AirPods Pro: 11 tricks to master Apple's wireless earbuds right now

Want to get more out of your AirPods Pro? Of course you do. Read this.

Jason Cipriani
April 4, 2021 - CNet

The AirPods Pro are small, but powerful.

Apple's AirPods Pro are tiny but powerful wireless earbuds that work with any Apple device you own. Apple has continued to improve the AirPods Pro through software updates, over a year after they were released. For example, with the release of iOS 14, Spatial Audio was added, giving them a surround-sound-like effect to the tiny buds when you're watching a video on your iPhone or iPad.

The AirPods Pro look and work differently than Apple's standard AirPods, although there are some similarities. From quick pairing and checking the battery level to active noise cancellation and spatial audio, there's a lot to learn about these true wireless earbuds.

For more like this

Subscribe to the Apple Report newsletter, receive notifications and see related stories on CNET.

Pairing takes just a few seconds

After unboxing your AirPods Pro, unlock your iPhone or iPad ($350 at eBay), and open the charging case to your earbuds. A second or two later, a prompt will show up on your device asking if you want to pair the earbuds.

Tap **Connect** to initiate the pairing, and you're done. Not only will the AirPods Pro work with your iPhone, but they'll also be paired with all the Apple devices you've signed in to your iCloud account.

Media Control
Press once on either AirPod to play/pause, twice to skip forward, and three times to skip backward.

Both AirPods Pro buds have a button that's not really a button.
Jason Cipriani/CNET

Don't tap, press on your AirPods Pro

Instead of tapping on one of the AirPods, you'll be using the stems of the AirPods Pro as buttons. There isn't actually a button there, it's a pressure-sensitive section that can replicate how you'd use a button.

You might find it weird and confusing, and yet something you'd expect Apple to do.

Using two fingers, squeeze the flat indention on each AirPod. You'll hear a click in your ear with each press. Here's what each press of the button does:

- **Single-press**: Pause/Play
- **Double-press**: Skip forward
- **Triple-press**: Skip backward
- **Long-press**: Switch between noise cancellation and transparency mode.

