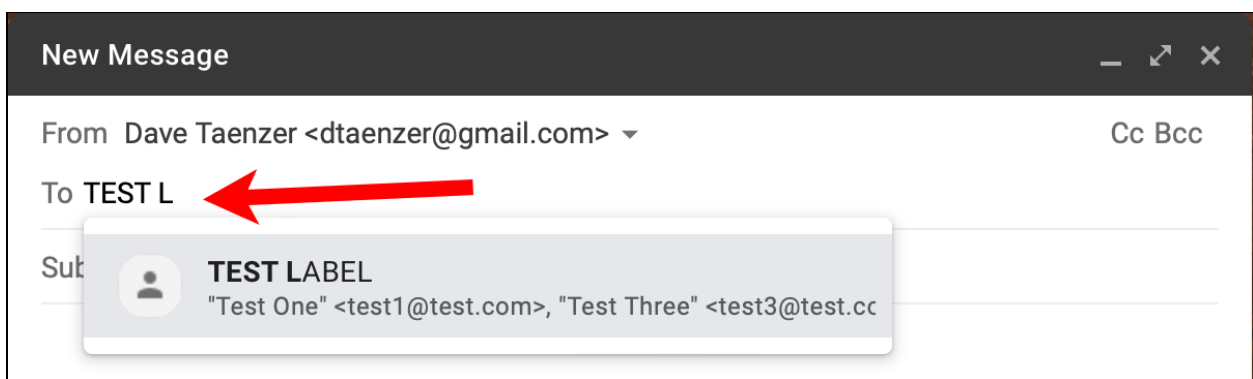
You can change the label on any contact when you create or edit it with the label button which looks like a rectangle with a point on the right.

You can use labels just like contact names in gmail (Google Mail) to send a message to all the contacts in that label.

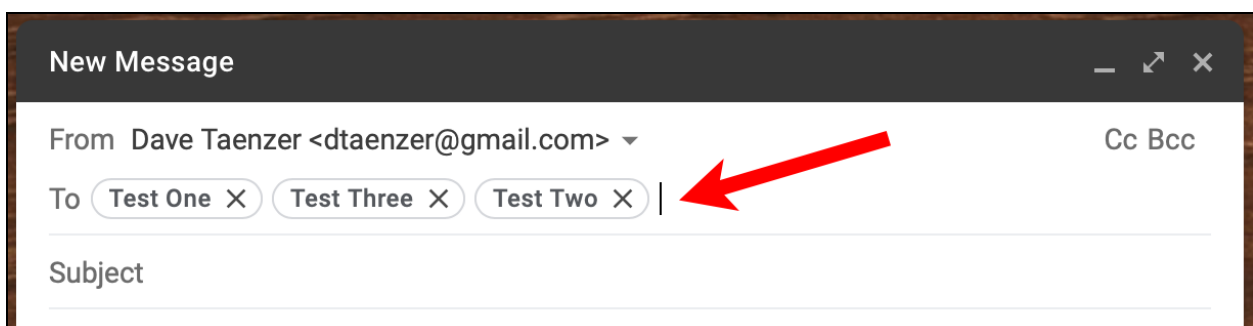
If I create three test contacts in the Test Label and three test contacts:



And then compose a message in gmail, I can type in TEST LABEL to send a message to all of them:

