

# Using Tech to Make Your Life Easier

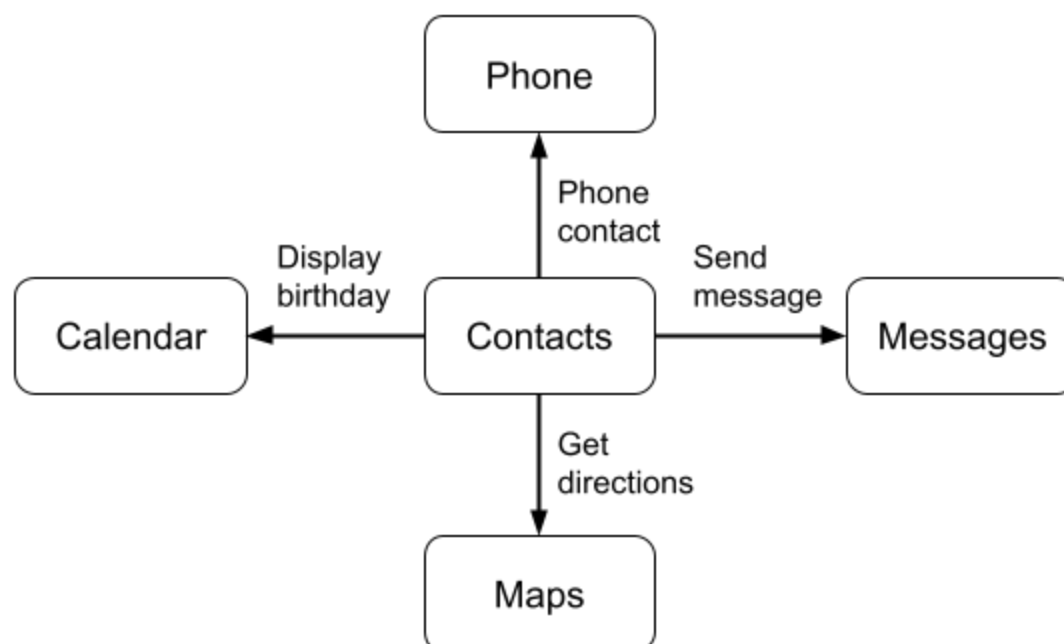
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# Introduction

There are many ways your Apple technology (iPhone, iPad, iWatch and Mac) can make your life easier. In this document I will cover some of them that I use. Many folks do not take full advantage of these features which can be very useful.

One of the things that makes this work so well is the integration between the apps on your phone. For example, the phone, messages, calendar and map apps can use your contacts to call or get directions to the address from your contact data, etc.



This document will show you various ways you can take advantage of the apps on your iPhone, iPad or Mac to make your life a bit easier.

# Siri

One function on Apple devices that people often don't think of is using is the Siri voice based "personal assistant". You can enable it on the Settings app on your device and also set it up so that it will activate when you say "Hey Siri". Note that you don't have to wait until the Siri ball displays on the bottom of your device, you can just keep talking after the "Hey Siri", e.g. "Hey Siri what's the weather?"

This Youtube video covers how to use Siri for things you may not have thought of:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOKy-MI7If8>

Here are some ways Siri can be used to make you life easier:

- **Opening apps**
  - "Hey Siri open photos"
- **Taking screenshots**
  - "Hey Siri take screenshot"
- **Identify a song**
  - "Hey Siri what song is this?"
- **Add a reminder**
  - "Hey Siri remind me to bake the tofu at 7pm"
- **Start a Timer**
  - "Hey Siri start a timer for three minutes"
- **How many days until...**
  - "Hey Siri, how many days until Christmas?"
- **Weather**
  - "Hey Siri, what's the weather?"
  - "Hey Siri, will it rain tomorrow?"

