LEARNING MADE EASY

2nd Edition

Android® Smartphones

FOR SENIORS

for dummies®

A Wiley Brand

Manage your smartphone with confidence

Level up your photography skills

Sharpen your privacy and security

Marsha Collier

Bestselling author and technology commentator, and influencer

Android® Smartphones For Seniors

2nd Edition

by Marsha Collier

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Android® Smartphones For Seniors For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,** 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2025 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial technologies or similar technologies.

Media and software compilation copyright © 2025 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial technologies or similar technologies.

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. Android is a trademark or registered trademark of Google LLC in the United States and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at http://booksupport.wiley.com. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number is available from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-394-28157-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-28159-6 (ePDF); ISBN 978-1-394-28158-9 (epub)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1
About This Book 1
Foolish Assumptions 3
Icons Used in This Book 3
Beyond the Book 4
Where to Go from Here 4

PART 1: YOUR PHONE IN THE ANDROID UNIVERSE 5

CHAPTER 1: **Why Android? What's the Deal?** 7
A Little Android History 8
The Many Flavors (Versions) of Android 9
Reasons That People Choose Android 10
Why You Need a Google Account 12
Accessing your Google account 12
Bequeathing your Google account 15
So Many Choices! 16
Flagship versus mid-range versus feature phones 17
Tech support options 18
5G? LTE? 4G? VoLTE? Whaaat? 19
A Word about Privacy and Security 20
Free usually isn't 21
The terms of service can be tricky 21
Making the AI decision — what is it really? 22
Marsha's sage advice about privacy 23

CHAPTER 2: **Buying Your Android Smartphone and Accessories** 25
Investigate First — Then Make a Buying Decision 26
Recognizing types and styles of phones 26
Looking at a phone's physical features 28
Reviewing before making a decision 32
What is the brand's update policy? 33
Considering an older model 34
Choosing where to buy your phone 35

Consider Your Carrier Choice 37
Checking out the carrier's coverage area 37
Finding senior discounts on carrier service 37
You Need a Few Accessories, Too 39
Power charging or wireless — volts and watts matter 39
MicroSD card 41
Phone cases 41
Phone sanitizer 43
Earbuds, wired or wireless? 44

CHAPTER 3: **Activating and Connecting Your Phone** 45
Unbox Your New Phone 46
Insert a SIM Card or Use an eSIM 48
Hardware Buttons and What They Do 49
Power buttons and your power-down options 51
Volume buttons and how they work 55
Turn On Your Phone for the First Time 57
Connecting to a network 58
Setting up a Google account 59
Setting up a secure lock 59
Restoring data from an older phone 60
Learn about Google One and Google Drive 61
Learn Android Smartphone Symbols and Gestures 62
Swipe, tap, pinch, and more 63
Recognizing common Android icons 63
Meeting the top status bar 65
Exploiting screen navigation and gestures 66

PART 2: GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR ANDROID SMARTPHONE 69

CHAPTER 4: **Safety First: Making Your New Phone Private** 71
Set Up a Screen Lock 72
Checking out the screen locking options 72
Following the Lock screen setup process 75
Establish Data Backup 76
Place Owner Information on the Lock Screen 78

Add Emergency Info. 81
Designating emergency or ICE contacts 81
Providing medical information 82

CHAPTER 5: **Personalizing Your Handset** 85
Find and Sort Your Apps 86
Move App Shortcuts to the Home Screen 88
Group Apps into Folders 89
Creating your own apps folders 90
Enlarge folders for easy viewing. 91
Deal with Preinstalled Applications (or Bloatware) 92
Get the News (and Other Media) You Can Use 94
Customize the Home Screen's Look and Feel 95
Finding handy widgets 95
Looking for particularly handy widgets 97
Show your creative side with wallpaper and styles 99
Try Out the Android Accessibility Suite 100

CHAPTER 6: **Android Typing Tricks with Google's Gboard** 103
Make the Keyboard Decision 104
Selecting a keyboard to use 104
Noting keyboard features 106
Exploring keyboards you have (or can have) 110
Check Out Keyboard Contenders 112
Gboard, the official Google keyboard 112
Samsung Keyboard 115
Microsoft SwiftKey keyboard 115
Dictate with Voice Typing 117
Extended Keyboard and Special Characters 118
Learn the Emoji Language 119
Delete, Copy, and Paste Text 120

CHAPTER 7: **Handling Notifications and Google Assistant** 123
Meet the Android Notifications Drawer 124
Recognizing notification types and settings 124
Disabling notifications (or not) 125
Controlling notifications via app settings 129
Having fun with notifications (or not) 129
Taming Google Discover news feed. 131

Manage Your Phone with Quick Settings 133
The first-up Quick Settings 134
The full cast of Quick Settings 135
Customizing the Quick Settings 136
Get the 411 from Google Assistant 138
Knowing what you can do with Google Assistant 139
Google Gemini versus Assistant 141

PART 3: LET'S START COMMUNICATING 143

CHAPTER 8: **Setting Up and Maintaining Contacts** 145
Establish Your Phone's Contacts 146
Starting out right with Google Contacts 147
Importing old address books 147
Save Contacts from Email 150
Add a Contact in Other Ways 151
Importing contacts from texts 152
Adding a contact from the call log 152
Type a Full Contact in the Contacts App 153
Merge Duplicate Contacts and Other Fixes 156
Customize, Delete, and Update Contacts 158

