

Apple TV: 11 essential tips to master your streaming box

The Apple TV is a seemingly simple device that's gained so many new features over the years. Here's the latest.

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The Apple TV remote gets the job done, as long as you don't lose it.

There's little doubt that the Apple TV is in desperate need of a refresh. Rumors currently point to a new streaming box arriving sometime this year with improved gaming features, an easier to find remote and a more powerful processor inside the small black box.

Even though a new Apple TV is possibly on the horizon, the current Apple TV lineup is worth the investment for Apple fans and users. And once you get the shiny new box setup, there are some things you'll need to learn. For instance, getting around the Siri remote can feel simplistic, but there are some hidden shortcuts that will surely make your life easier.

You can even use your AirPods or a HomePod with the Apple TV to listen to your favorite show or movie. Below you'll find 11 tips and tricks to get the most out of your Apple TV.

Useful gestures and tricks for the Siri remote

The Apple TV remote is in desperate need of an overhaul. It's small, easily lost, and the trackpad that's used to tap and swipe your way through the

Apple TV's interface can be frustrating. But, it's what you're stuck with. So, in an effort to make the most out of the situation, below are some of the gestures and tips we've learned from our time using the Siri remote.

Of course, you can use the power of Siri by pressing and holding the Siri button (the one with the microphone icon on it) and speaking a command. You can say things like, "Jump forward 10 minutes," "Get me some new shows on Netflix" or "Who directed this?" The list of [Siri commands for Apple TV](#) is expansive.

Still, the true beauty of the Siri remote are all the hidden hotkey functions.

- Long pressing the **Home button** (the one with the TV icon on it) will bring up a slide over menu, where you can put the TV to sleep, change user accounts, view your HomeKit devices and camera feeds, as well as access AirPlay devices (more on this in a minute).
- Pressing **Play/Pause** while typing acts as a shift key.
- A **double-click** of the **Menu** button while on the home screen will start the screen saver.

- Long-press on the touchpad to activate jiggle mode to reorganize or delete apps.
- **Double-pressing** the **Home** button opens the app switcher, which you can then swipe through all of the open apps and even force-close them if you're having issues.



You don't have to use your TV's full remote. With a couple of settings tweaks, you can use the Apple TV to control everything.
Sarah Tew/CNET

Ditch the remote that came with your TV

The Siri remote can almost totally replace the remote for your television (at least when using the Apple TV). It's generally enabled automatically, but if

your Siri remote isn't controlling your TV's volume, go to **Settings > Remotes and Devices** and make sure **Control TVs and Receivers** is set to **On**. If the volume control still isn't working, click **Volume Control** and click **Auto**.

The Apple TV can also power on and off almost television, but this is dependent upon the television itself. You will need to enable CEC, which has over a dozen different names depending on your TV brand. Once enabled, when you press a button on the Siri remote, your television should power on. And when you sleep the Apple TV, your TV should also power off.

