

Cleaning Up Android Devices

Your phone may tell you that you are running out of space, or perhaps things are moving a little slower than they used to. Many times, a clean up will speed up your device and allow you to keep using it for another year. (My current phones are 2021 and 2024 devices.)

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Too Many Notifications!

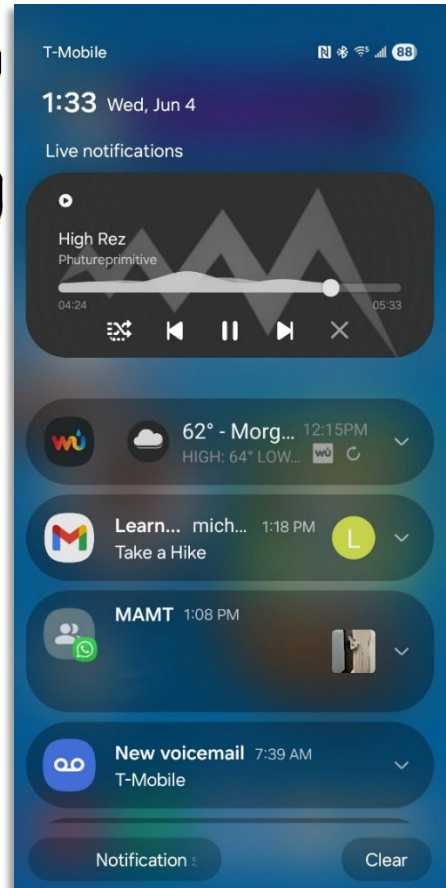
Notifications may not slow down your device, but they can clutter up your device, and constant notifications—various apps clamoring for your attention—can cause stress and anxiety. An easy solution is to silence most app notifications and to turn off notifications for social media apps.



Your notifications are on the left side of the status bar. These can include new text messages, missed phone calls, as well as the current time. You can control many of the apps that share notifications and restrict what notifications provide sound alerts.

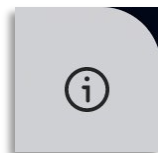
Accessing Notification Settings

1. View your notifications by swiping down from the top left side of the screen.
2. In the lower left corner, tap **Notification Settings** to view a list of what apps have permission to create notifications.



OR

1. Press and hold any icon whose notifications you want to modify.
2. A menu pops up. In the top right corner of the menu tap the *information* icon.

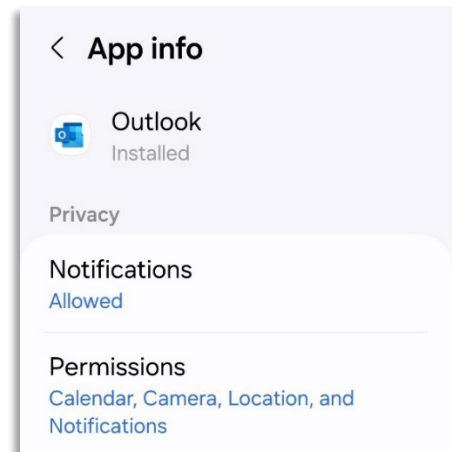


OR

1. Open Settings, select Apps, then then scroll through until you find the desired app.

Modifying Notifications

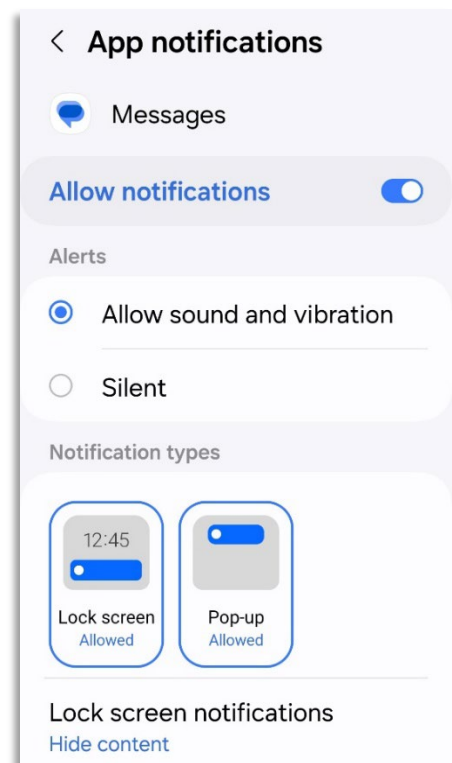
1. Open the **Notifications** options for the selected app.



