

Using Web Browser Tabs

All web browsers on all devices support the ability to open a web page in a new tab instead of the current window or tab. This is very useful since you do not lose what you are currently looking at and can easily get back to that web page by simply closing the new tab. This is particularly useful when you do use an Internet search engine (like Google or DuckDuckGo) since you do not lose your search results when you click on a link.

You can get back to where you were via the Back button on the browser but it is easier and much more efficient to use tabs. The problem is that if you follow a link from the search result web page and then another link, you may have to click the back button many times to get back to the search results. Tabs make this process much easier and more efficient.

Browsers support the following tab related features:

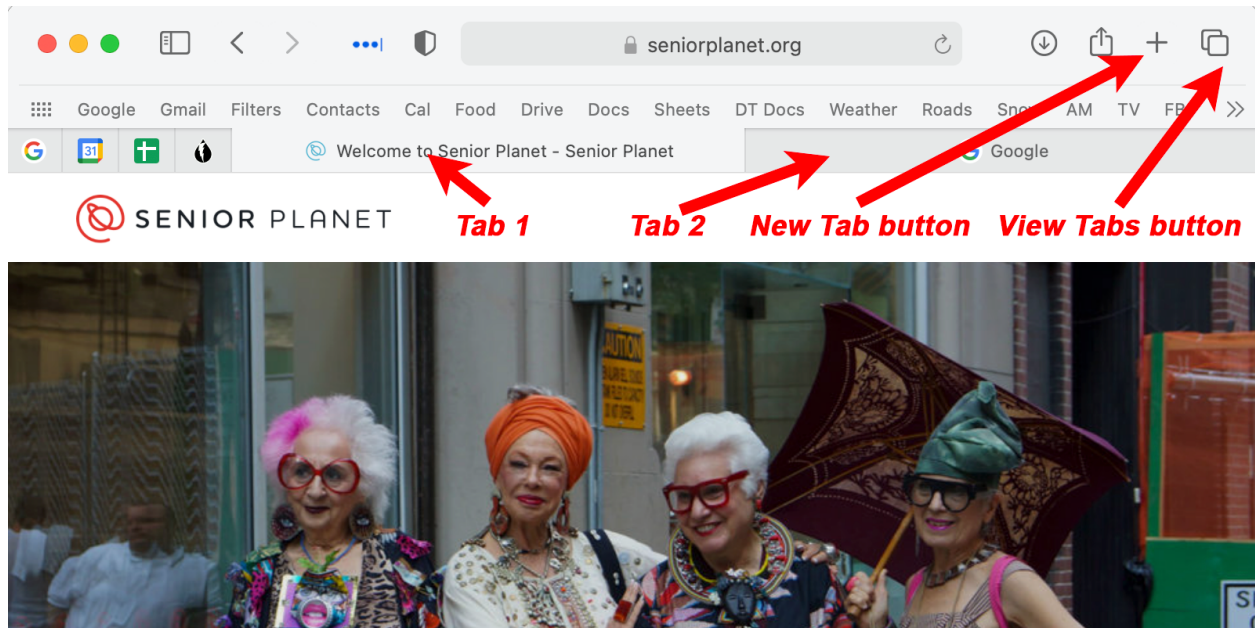
- Opening a new tab and going viewing a web page in it
- Following a link from a web page by opening the link in a new tab
- Switching between tabs
- Closing the current tab and going back to the previous tab
- Viewing the currently opened tabs
- Pinning tabs so they are always available (on computer browsers)

Tabs look different on different browsers and different devices. Today we will look at three different browsers (Google Chrome, Apple Safari and Mozilla Firefox) running on computers, tablets and smartphones.

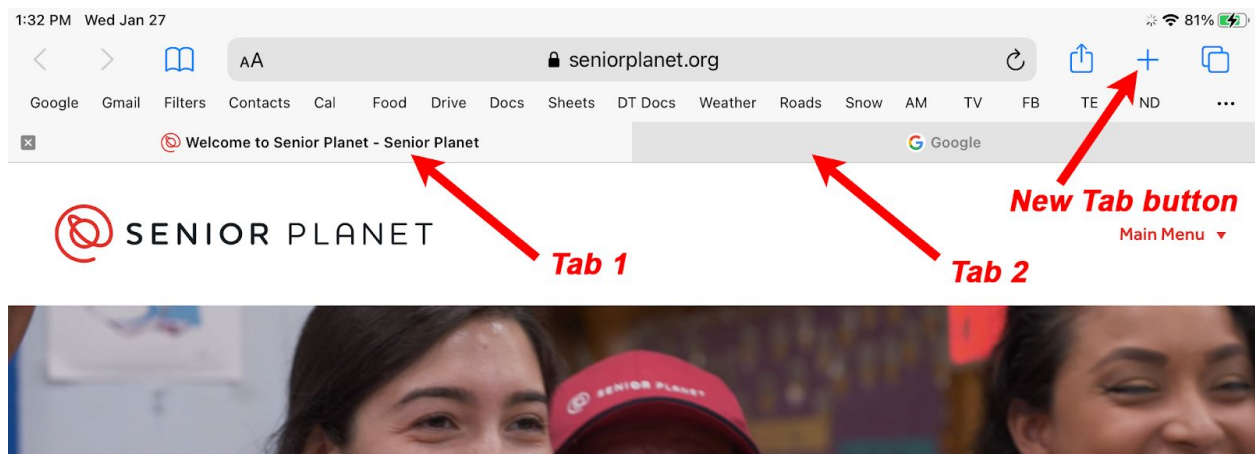
There are also different tab related preferences on the various browsers and devices.

Safari

Safari on the Mac puts the tabs above the web page in the browser window. In this case, there are two tabs:



The one with the lighter background is the active tab which is being viewed. There is also a "+" (plus) button for adding a new tab. With Safari on an iPad, the tabs look very similar:

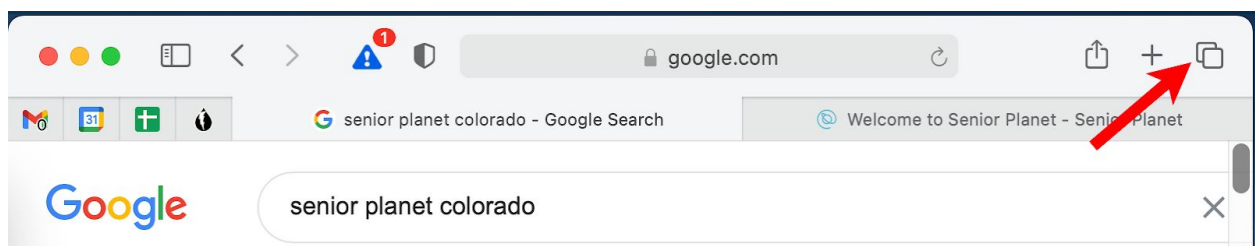


For both devices, the active tab has a lighter background and the inactive tab(s) have a darker background. You can switch between them by clicking on the tabs. The active tab has a close button (X) which lets you close the tab. On the Mac, the close button appears when you hover the mouse over a tab.

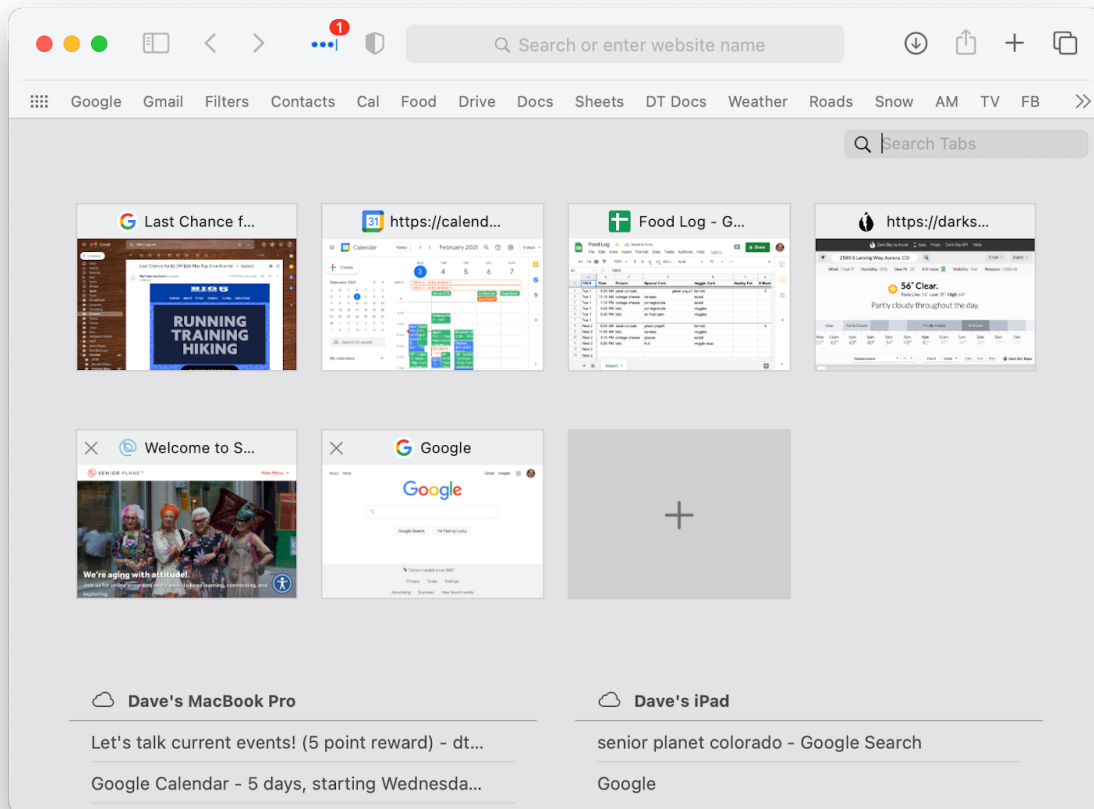
There is also a keyboard shortcut on the Mac and PC to close the current tab. You hold down the Command key on a Mac (or Control key on PC) and tap the W key. This closes the current tab and displays the previous tab.

