THE USEFUL TECH / FREE CHECKLIST

The iOS 27 Settings Checklist

All 39 settings that changed in iOS 27, with the exact path to each one and what it is set to out of the box. Work down the list once and you are done for the year.

#1

Print it, or open it on a second screen and tick as you go.

#2

The badge shows the out of the box state, so you know what to expect.

#3

Starred rows are the five worth doing first if you only have five minutes.

01 Look and feel

5 settings

- [ ] 01 ★ Liquid Glass slider SET TO MIDPOINT
  Settings › Appearance › Liquid Glass
  Replaces the old Clear and Tinted toggle with a full range. Drag toward tinted if text is hard to read over your wallpaper.
- [ ] 02 Reduce Transparency OFF
  Settings › Accessibility › Display & Text Size
  Goes further than the slider does. Flattens almost all translucency if the tinted end still is not enough.
- [ ] 03 ★ Compact lock screen clock OFF
  Lock screen › long press › Customize › Font & Color panel, top right corner
  Shrinks the time to a small format at the top next to the date. Frees up most of your wallpaper.
- [ ] 04 Extend wallpaper NOT APPLIED
  Lock screen › Customize › Extend
  Generates image content around the edges so a photo fills the screen without aggressive cropping.
- [ ] 05 Full page widget NOT ADDED
  Home screen › long press › Edit › Add Widget › scroll to largest size
  A widget that fills an entire home screen page. Calendar, Photos, Music and Weather support it at launch.

02 Sound

3 settings

- [ ] 06 ★ Alarms and Timers volume MATCHED TO RINGER
  Settings › Sounds & Haptics › Alarms and Timers › Match Ringtone Volume
  Turn the toggle off and a separate slider appears. Now you can silence the ringer overnight and still be woken up.
- [ ] 07 Alerts and System Sounds volume MATCHED TO RINGER
  Settings › Sounds & Haptics › Alerts and System Sounds › Match Ringtone Volume
  Same trick. Covers message tones, keyboard clicks and the camera shutter, none of which need to be loud.
- [ ] 08 Change with Buttons OFF
  Settings › Sounds & Haptics
  Lets the physical volume buttons adjust alarm volume directly instead of only media.

03 Siri and what it keeps

8 settings

- [ ] 09 ★ Keep Conversations FOREVER
  Settings › Siri › Keep Conversations
  Siri now stores chat history like ChatGPT does, and the default is Forever. Change it to 1 Year or 30 Days.
- [ ] 10 ★ App Access EVERY APP ON
  Settings › Siri › App Access
  Switch off Learn from this application for banking, health and work apps. You lose nothing useful.
- [ ] 11 Siri iCloud sync ON
  Settings › [your name] › iCloud › See All › Siri › Sync this Device
  Conversation history syncs across all your devices by default. Turn it off to keep it on one device.

☐ 12 **Voice** `DEFAULT VOICE`
Settings › Siri › Voice
Six accents and several voices each. Pace and expressivity sliders need an iPhone 17 Pro, 17 Pro Max or Air.

☐ 13 **Responses** `SPOKEN`
Settings › Siri › Responses
Silent gives you text replies nearly everywhere. Siri still speaks when you are driving or wearing headphones.

☐ 14 **Preview** `DEFAULT`
Settings › Siri › Preview
Controls how many lines of a Siri response you see before opening the app. None, or 1 to 5 lines.

☐ 15 **Opens To** `RECENT CONVERSATIONS`
Settings › Siri › Opens To
Switch to A New Conversation if you never go back and read old threads.

☐ 16 **ChatGPT extension** `ON`
Settings › Siri › ChatGPT
Sign in with your own account so your usage limits apply, or switch the extension off entirely.

04 Photos and Camera

5 settings

☐ 17 **★ Rating Controls** `OFF`
Settings › Apps › Photos › View Options › Rating Controls
Turn on for 1 to 5 star ratings. Then filter your library by rating from Library > filter icon > Rating.

☐ 18 **Keywords** `NOT USED`
Photos › open a photo › info pane › Add Keywords
Tag photos with your own words and filter by them later. Manage the list from Collections > profile > Manage Keywords.

☐ 19 **Clean Up quality** `AUTO`
Photos › edit a photo › Clean Up › picker at the top
Auto usually picks Fast. Set it to High Quality manually and busy backgrounds come out far cleaner.