2. You can toggle off **Allow notifications**.

Even if an app (such as a system app) does not allow you to turn off notifications, you can change them to **Silent**.

Some apps have further options you can modify, some do not.



Photos

When your device is running out of space, the most likely culprit is photos.

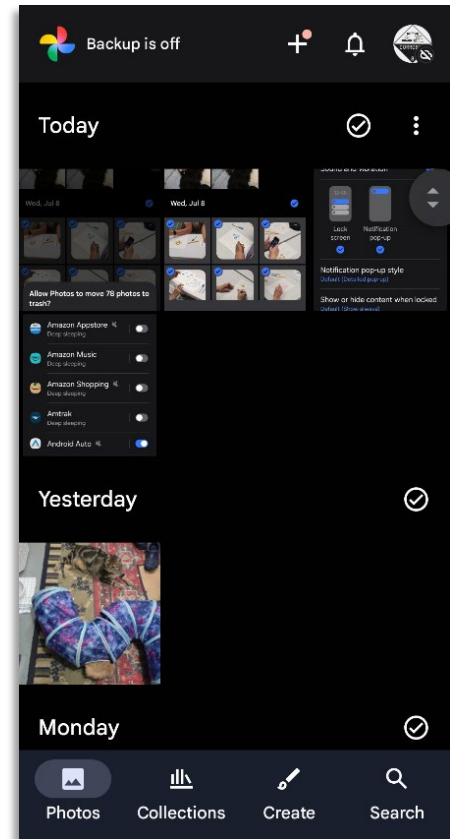
The first step is to go through your device and delete redundant and/or terrible photos. This is a perfect task for a long trip when you're trapped in your seat and the scenery is boring.

The second step is to transfer the "good" pictures that you don't need in your device to your computer or some other backup storage.

The default app for viewing your images may depend upon your phone make, however, Google's Photos app is available to all Android devices; that's what I'll use for this explainer.

Photo Settings

1. Open your Google Photos.
 2. Along the bottom of the screen is where you switch views between photos, collections, and search.
 3. In to top right corner, tap your account avatar.
- **Photos settings.**
 - **Backup:** Automatically sync all your photos to Google Drive
 - **Free up space on this device:** Automatically delete images that have been saved to your Google account.

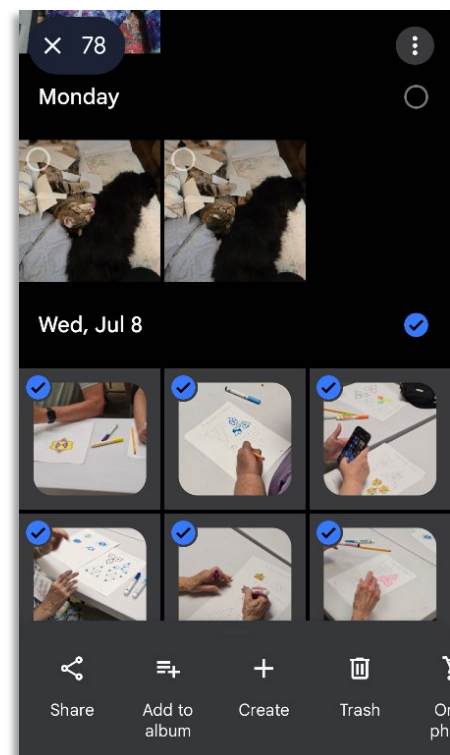


Selecting Photos

1. **Tap** a single photo to view that image.
2. **Tap and hold** a single photo to select it.
3. Once one photo has been selected, you can tap other photos to select them as well.
4. You can select all the photos from a selected date by tapping the circle beside the desired date.
5. Different items appear once a photo has been selected. The **trash can icon** allows you to **Delete** the selected items. The **“less-than” icon (<)** allows you to **Share** the selected images. The **“plus” (+)** icon allows you to create a folder.

Deleting Photos

Once you have selected one or more photos, at the bottom of the screen click the trash can / Delete.



