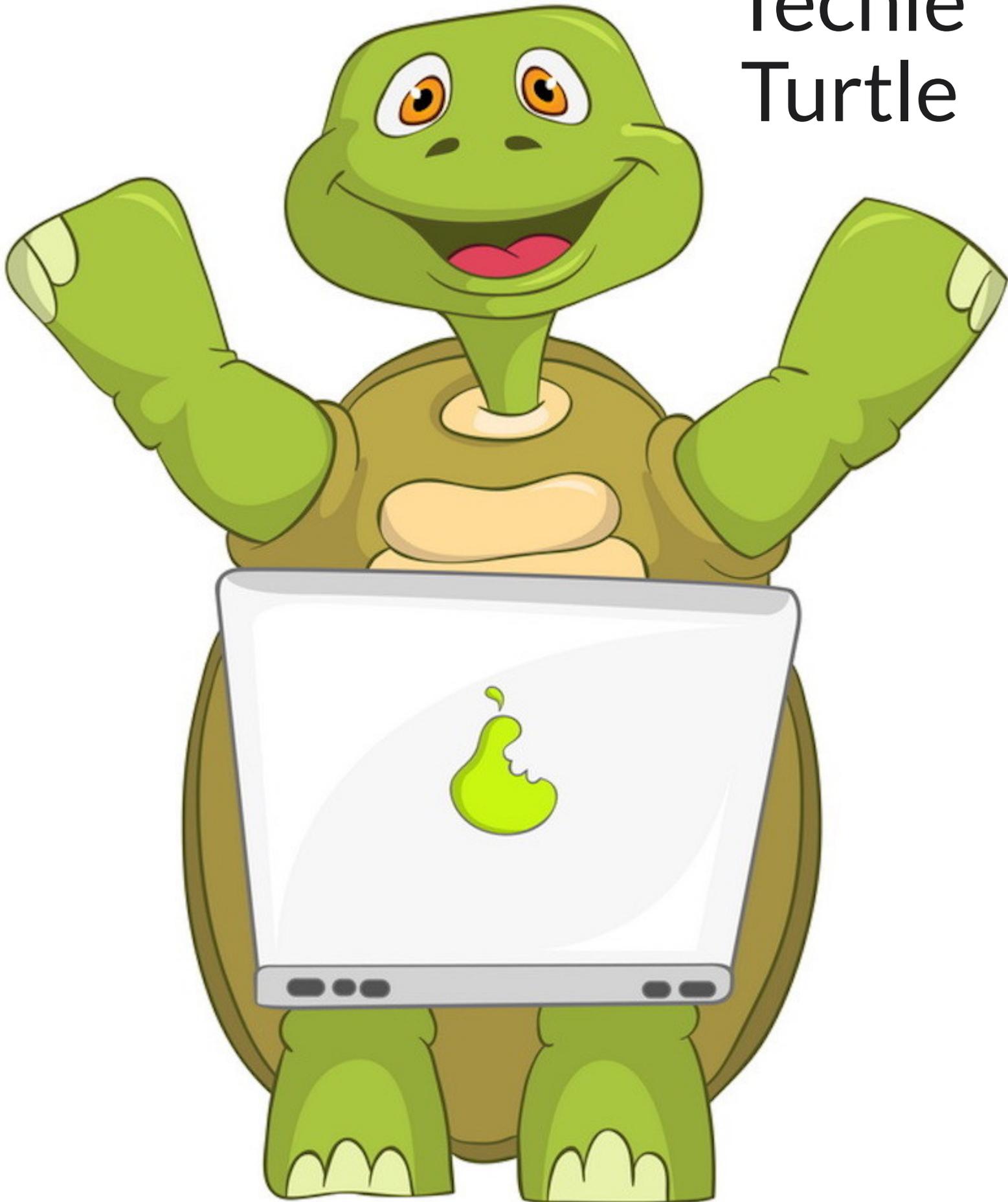


Techie Turtle



Tips for non-techies | Get the most out of your technology

Anne Rosales | Jubilant Age | ©2018

Ever feel like the dizzying pace of technology is passing you by? I'll admit it: there are days when I'd like to go back to the rotary phone, handwritten address book and being unavailable – especially to people who want something from me. But most days I love learning about technology. I especially like to collect tips for non-techies. At midlife, we probably aren't running in front of the pack. But a slower pace might help us enjoy the journey even more.

