LEARNING MADE EASY

4th Edition

Android® Phones

for dummies®
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Shoot and share photos and videos

Set up and get connected with your Android phone

Email, text and use social media to stay in touch

Dan Gookin
Bestselling author of
Android Tablets For Dummies

Android® Phones

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

4th edition

by Dan Gookin

for dummies®
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Android® Phones For Dummies®, 4th Edition

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Introduction

It may be a smartphone, but it makes you feel dumb. Don't worry: You aren't alone. As technology leaps ahead, it often leaves mortal humans behind. You paid good money for your phone — why not use all of its features?

This book makes the complex subject of Android phones understandable. It's done with avuncular care and gentle handholding. The information is friendly and informative, without being intimidating. And yes, ample humor is sprinkled throughout the text to keep the mood light.

About This Book

I implore you: Do not read this book from cover to cover. This book is a reference. It's designed to be used as you need it. Look up a topic in the table of contents or the index. Find something about your phone that vexes you or something you're curious about. After getting the answer, get on with your life.

Every chapter in this book is written as its own self-contained unit, covering a specific Android phone topic. The chapters are further divided into sections representing tasks you perform with the phone or explaining how to get something done. Sample sections in this book include

- Typing without lifting a finger
- Making a conference call
- Dealing with a missed call
- Uploading a picture to Facebook
- Recording video
- Creating a mobile hotspot
- Flying with your phone
- Extending battery life

Every section explains a topic as though it's the first one you read in this book. Nothing is assumed, and everything is cross-referenced. Technical terms and topics, when they come up, are safely shoved to the side, where they're easily avoided. The idea here isn't to learn anything. This book's philosophy is to help you look it up, figure it out, and move on.

How to Use This Book

This book follows a few conventions for using your phone, so pay attention!

The main way to interact with an Android phone is by using its touchscreen, which is the glassy part of the phone as it's facing you. The physical buttons on the phone are called keys. These items are discussed and explained in Part I of this book.

Various ways are available to touch the screen, which are described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 covers typing text on an Android phone, which involves using something called the onscreen keyboard. When you tire of typing, you can dictate your text. It's all explained in Chapter 4.

This book directs you to do things on your phone by following numbered steps. Every step involves a specific activity, such as touching something on the screen; for example:

1. **Choose Downloads.**

This step directs you to tap the text or item on the screen labeled Downloads. You might also be told to do this:

1. **Tap Downloads.**

Because this book covers a variety of phones, alternative commands may be listed. One of them is bound to match something on your phone, or at least be close to what you see:

1. **Tap the My Downloads action or the Downloads action.**

Various phone settings can be enabled or disabled, as indicated by a master control, which looks like the On/Off toggle shown in the margin. Slide the button to the right to activate the switch, turning on a phone feature. Slide the button to the left to turn off the feature.

Foolish Assumptions

Even though this book is written with the gentle handholding required by anyone who is just starting out or is easily intimidated, I have made a few assumptions.

I'm assuming that you're still reading the introduction. That's great. It's much better than getting a snack right now or checking to ensure that the cat isn't chewing through the TV cable again.

My biggest assumption: You have an Android phone. It can be any Android phone from any manufacturer supported by any popular cellular service provider in the United States. Because Android is an operating system, the methods of doing things on one Android phone are similar, if not identical, to doing things on another Android phone. Therefore, one book can pretty much cover the gamut of Android phones.

Android has versions. This book was updated to cover the current Android release, 6.0, called Marshmallow. Also addressed is Android 5.1, known as Lollipop. Some details on older versions of Android phones might be found here as well. These are all similar versions of the operating system, so if your phone has an older version, you should be just fine.

To confirm which Android version your phone has, follow these steps:

1. **At the Home screen, tap the Apps icon.**
2. **Open the Settings app.**
3. **Choose the About Phone item.**

   On some Samsung phones, you need to first tap the General tab atop the screen and then swipe down the screen to find an About Device item. Samsung phones can be a little different from other Android phones, and those differences are highlighted throughout this tome.

4. **Look at the item titled Android Version.**

   The version number is listed, such as 6.0.1.

Don't fret if these steps confuse you: Review Part I of this book, and then come back here. (I'll wait.)

More assumptions: You don't need to own a computer to use your Android phone. If you have a computer, great. The Android phone works well with both PCs and Macs. When phone and computer cross paths, you'll find directions for both PC and Mac.