- **Arithmetic**
  - “Hey Siri, what’s 457 times 23?”
  - “Hey Siri, what’s 15% of \$23.45?”
- **Translation**
  - “Hey Siri, how do you say good morning in Mandarin?”
  - “Hey Siri, how do you say where is the toilet in French?”
- **Flashlight**
  - “Hey Siri, turn flashlight on”
  - “Hey Siri, turn flashlight off”
- **Find your phone**
  - “Hey Siri, where are you?”
- **Phone calls**
  - “Hey Siri, call Bob”
  - “Hey Siri, call 303 123 4567 on speaker”
- **Show me a picture**
  - “Hey Siri, show me a picture of Red Rocks Park”
  - “Hey Siri, show me a picture of Taylor Swift”
- **Find your car**
  - “Hey Siri, where’s my car”
- **Get directions**
  - “Hey Siri, directions home”
  - “Hey Siri, directions to Senior Planet Center”
- **Quickly change screen brightness**
  - “Hey Siri change screen brightness to 100 percent”
  - “Hey Siri make by screen brighter”
- **Quickly change your sound volume**
  - “Hey Siri set volume to fifty percent
  - “Hey Siri increase (or decrease) volume”

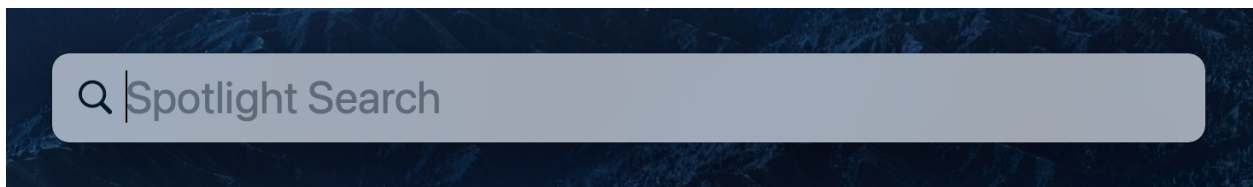


# Spotlight Search

Spotlight search is very powerful on the Mac. You can pull it up by clicking on the magnifying glass button in the top right on your screen:



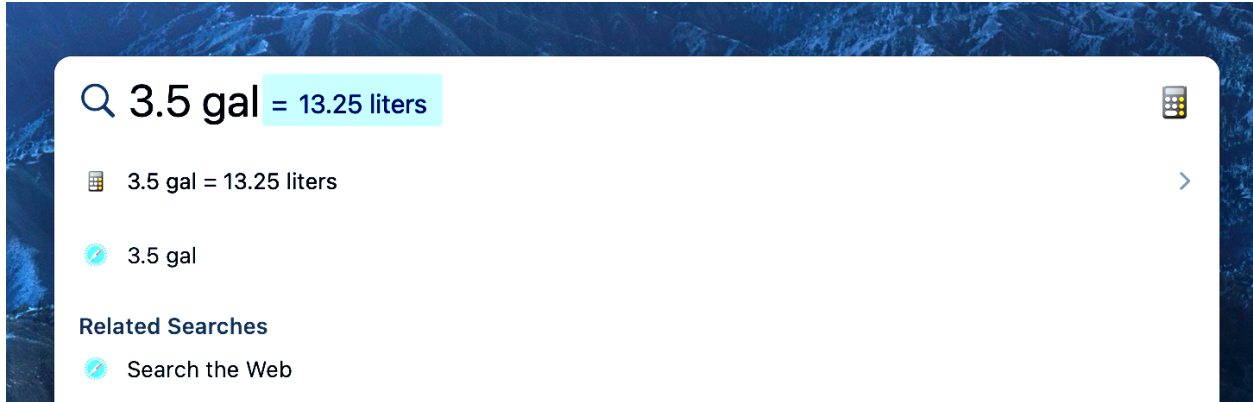
The search popup will appear



The keyboard shortcut for the is to hold the Command Key down and tap on the space bar.

You can find any file on your computer by name or if the file contains the entered text, similar to the search options in the Finder.

