

(Approx. 856 words)

Siri for Seniors (or Anyone)

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If you have an iPhone 4s or later, iPad with Retina display, iPad mini, or iPod touch (5th generation), meet your new best digital friend – Siri. You’ve probably been ignoring Siri a lot simply because you may not be comfortable using it. But if you’ll just talk to Siri as you would a friend, you’ll be amazed how much it will help you during your day. Let’s take a look at some of the most helpful things you can do.

Things like sending messages, reading email, placing calls, setting reminders (very important for those of us with short memories) or even finding a restaurant or making dinner reservations. You can ask Siri to show you the Orion constellation or even how to flip a coin. Siri works hands-free, so you can ask it to show you the best route home and what your ETA is while driving. And it’s connected to the world, working with Wikipedia, Yelp, Rotten Tomatoes (movie reviews), Shazam (song & artist recognition), and many other online services to help you find even more answers. The more you use Siri, the more you’ll realize just how great it is. And just how much it can do for you.

How to Use Siri

Press and hold the HOME button on your iOS device until you see “What can I help you with?” accompanied by a double-beep tone. Then, in a normal speaking voice tell Siri your command. Wait for Siri to respond to your request and display it. If you’re driving, don’t try to read it, but reply to Siri again, saying “I can’t read it”. Then Siri will read back your command for verification, which is very helpful with texts or emails, especially while driving.

Set Reminders, Alarms, Add to Your Calendar & More

- “Set the timer for 10 minutes”
- “Stop the timer”
- “Reset the timer”
- “Pause the timer”
- “What time is it?”
- “What is the date?”
- “Wake me in 30 minutes” (one of my favorites for a power nap)
- “Remind me at 8am tomorrow morning to put out trash”
- “Remind me to record American Idol at 8pm”
- “Remind me to call Jack next Friday”
- “Set up a tee time for next Friday at 9am”
- “Add Yoga to my calendar for next Monday at 10am”

Location Based Reminders (Location must be enabled in Settings)

- “Remind me when I arrive home to defrost the turkey”
- “Remind me when I arrive here to buy gas” (use “here” as the “place” at which you want to do something)
- “Remind me when I arrive in Knoxville Tennessee to call Sam”

Read and Send Emails or Texts (Use actual “First Last” names from your Contacts)

- “Read my emails” (Siri will read aloud the time the email was sent, sender’s name and subject)
- “Send an email to James Brown” (Siri will then ask you “what would you like to say to James Brown”?)
- “Email Bob and say I cannot play golf this weekend”
- “Send a message to Dave on his mobile and tell him I’ll be 10 minutes late” (assumes Dave has a mobile phone in his contact)
- “Read my most recent email message”
- “Read my new text messages”
- “Text Brenda See you soon smiley exclamation point”

Create Notes

- “Note, the grandkids will be here the last week in July”
- “Create a shopping list note” (substitute any name for your list)
- “Add bread, milk, and salami to the shopping list note”
- “Find the shopping list note” (Siri will display your shopping list note)

Some Other Things You Can Ask/Tell Siri (Use your imagination for more...Siri will likely know the answer)

- “What movies are playing today at the Regal Cinema in Knoxville?”
- “What is the temperature?”
- “What is the current weather in Kansas City?”
- “What is the forecast for tonight?”
- “Search for Italian recipes that use bowtie pasta”
- “Find a table for four tonight in Dallas Texas”
- “What time does the sun set tonight in Paris tomorrow?”
- “What are names of the band members in Three Dog Night?”
- “Did the Tennessee Vols win last night?” (I sure hope they did!”
- “Are there any Mexican restaurants near me?”
- “Where’s a good Indian place around here?” (Siri understand slang and will assume you mean an Indian restaurant)
- “How many cups are in a gallon?”
- “Who starred in the movie Gravity”

Special Tip

Here's a really helpful Siri tip you can apply in any way you want, to any contact.

– Tell Siri “Brenda Smith is my wife”.

This explains to Siri how people in your contacts are related to you, like your mom, dad, or wife, and it will know who you're referring to the next time you ask Siri to contact someone. Then just tell Siri to “Call my wife”.

Siri is nothing more than artificial intelligence, maximized in a way to help you with obtaining answers, finding tips and tricks, locating entertainment, staying organized, staying in touch, keeping up with your favorite sports teams, and much, much more. Experiment by simply asking Siri any question that comes to mind and you'll quickly realize just how helpful it is.