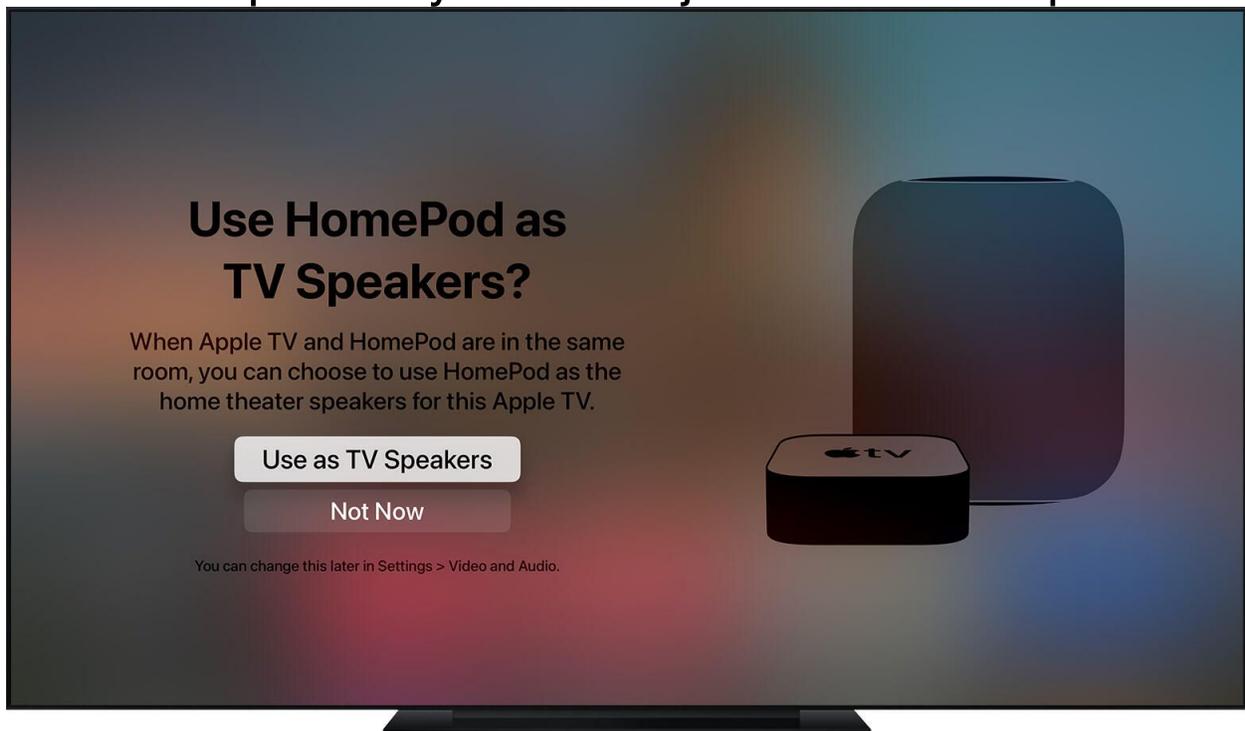


AirPods and Apple TV go together like peanut butter and jelly.

Use your AirPods with your Apple TV

The next time you want to binge your favorite new series late at night without disturbing your partner, connect your AirPods to your Apple TV. Your AirPods should already be paired with the streaming box, so all you need to do is put your AirPods on, then long-press the TV button, select the AirPlay icon and then scroll down and click on your AirPods.

All audio will be beamed from the Apple TV straight to your ears, letting everyone else around you get some sleep while you watch just one more episode.



Use your HomePod as TV speakers for improved sound.

Or you can use your HomePod for better sound

If you have full-size HomePods, you can use the smart speakers to create a home theater sound system. Alternatively, if you only have a HomePod Mini, you can stream your Apple TV's audio through the speaker for improved sound.

There's a few different ways of getting the home theater feature working, but here's the gist: You'll need an Apple TV 4K, one or two of the bigger HomePod model.

Make sure the HomePod and Apple TV are located in the same room in the Home app on your iPhone or iPad. If you have two HomePod speakers you want to use as a stereo pair, you'll need to create that pair before assigning them to the same room as your TV.

The next time you turn on your Apple TV, you'll be asked if you want to use the HomePod as your TV speakers. If you aren't prompted, open the Settings app on your Apple TV and go to **Video and**

Audio > Default Audio Output and select the speaker you want to use.



You can pair true gaming controllers to the Apple TV for gaming.

Pair Bluetooth devices

If you don't have AirPods but have a pair of Bluetooth headphones, you're not left out. Whether you're looking to play some casual games with a controller or watch a TV show without disturbing others late at night, Bluetooth is your best friend. While you can play some simple games with the Siri remote, the Apple TV is compatible with MFi (Made for iPhone) controllers as well as a select list of Xbox

and PlayStation controllers. To pair a controller, turn it on and put it into pairing mode. Then, on the Apple TV, go to **Settings > Remotes and Devices > Bluetooth**. Look for the controller to appear under **Other Devices** and click it. Now when you turn it on, it will automatically connect to the Apple TV.

