Apple iPhone and iPad VoiceOver Gesture List

What are Gestures?

Gestures are made by moving one or more fingers around the screen, or by tapping with one or more fingers. They form a language VoiceOver uses to control your iPhone or iPad. There are two types of gesture, Swipes and Taps.

Context Sensitive Gestures

Sometimes the same gesture can have different meanings depending on what you are doing at the time. For example, the One Finger Double Tap is the activate gesture on the Home Screen or Dock, and when the Current Item is a button, but it is the Start/End of Field gesture in an active Text Field. The Three Finger Swipe up is the Close App gesture in the App Switcher, but it is the Scroll Down gesture everywhere else. These are called Context Sensitive gestures.

Following are all of the gestures that can be used with VoiceOver on an iPhone or iPad. Each gesture describes the motion used to perform the gesture, the function of the gesture and the context in which the gesture can be used.

One Finger Gestures

The Explore Gesture

Motion: One Finger Drag or Touch .
Function: VoiceOver reads everything your finger passes over. The last item your finger touches becomes the Current Item. Apple also refers to this gesture as the "Touch" gesture.
Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Next Item Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Right.
Function: Moves to and reads the Next Item and makes it the Current Item.
Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Previous Item Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Left.
Function: **Moves to and r**eads the Previous Item and makes it the Current Item.
Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Activate Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap, or Split Tap.

Function: Activates an icon, presses a button, or puts a Text Field into edit mode. The Split Tap gesture is made by holding one finger on the item you want to activate, and then tapping the screen anywhere with one of your other fingers.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time, except in an active text field.

The Start/End of Field Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap or Split Tap.

Function: When editing text, jumps the Insertion Point between the Start and End of the Text Field.

Context: You can only use this gesture in an Active Text Field. Everywhere else, it is the Activate gesture.

The Increment Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe up or One finger double tap.

Function: Increments the value of a Picker Item by one.

Context: This gesture can only be used when positioned on a Picker Item.

The Decrement Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe down.

Function: Decrements the value of a Picker Item by one.

Context: This gesture can only be used when positioned on a Picker Item.

The Move Forward Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Down.

Function: Moves to the Next Character, Word, Line, Container, Heading or other item type skipping anything else in between.

Context: You can use this gesture when the Rotor is dialled to a Navigational function.

The Move Backward Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Up.

Function: Moves to Previous Character, Word, Line, Container, Heading or other item type skipping anything else in between.

Context: You can use this gesture when the Rotor is dialled to a Navigational function.

The Set Mode Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Up, or One Finger Swipe Down.

Function: Changes the behaviour of your iPhone or iPad, For example, Increases/Decreases Volume and Speech Rate, Turns Hints on and off, Changes Typing Mode…. Apple also refers to these gestures as the "Next Rotor Item" and "Previous Rotor Item" gestures.

  Context: You can use these gestures when the Rotor is dialled to a Behavioural function.

The Jump to Top Gesture

Motion: Explore then One Finger Double Tap.

Function: This gesture jumps to the top of a long list. Whilst the list is displayed, make an icon in the Status Bar the Current Item and perform a One Finger Double Tap anywhere on the screen.

Context: You can only use this gesture when a list of items is displayed.

The Zip To Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap and then Drag.

Function: skips quickly through an index list by moving your finger up or down.

Context: This gesture can only be used in the Contacts app.

The Select Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap or Split Tap.

Function: Selects one or more options from a List item, or menu. It is also used to select a word in an Active Text Field or to select an item from the Item Chooser. Selecting items from a list is different from activating them. Selected items are not acted upon immediately. They are simply marked for some action in the immediate future such as being moved or deleted.

Context: You can use this gesture in any Active Text Field, the Item Chooser, some Menus and Lists.

The Previous Response Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Left.

Function: Moves to the previous response in a text message conversation.

Context: This gesture can only be used in the body of a text message. Anywhere else, it is the Next Item gesture.

The Next Response Gesture

Motion: One Finger Swipe Right.

Function: Moves to the next response in a text message conversation.

Context: This gesture can only be used in the body of a text message. Anywhere else, it is the Next Item gesture.

The Context Menu Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap and Hold, or One Finger Triple Tap.

Function: Activates a hidden menu of options which affect the Current Item. The menu options vary greatly depending on the item type and the context in which the menu was invoked.

Context: This gesture can only be used on the Home Screen, in Text Fields and List Items.

The Drag Gesture

Motion: One Finger Double Tap and Hold, then Explore.

Function: Use this gesture to change the position of an item in a List or on the Home Screen. You can drag the item up or down.

Context: This gesture can only be used when items are present that can be dragged.

Two Finger Gestures

The Read from Top Gesture

Motion: Two Finger Swipe Up.

Function: Causes VoiceOver to begin reading from the top of the screen just below the Status Bar.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Read to Bottom Gesture

Motion: Two Finger Swipe Down.

Function: Causes VoiceOver to read from the Current Item to the bottom of the screen. Apple also refers to this gesture as the "Read All" gesture.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Item Chooser Gesture

Motion: Two Finger Triple Tap.
Function: Activates the Item Chooser.
Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Dial Rotor Gesture

Motion: Turn Rotor dial with two fingers.

Function: Changes the function the Rotor is set to. The rotor can be dialled clockwise or anti-clockwise, because the list of functions is circular. Not all functions are available at all times.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Pause/Resume Gesture

Motion: Two Finger Single Tap.