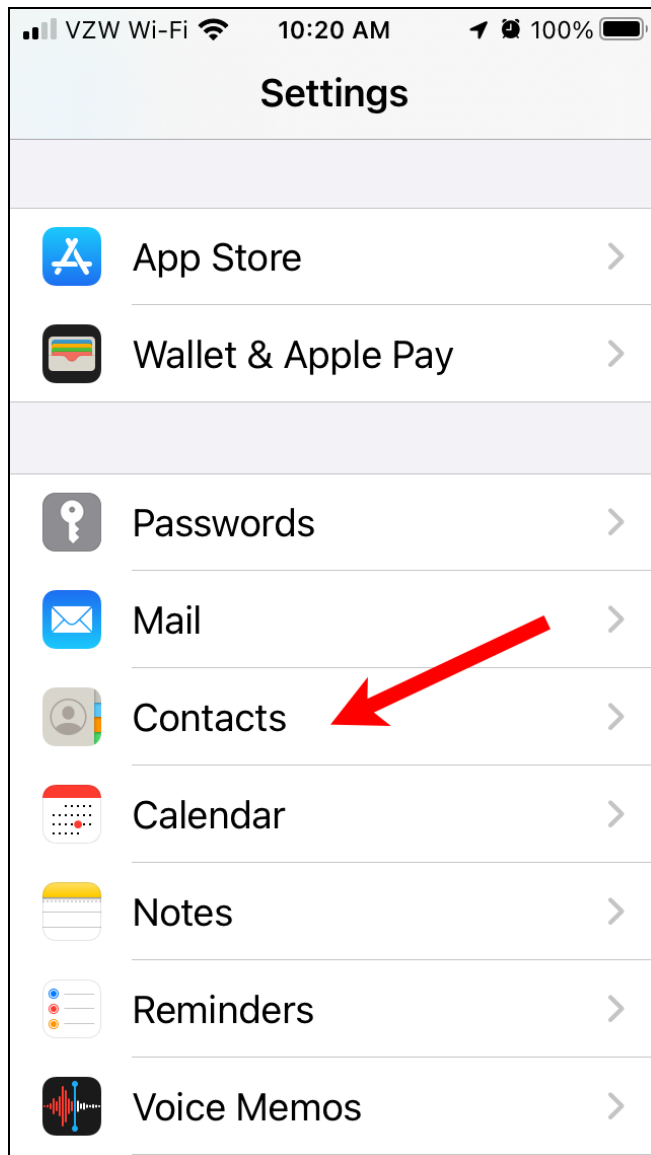


This fills in all the contacts associated with this label:

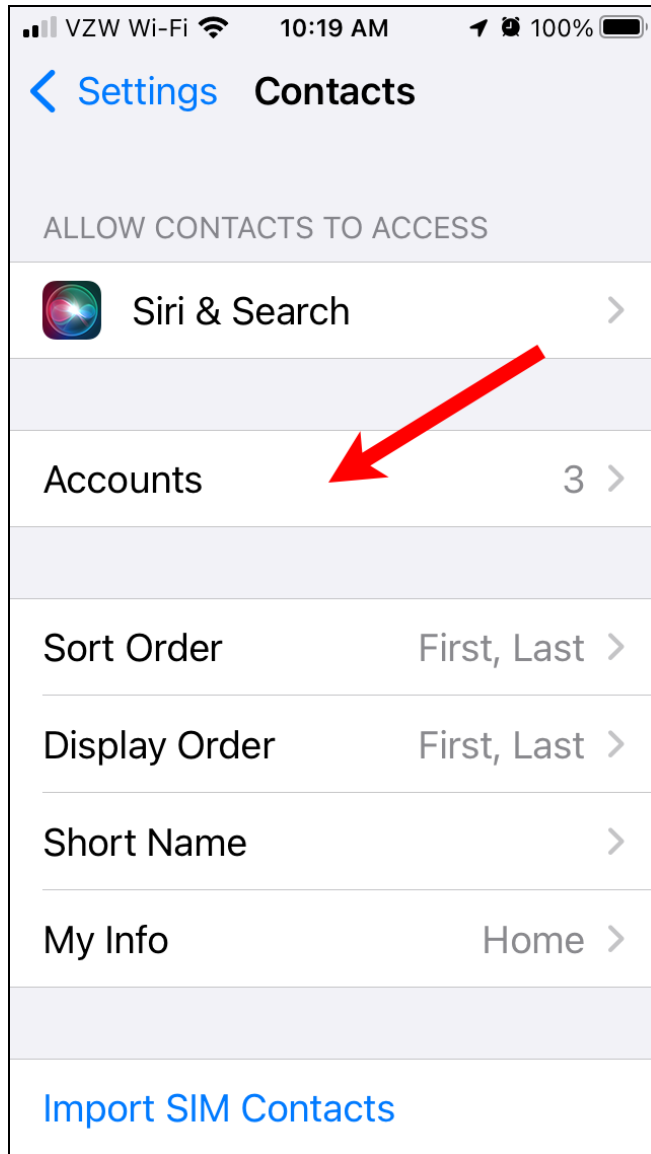


Using Google Contacts on iPhone and iPad

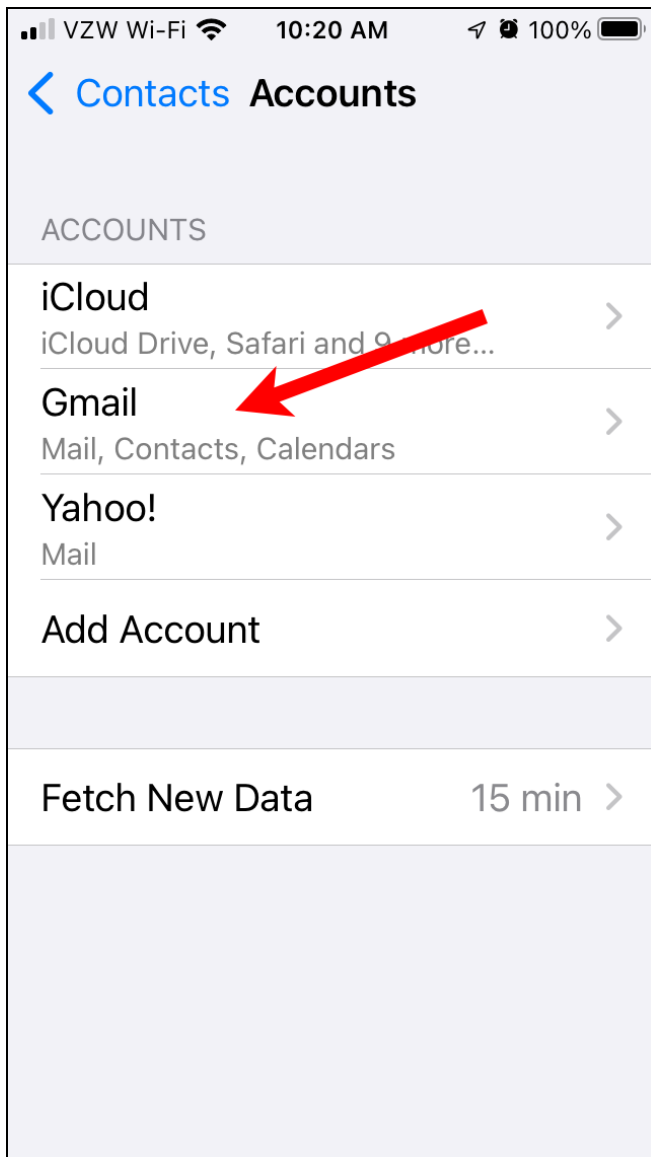
It is easy to set up access to Google Contacts on your iPhone or iPad. First you start your Settings app and select Contacts:



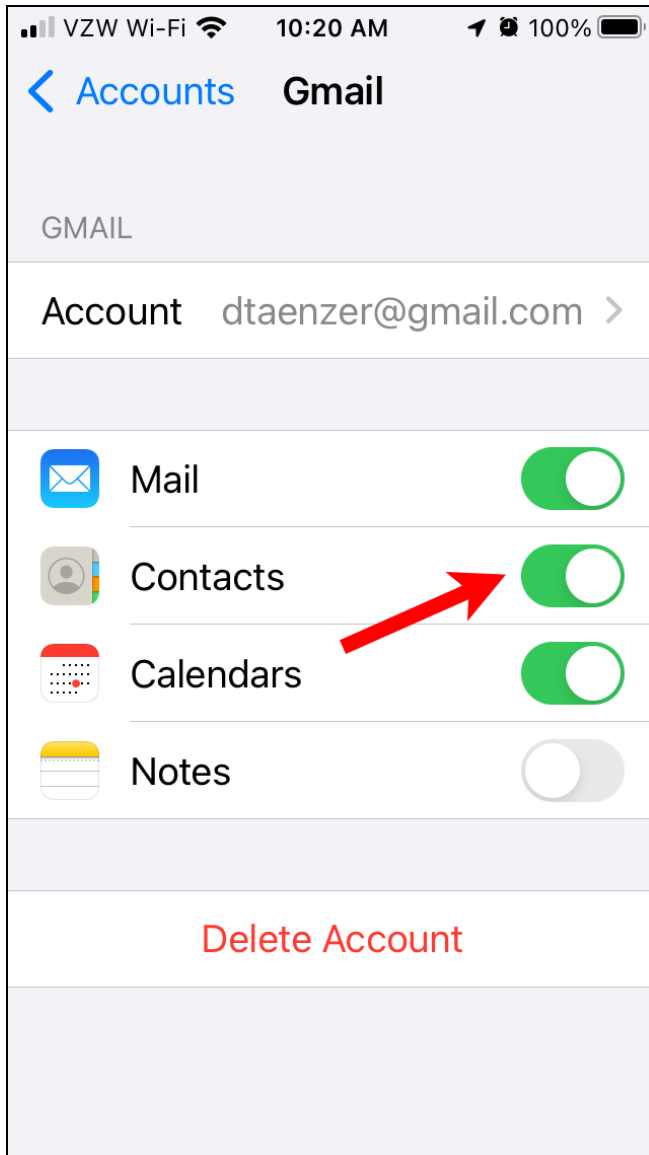
You then tap on Accounts



Then tap on Gmail (or add your Gmail to your accounts with the Add Account button):



Then click the switch next to Contacts to view the Google Contacts on the current device:

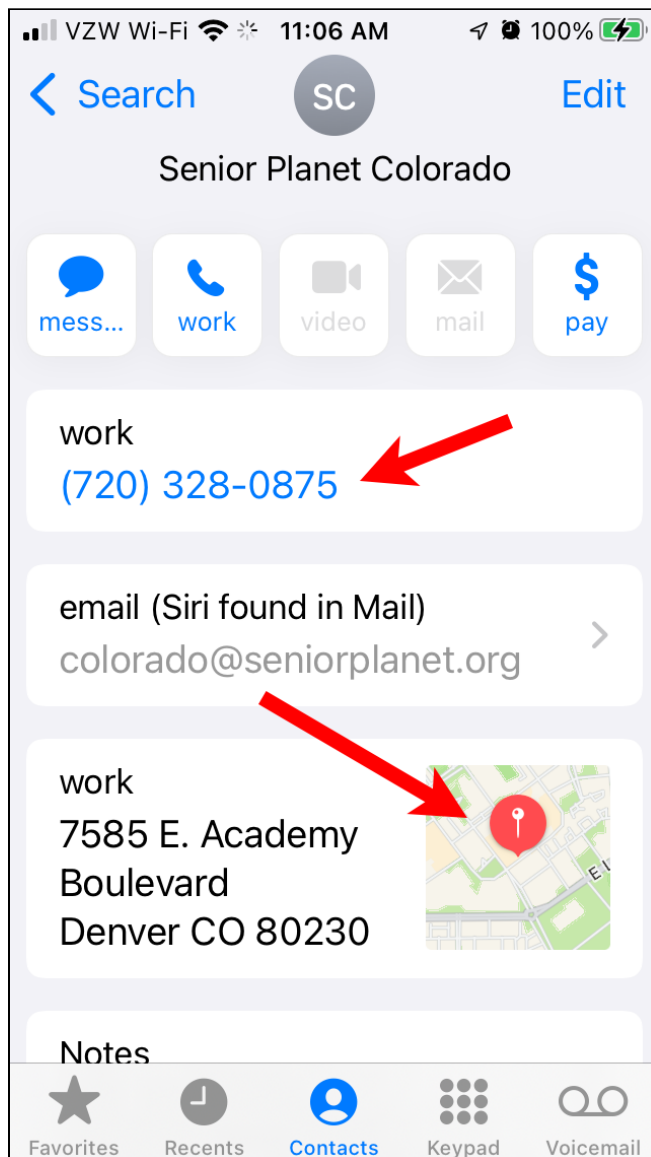


Finally, if you have more than one account with Contacts enabled, you can select which system is used to store any new contacts you create by using the Default Account setting on the Contacts settings:



As I mentioned before, it is simpler if you only use one account on all your devices.