The same goes for Bluetooth headphones, which is especially helpful to late night watching if you don't want the sound of the television keeping everyone in the house up. And you can replace the Siri remote with a Bluetooth keyboard, if you so wish. Just put the device in pairing mode, then visit the Bluetooth section in the Apple TV settings to finish the pairing process.

Force a reboot

While the Apple TV works almost flawlessly most of the time, things can go awry from time to time. Apps can freeze or stop working. We've previously covered five common Apple TV problems (and how to fix them), but your best friend will almost certainly be the force reboot option. There are two ways to do this:

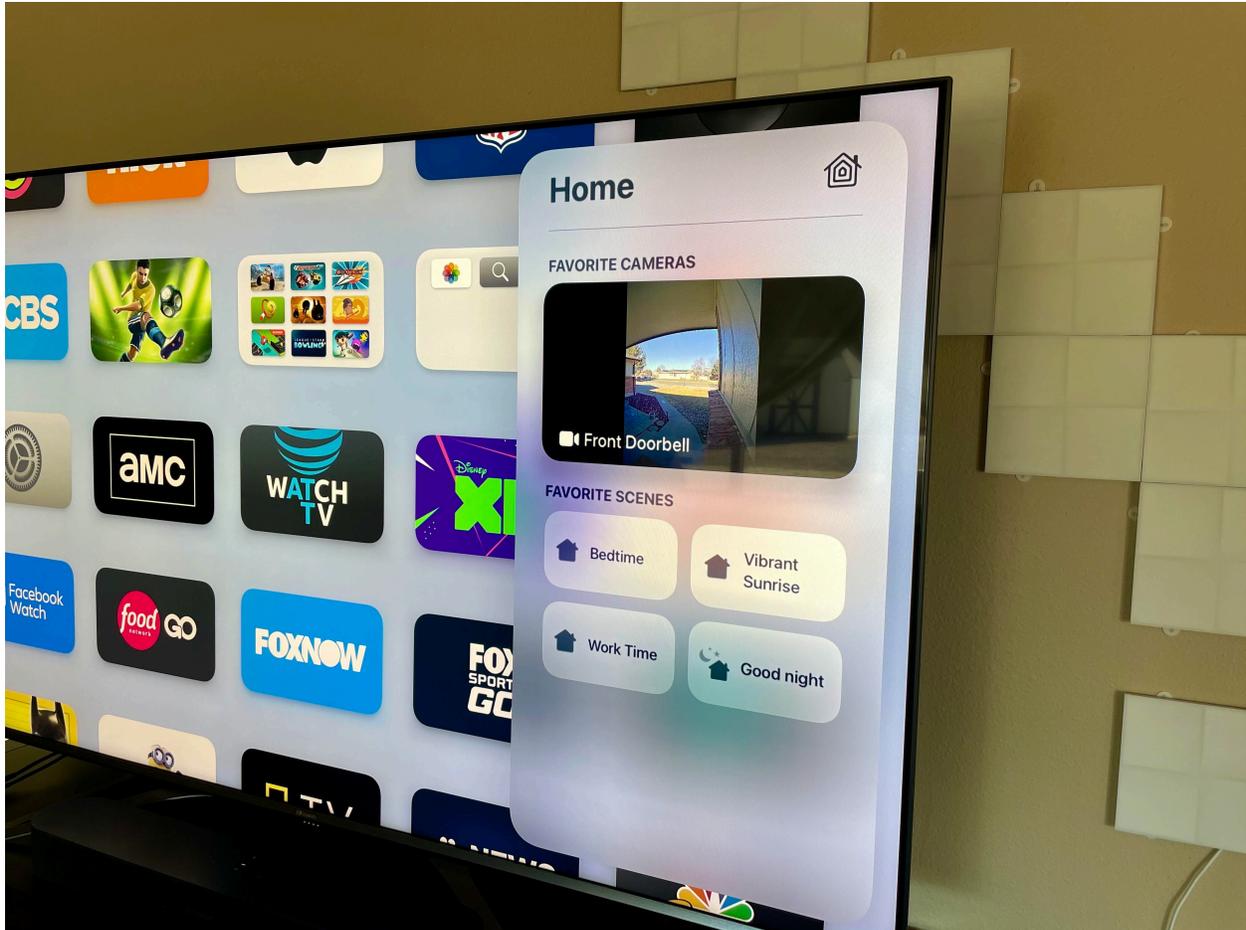
- Go to **Settings > System** and click **Restart**.