Few of us aspire to code, but we **do** want to harness technology to improve our quality of life. My image for the midlife inner geek is Techie Turtle. Like the Tortoise in Aesop's fable, Techie Turtle may be slow. But in the end, he wins the race.

Winning doesn't mean surpassing the know-how of early adopters and technology whiz kids, a.k.a. the Hares. You win on your terms. You acquire technical knowledge to help you live your life better. This will mean something different for every person.

Join me as I share tips for non-techies that can help you get more out of your personal technology. Knowing inside tricks can make your devices more fun to use. You might even learn something to show your kids!

Techie Turtle's tips for non-techies

Techie Turtle won't turn you into a technological genius. But he'll help you discover cool things about the devices you already use or may want to buy. Coming posts will talk about computers, cell phones, music systems, cloud storage, IoT (Internet of Things), robots, and more.

In case you missed it above, the point is **not** your speed. In fact, you're almost guaranteed to be slower than younger people when it comes to learning new tech things. But that's no reason to drop out of the race altogether.

Techie Turtle's tips will help you get the most out of your personal technology. You'll become more confident using your devices. And maybe best of all, you'll learn fun things you can do with tech stuff.



Let's start with the tech in your hand

It's hard to fathom that something as ubiquitous as the mobile phone has been a consumer device for less than 25 years. The iPhone, in fact, first came out in 2007.

Ten years later, there were approximately 223 million **smartphone users in the US**, over 90 million of which had iPhones. Analysts estimate there are **700 million iPhone users worldwide**.

This post will focus on iPhone tips for non-techies. I've picked a few tips that are especially relevant to those of us at midlife.

If you know how to use the features that follow, congrats! But I'll bet at least a couple of them will be new to you. I'm enjoying experimenting with some features I learned about while writing this post.

No more tiny iPhone text!

Lots of you probably know by now that you don't have to hold your phone at arm's length or fish around for reading glasses to do a quick scan of your messages.

But if you don't yet know how to enlarge iPhone text, you'll want this tip! If you're over 40, it will definitely make your phone easier to use.

Here's how:

- Click on Settings (sliver icon with gears)
- Tap General
- Choose Accessibility
- Select Larger Text
- Drag the slider dot toward the big "A" to make the text bigger. Choose what size you want. You'll get a preview in the screen to help you decide.
- Touch Home button (iPhone 6, 7, 8) or slide up (iPhone X) to return to the home screen.



More screen viewing tips for non-techies

While you're adjusting your Accessibility settings, you might want to experiment a little more.

Select Settings...General...Accessibility...Display Accommodations.

Invert Colors

Choose Smart Invert or Classic Invert. Try them and see if you can view the screen better with either option. Neither one helped me, but if you use your phone in very bright or very dark conditions, this adjustment might help you view the screen better. You can always change it back.

Color Filters

Helpful if you have difficulty reading text due to things like color blindness. Leave off unless this applies to you.

Auto-Brightness

This one's turned on by default. It adjusts the screen brightness for optimal viewing in sunlight, darkness and everything in between. I recommend that you leave it on.

Reduce White Point

Turned off by default. But if the intensity of bright colors on the screen hurts your eyes, try turning it on for a while to see if that helps.

Techie Turtle's advice

This post has covered ways you can change your iPhone's display to make it work better for you. Upcoming Techie Turtle articles will pass along tips for getting more out of the virtual keyboards on the iPhone and iPad, as well as how to save time and have fun with Siri, Apple's virtual assistant.

Techie Turtle's advice is to enjoy technology and remember that your tech should serve **you**. Not the other way around. You don't have to embrace all technology, but **do** leverage the tech that helps you live your best midlife!