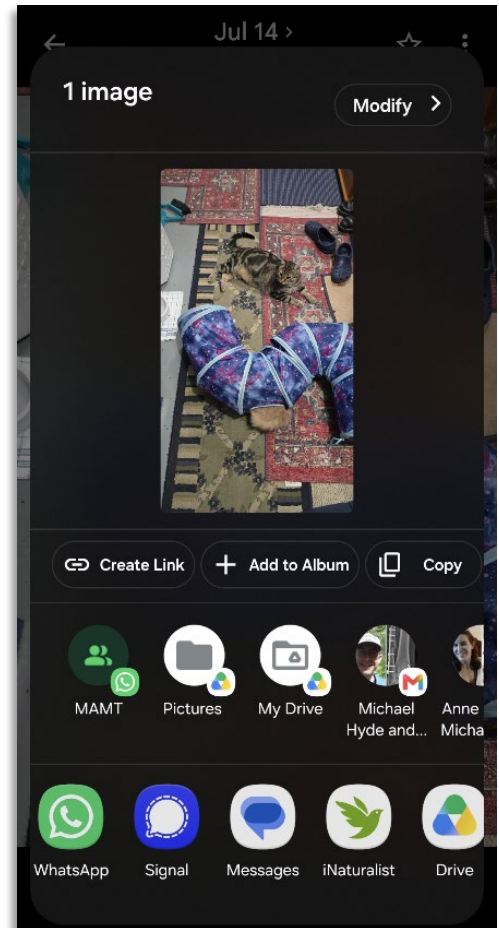
Sharing Files to Cloud Services

Sharing is used to send a file to someone else AND to send a copy of a file to a cloud service. Cloud services are an easy way to get files from your device to a computer or a cloud service.

Sharing Photos

1. Select one or more images.
2. Tap the **Sharing** icon.
3. Along the bottom of the screen, you can scroll to select the app through which you want to share the images. Find the desired cloud service app.
4. Once you select the desired app, it will walk you through the process of sharing the picture(s).

I have a separate handout for [Cloud Storage](#) that goes into more detail about different services.

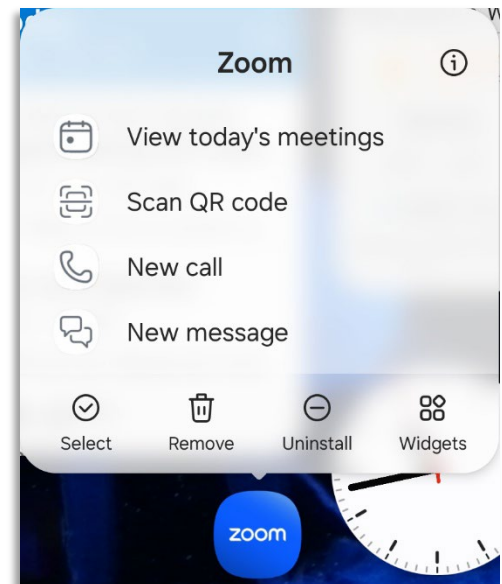
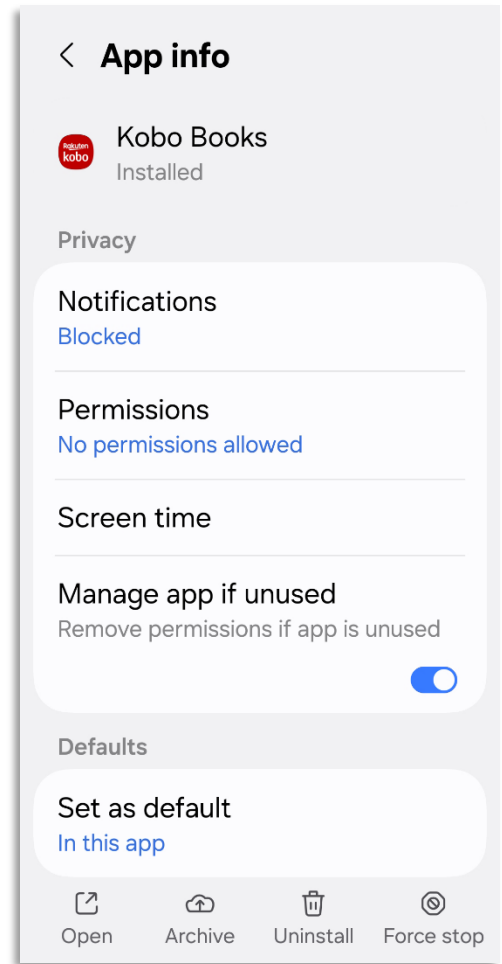