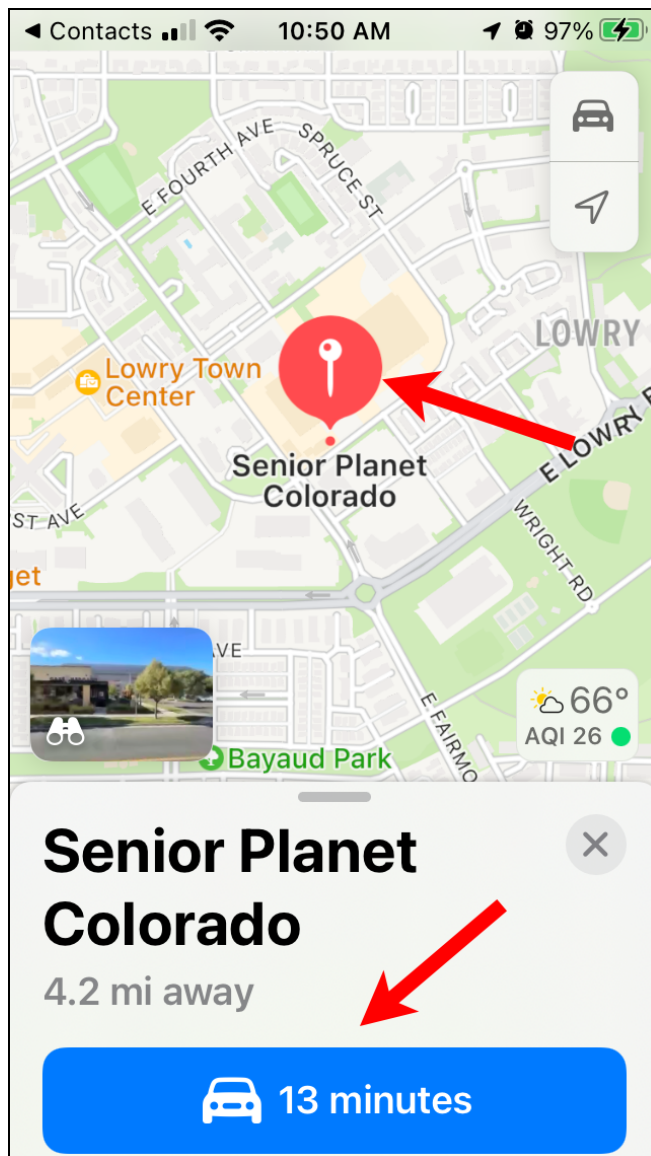
If you enter an address in a contact you can tap on it to open the Maps app and get directions:



If you tap on the phone number, it will switch to the phone app and call the contact.