Techie Turtle's iPhone camera tips

Smartphone cameras have changed the way we experience our lives. It's so easy to whip out your phone and snap a photo of a beautiful sunset or delicious slice of pie. Gatherings with friends and family nearly always involve taking group photos with different people's phones. Afterward, you look at your photos, show them to friends, upload and tag them on social media. Essentially, you enhance your experience by recording and sharing pictures of it.



Techie Turtle has iPhone camera tips to make your personal photography better and more fun. We're not going to discuss "time lapse," "contour light" or other iPhone camera features that appeal to camera buffs. The Turtle doesn't care about those things. He's collected iPhone camera tips for the casual photographer. He'll help you get more out your phone as you use it to record life experiences.

Quick, snap that photo!

If you're like me, you keep your camera app icon on the first page of your iPhone apps, where you can find it easily. This works fine. But sometimes you'll want to start up your camera super-fast.

Long press camera button on the lock screen. If you have an iPhone X, you can jump to the camera app with a long press on the camera button at the lower right side of the lock screen. (Bonus tip: you can turn on the flashlight with a long press on the flashlight button at the lower left of the lock screen.) You have to experiment a little to know how long is a "long press." It's not a tap, nor is it a press and hold – it's somewhere in between.

Swipe right from the lock screen. This one works for both iPhone X and earlier models. And you don't get frustrated with figuring how long is a "long press." Just swipe right directly from the lock screen. This will open the camera app straight away.

Shh! Don't let them know you're taking a picture

The easiest way to stop your phone from making a camera shutter sound when you take a photo is to slide the side switch to "mute." This is the same thing you'd do when in a meeting or somewhere else where you don't want your phone to make noise.

But another useful iPhone camera tip is to take photos using your phone's volume up and down buttons. Say you want to take a photo of something silly going on across the room, but you don't want to draw attention to yourself by holding up your phone. Make sure your phone is set to "mute." Open the camera app, but hold your phone as though you're checking your messages. You can click one of the volume buttons to take a photo without looking so obvious.

Some people suggest that taking photos with volume up/down buttons will reduce camera vibration vs. holding the phone in one hand while you tap the white button. I'm not sure this is true. I have a case on my phone that makes the volume buttons harder to press. I probably jiggle the camera **more** if I'm using them. Experiment and see what works for you.

Why are your photos moving?

The iPhone's Live photo feature is like a mini-video. It records 1.5 seconds before and after you take a picture. You can do **fun things with live photos**. But sometimes you end up taking a Live photo by accident when all you wanted was a regular picture.

The good news is that Techie Turtle has an iPhone camera tip to deal with these accidental Live photos. Here's how to convert a Live photo to a regular still shot:

- When the Live photo's on your screen (in Camera or Photos app), tap Edit
- You'll get a row of frames at the bottom of the screen to show the mini-video
- Slide the box back and forth to select the frame you like best
- Tap Make Key Photo
- Then tap the yellow "Live" button at the top of your screen so it goes white and says "Off"
- Tap Done
- Now when you review your images, you'll see you have only a still photo where you used to have a Live one.

Can you turn off Live photos?

Yes. Live photo is turned on by default (thanks, Apple!), but if you don't want to remember to turn it off every time you open your camera to take a regular photo, do this:

- Go to Settings, Camera, Preserve Settings
- Tap the slider for Live Photo so it turns green. This will cause your phone to "remember" whatever settings you used last time. (i.e., it will leave Live Photo turned **off** if that's how you set the camera last time you used it, or it will leave it **on** if you were taking Live photos)
- Now in the Camera app, look at the top row of buttons. The second one is a series of concentric circles, and it's yellow
- Tap that icon. It should turn white, and a brief message will flash, "Live off." You'll now see the white circles with a slash through them
- When you close the camera app and open it again, your choice of "Live Off" will be preserved. You'll see the white circle icon, not the yellow one.
- You can always switch to take a live photo by tapping the white circle icon so it will turn yellow. Just remember that whatever setting you leave it on when you close the app will be what loads next time you open it

The iPhone camera's built-in QR reader

You've probably seen those square QR codes in different places. QR stands for Quick Response, and the codes link to websites with additional information. QR codes have not caught on as widely as some people predicted, but they're still around. Organizations are using QR codes to provide people with enhanced experiences, encourage them to learn more, and so on.