Uninstalling Apps

1. Open your device settings. (Typically available from the list of all applications or by pulling down from the top of the screen to open the system tray, and tapping the gear icon.)
2. From the list of available settings, choose **Apps** or **Applications**. (Depending upon your phone.)
3. Scroll through the list to find the specific app you want to close and/or keep from running in the background.
4. Towards the top of the screen, tap the **Uninstall** button.
5. In the verification window, click **OK** to uninstall the app.

OR

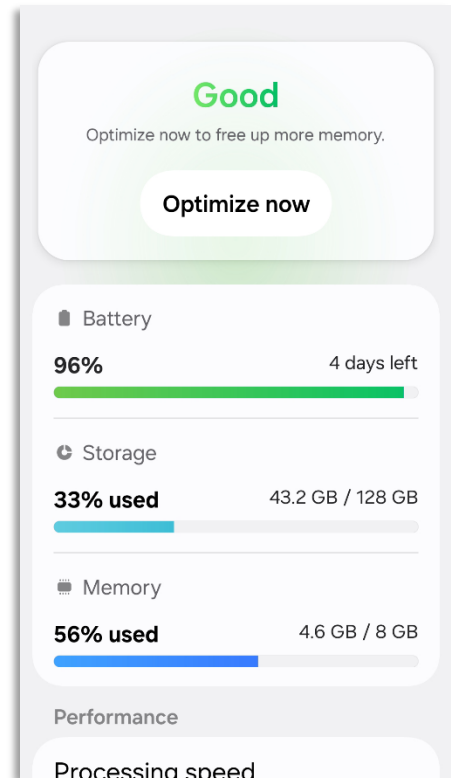
1. Long Press an app from the app drawer or Home screen or folder.
2. Tap **Uninstall**. (Remove does not uninstall but removes the app from the Home Screen or folder.)



Device Care

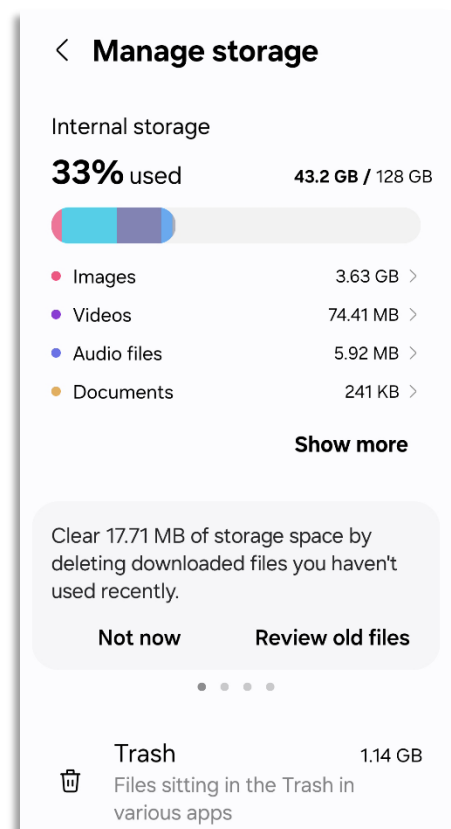
Running out of space? Running slowly? Device care can sometimes help you figure out and resolve some common issues.

1. Open **Settings** and search for **Device Care**.
2. This dashboard gives you an overview of your device “health”.
3. Clicking **Optimize now** will close background programs and may make your device run a little better.