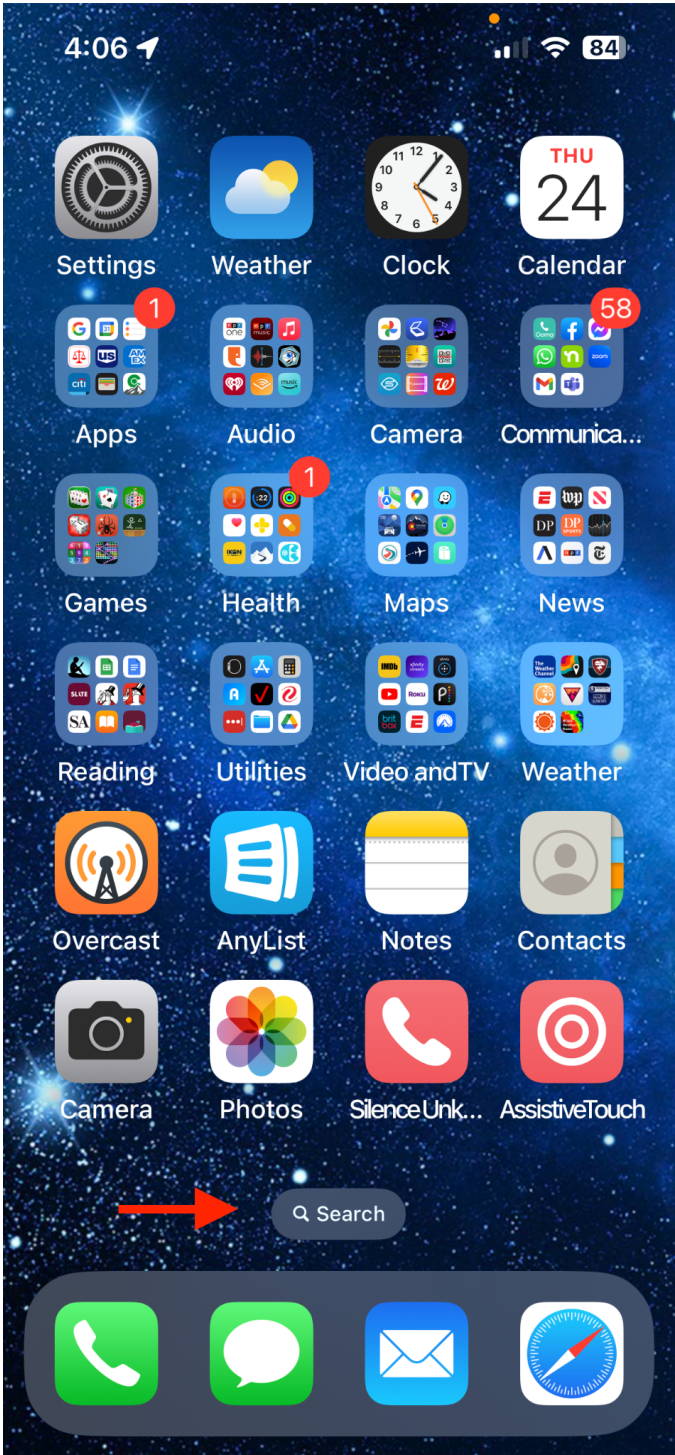
You can also ask questions or do arithmetic or conversion, e.g. when I type in "3.5 gal" it assumes I want to convert it to liters.



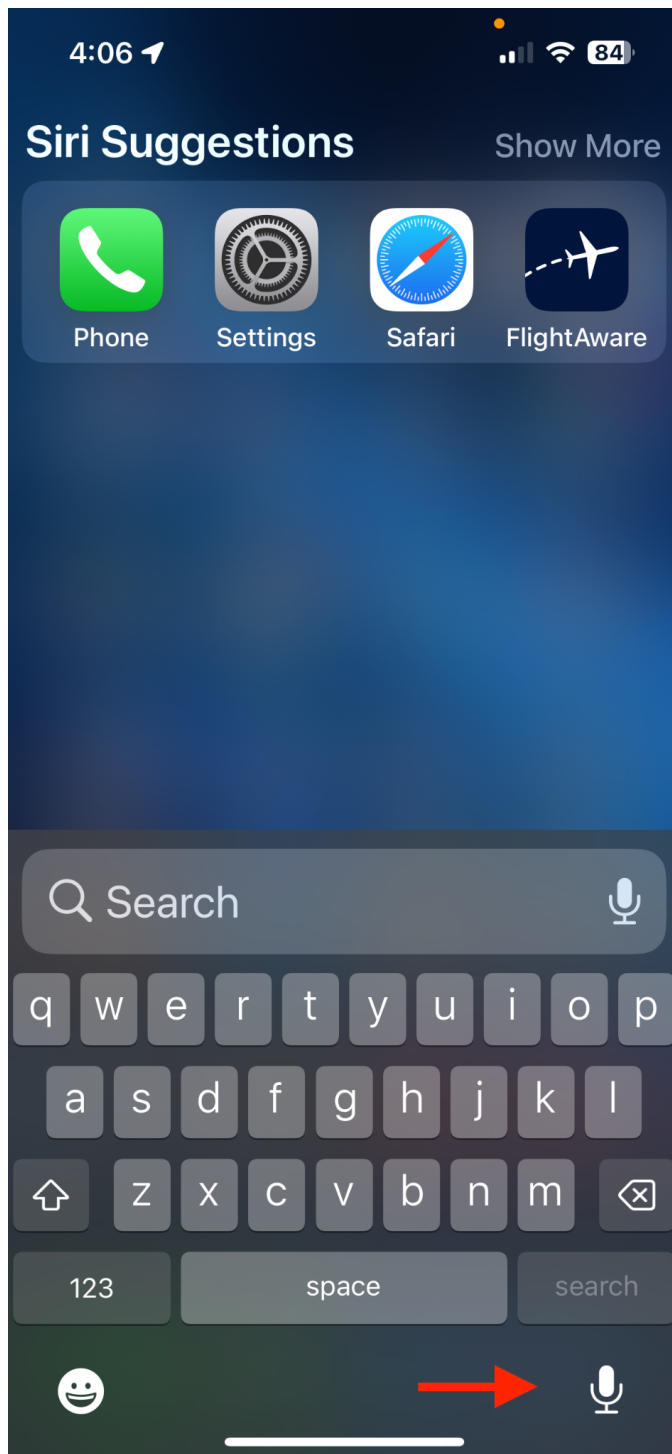
I can ask for the weather, etc. Spotlight search always shows different options, like web pages or files:



On your phone, you can get to Spotlight Search by tapping on the Search button at the bottom of the home screen:

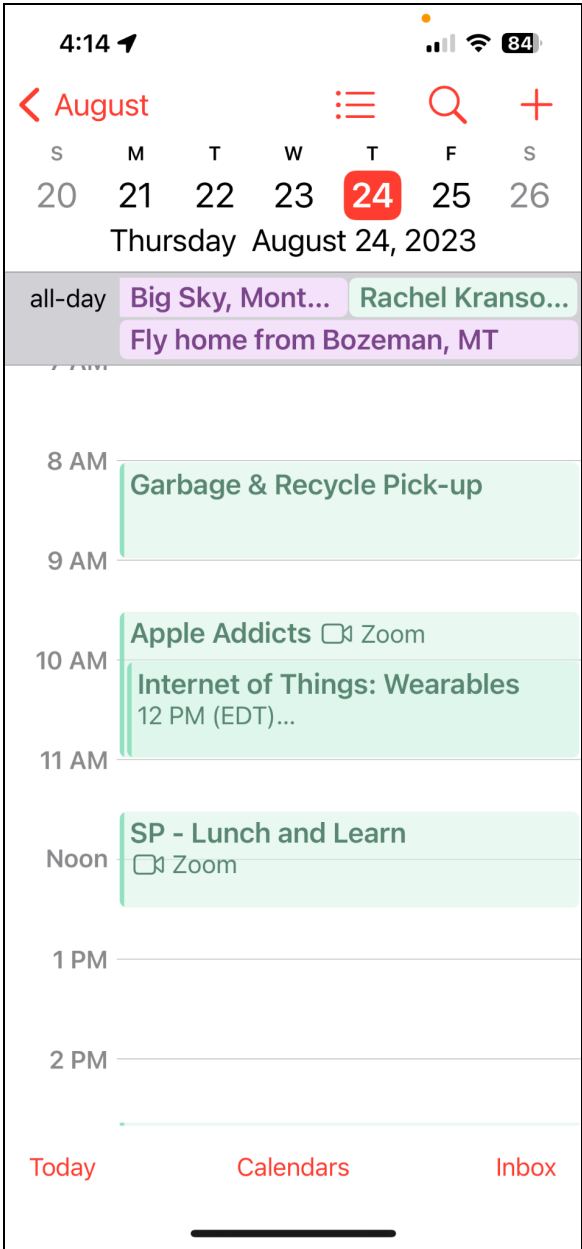


You can also put your finger in the middle of the screen and slide down slightly. This brings up the Search page where you can type in your search or press the microphone button to dictate it:

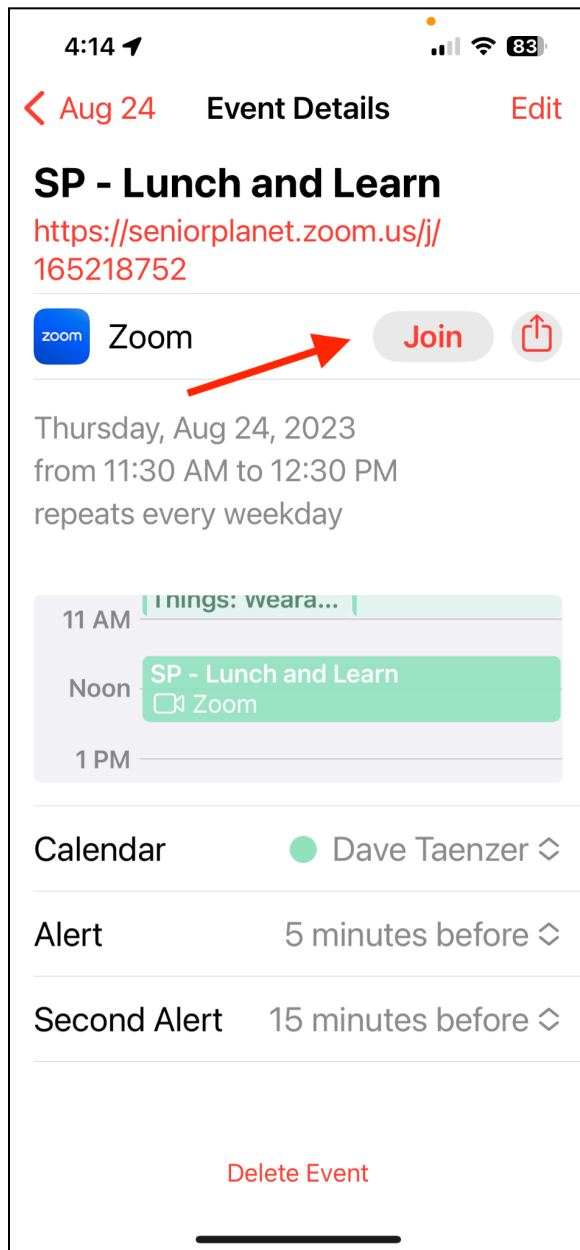


# Calendar

The Calendar App is a great way of keeping track of your schedule and upcoming meetings, like Zoom classes. You can use the Location field in the Calendar for the physical address of your meeting or the Zoom weblink:



When you tap on a zoom link, there will be a Join button to open Zoom in that meeting.



If the location is a physical address, you can click on it to get directions via Apple Maps.

# Contacts

It is incredibly useful to save your contacts in the Contacts app. You can set up Contacts to use iCloud, Google or another Internet account to store the calendar data. You don't need to use the Apple iCloud with the Calendar or Contacts app. I actually use them to view and modify my Google Calendar and Contacts.

Here are a few things that you can use Contacts data for:

- Phone calls
  - You can tap on the phone number in the Contacts app or use Siri to start of phone call based on the contact name
- Directions
  - You can tap on an address in the Contacts app to open Apple Maps and get directions to the location
- Birthdays
  - If you save a birthday for a Contact, it can appear in the Calendar app every year with the red gift icon. If you put in the birth year, it will tell you what birthday it is:



 Paul Taenzer's 73rd Birthday

- Messages, Email, Phone and Facetime
  - At the top of the Contact display there are buttons to call the Contact, send a message via the Messages app, start a Facetime call (Video) or send them an email via the Mail app.

# Maps

Apple and Google maps are very handy when driving or walking to a location and can give you audio directions. If you use Apple Maps and have an Apple Watch, it will vibrate when a turn is coming up. This in combination with the spoken directions makes it much harder to get lost.

You can also search for nearby gas stations, restaurants, public bathrooms, etc. There are specific apps specialized for these tasks, like GasBuddy for finding nearby gas stations and their prices or Yelp for finding restaurants or other locations along with ratings, but the map apps make it easy to find what you are looking for.

Apple Maps automatically coordinates with the Calendar and Contacts apps (as described above) so you can get directions to the location of a calendar event or a contacts address.



# Notes

The Notes app can be very handy for entering textual information and formatting it. Notes can be organized into albums, so for example, I put recipes in a Recipes album in my Notes and bring them up on my iPad when I am cooking.

You can also put photos into notes and get the Notes app to scan documents. This is much easier than using a physical scanner to get an image of a document.

When you enter a note and tap on the camera button, a menu pops up to either use an existing photo, take a new photo with the iPhone camera, scan text or scan a document. The Scan Document automatically fixes the alignment of the document and does various corrections to make it easy to view. This works very well with business cards.

