

First Things First: Your New iPhone

Congratulations on your purchase or gift of a new iPhone, you've joined a group of people who are particularly happy with their choice. Once you get that battery charged there are a few things that you want to do to ensure your enjoyment of your iPhone.

Get a case, please. I know this isn't the most exciting bit of advice to hear, but you've got a lot of glass in your hand and you want to protect it from scratches and breakage. You have a lot to choose from, starting with the bumper guards all way up to some very fancy, and armored, cases. A simple slip on will at least cushion edge drops and bangs.

Sign up for iCloud. This is a handy new service that Apple is rolling out and allows you to save information from your iPhone without the need for a USB cable connection to your computer. When you first power on your iPhone, you will need to make some selections. iCloud is one of those selections and you can tell it what you want to backup. You get 5 GB of storage for free from Apple but you can always buy more.

Turn on Find My Phone. This is a very important one that you do want to make sure that you enable. Once you get it enabled on the iPhone, download and install the free Find My iPhone app on your computer and test it out. You can also do this through iCloud.com via any web browser. What happens if you misplace your iPhone and you're not near your computer? Just download the application to a friend's computer or one of their Apple devices. You can use the app to display a message on the phone, play a sound, set a passcode remotely and if necessary, wipe the device.

Sync your movies, music and photos over Wi-Fi. Of course you want to carry your stuff with you on your iPhone to enjoy and share but you want to make sure that you can back it up as well. The first time you do a sync you're going to have to do it using USB with iTunes but after that you can use Wi-Fi. Just make sure that you set the sync the way that you want otherwise the iPhone will do it in a random way that it thinks will work for you best. Automatic is sometimes good but not in this case. Tell it what you want.

Get some apps — especially free ones. No doubt you've heard of the App Store and its huge selection of apps. Now is the time for you to jump in and see what there is to be had. There are a lot of ways to find out what are the best apps to get. Read the online best apps lists at your favorite magazine or check the App Store. Its tracking mechanism can show you which ones are the most popular downloads. And of course, Apple will be more than happy to suggest apps for you to buy.

Shop for media the right way. Apple's App Store, iTunes and iBooks are easy ways to buy media, but aren't necessarily the best or least expensive ways. Amazon MP3 and Amazon books can offer a larger selection as well as some discounts and will have to files that can be played on the iPhone. Make sure to take a look at Netflix, Hulu, Spotify and Pandora for streaming music and video.

Keep an eye on battery life. This is a tricky one, as there are so many things on the iPhone that could drain the battery. After you've had the iPhone for a while you'll get a feel for how long the battery charge will last. Start by reducing the frequency of polling for e-mail, Facebook and Twitter updates. Consider disabling notifications and location services whenever you don't need them. Pay attention to the type of reception that you have because if you're an area of poor coverage the phone will work harder trying to catch a signal. Ease off on the websurfing. I know, that's why it's last.