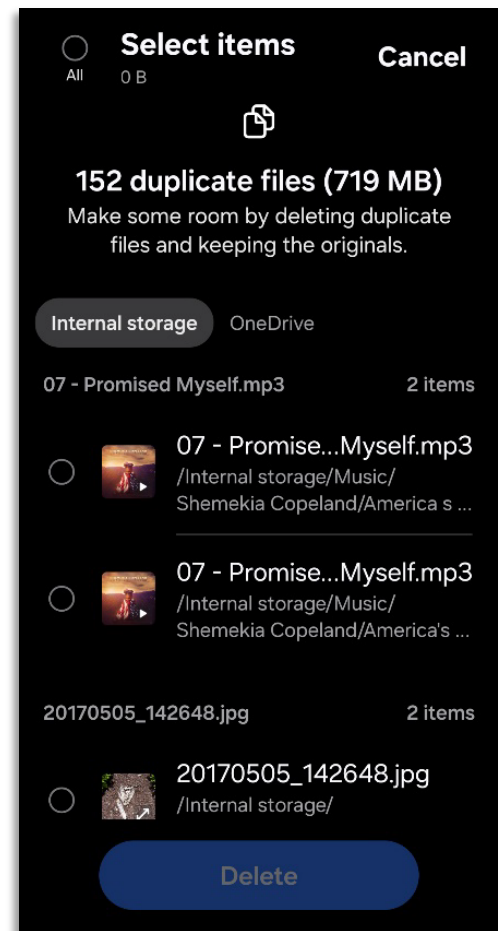


Freeing Up Storage

1. Open **Device Care**.
2. If you are running low on space, click **Storage**.
3. You can see an overview of what types of files are using the most storage. Click on the type using most of your storage, typically audio files, images, or videos.
4. You can also scroll down and look for **Duplicate files**.



5. Scroll through the list and look for files you can delete. (See page 4 for how to select multiple files.)



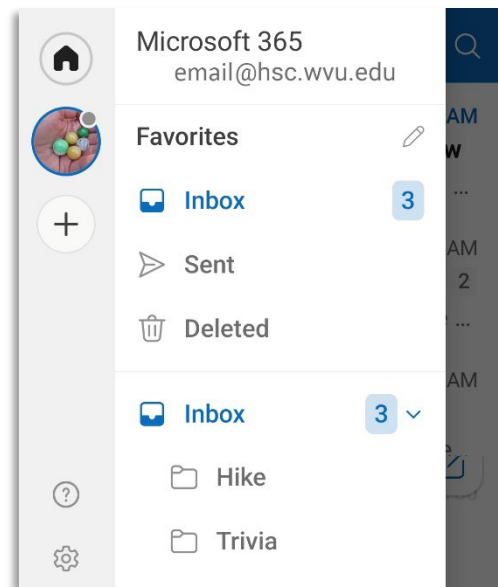
Email

You can access multiple email accounts from the Mail program. For example, you can view your mail from Yahoo, Google, and your ISP all in one place.

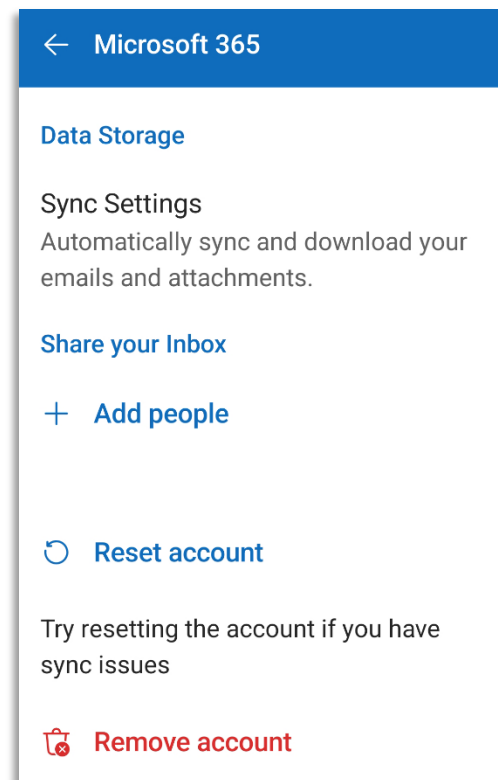
Email Retention

Unfortunately, different email apps will have different settings, we'll look at Outlook here, but other programs should have similar options

1. From your email program, open the Settings. It is likely to be a gear icon and/or the word **Settings**.
2. Look for **Accounts** or your email address.



3. Under settings, look for Data storage or Data usage, and from there Sync Settings or Says of Mail to Sync. The default is 30 days, but if you regularly check your email on another device, you can shorten that time.
4. If you have multiple email accounts, adjust the settings for each account.