This is a Youtube video that shows how to use Notes to scan documents:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s\\_5hjTo78s4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_5hjTo78s4)

There are other ways to scan documents with your phone, but Notes is very easy to use. You can then tap on the photo in Notes and then the Share button to save it or share it with a friend.

The Notes app can be used to create numbered or bullet lists of items. I use a note to remember what questions I want to ask my doctor the next time I see them. You can also use a note for your medications, etc.

# Reminders

I didn't use the Reminders app that much until a few months ago but I use it all the time now to quickly remind myself to do things or call folks. You can just use Siri to quickly add a reminder ("Hey Siri, remind me to call John at 5pm).

You can also edit the reminder for repeated events (like taking out the trash). In conjunction with Siri, I find that it prevents me from forgetting to do tasks that I intend to do a bit later. If I don't set a reminder, there is a good chance I will forget to do them.

There are many good Youtube videos on using Reminders, e.g.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Tk47Qeo0fE>

Here is one for using Reminders on the Mac

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDwmBgidPd8>

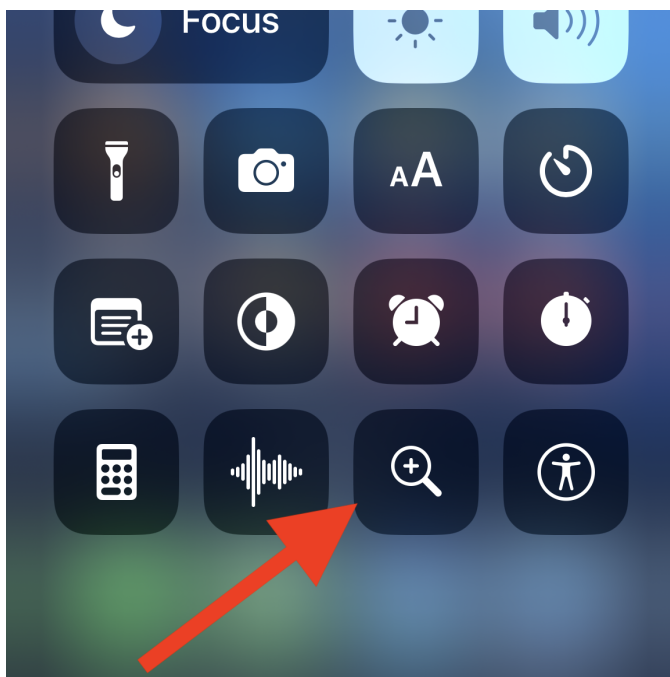
This is a compressive tutorial video if you want to see all the features:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArpQoO1teGc>