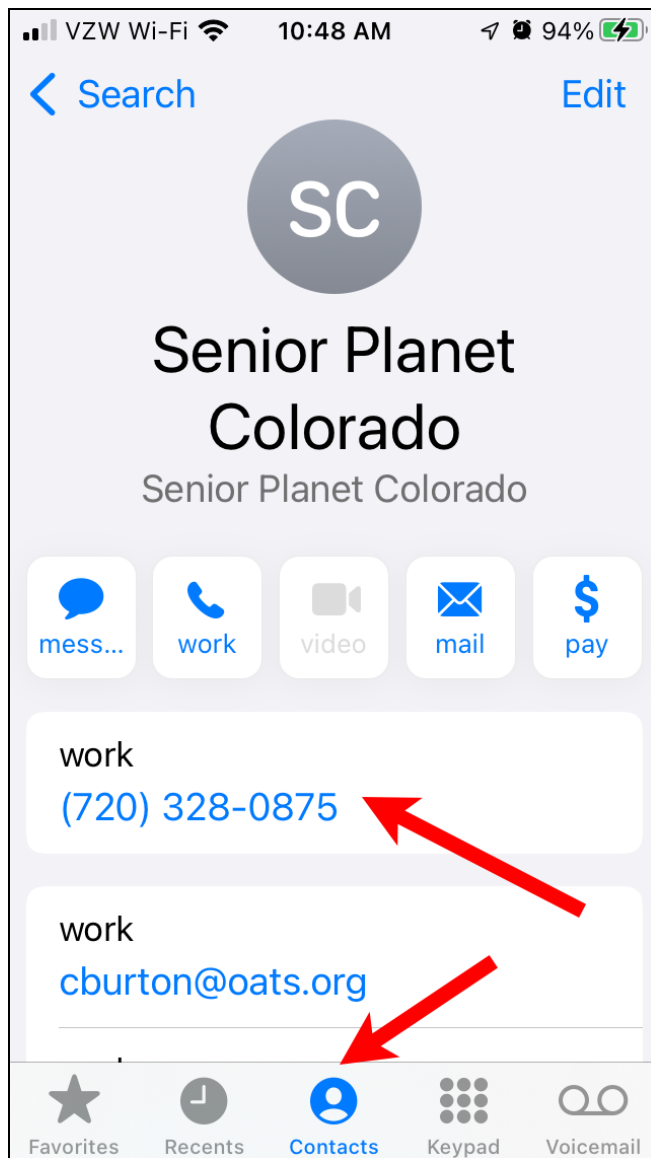
You can also tap on an email address in your Contacts app to compose an email to the contact.

When you tap on the map in the contact, it opens the map app to that location and you can tap on the directions button at the bottom of the screen:

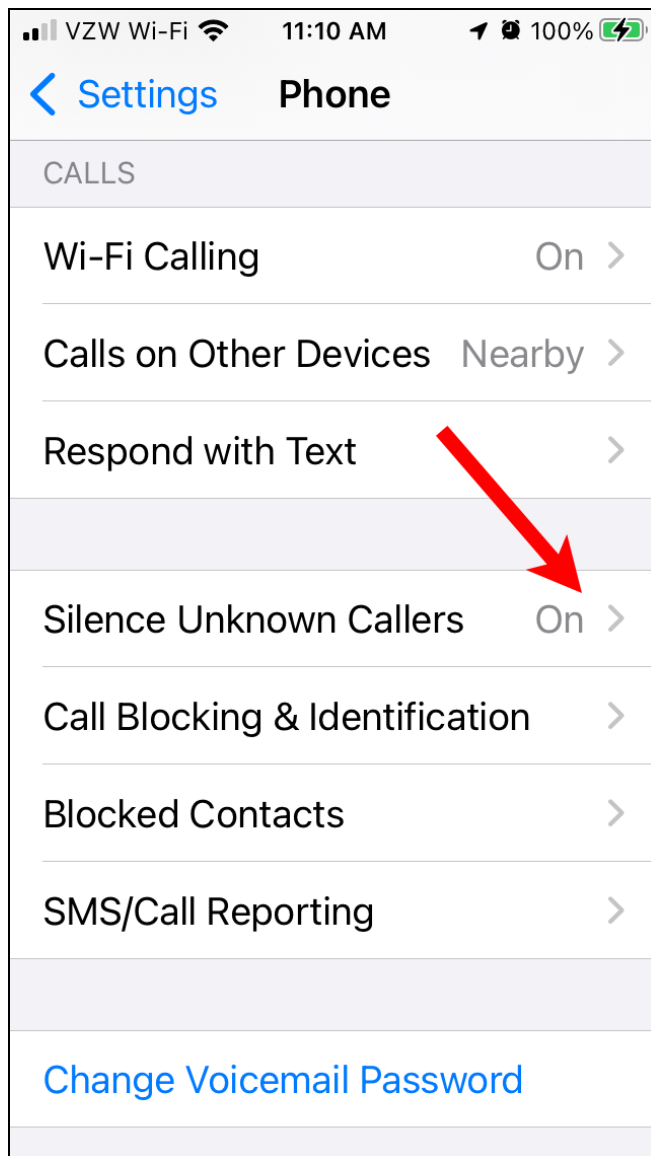


You can also ask the Siri voice assistant for directions, e.g. “Directions to Senior Planet Colorado” to open your Map app and give you directions.