Finally, this book assumes that you have a Google account. If you don't, find out how to configure one in Chapter 2. Having a Google account opens up a slew of useful features, information, and programs that make using your phone more productive.

Icons Used in This Book

This icon flags useful, helpful tips or shortcuts.

This icon marks a friendly reminder to do something.

This icon marks a friendly reminder not to do something.

This icon alerts you to overly nerdy information and technical discussions of the topic at hand. Reading the information is optional, though it may win you a pie slice in Trivial Pursuit.

Beyond the Book

The publisher maintains a support page with updates or changes that occur between editions of this book. Go to `www.dummies.com`, search for *Android Phones For Dummies*, then open the Extras tab on this book's specific page to view the updates or changes. Or click the Cheat Sheet link to view helpful information pulled from throughout the text.

On a personal note, my email address is `dgookin@wambooli.com`. Yes, that's my real address. I reply to every email I receive, especially when you keep your question short and specific to this book. Although I enjoy saying "Hi," I cannot answer technical support questions, resolve billing issues, or help you troubleshoot your phone. Thanks for understanding.

My website is `wambooli.com`. This book has its own page on that site, which you can check for updates, new information, and all sorts of fun stuff. Visit often:

```
wambooli.com/help/android/phones
```

Where to Go from Here

Thank you for reading the introduction. Few people do, and it would save a lot of time and bother if they did. Consider yourself fortunate, though you probably knew that.

Your task now: Start reading the rest of the book — but not the whole thing, and especially not in order. Observe the table of contents and find something that interests you. Or look up your puzzle in the index. When these suggestions don't cut it, just start reading Chapter 1.

1 Getting Started with Your Android Phone

IN THIS PART . . .

Get started with Android phones.

Work through the setup of your Android phone.

Learn how to use your Android phone.

Discover parts of the Android phone.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Freeing the phone from its box
Setting up the phone
Charging the battery
Recognizing phone features
Obtaining accessories
Taking the phone with you
Keeping the phone in one place

Chapter 1
Hello, Phone!

It may have a funky name, like a character in a science fiction novel or a sports hero. Or it can simply be a fancy number, perhaps with the letter *X* thrown in to make it cool. No matter what, the phone you own is an *Android* phone because it runs the Android operating system. The adventure you're about to undertake begins with removing the thing from the box and getting to know your new smartphone.

Liberation and Setup

The phone works fastest when you remove it from its box. How you liberate it is up to you. I prefer to gingerly open the box, delicately lifting the various flaps and tenderly setting everything aside. I even savor the industrial-solvent smell. If you prefer, you can just dump everything on the tabletop. Be careful: Your phone may be compact, but it's not indestructible.

ANDROID PHONE-BUYING TIPS

When buying a phone, first look at a cellular provider, and then determine which phones are available and suit your purpose.

Finding a cellular provider is all about coverage: Can you get a signal everywhere you need one? Despite the boasts, not every cellular provider offers full data coverage. The true test is to ask people who frequent your same locations which services they use and whether they're happy with the coverage.

All Android phones offer similar features and a vast array of apps. Start looking for a phone by finding ones that feel good in your hands. Some people like smaller, compact phones that fit easily in a pocket or purse. Others prefer the large-format (phablet) phones, which offer larger screens.

Check the phone's display, not by reviewing the fancy technical jargon but by looking at it with your own eyes. View some photos on the phone to see how good they look.

Phones come with varying quantities of storage, from 8GB on up to 128GB and more. Some phones might still offer removable storage in the form of a microSD, though this feature is becoming rather rare.

Camera resolution isn't vital, but if your Android phone is your only digital camera, getting a high-resolution rear camera is a plus.

Beyond these basic items, most Android phones are drearily similar. To work best with this book, ensure that your phone uses the Android operating system and can access and use Google Play, the online Android store, where you obtain apps, music, video, and books. Some low-price, bargain phones restrict your purchases to the manufacturer's own app store. That's not a good thing.