Battery life is officially 5 hours.
Jason Cipriani/CNET

How to monitor battery life

Whenever you want to check the charge level of your AirPods Pro and the charging case, unlock your iPhone or iPad and open the case next to your device with the AirPods inside it. An animation will appear, showing the charge level of each AirPod and the case.
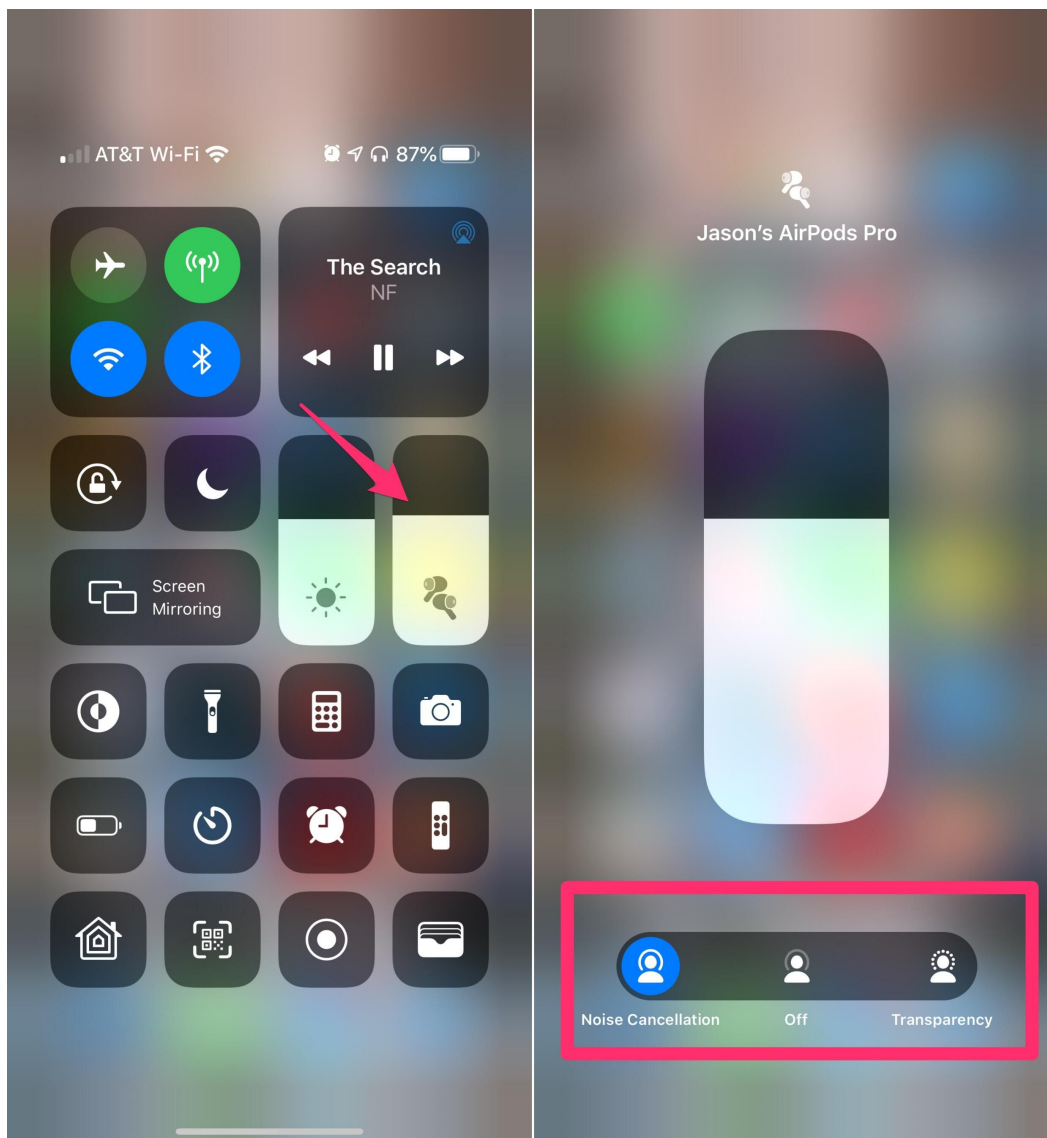
The control center makes it easy to switch between modes.

How to use active noise cancellation

Perhaps the headline feature of the AirPods Pro is active noise cancellation. When it's turned on, noise cancellation blocks nearly all background noise that you'd normally hear with regular earbuds or the standard AirPods. If you work in a noisy office, for example, or, say, a home office shared with a partner and kids who are remote-learning, it should help block out the chatter and distractions.

You can turn off noise cancellation with a long press on one of the AirPods' buttons, or use the control center on your iPhone or iPad. Swipe down from the top right corner of your device's screen; then, when the control center appears, long-press on the volume slider. At the bottom of the screen, you'll have three options: Noise cancellation, Off and Transparency. Tap the setting you want to use.

Use Transparency mode on the AirPods Pro

When you switch to Transparency mode, you'll be able to hear some of the sounds in your

environment, but also still hear the audio playing in your AirPods Pro.

Transparency mode is something you'd use when walking along busy streets so you can hear the traffic, or in an airport when you need to listen for gate changes, for example.

You can switch to Transparency mode with a long press on the AirPods' buttons or by using the toggle in Control Center.

You can toggle Spatial Audio in the same spot you control ANC.

# Spatial Audio is an impressive experience

In order to use this relatively new feature, make sure your iPhone is <u>updated to iOS 14</u>. With your iPhone running iOS 14, your AirPods Pro should automatically update to the latest firmware, which is also required in order for the feature to work. (More on how to try and force an update in a minute.)