When you use your Phone app, you can tap on the Contacts button at the bottom of the screen, search for your contact and then tap on the phone number to call it:



If you want to block calls from people that are not in your contact list, you can go to the Phone settings in the Settings app at turn on the Disable Unknown Callers option:

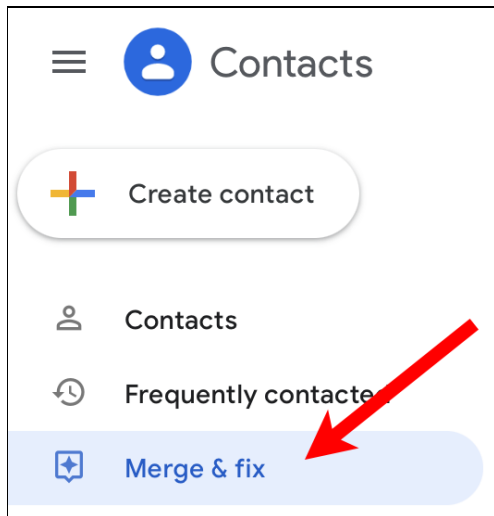


This sends all unknown callers to voicemail.

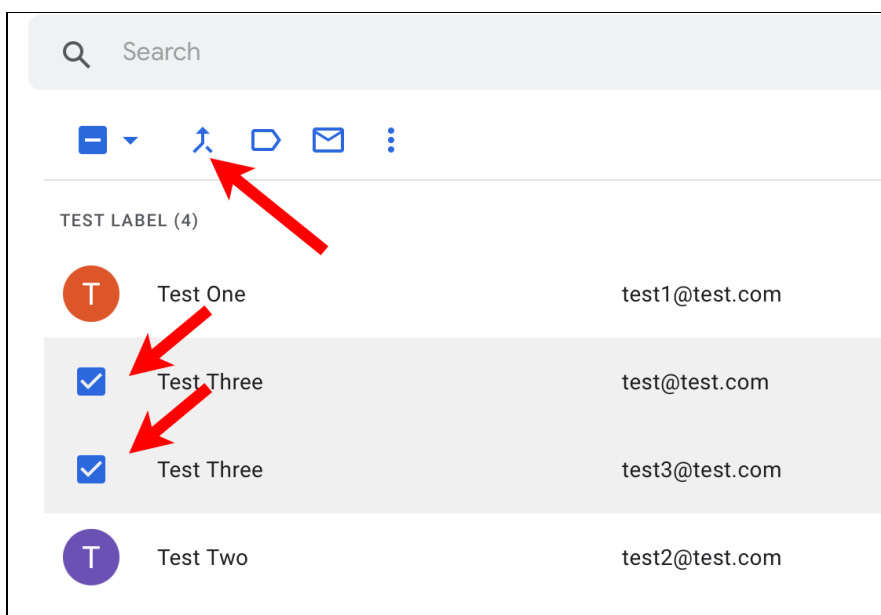
Note that this can be a problem if you are expecting a call from a number that is not in your contacts list (like a doctor's office), so you may need to turn this off occasionally when you expect such a call.

Merging Contacts

One nice feature of Google Contacts is that it is easy to merge duplicate contacts. There is a button on the left sidebar for this:



You can also select contacts manually and click the merge button at the top of the window:



Conclusion

Google Contacts is a very easy to use and useful application that lets you have shared contacts across all your devices. These can be used in your email, phone, messaging and mapping applications making it easy to communicate with your contacts or even get directions to their address.