☐ 20 **Camera quick controls** `DEFAULT SET`
Camera › controls button, bottom right › Edit, top of screen
Add and remove the controls that sit along the top of the viewfinder. Works for Photo, Video and Cinematic.

☐ 21 **Siri camera mode** `UNUSED`
Camera › mode carousel › Siri
Point the camera at anything and ask about it. Identifies plants, food, text, and can add a flyer date to Calendar.

05 Safari

4 settings

☐ 22 **★ Notify Me** `NOTHING WATCHED`
Safari › open any page › settings icon to the left of the address bar › Notify Me
Describe the change you are waiting for in plain English, then pick a frequency. Hourly at the most, down to monthly.

☐ 23 **Manage Notify Me alerts** `EMPTY`
Settings › Apps › Safari › Notify Me
The full list of pages being watched. Edit a condition, change a schedule, or delete a watcher you forgot about.

☐ 24 **Automatically Create Topics** `OFF`
Safari › tab view › three line icon, top right › Organize Tabs
Sorts your open tabs into topic groups by itself. Built for anyone sitting on 60 tabs with no plan to close them.

☐ 25 **Create an Extension** `NOT USED`
Safari › menu to the left of the address bar › Create an Extension
Describe what you want an extension to do and Safari generates it. Suggested ideas are grouped by category.

06 Messages and Mail

3 settings

☐ 26 **Show in Text Field** `RECORD AUDIO`
Settings › Messages › Show in Text Field
The button your thumb keeps brushing. Switch it to Start Dictation, or None to remove it entirely.

☐ 27 **Draw in Messages** `UNUSED`
Messages › open a conversation › plus button › Drawing
The Markup toolset inside a chat. Marker, pen, highlighter and eraser, in any colour.

☐ 28 **Ask Siri on an email** `UNUSED`
Mail › long press an email › Ask Siri
Summarise it, pull out a flight number, track a package, or delete every email from one sender in a single request.

07 Shortcuts

2 settings

☐ 29 **★ Describe a Shortcut** DEFAULT SCREEN

Shortcuts › New Shortcut

Type what you want in one sentence and Apple Intelligence assembles the actions. Needs an iPhone 15 Pro or newer.

☐ 30 **New automation triggers** NOT SET

Shortcuts › Automation

New this year: taking a screenshot, receiving a specific notification, connecting a keyboard, starting a Watch workout.

08 Storage and audio

3 settings

☐ 31 **Podcast video downloads** ON

Settings › Apps › Podcasts › Download Video

Video podcasts are long and large. Turn this off unless you genuinely watch them rather than listen.

☐ 32 **TV automatic downloads** ON

Settings › Apps › TV › Automatic Downloads

Pulls down the next two episodes of whatever you are watching, and will use cellular data if you let it.

☐ 33 **AirPods custom EQ** OFF

Settings › [your AirPods] › Audio & Routing › Equalizer › Custom

Adjustable lows, mids and highs, finally. H2 chip models only: AirPods Pro 2 and 3, AirPods 4, AirPods Max 2.

09 Location privacy

3 settings

☐ 34 **Improve Location Accuracy** ON

Settings › Privacy & Security › Location Services › System Services › Product Improvement

Uses your phone to map nearby Wi-Fi and cell towers for Apple's database. Location works normally without it.

☐ 35 **Significant Locations & Routes** ON

Settings › Privacy & Security › Location Services › System Services

Builds a running history of places you visit often. Turn it off, then use Clear History on the same screen.

☐ 36 **Analytics & Improvements** CHECK YOURS

Settings › Privacy & Security › Analytics & Improvements

Confirm what you are sharing after the update. Every toggle on this screen can be switched off with no downside.

10 Housekeeping

3 settings

☐ 37 **Communication Preferences** SUBSCRIBED

Settings › [your name] › Personal Info › Communication Preferences

Apple marketing email and product newsletters. Almost nobody opted into these on purpose.

☐ 38 **Subscriptions audit** WORTH A LOOK

Settings › [your name] › Subscriptions

Every recurring charge in one list. A good habit to run every September when the new iOS lands.

☐ 39 **Background Security Improvements** ON

Settings › Privacy & Security › Background Security Improvements

Not full iOS updates. Small security fixes that install silently. Confirm this one is set to automatic and leave it.

That is all 39.

If this was useful, the newsletter is where the rest of it lives. One email a week on Apple software worth your time, written the same way: the actual setting, the actual path, and why it matters. No roundups of things you already read somewhere else.

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