Turn on Spatial Audio by going to **Settings** > **Bluetooth** > tap the "i" next to your AirPods Pro and then slide the switch next to **Spatial Audio** to the On position. You can then listen to a demo to see how the feature works by selecting **See & Hear How It Works**.

Now, whenever you are watching a video in an app like Apple TV and using your AirPods Pro, you should hear the audio in surround sound, moving around you as things happen on screen or as you move your head.

If you're not having luck using Spatial Audio, you might also need to update the firmware on your AirPods Pro, but that's something that your iPhone

handles on its own. My advice? If you don't see the spatial audio feature in the settings, put your earbuds in the charging case, but leave it open and place it next to your iPhone. I had to do this exact thing for about an hour before my AirPods Pro updated.
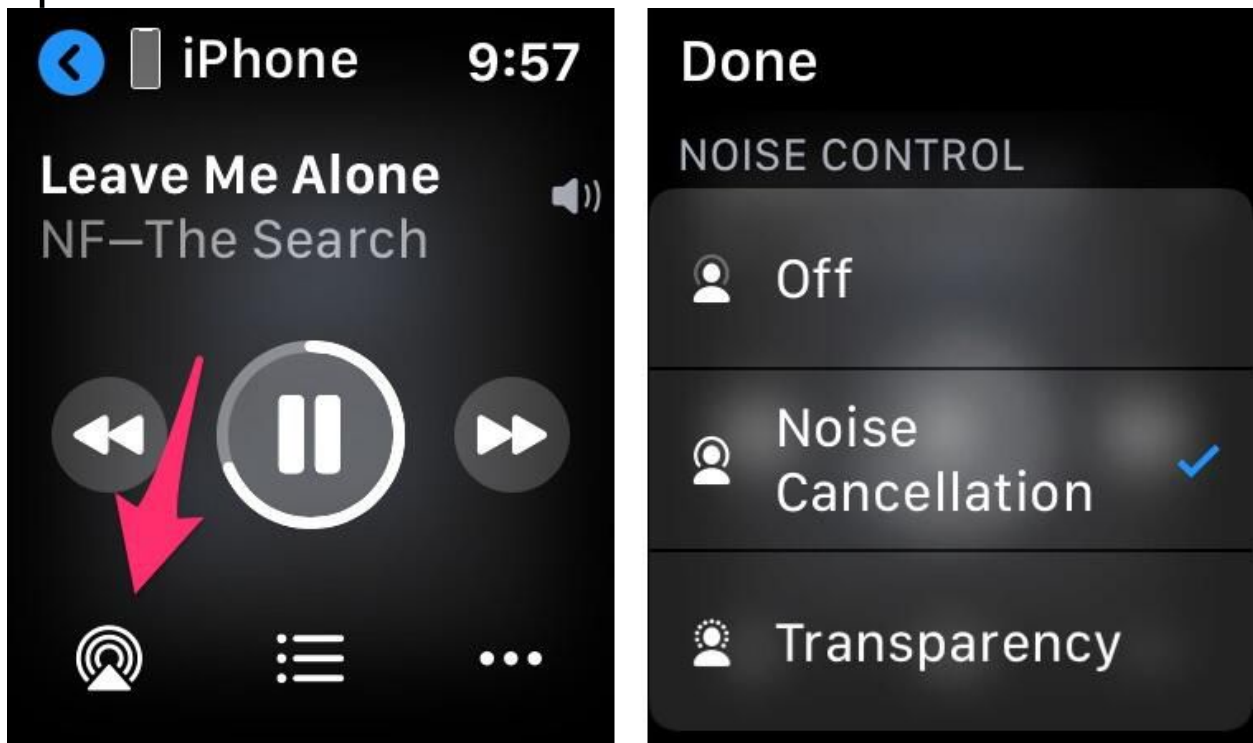
Even your Apple Watch can help you change modes.