Function: Pauses VoiceOver. The item VoiceOver began reading last becomes the Current Item. Restarts VoiceOver from where it was paused, as long as no other gestures have been used between the Pause and Resume gestures. Apple also refers to this gesture as the "Toggle Speech" gesture.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Stop/Start Action Gesture

Motion: Two finger Double Tap.

Function: Starts and stops an action. Examples: Answer or Hang Up a Phone Call, Starts and Stops Dictation and Starts and Stops Music Playback. Apple refers to this gesture as the Magic Tap.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Start/Stop Dictation Gesture

Motion: Two Finger Double Tap.

Function: Starts or stops Dictation Mode in a Text Field that has been activated for editing. When started, a single bell tone sounds to indicate your device is listening. When stopped, a higher pitched bell tone sounds to indicate your device is no longer listening and is processing what was dictated.

Context: This gesture can only be used in an Active Text Field.

The Pinch Open Gesture

Motion: Place Thumb and Index Finger together simultaneously on the screen. Move index finger away from stationary thumb.

Function: Selects text. If thumb and index finger can't go farther apart, and more text needs to be selected, lift index finger whilst holding thumb stationary. Place index finger near thumb again and move index finger away.

Context: This gesture can only be used in an Active Text Field.

The Pinch closed Gesture

Motion: Spread Thumb and Index Finger apart and place them simultaneously on the screen, then move index finger toward stationary thumb.

Function: When editing text, deselects text. Be sure both fingers make contact with the screen at the same time. Otherwise, this will be interpreted as a Split Tap gesture.

Context: This gesture can only be used in an Active Text Field.

Three Finger Gestures

The Where Am I Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Single Tap.

Function: Gives you information about the location of the Current Item on the screen.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Scroll Right, or Next Page Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Left.

Function: Moves through the pages of the Home Screen Grid in ascending order.

Context: This gesture can only be used on the Home Screen.

The Scroll Left, or Previous Page Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Right.

Function: Moves through the pages of the Home Screen Grid in descending order.

Context: This gesture can only be used on the Home Screen.

The Scroll Down Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Up.

Function: Advances vertically to the next screen. You will hear the "Thunk sound, if there is no screen left to advance to.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time, except on the Home Screen or in the App Switcher.

The Scroll Up Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Down.

Function: Moves vertically to the previous screen, if one exists.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time, except at the top of the Inbox folder in the Mail app.

The Refresh Content Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Down.

Function: This gesture causes your device to immediately Fetch new Emails from the server without waiting for the specified time between fetches to elapse.

Context: This gesture can only be used at the top of an Inbox screen in the Mail app.

The Toggle Speech Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Double Tap.

Function: Turns off Speech until it is turned on with the same gesture. All other VoiceOver functions and gestures are still active. This is different than turning off VoiceOver altogether. Be sure to turn the speech back on before you power off your device. If your screen locks whilst speech is off, you can press the Home button or Side button once, and then do a Three Finger Double Tap to turn it back on again. Apple also refers to this gesture as the "Toggle Mute" gesture.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Toggle Screen Curtain Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Triple Tap.

Function: Toggles the screen on and off. Turning off the display is good for privacy. If an iPhone or iPad is lost whilst the screen curtain is on, placing the device in "Lost Mode" does not turn it off. People who find the device will not be able to read any message that might be on the screen.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Close App Gesture

Motion: Three finger Swipe up.

Function: Closes the app represented by the Current Item.

Context: This gesture is only used in the App Switcher.

The Previous Year, or Previous Month Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Down.

Function: Rolls back the Calendar to the previous month or year depending on which Time View is currently displayed.

Context: This gesture can only be used when the Calendar app is active in the Year or Month Time View.

The Next Year, or Next Month Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Up.

Function: Advances the Calendar to the next month or year depending on which Time View is currently displayed.

Context: This gesture can only be used when the Calendar app is active in the Year or Month Time View.

The Previous Day, or Previous Week Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Right.

Function: Rolls back the Calendar one day or week depending on whether the calendar is in the Day or Week Time View.

Context: This gesture can only be used when the Calendar app is in Day or Week Time View.

The Next Day, or Next Week Gesture

Motion: Three Finger Swipe Left.

Function: Advances the Calendar one day or week depending on whether the calendar is in the Day or Week Time View.

Context: This gesture can only be used when the Calendar app is in Day or Week Time View.

Four Finger Gestures

The First Item Gesture

Motion: Four Finger Single Tap.

Function: Jumps to the first item of any screen and makes it the Current Item. This action must be performed near the top of the screen.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Last Item Gesture

Motion: Four Finger Single Tap.

Function: Jumps to the last item of any screen and makes it the Current Item. This action must be performed near the bottom of the screen.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

The Next App Gesture

Motion: **Four Finger Swipe Left.**
Function: **Switches to the next open app sequentially.**
Context: **This gesture can only be** used when an app is active.

The Previous App Gesture

Motion: **Four Finger Swipe Right.**
Function: **Switches to the previous open app sequentially.**
Context: **This gesture can only be** used when an app is active.

The VoiceOver Help Gesture

Motion: Four Finger Double Tap.

Function: Turns VoiceOver gesture help/practice on. This mode can be used to practice the timing and motion of gestures, or to find out if there is a VoiceOver command that matches a particular gesture. For example, if a gesture is made, and VoiceOver is silent, then the gesture being made is not a valid VoiceOver gesture.

Context: You can use this gesture at any time.

This is the end of the description of VoiceOver gestures. If you need further information about gestures used with VoiceOver, contact the author, Gary Eady, using the following email address:

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