Several useful items are found loitering inside your Android phone's box. Some of them are immediately handy, and others you should consider saving for later. Even if you've already opened the box and spread its contents across the table like some sort of tiny yard sale, take a few moments to locate and identify these specific items:

- The phone itself, which may be fully assembled or in pieces
- Papers, instructions, a warranty, and perhaps a tiny, useless Getting Started pamphlet
- The phone's back cover, which might already be attached to the phone
- The charger/data USB cable

- The charger head, which is a wall adapter for the charger/data cable
- Other stuff, including the SIM card, SIM card removal tool, earbuds, carrying case, or other goodies

It's rare, but the phone may feature a removable battery. If so, you'll find the phone's battery in the box, along with the phone's rear cover. These items must be assembled. Look for instructions inside the box.

If anything is missing or appears to be damaged, immediately contact the folks who sold you the phone.

TIP

I recommend keeping the instructions and other information as long as you own the phone: The phone's box makes an excellent storage place for that stuff — as well as for anything else you don't plan to use right away.

See the later section "Adding accessories" for a description of various goodies available for the typical Android phone.

Phone Assembly

Most Android phones come fully assembled. If yours doesn't, the folks at the Phone Store have most likely put everything together for you. When you're on your own, some setup may be required. This process might involve installing the SIM card or microSD card and inserting the battery. Directions that come with the phone assist you.

Don't worry about the assembly process being overly complex; if you're good with Legos, you can put together an Android phone.

Removing the plastic sheeting

The phone ships with a clingy plastic sheeting over its screen, back, or sides. The sheeting might tell you where to find various features, so look it over before you peel it off. And, yes, you need to remove the sheeting; it's for shipping protection, not for long-term phone protection.

TIP

- Remove all clingy plastic sheets.
- Check the phone's rear camera to confirm that you've removed the plastic sheeting from its lens.
- Feel free to throw away the plastic sheeting.

Installing the SIM card

A *SIM card* identifies your phone on a digital cellular network. Before you can use the phone, the SIM card must be installed. The only time you as a mere mortal need to do this is when you purchase the phone independently of a cellular provider. Otherwise, the kind people at the Phone Store install the SIM card. They pretend like it's a task that requires a PhD, but installing a SIM card is simple.

When you do need to install the SIM card yourself, follow these steps when the phone is turned off:

1. **Pop the SIM card out of the credit-card-size holder.**

   Push the card with your thumb and it pops out. Don't use scissors or you may damage the card.

2. **Locate the SIM card cover on the phone's outer edge.**

   The cover features a dimple or hole on one end.

3. **Insert the SIM card removal tool into the hole on the SIM card cover; press it in firmly.**

   The SIM card cover pops up or the SIM card tray slides out.

4. **Insert the SIM card into the SIM card slot, or place the SIM card into the SIM card tray and reinsert it into the phone.**

   The SIM card is shaped in such a way that it's impossible to insert improperly. If the card doesn't slide into the slot, reorient the card and try again.

5. **Close the SIM card cover.**

   You're done.

The good news is that you seldom, if ever, need to remove or replace a SIM card.

- On some phones, the SIM card is inserted internally. In that case, remove the phone's back cover and, if necessary, remove the battery to access the SIM card slot.
- SIM stands for subscriber identity module. SIM cards are required for GSM cellular networks as well as for 4G LTE networks.

Installing a microSD card

A few Android phones offer removable storage in the form of a microSD card. If your phone sports this feature, go out and obtain a microSD card to take advantage of the extra storage.

No, your phone didn't come with a microSD card — unless the Phone Store included it as a "bonus." (You still paid for it.)

To insert a microSD card, heed these directions:

1. **Locate the slot into which you stick the microSD card.**

   The slot is labeled as shown in Figure 1-1. It is not the same as the SIM card slot.

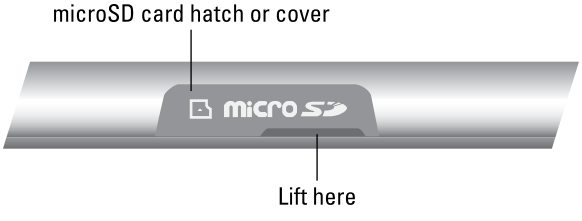

FIGURE 1-1: Opening the microSD card hatch.

2. **Flip open the teensy hatch on the microSD card slot.**

   Insert your thumbnail into the tiny slot on the hatch. Flip the hatch outward. It's attached on one end, so it may not completely pop off.