- Or press and hold both the **Menu** and **TV** buttons until the light on the front of the Apple TV begins blinking rapidly. Release the buttons and the Apple TV will reboot.

Use your iOS device as a remote

Speaking of replacing the Siri remote, if you happen to misplace it or break it, replacing it is a cool \$59. But you can avoid replacing it altogether. Built into your iPhone or iPad is the Apple TV remote app, and if you're using your own profile to stream and watch shows, you'll notice that your lock screen automatically displays controls. You have pretty much all the functions of the Siri remote, including volume control.

It also comes with the handy option to let you type searches and other text input using the onscreen keyboard on your iOS device, instead of having to hunt and peck with the on-screen Apple TV keyboard. You can even use it to sign into apps with a password manager like iCloud Keychain or 1Password.



View your HomeKit devices on your Apple TV, including live video streams.

Control your smart home devices

If you have any smart home devices that work with HomeKit, your Apple TV will act as a hub for them, and you can use the Siri remote to control your house.

Setup is a breeze -- just connect your HomeKit devices to the Home app on your iOS device and make sure the Apple TV is signed in to the same iCloud account as you use on your phone. To make sure it's set up properly, go to **Settings > AirPlay and HomeKit** and look to see that it's connected as a hub. If not, double check the user account by going to **Settings > Users and Accounts >** click on your account name then select **iCloud** to see what email address it's using.

As long as all of that is working, you should be able to press the Siri button on the remote and tell it to turn your lights on or off, or unlock a door -- depending on what kind of HomeKit devices you have around your home.

The real beauty of HomeKit working with Apple TV is that your Apple TV will work as a remote hub, so you can control your home while you're away.

If you have any HomeKit compatible cameras, you can watch live streams or get alerts when someone rings your doorbell, for example, right on your TV. Just long-press the TV button, highlight and click the HomeKit icon to take control of your home.



Use the Apple TV app as your go-to spot for finding what to watch next, regardless of which app owns the show.

Take advantage of the TV app

The Apple TV app has become the centralized hub for all the stuff you watch, or might want to watch. When you open an app like Discovery Go, you'll be asked if you want to give the TV app access to the app. Doing so will allow it to track the shows you're watching and put new episodes in front of all the other stuff under the **Up Next** section. The TV app is also where you will buy new TV shows or movies and where you can find all your previously purchased items.