Use your Apple Watch to control AirPods Pro

If you have an Apple Watch, you can tap on the AirPlay icon in the Now Playing app to switch between noise cancellation and transparency modes whenever your AirPods Pro are in use.
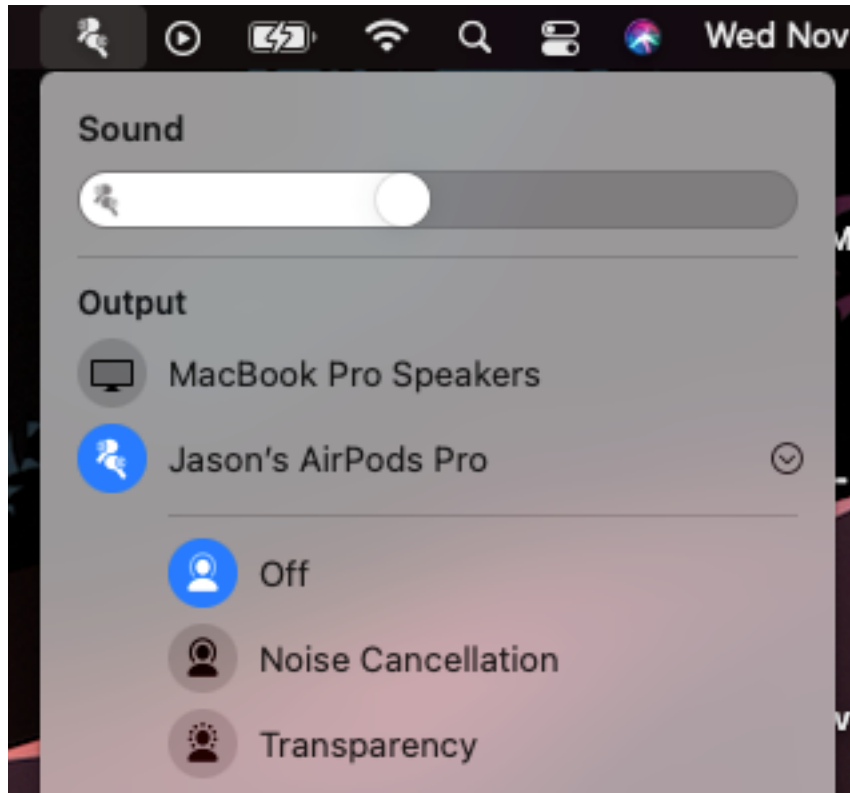
MacOS Big Sur added a dedicated AirPods control that appears when your wireless earbuds are connected to your Mac.

Use your Mac to control AirPods Pro

When using your AirPods Pro with your Mac, you can switch between noise cancellation and transparency without having to squeeze one of your AirPods Pro. If you've already updated to MacOS Big Sur, you'll see an AirPods icon when your earbuds are connected to your Mac. Click on it, then change the mode. If you haven't taken the plunge to Big Sur quite yet, you can click on the speaker icon in the menu bar along the top of your screen, then

hover your mouse over your AirPods Pro, then select the mode you want to switch to.