This is a great way to quickly view search result links in Google or DuckDuckGo or another search website. You hold down the Command key on a Mac (or Control on a PC) and click the link to open it in a new tab. You can then click links on that web page to view related pages and use the Command/W on Mac (or Control/W on PC) to close that search result and go right back to the search results display.

On a Mac, if you click on the Tab button in the upper right part of the window which looks like two overlapping rectangles:

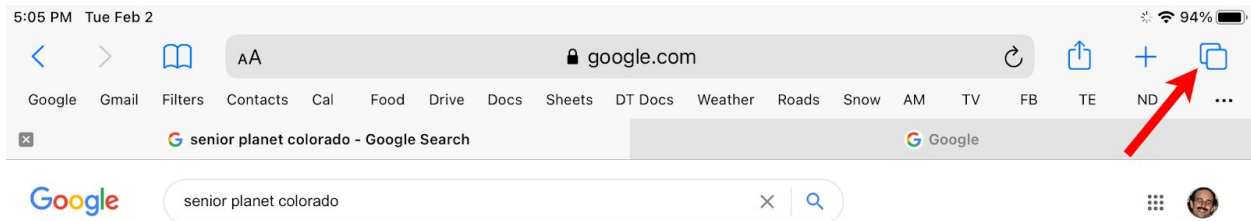


you will see a display of all the open tabs, which looks like this:

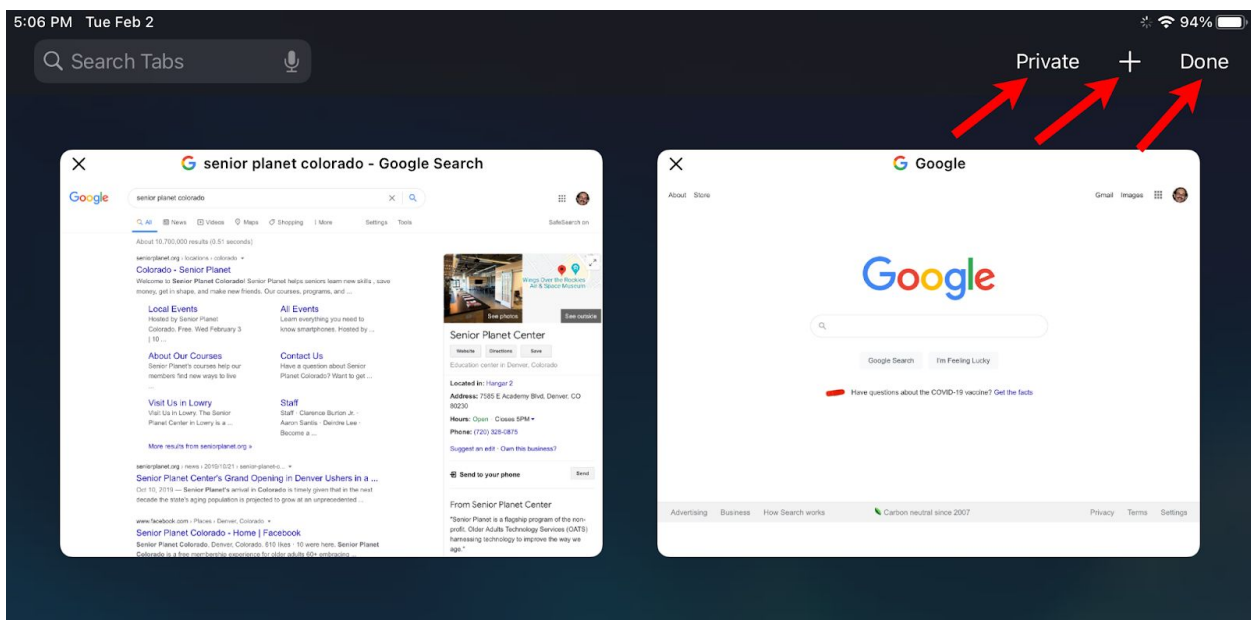


In this case, there are four pinned tabs and two regular tabs. You can click on any tab to switch to that tab. You can also click on the Close (X) button in the upper left of each unpinned tab image to close it.

On the iPad, you tap on the Tab button (the two overlapping rectangles to view the open tabs):

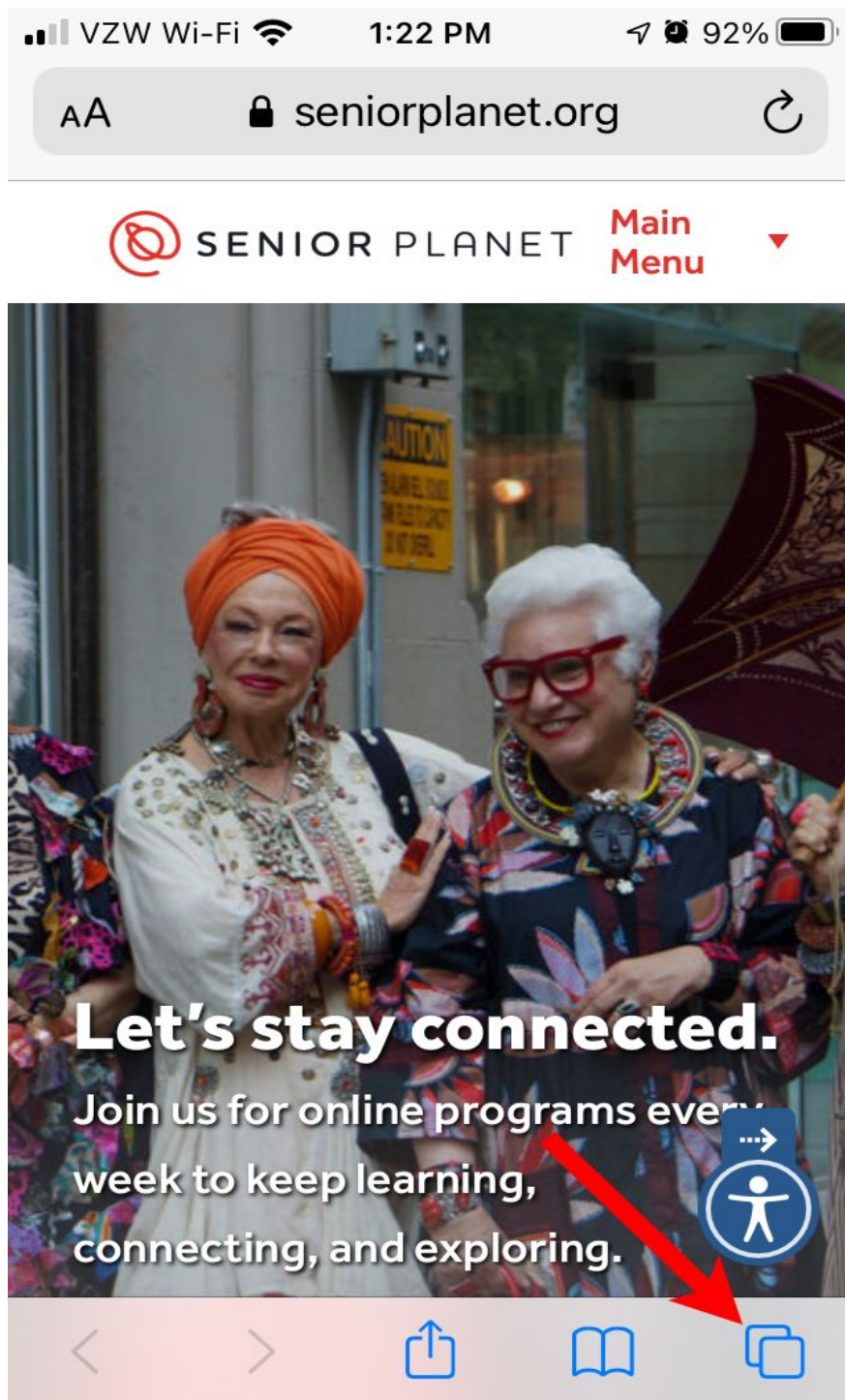


This brings up a tab display similar to the one on the Mac:

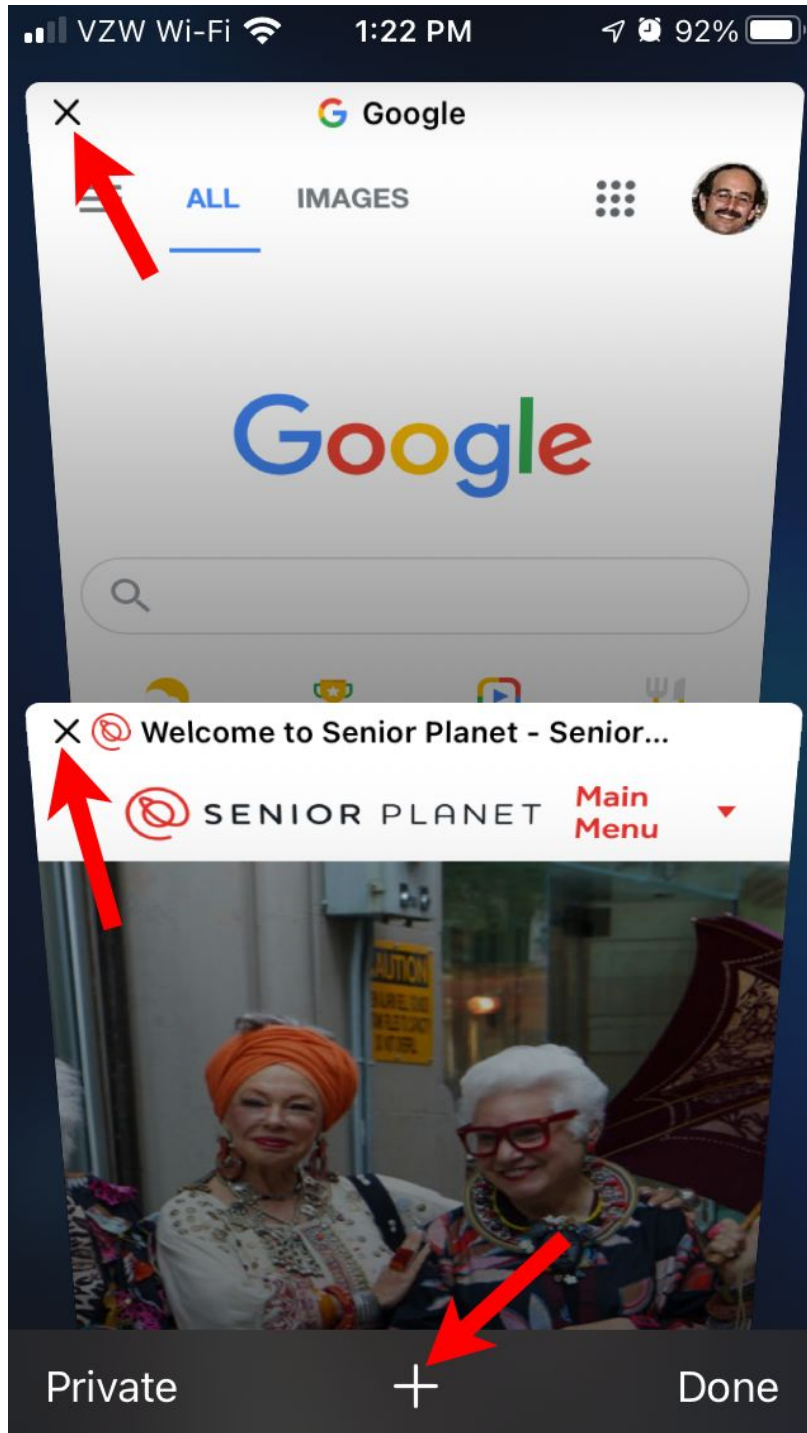


There are buttons on the top to add a new private tab, a new normal tab and a Done button to close the tab display.

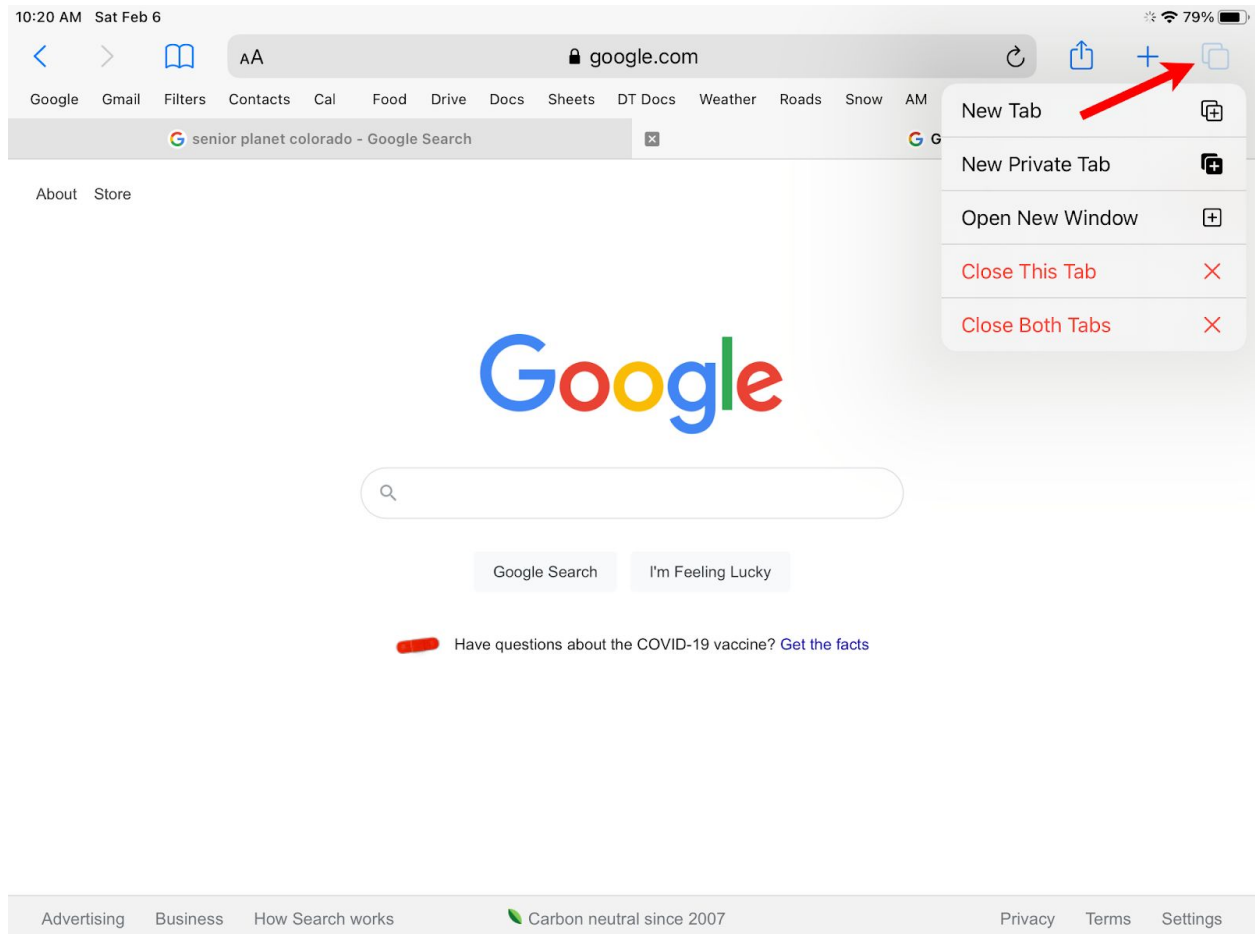
With Safari on an iPhone, you tap on the tab button in the lower right corner to view the current tabs:



This shows a three dimensional display of the tabs. You can tap on one of the tabs to open it or click the close (X) button in the upper left to close the tab. There is also a Plus (+) button to create a new tab:



On an iPhone or iPad you can press down and hold on the tab button (the overlapping rectangles) to see a popup menu that lets you close the current tab or all the tabs:

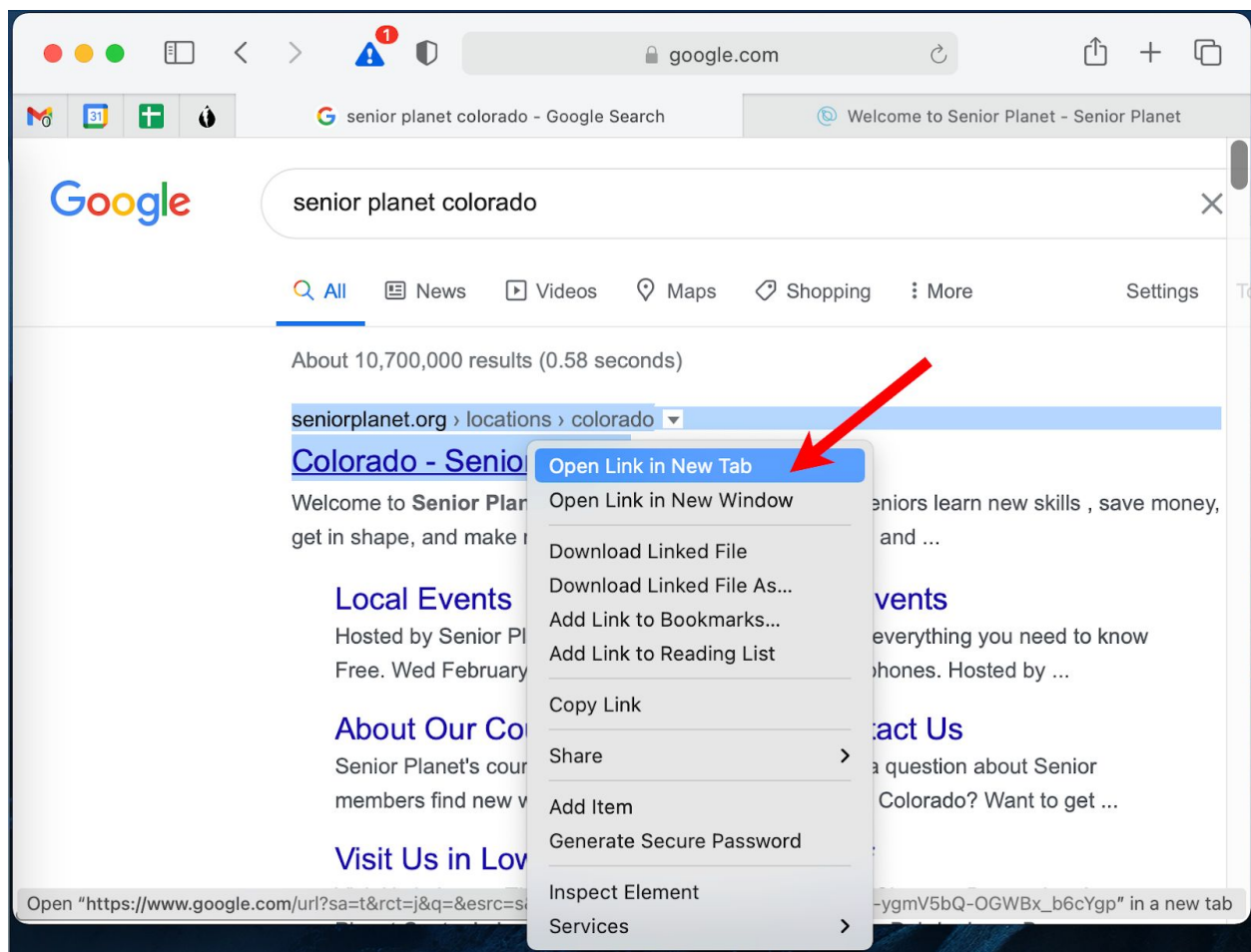


In Chrome, there is a Close All button on the tab display (after you tap on the tabs button). Firefox is similar. You can delete all tabs by clicking on the trash can button on the tabs display.

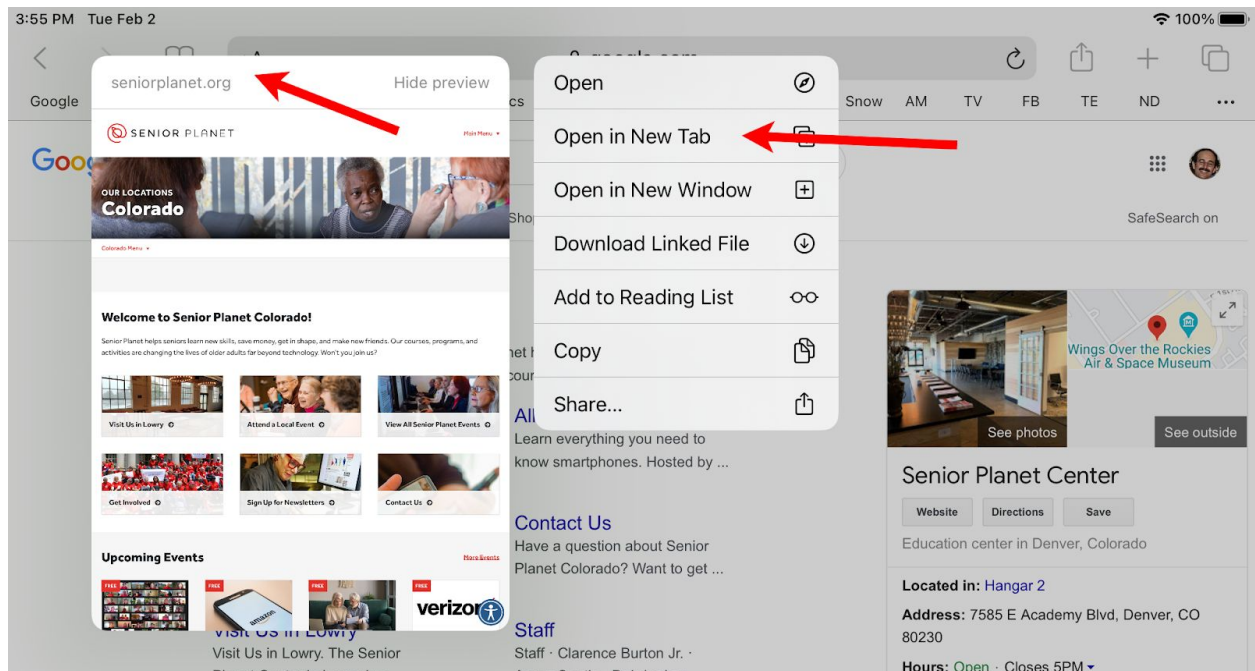
You can also open a link on a web page in a new tab instead of the current one. On a computer, you can right-click on a link to bring up a context menu and select the “Open Link in New Tab” option.

On a Mac, you can also hold down the Command button and click on a link to open it in a new tab. On a PC, this is done by holding down the Control button and clicking on a link.

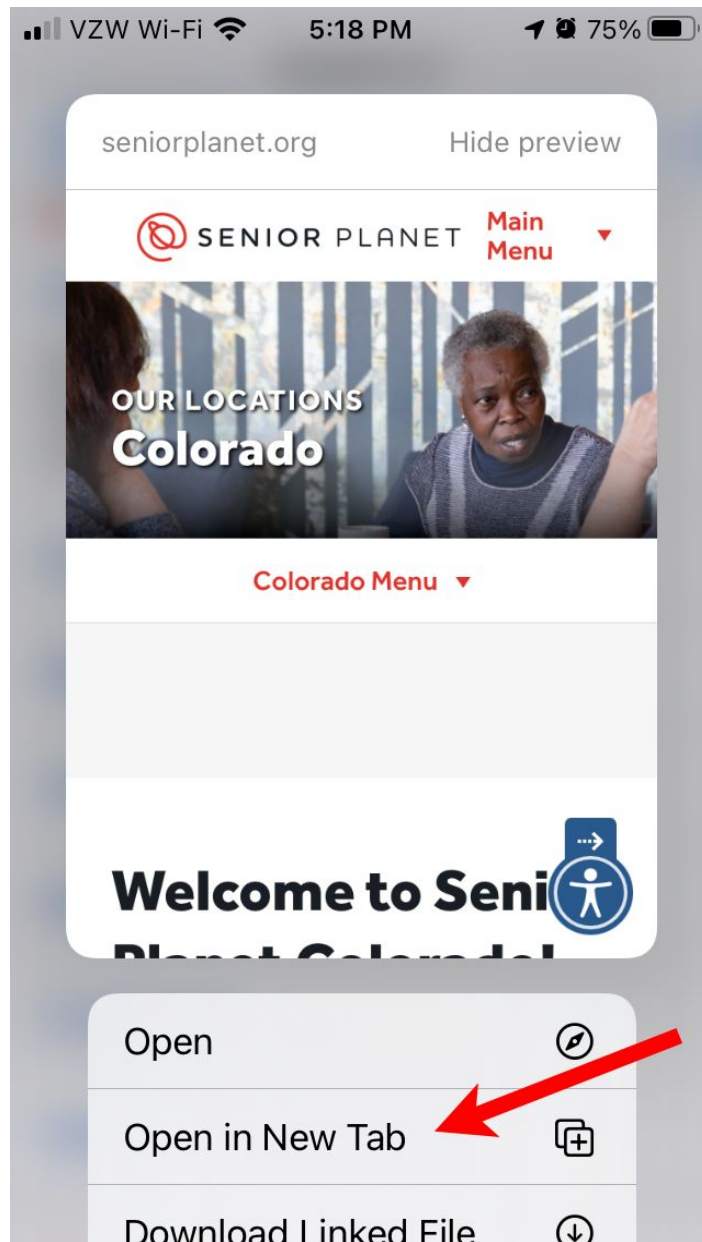
For example, if I search for “senior planet colorado” on the google.com web page and then right click on the first link, I see the context menu with the “Open Link in New Tab” option:



On the iPad, you click and hold down on a link to bring up the context menu and then tap on the “Open in New Tab” option. In Safari, you will see a preview of the link along with the menu options:

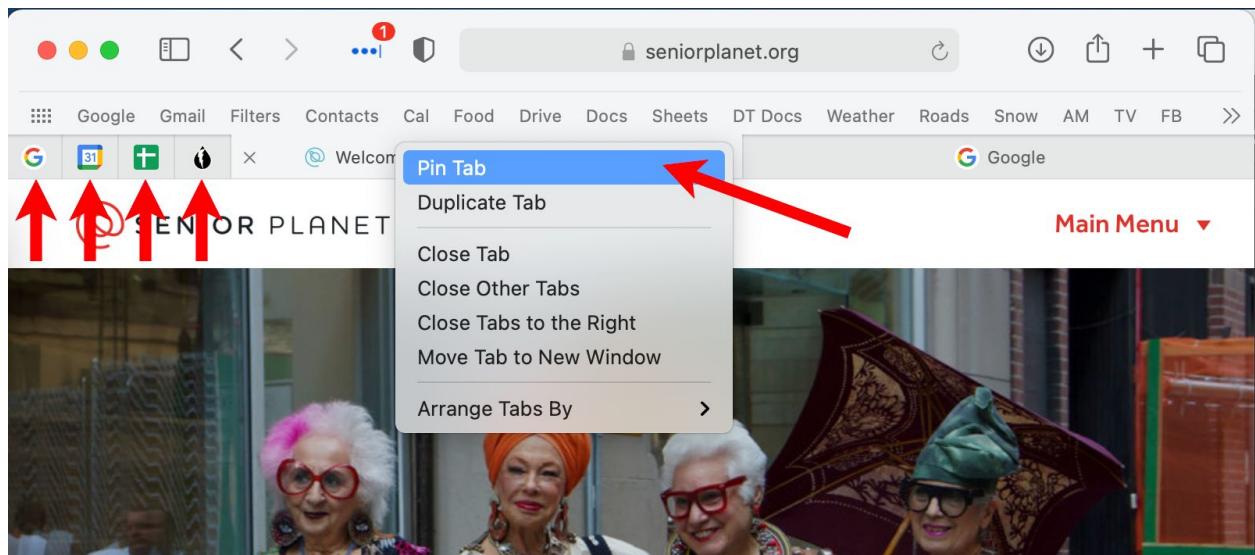


The same technique of holding down on a link is used on an iPhone:



The other browsers (Chrome and Firefox) work the same way on both devices.

In Safari on a Mac, you can right click on a tab at the top of the display to bring up a context menu which will let you close the tab, the other tabs or the tabs to the right of the current tab:

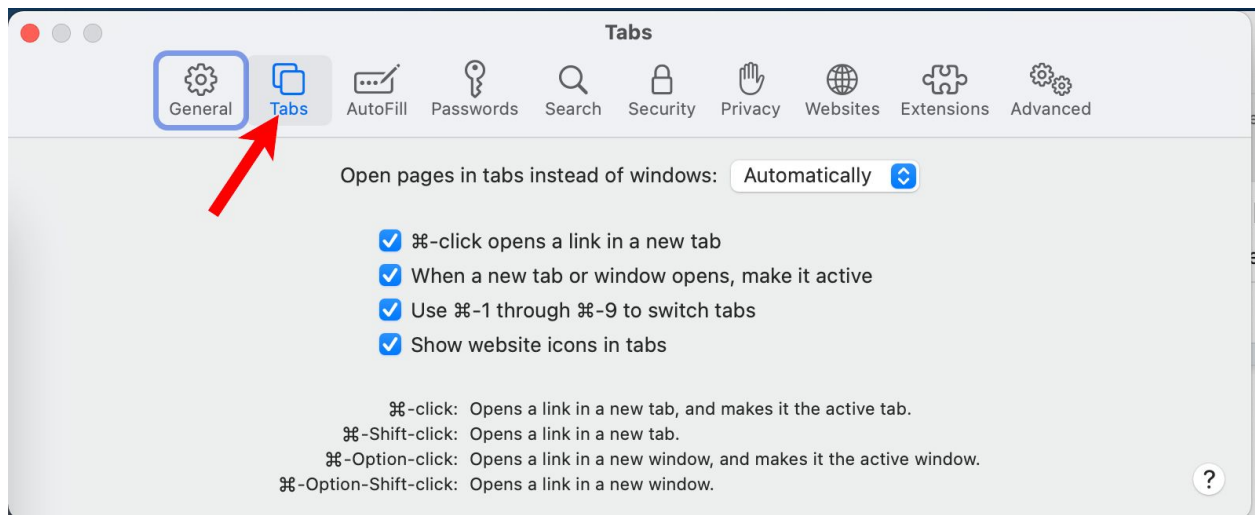


You can also choose “Pin Tab” to shrink the tab and keep it on all browser windows. In this case, there are four pinned tabs to the left of the other tabs. This is very helpful for websites you visit often, e.g. your email or calendar websites.

If you want to change a pinned tab back to a normal tab, you can right-click on the tab and select the “Unpin Tab” option. You can then close the tab if you wish.

You can quickly get to any tab on a computer by holding down the Command key on a Mac or the Control key on a PC and typing the number. For example, Command/1 (Control/1 on PC) goes to the left most tab, Command/2 to the second tab, etc. This is a great way to switch to a pinned tab since they are pinned in the first few tab positions.

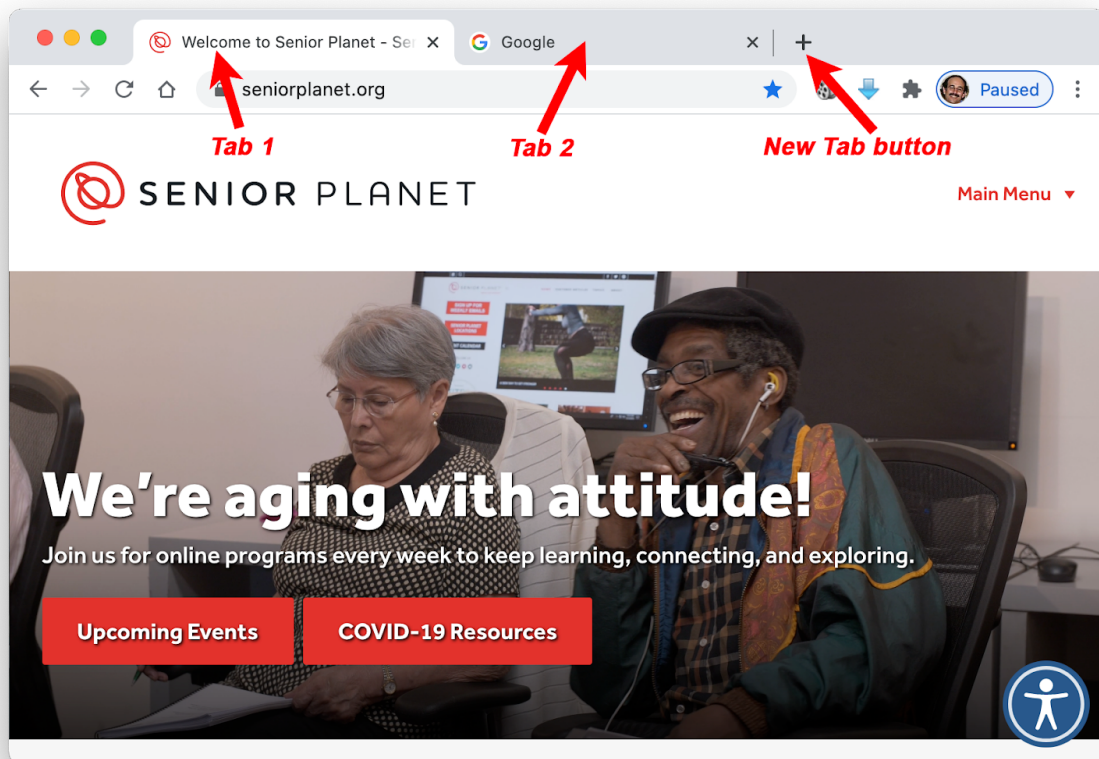
In Safari on a Mac, the Safari Preferences window is opened by selecting “Preferences” from the Safari menu. You can then click on the Tabs button to view the settings related to tabs:



This is where you specify that Command clicking opens a link in a new tab and when the tab opens it should become immediately active. I recommend checking all four options here.

Chrome

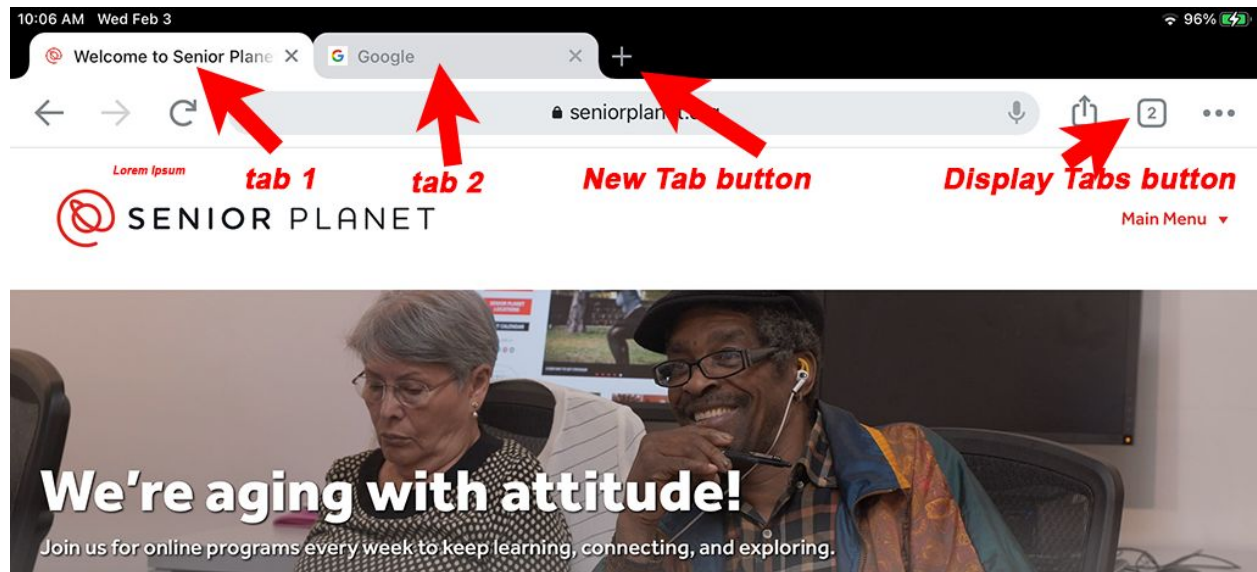
The Chrome browser works in similar fashion to Safari on all three types of devices (computer, tablet and smartphone). On the Mac, Chrome with two tabs open looks like this:



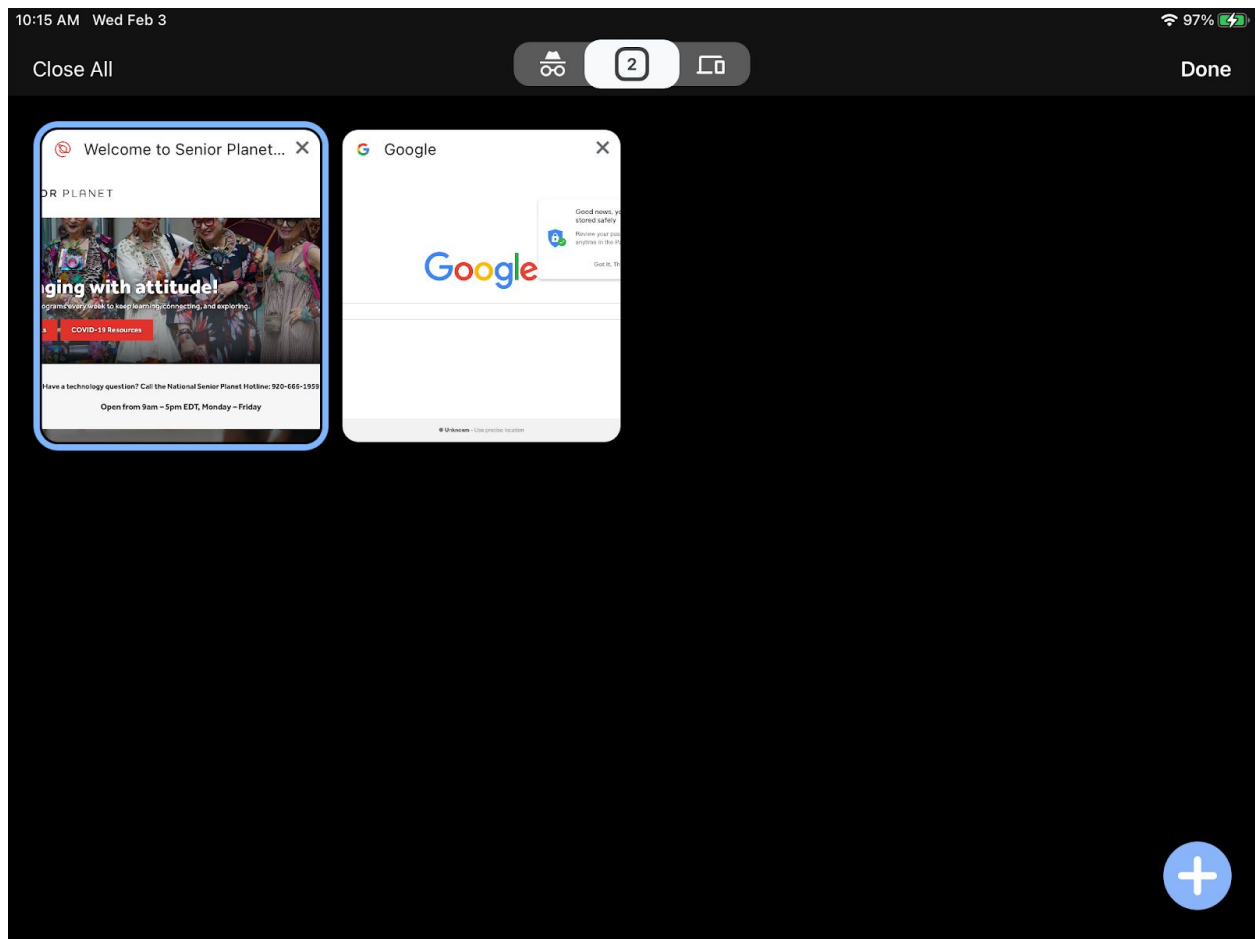
In Chrome, the tabs are at the very top of the browser window.

There is no built in button for displaying a preview of all the tabs on a computer, but this can be added with a Chrome extension.

On the iPad, the display is similar but does have a button to preview the tabs:



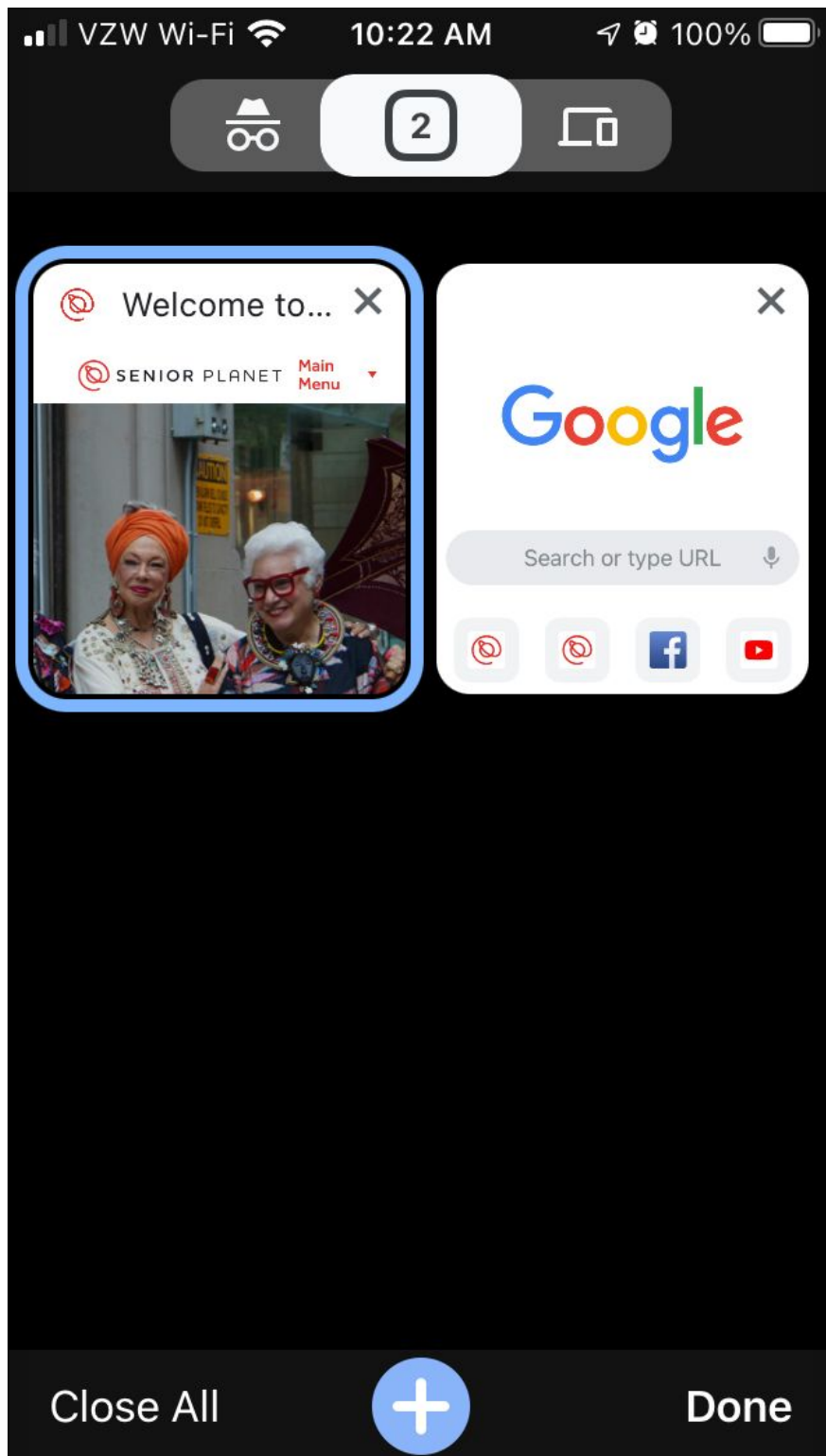
The tab preview on an iPad looks like this:



On the iPhone, Chrome looks similar to Safari:

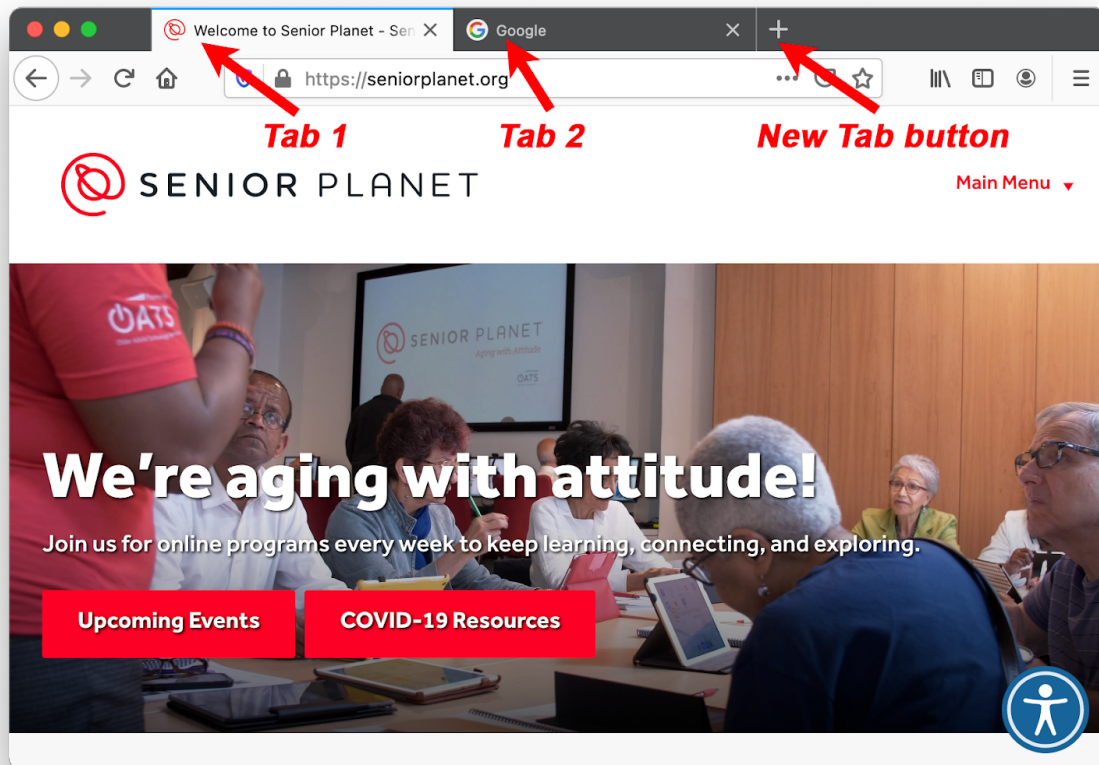


The tabs preview looks like this:



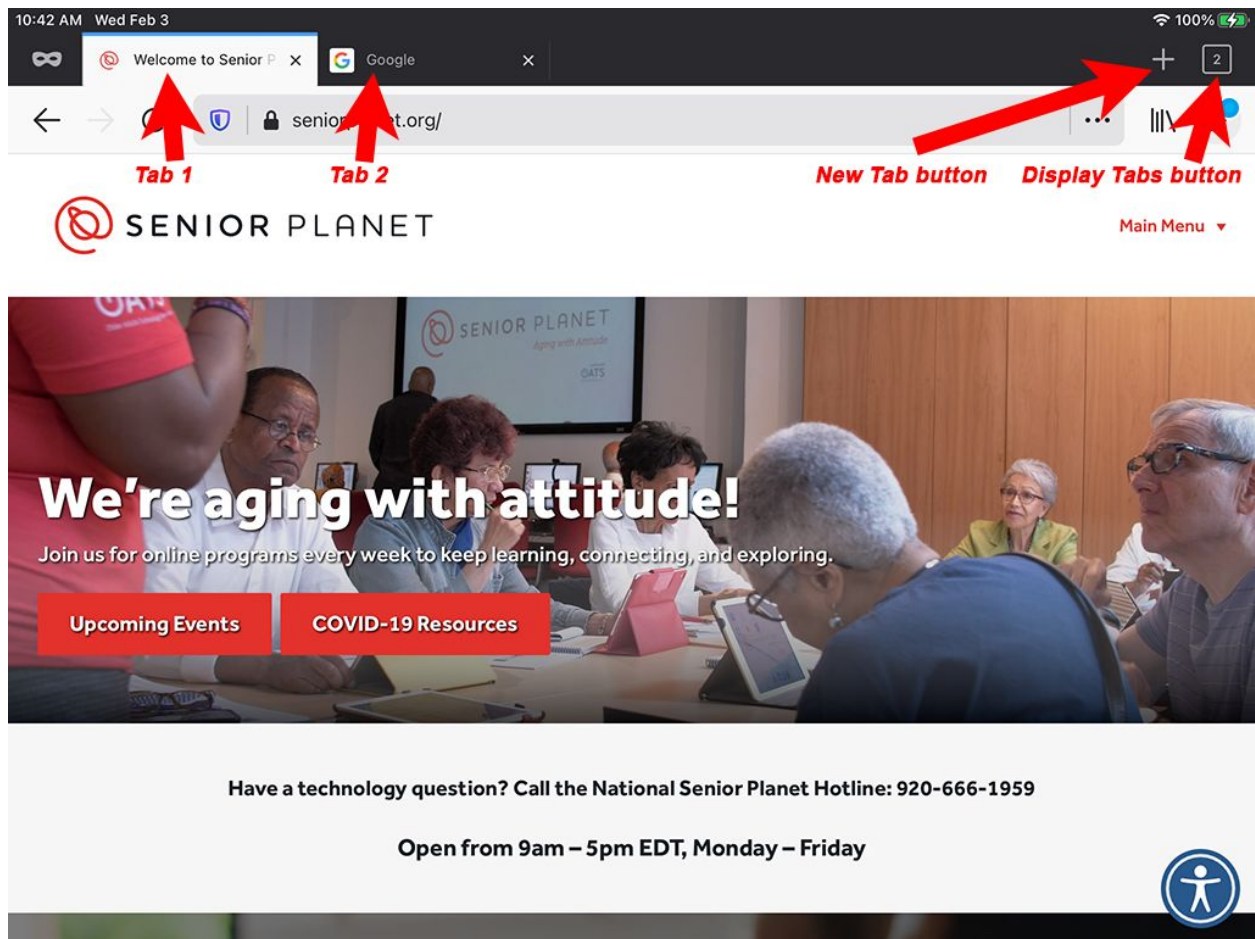
Firefox

Firefox on a Mac looks similar to the other browsers:

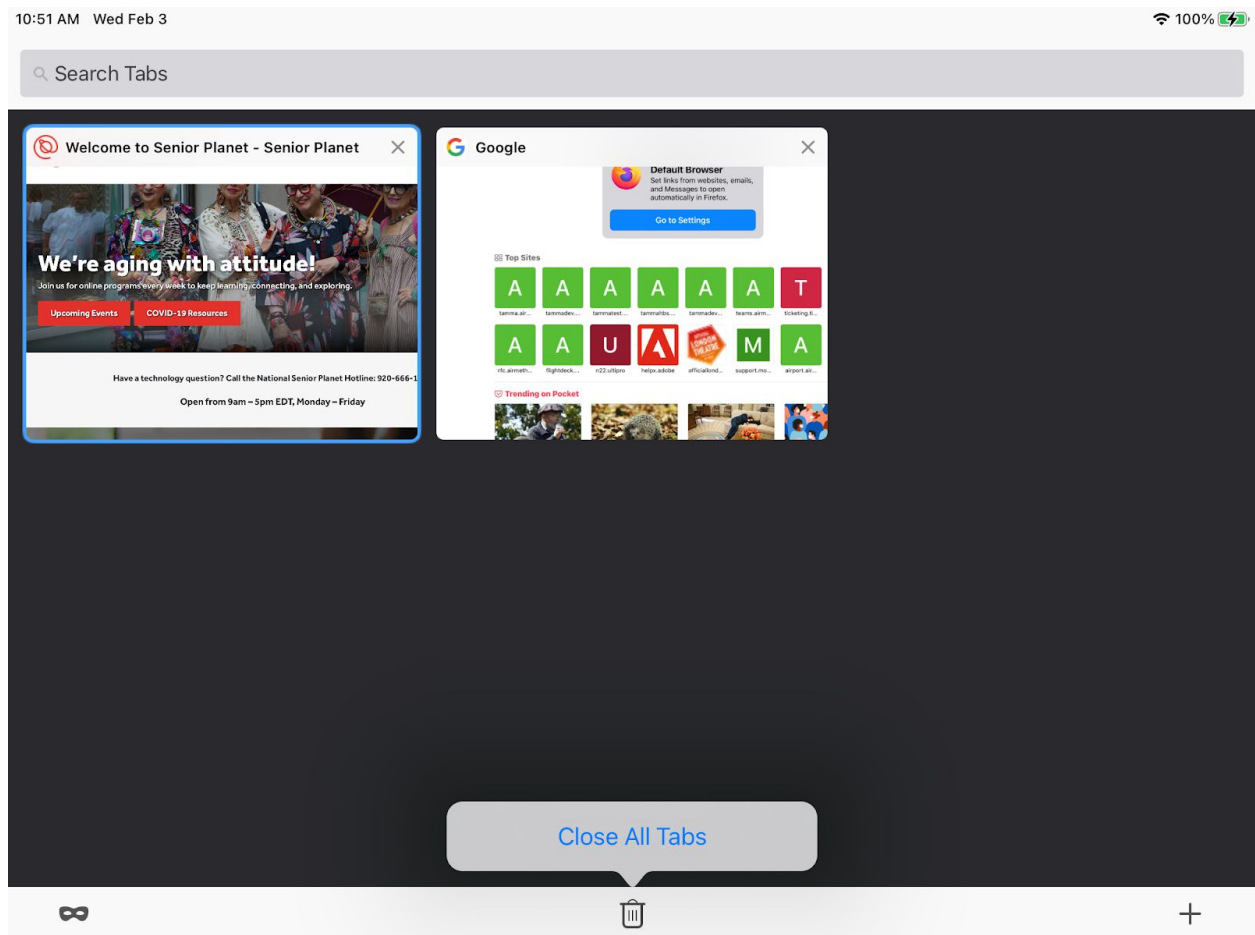


There is no built-in button for previewing the tabs on computers, but this can be added with a Firefox extension.