For example, I observed an interesting use of QR codes at a museum. A special exhibit had QR code labels on some items, the same way you'd find labels with numbers corresponding to audio tour recordings. The QR codes allowed you to wander through the exhibit at your own pace. You could scan here and there with your phone to read more info when you felt like it.

With iOS 11, you no longer need a separate app to read QR Codes. Here's what you do:

- Go to Settings, Camera. Toggle Scan QR Codes on so it turns green
- Open up your camera (which you can do quickly now, right?). Make sure it's on rear-facing (not selfie) mode
- Hold your camera over the QR code and wait a couple of seconds. The camera will sense that it's looking at a QR code and scan it automatically. You'll get a notification at the top of the screen
- Tap the notification to pull up the corresponding website

Try it here.



Summary: iPhone camera tips

Let's review our iPhone camera tips to make personal photography more enjoyable. Techie Turtle has shown you how to:

- Quickly open your camera app with a long press (iPhone X only) or a swipe right gesture
- Silence the iPhone shutter sound
- Use volume/up down buttons to take Photos
- Convert a Live photo into a regular one
- Turn off Live photos as a default mode
- Use your iPhone camera to read QR codes

If you want to move on to learning more sophisticated ways you can use your iPhone camera, the internet has lots of resources. For example, check out these links:

- [Apple's own site](#). Shows you how to use different camera features, like slo-mo or pano mode
- [iPhone Photography School](#). Comprehensive source of articles, tutorials and how-to tips on taking amazing photos with the iPhone



Smartphones drive a digital photography boom

You can go crazy with iPhoneography. Or just take advantage of a few iPhone camera tips. In either case, make sure you enjoy having an excellent camera close at hand.

It's almost hard to remember the Instamatic and Polaroid years, when you paid by the print and had to avoid taking too many pictures. It's even funny to recall the days when you felt pretty cool if you had a small point-and-shoot camera. One you could carry around so you wouldn't miss a photo opportunity. But the **Wall Street Journal** noted the **point-and-shoot camera's demise** in an article five years ago.

Our ability to capture the moment with a smartphone image has accelerated. InfoTrends estimates that people will take **1.2 trillion digital photos this year**. That's about 160 photos for each of the 7.5 billion people living on the planet. An estimated 85% of these photos will be captured on smartphones.

The smartphone photography boom taps into a universal human desire to record events. To notice and commemorate the large and small things that make up our lives, especially the good times. It's fun to thumb through old photos on your phone and remember a birthday, a vacation, a wedding.

Live large, enhance your experience

Now everyone with a smartphone is a photographer. And our culture's adaptation to the smartphone photography boom is nothing short of remarkable. In fact, now to fully experience an event, you often need to take and/or pose for photos.

So snap all the photos you want. Let them help you enjoy and relive important moments in your life. Enlarge the experience by sharing them with friends and family.

His iPhone camera tips aside, Techie Turtle has a word of advice. Don't get so wrapped up in documenting an event for **later** that you fail to enjoy your experience **now**. Your camera phone can enhance your life. But you're the one who gets to live it.

Images via: RA Studio, Pixabay

Join me on my journey through midlife

Techie Turtle's tips will help you get more out of your iPhone and other devices you use regularly. The goal is to leverage technology so you can live your best midlife.

Join me as a fellow midlife traveler. I'll share tips I'm learning about that will help you live your best. Tips not only about technology, but also health, family, getting older and how to navigate the midlife transition with grace and joy.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on these issues. Please let me know what topics interest you most. Send me an email or connect with me on Facebook or Instagram. I look forward to hearing from you!

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