Get the right fit by switching tips

Included in the box with your AirPods Pro are two additional sizes of ear tips -- the medium size already comes installed. Try those out first, and if they feel uncomfortable, you can swap out for a different size. There's no trick to getting the tip off of each AirPod, just pull to slide it off and push to fit another pair on. It may feel like you're going to rip it, but from the few swaps I've done, they eventually come off.
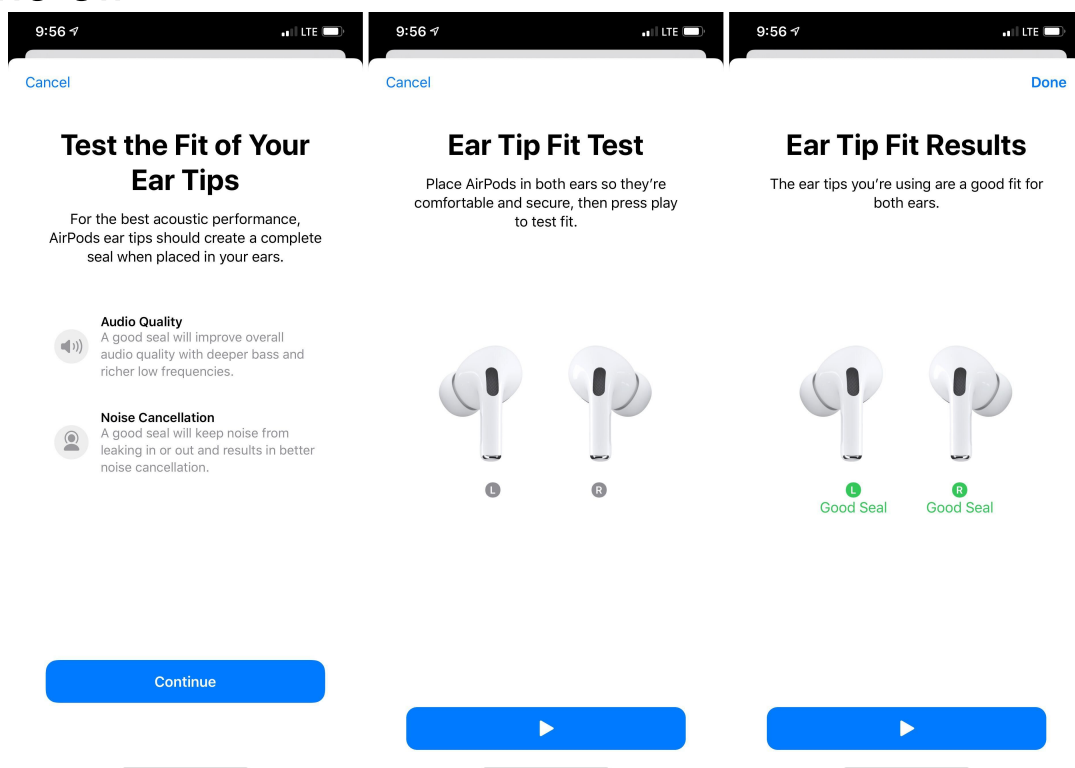
The Ear Tip Fit Test will tell you if you're using the right size ear tips.

Do the Ear Tip Fit Test to find the best fit

If you dive into the AirPods Pro settings, you can do the Ear Tip Fit Test (try saying that out loud a few times). The test will play some sounds using the AirPods' microphones and then tell you if the ear tips you have installed are the right size for your ears.

To run the test, open the Settings app on your iPhone, select <u>Bluetooth</u> and tap on the "i" next to the name of your AirPods Pro. Select Ear Tip Fit Test, and then follow the prompts.

I've run the test with both medium and small ear tips, and both passed. So don't feel locked into the first ear tips you test with; there may be another size that works and feels more comfortable.

Apple AirPods Pro have a new design

<u>See all photos</u>

See charge status when wirelessly charging the case

The case that comes with the AirPods Pro will wirelessly charge on the same wireless charging pads that work with the iPhone. Place the case on the pad with the small light facing up to start charging it. The case's light will light up when it's first placed on the pad, letting you know it's charging. However, it will eventually time out and turn off. Tap on the case to check the charge status of the case (green means it's fully charged).

There's plenty more to the AirPods Pro; these other tips and tricks apply to all AirPods, and should help you completely master your new wireless earbuds. If you have a new iPhone, make sure to check out these settings. Then get to know all of iOS 14's new features.

original article: https://www.cnet.com/how-to/airpods-pro-11-tricks-to-master-apples-wireless-earbuds-right-now/?utm_medium=40digest.7days3.20210404.carousel&utm_source=email&utm_content=&utm_campaign=campaign