

BLUETOOTH

For many people, Bluetooth can be tricky. That's because Bluetooth requires that you "pair" gadgets. I can definitely help you with that!

But before I begin, let's explain Bluetooth. It is a wireless networking standard similar to Wi-Fi. However, Bluetooth is used for personal area networking. That's a fancy way of saying it connects gadgets that are nearby.

It's most commonly used in cell phones and wireless headsets. People who look like they're talking to themselves probably are using a Bluetooth headset. You'll also find Bluetooth in wireless keyboards and mice. It isn't suitable for networking computers, except for transferring small files.

There are different types of Bluetooth. And ranges vary. Some gadgets can range as far as 300 feet. Most Bluetooth gadgets have a range of 10 meters (about 32 feet).

To make Bluetooth gadgets communicate, you need a connection. This involves establishing a shared PIN. Pairing will be different from gadget to gadget. But I can give you a general rundown.

First, you must turn on Bluetooth and allow your phone to be discovered by other gadgets. Likewise, the other gadget must be discoverable. You should be able to activate Bluetooth and make your phone discoverable in Bluetooth options. If you can't find the options, consult your manual.

If you want to pair a wireless headset with your phone, it probably has a pairing mode. You may need to hold down a button on the headset. Again, if you're unsure, consult the manual.

For security reasons, you should only make your phone discoverable when you're pairing. Also, you should only do Bluetooth pairing in a private place. If you do it in public, you could pair with someone else's phone or computer.

Next, you need to add the other gadget with which you're connecting. On your phone, you should opt to "Add device" or "Setup devices." This will give you a list of other Bluetooth-enabled gadgets in proximity.

From the list, select the gadget with which you wish to connect. When you select it, you'll be prompted for a passkey. Some gadgets have fixed passkeys. This means the manufacturer set it. Headphones, for example, have fixed passkeys.

If there is no passkey, you'll need to create one. For security reasons, I would avoid "1234" and "0000." These are often used by manufacturers as fixed passkeys. There is no need to remember the passkey after you have paired with a gadget.

Once you're done, exit the Bluetooth settings. Then, follow the same steps for the other gadget. Make sure you enter the same passkey. If you're connecting something like a headset, you're done.

After the gadgets have been paired, make them undiscoverable again. When they're undiscoverable, unpaired gadgets won't be able to locate them. This won't affect pairings already established.

To transfer pictures or data via Bluetooth, initiate a connection. You do this by selecting or opening the item. Then you should have a menu that allows you to send the item via Bluetooth. Again, this will vary from gadget to gadget.

For the transfer to work, the other gadget may need to accept the incoming data. If that's the case, a message will pop up on its screen.

Your headset should connect to your phone automatically. That is, provided the phone has Bluetooth turned on.

These days, most smartphones and handhelds have Bluetooth connections. You will want to pay special attention to security if you have a smartphone or handheld. I have a tip that explains how to secure both [Windows](#) and [Palm](#) handhelds.

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