

Digital tools and settings for people with hearing impairments

There are tools and settings that can make phones, tablets, laptops and browsers easier to use for people with hearing impairments. Some settings or tools may not be available or work on older phones, tablets or laptops.

You can find settings for Android, iOS/iPadOS, Microsoft Windows and Apple macOS in the tables below. These include simplifying layouts, reducing distractions and using voice commands to control your device. Look for the cog icon . This is usually on your home screen, in your app list on phones and tablets, or in the Start menu on Windows.

[My Computer My Way](#) from AbilityNet also offers step-by-step instructions to change settings to meet your needs.

You can set up shortcuts on your smartphone for quick access to settings you find useful.

Contact Alice Holland, Digital Inclusion Worker, with any questions or if you would like support to change your settings.

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Accessibility features

- Live caption – automatically caption speech as text on screen e.g. videos, phone calls
- Caption style – change how the captions look to suit you
- Flash notifications – flashes the torch or screen when you get a notification
- Notification duration – make notifications stay on screen for longer
- Real-Time Text (RTT) – send and receive text during a live phone call
- Visual audio alerts – see visual cues for sound alerts e.g. flashing light for an alarm
- Mono and stereo audio – adjust how audio is balanced or combined across both ears
- Background sounds – play ambient background sounds to mask background noise or help with tinnitus e.g. ocean waves or rain
- Vibration and haptics – set physical feedback for calls, notifications and screen taps
- Hearing devices – connect a compatible hearing device to amplify sound and stream calls, music and audio directly via Bluetooth e.g. hearing aids
- Name recognition – get a notification when your device detects your name being said
- Sound recognition – get a notification when your device detects certain sounds e.g. doorbell, siren, crying baby
- Type to Google Assistant / Gemini or Siri instead of speaking

Android settings

Feature	How to access
Live caption	Accessibility > Captions
Caption style	Accessibility > Caption preferences
Flash notifications	Accessibility > Flash notifications
Real Time Text	Phone app settings > Accessibility > TTY mode
Mono audio	Accessibility > Audio adjustment
Vibration & haptics	Accessibility > Vibration and haptics
Hearing devices	Accessibility > Hearing devices
Type to Assistant	Swipe from bottom corner of screen

Apple iOS/iPadOS settings

Feature	How to access
Live caption	Accessibility > Live Captions
Caption style	Accessibility > Subtitles & Captioning
Flash notifications	Accessibility > Audio & Visual > Flash for Alerts
Real Time Text	Accessibility > RTT/TTY
Mono audio	Accessibility > Audio & Visual
Background sounds	Accessibility > Audio & Visual
Vibration & haptics	Accessibility > Sounds and haptics
Hearing devices	Accessibility > Hearing devices
Name recognition	Accessibility > Sound & Name Recognition
Sound recognition	Accessibility > Sound & Name Recognition
Type to Siri	Accessibility > Siri

Microsoft Windows settings

Feature	How to access	Shortcut
Live caption	Accessibility > Captions	Win  + Ctrl + L
Caption style	Accessibility > Captions	
Notification duration	Accessibility > Visual effects	
Visual audio alerts	Accessibility > Audio > Hearing > Flash my screen during audio notifications	
Mono audio	Accessibility > Audio	
Hearing devices	Bluetooth & devices > Devices	

Apple macOS settings

Feature	How to access
Live caption	Accessibility > Hearing > Captions
Caption style	Accessibility > Hearing > Captions
Flash notifications	Accessibility > Audio
Real Time Text	Accessibility > RTT/TTY
Mono audio	Accessibility > Audio
Background sounds	Accessibility > Audio
Hearing devices	Accessibility > Hearing devices
Name recognition	Accessibility > Name Recognition
Type to Siri	Accessibility > Siri

Tools and apps

[TapSOS](#) – a non-verbal way to connect with Emergency Services

Real-time text – instant transcription of audio to text in meetings and conversations e.g. AVA, Otter.ai

[Rogervoice](#) – captions phone calls in multiple languages

[Braci Sound Alert](#) – record sounds in your environment and get a visual and vibrational alert when your smartphone recognises them

[Music haptics](#) – experience music on iPhone with taps, textures, and refined vibrations that are synchronized with a song's audio

[Subtitled cinema screenings](#) – find subtitled screenings at your local cinema

[myNoise](#) – play ambient background sound to mask background noise or help with tinnitus

[Signly](#) – adds sign language to website