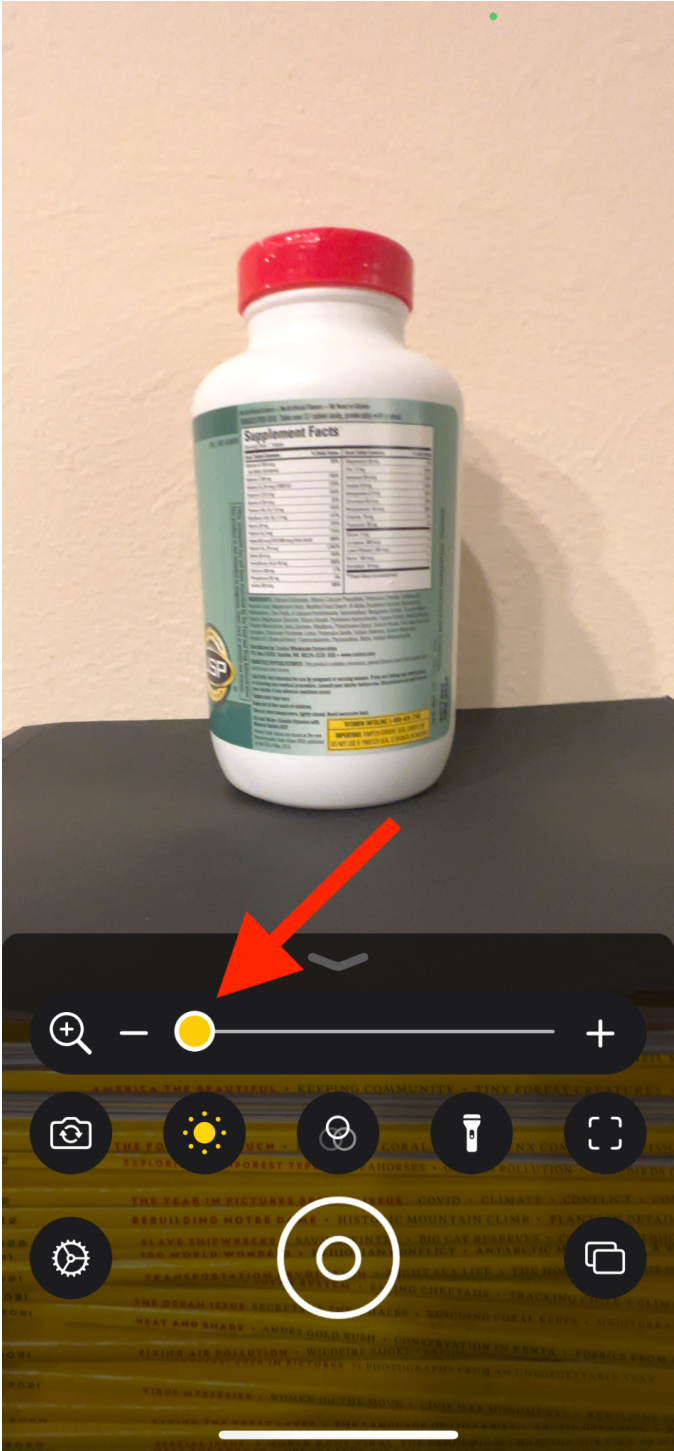
# Magnifier

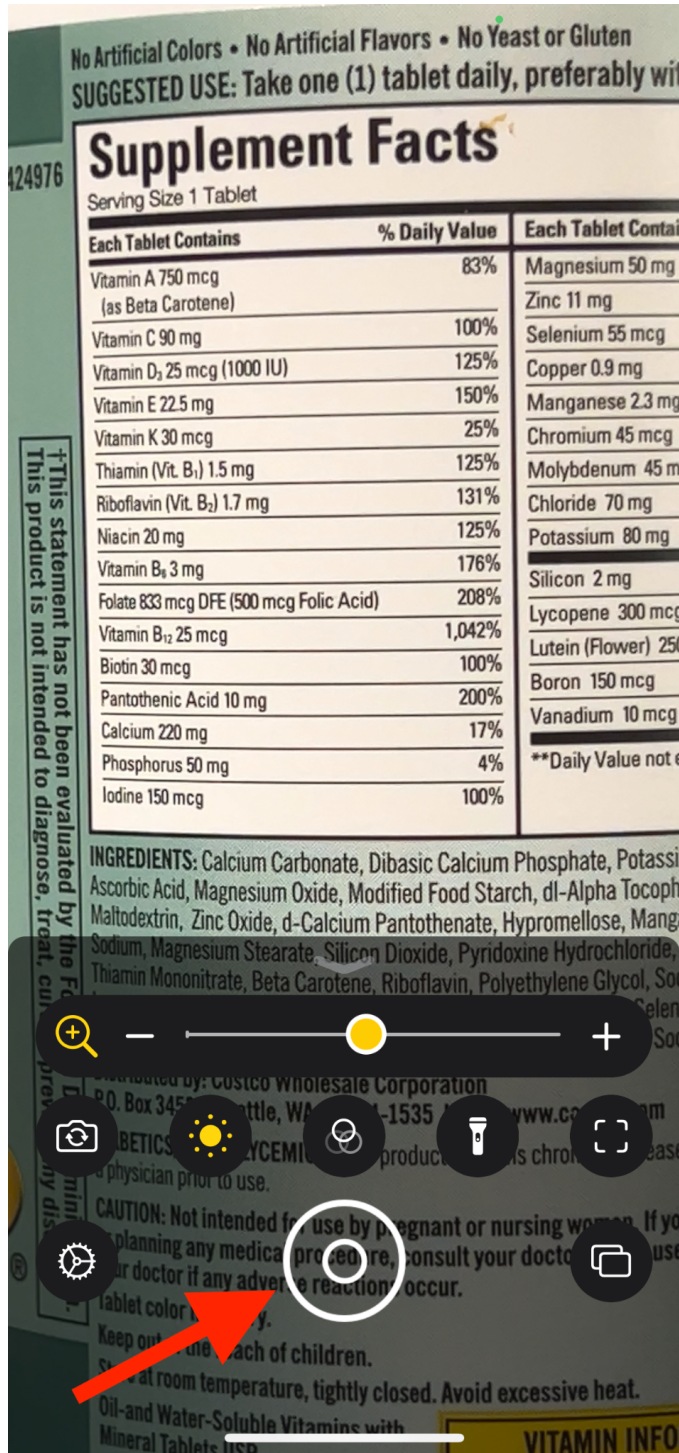
The Magnifier app is like carrying a magnifying glass around with you all the time, only better. If you need to read the fine print on a package, you can just open the Magnifier app (by tapping the app icon, using the Control Center or saying “Hey Siri open Magnifier”).