3. **Insert the microSD card into the slot.**

   The card goes in only one way. If you're fortunate, a little outline of the card illustrates the proper orientation. If you're even more fortunate, your eyes will be good enough to see the tiny outline.

TIP

You may hear a faint clicking sound when the card is fully inserted. If you don't, use the end of a paperclip or your fingernail to fully insert the card.

- It's okay to insert the microSD card while the phone is on.
- If the phone is on, a prompt appears on the touchscreen, detailing information about the card. The card is available instantly for use. If not, the card may need to be formatted. See Chapter 18 for details.
- Some older Android phones may feature internal microSD card slots. In that case, you must remove the phone's back cover to access and install the card. You might even have to remove the battery to get at the card.
- I've never seen an Android phone come with a microSD card. If your phone can use such a card, obtain one at any computer or office supply store. They're cheaper if you order them on the Internet.

- A microSD card comes in a capacity rated in gigabytes (GB), just like most media storage or memory cards. Common microSD card capacities are 8GB, 16GB, 32GB, and higher. The maximum size allowed in your phone depends on its design. The side of the phone's box lists compatible capacities.

Removing the microSD card

To remove the microSD card, follow these steps:

1. **Turn off the phone.**

   It's possible to remove the card while the phone is on, and directions are offered in Chapter 18. For now, ensure that the phone is off. Specific power-off directions are found in Chapter 2.

2. **Open the little hatch covering the microSD card slot.**

   Refer to the preceding section.

3. **Using your fingernail or a bent paperclip, gently press the microSD card inward a tad.**

   The microSD card is spring-loaded, so pressing it in pops it outward.

4. **Pinch the microSD card between your fingers and remove it completely.**

After you've removed the card, you can continue using the phone. It works just fine without a microSD card.

WARNING

- A microSD card is teensy! If you remove it from your phone, keep it in a safe place where you won't lose it. Never stick the microSD card into your ear.
- You can purchase microSD card adapters to allow a computer to read the card's data on a computer. The adapter allows the microSD card to insert into a standard SD memory slot or the USB port.
- Refer to Chapter 18 for more information on phone storage.

Charge the Battery

The phone's battery may have enough oomph in it to run the setup-and-configuration process at the Phone Store. If so, count yourself lucky. Otherwise, you need to charge the phone's battery. Don't worry about flying a kite and waiting for a lightning storm. Instead, follow these steps:

1. **If necessary, assemble the charging cord.**

   Connect the charger head (the plug thing) to the USB cable that comes with the phone.

2. **Plug the charger head and cable into a wall socket.**

3. **Plug the phone into the USB cable.**

   The charger cord plugs into the micro-USB connector, found at the phone's bottom.

As the phone charges, you may see a charging-battery graphic on the touchscreen, or a notification lamp on the phone's front side may glow. Such activity is normal.

The phone may turn on when you plug it in for a charge. That's okay, but read Chapter 2 to find out what to do the first time the phone turns on.

- I recommend fully charging the phone before you use it.
- Older USB cables use the micro-A connector, which plugs in only one way. If the cable doesn't connect to the phone, flip over the cable and try again.
- Newer USB Type-C cables and connectors plug in any which way.
- You can use the phone while it's charging, although the phone won't turn on when the battery charge is too low.
- The phone also charges itself whenever it's connected to a computer's USB port. The computer must be on for charging to work. Some phones may charge only when plugged into powered USB ports, such as those found directly on the computer console.
- Cell phones charge more quickly when plugged into the wall than into a computer's USB port or a car adapter.
- Unlike with the old NiCad batteries, you don't need to worry about fully discharging your phone before recharging it. If the phone needs a charge, even when the battery is just a little low on juice, feel free to do so.
- Some Android phones can be charged wirelessly. See the later section "Adding accessories."
- Also see Chapter 23 for battery and power management information.

Android Phone Orientation

No one told the first person to ride a horse which way to sit. Some things just come naturally. Your Android phone most likely isn't one of those things. It requires a special introduction and orientation.

Finding things on your phone

I think it's cute when people refer to things that they can't name as *doodads* or *thingamabobs*. Cute, but inaccurate. Take a gander at Figure 1-2, which illustrates common items found on the front and back of a typical Android phone.

Not every item shown in the figure may be in the exact same spot on your phone. For example, the Power/Lock key might be found on the top of the phone, not the side.

FIGURE 1-2: Your phone's face and rump.