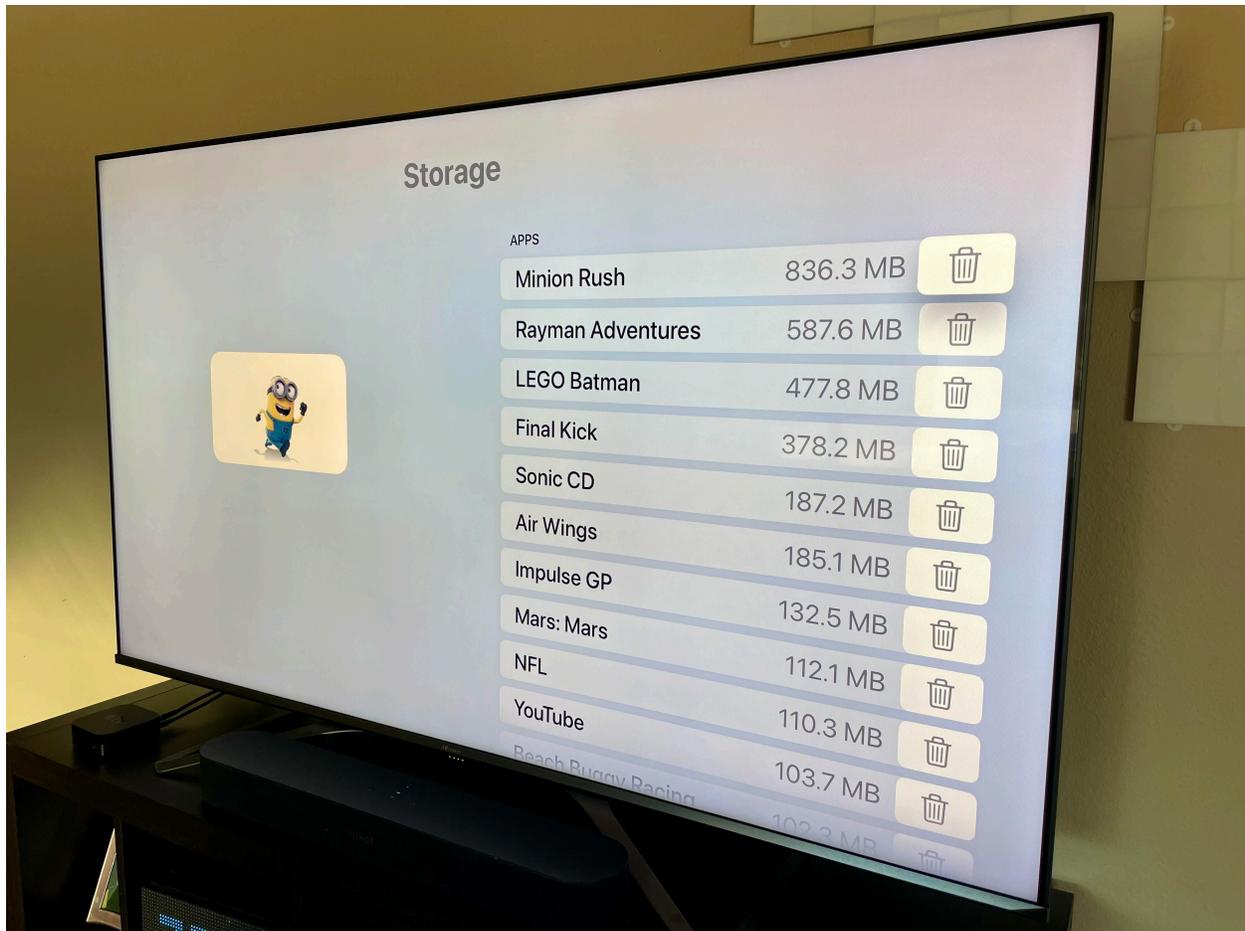
Perhaps more importantly for some, this is also where you'll find all of the Apple TV Plus shows and movies that Apple releases.

It's easy to gloss over the TV app, but if you take the time to sign in to your TV provider and include all the streaming apps you use, it will become a helpful tool that will reduce the time you spend clicking around to pick up where you left off or finding something new to watch.

Automatically install apps

If you download a new app to your iPhone, it can be automatically installed on your iPad. The same thing can be enabled with your Apple TV -- assuming there's an Apple TV app for something you've installed.

To enable this, go to **Settings > Apps** and click **Automatically Install Apps** to switch it to **On**.



This is a much easier way to delete apps.

Quickly delete apps

You might find yourself going on an application installing spree with your new Apple TV. Or you might have automatically downloaded a bunch of apps you installed on your phone that you never use on your Apple TV.

If you need to quickly free up storage on your Apple TV, you could go through and delete each app individually from the home screen, which is

painstakingly slow and cumbersome. Or you could go to **Settings > General > Manage Storage** to find a list of installed applications, organized from largest to smallest. There you can click the trash can icon next to each app you want to remove and click **Delete** to confirm.

Once you've mastered your Apple TV, make sure to check out our [learn more about Apple TV Plus](#). [Apple recently launched Fitness Plus](#), a workout service that uses the Apple TV to bring instructors into your living room, if you have an [Apple Watch](#), that is.

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