If you add it to the Control Center (using the Settings app), it appears as a icon with a magnifying glass:



Magnifier opens showing you the view of the back camera. You can use the magnification slider (with the yellow circle) to zoom in. For example to look at the label on a multi-vitamin bottle:

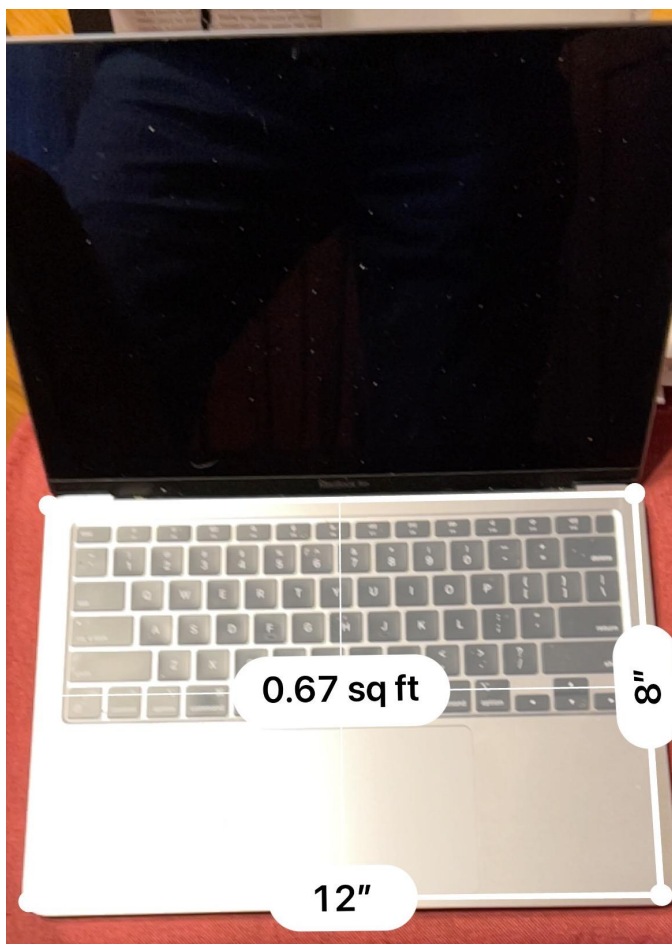




The buttons on the bottom let you control which camera you are using, the brightness, apply filters, turn on the flashlight, detect objects and the target button at the bottom captures a screenshot.

# Measure

The Measure app means you don't need to carry a measuring tape around with you - just use the Measure app. You can start it by tapping on the Measure app button or saying "Hey Siri open Measure". You can add points to measure from but it also automatically recognizes rectangles, e.g.:



This is a good introductory video on how to use the Measure app:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5pxcMzaGh0>



# Books

The Books app is very handy for storing books to read. It is similar to Kindle for reading Amazon books and Libby for library books.

This is a good introduction on downloading and reading books in the Books app:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vrc4r4uE4s>

The Books app is also a good place to save PDF files like recipes or user manuals. You can also save tickets to upcoming events and then delete them when you don't need them. You just need to have the ticket in PDF format and import it into the Books app.

You can create albums in the Books app (e.g. Manuals, Recipes, Tickets) to make it easy to find your files. I find the app very useful since it automatically syncs between all my devices. I can save a recipe as a PDF file on my Mac and then bring it up on my iPad when it's time to cook. This is often easier than saving the files in folders on the iCloud and then using the Files app to view the folders and files.

## Conclusions

Your iPhone has lots of built in apps that can work together to make your life easier. You don't have to use all of them or learn them all at once, but they can make your life much easier once you learn how to take better advantage of what your iPhone or other Apple device can easily do for you.