Firefox on the iPad looks very similar but has a button to preview the tabs:

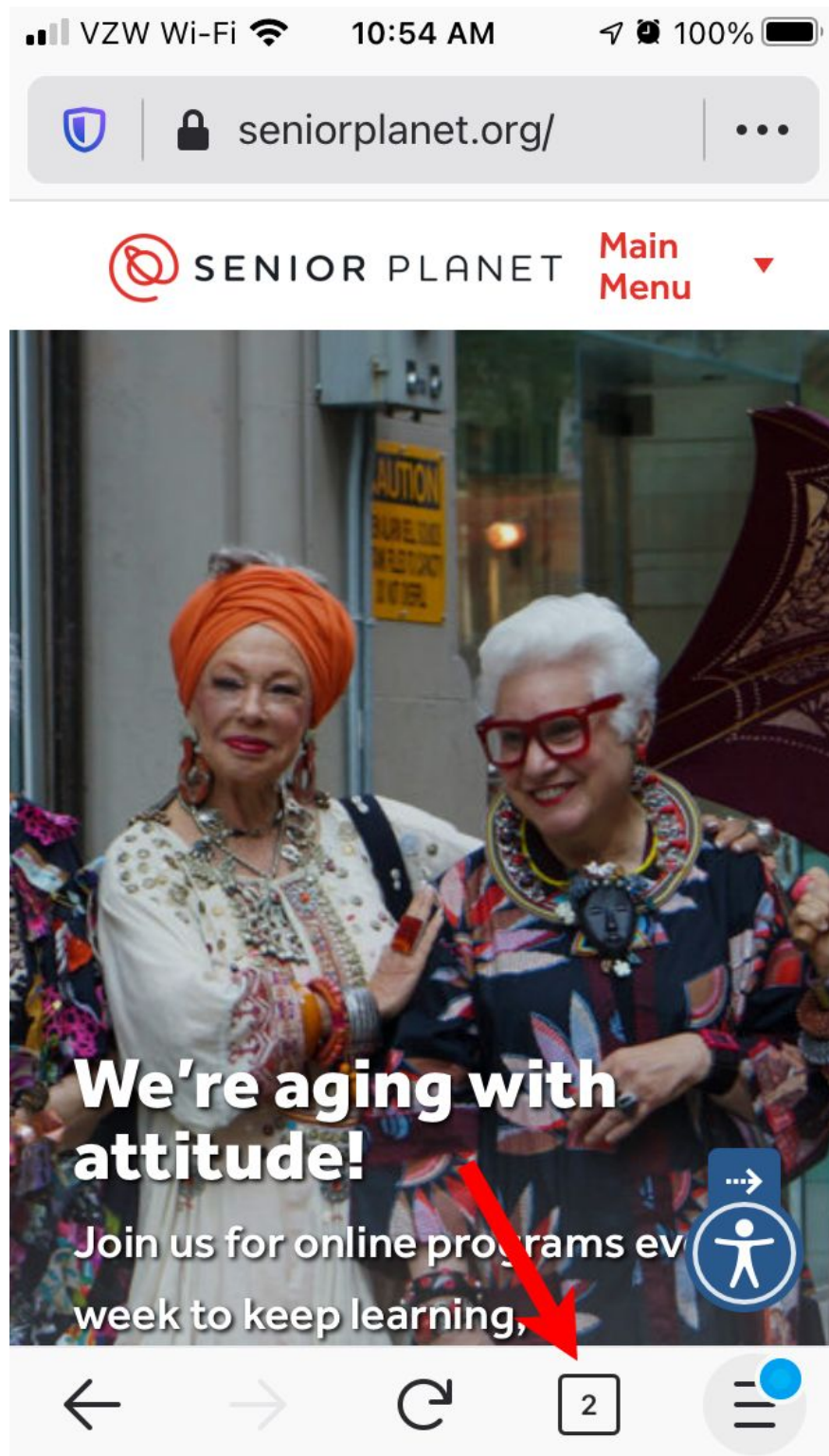


The preview tabs display in Firefox on the iPad looks like this:

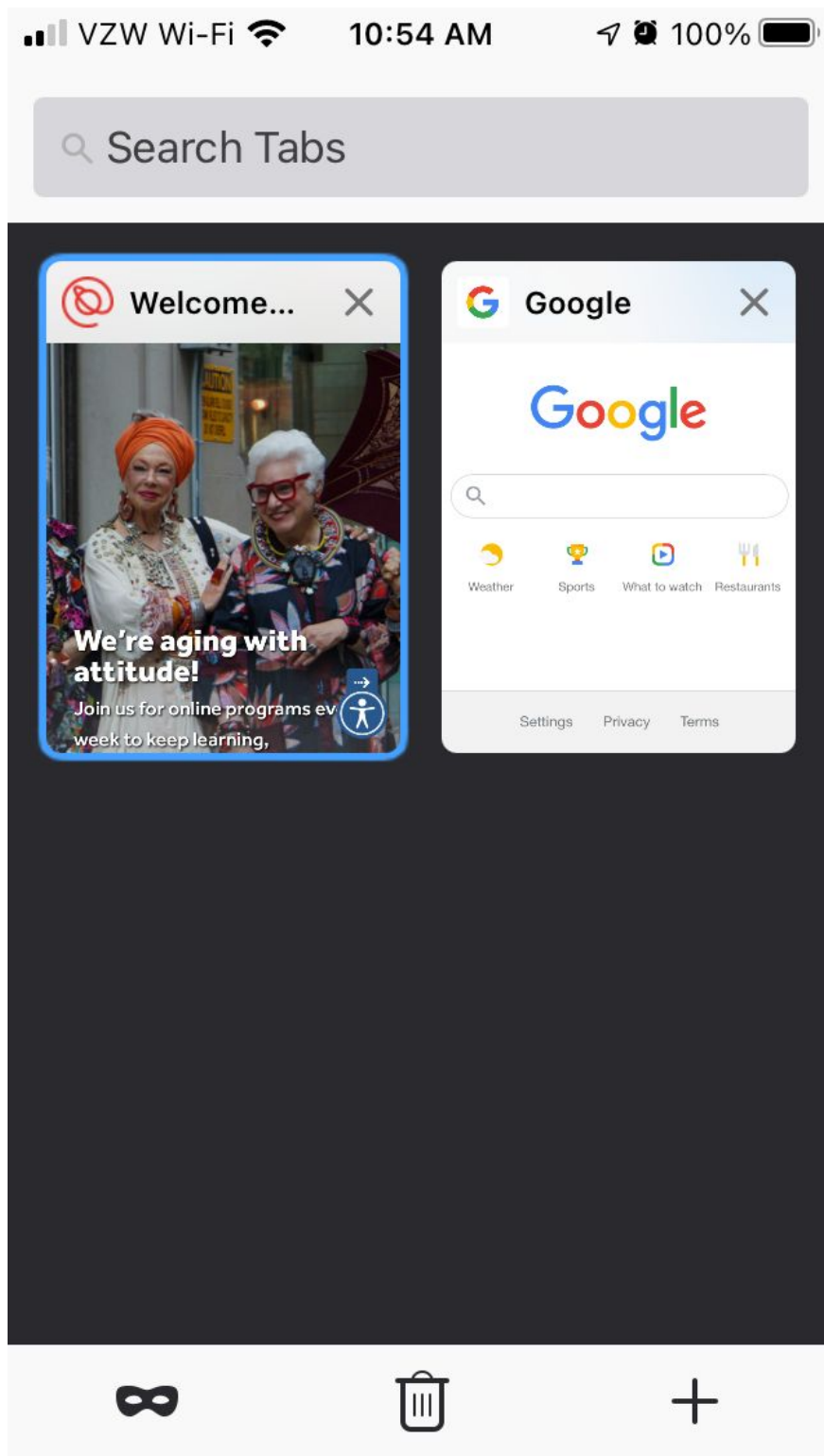


The three buttons on the bottom are for adding a private tab, closing all the tabs and adding a new tab (+).

Firefox on the iPhone looks very similar to the other browsers:



The preview tabs display looks like this:



There are many other web browsers available on the various devices. As you can see from the examples above, they all do most of the tab related features and do it in a very similar fashion.

Using tabs, particularly on computers, can make your browsing experience much simpler and faster and it is worth trying it out to see how well it works for you.