Home Screens

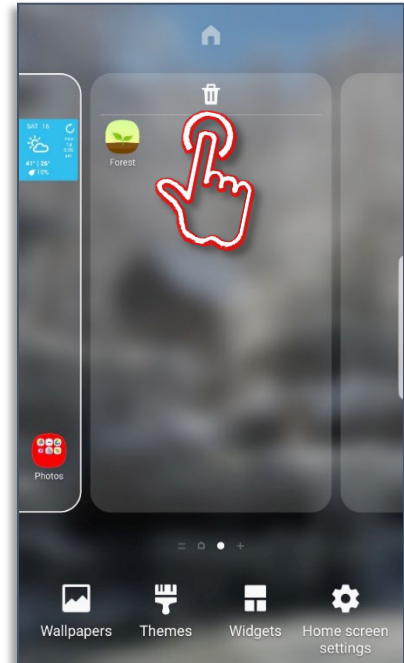
You can have multiple home screens available on your device, or just a single screen—this flexibility allows you to customize your device. On your screens you can have apps, folders, and widgets (small apps that display content such as the weather or your calendar).

You move from screen to screen by swiping left or right on the home screen.

If you are a minimalist, you may want to remove all the individual icons from your screen, leaving just the few you access regularly. Once you do that, you may have extra home screens, which you can easily remove.

Removing a Home Screen

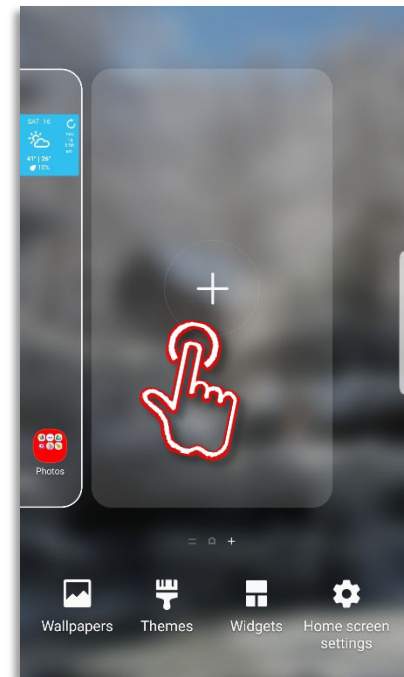
1. Pinch the screen with two or more fingers.
2. The screen changes to display options for modifying the home screen.
3. Use your finger to scroll to the extra screen you want to remove.
4. Tap the trash can icon at the top of the screen.



Conversely, you may want to add an additional home screen, either to organize your app icons or to add a full screen widget (like a monthly calendar).

Adding a Home Screen

1. Pinch the screen with two or more fingers.
2. The screen changes to display options for modifying the home screen.
3. Use your finger to scroll to the far right screen.
4. Tap the plus sign (+) to add an additional home screen.

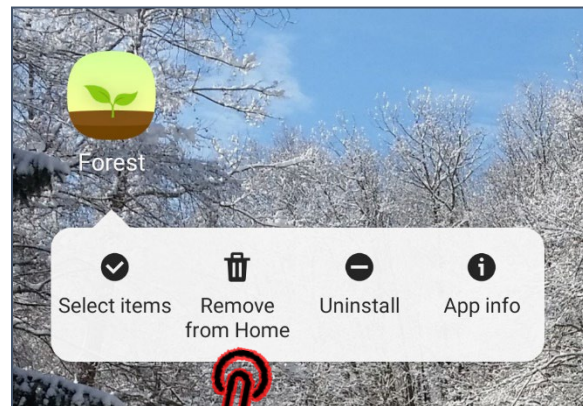


Apps or Folders on the Home Screen

When you install a new app it typically adds an icon to your home screen. This makes the app easier to find, but if you prefer a minimalist home screen, it can often clutter things up.

Removing Apps and Folders from the Home Screen

1. **Tap and hold** the icon you want to remove, until a menu appears.
2. Tap **Remove from Home** to keep the program installed but remove it from your home screen.



References

[Association of smartphone use with depression, anxiety, stress, sleep quality, and internet addiction. Empirical evidence from a smartphone application \(2021\)](#)

[Why Smartphones Stimulate Anxiety \(Psychology Today 2024\)](#)

[The association between smartphone use, stress, and anxiety: A meta-analytic review \(2018\)](#)

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