CHAPTER 9: **Chatting via Voice or Video** 161
Make a Voice Call 162
Making international calls from your phone 164
Calling internationally or locally with no contract 165
Check Voicemail 167
Get Voicemail Transcriptions 168
Reply to an Incoming Call by Sending a Text 170
Busy? Have Google Assistant Handle Your Calls 173
Using Audio Emoji 176
Set a Built-in Ringtone 178
Spend Face Time with Google Meet 178

CHAPTER 10: **Texting with Poise and Character** 181
Compare Types of Text Messaging 182
Turning on RCS chat features 185
Using third-party chat apps 187
There may be bubbles? 188

Dress Up Texts in Google Messages 189
The Text Message Bar and Emoji in Gboard 192
Find Even More Texting Options 194
Share Multimedia in Texts 195
Voice-Type (Dictate) 199
Manipulate the Text in Your Message. 200
Act on Text Messages You Receive 201

CHAPTER 11: **Managing Email with the Gmail App** 203
Discover Gmail Features 204
Revealing the Gmail app's main menu 204
Tending to mailbox organization 205
Scoping out the main mailbox 206
Send a Gmail Email 207
Adding an email signature. 210
Scheduling an email delivery 211
Perform Basic Gmail Tasks 212
A table of common email tasks 212
Printing an email from Gmail 214
Print Other Messages, Documents, and Web Pages. 215
Link to Other Apps and Gmail Settings. 218

PART 4: EXPLORING YOUR PHONE'S HANDY APPS 219

CHAPTER 12: **Choosing and Using a Smartphone Camera** 221
Examine Smartphone Cameras and Brands 222
Paying the right amount of attention to reviews 222
Phones with camera brand collaborations. 223
Take a Camera-Spec Safari 224
Enough megapixel, but not too much 224
Home in on subjects with zoom 225
Exercise Your Android Camera's Capabilities 227
Just point-and-shoot either stills or video 227
Add interest with your camera's tools 229
Expand your reach with Google Lens visual search 229
Access camera features on the scrolling menu 235
Go Pro with Pro Mode 236
Discovering the Pro settings 236
Applying the Pro settings. 237

CHAPTER 13: **Organizing and Editing Photos** 239
Find and Organize Photos on Your Phone 240
Using the in-phone Gallery 242
Using the Albums feature 242
Sharing photos in texts, emails, and more 243
Backing up your photos 244
Edit Your Photos in the Gallery 246
Finding editing options 247
Applying your phone's photo editing tools 248
Playing with filters, colors, and more 250
Getting into the Google Photos App 251
Organizing Google Photos 252
Organize and select a Top Pick with Stacks 254
Editing images in Google Photos 255

CHAPTER 14: **Google Mobile Services and Apps for Android** 257
Find Popular Google Apps 258
Google Photos 259
Storing and retrieving photos 261
Syncing and deleting photos 261
Sharing with friends 262
Searching for photos 262
Adding info to help with photo searching 264
Google Maps 266
Finding your way to an appointment 267
Employing the Directions screen options 268
Sharing your location 269
Google Find My Device Network 271
Take Note(s) with Google Keep 275

CHAPTER 15: **Useful Apps in Google Play Store** 277
Frequent the Google Play Store 278
Establish App Privacy Permissions 278
Connect to Radio (Yes, Radio), Podcasts, and Music 281
Configuring your speakers' volume 281
Making a wired connection 282
Using a Bluetooth connection 283

Find Favorite and Fun Apps — a Consensus 284
Radio, podcasts, and music 284
Video apps 286
Travel 286
Games 289
News 290
Books 291
Engaging Social Media 291

CHAPTER 16: **Marsha's MUST-DO Things for Your Phone** 293
Make the Orientation Decision 294
Take a Screenshot 295
Configure Do Not Disturb 296
Use Your Home Wi-Fi for Calls and Browsing 297
Practice Safety When Using Public Connections 299
Use a VPN to secure public Wi-Fi connections 299
Beware of charging a phone from a public port 301
Protect the Heart of Your Phone 302
Wireless charging overnight 303
Secure your power cables 304
Set Up Emergency Call and SOS 304
Establishing SOS messaging 305
Activating Emergency mode 306
Managing Emergency mode 307
Adding on the Pixel Personal Safety app 308
Dealing with unknown trackers 308

INDEX 311

Introduction

This, the second edition of *Android Smartphones For Seniors For Dummies*, is for you, even if you're not a senior. You no doubt live a busy life and may rarely have the desire (or time) to learn to operate every last feature of your Android smartphone. Android has *so* many options, and in this book, I share some of my favorites, some really hidden nuggets, and some basic tricks for beginning (and not-so-beginning) users. Most of all, I want you to be comfortable with your Android phone.

I've met too many people who refuse to learn anything regarding technology, and it upsets me. As you grow older (don't we all?), improving cognitive abilities is a top way to fend off mental decline. What better way to boost brainpower than to master the tiny computer in your pocket? Challenge yourself and think of spending time on your smartphone as a form of self-care — while having fun at the same time. While writing this book I learned so much, going deep into different brands; it was an entertaining challenge.

So, buy the book. I know we'll have fun learning together.

About This Book

The idea for the first edition of this book was born during the coronavirus pandemic, on the day that vaccinations became available in Los Angeles. I scoured the internet, found the active link with the information, and wanted to be sure that my over-65 neighbors could sign up for the vaccine as well.

I went from house to house, helping others sign up for an appointment (much to their relief). The problem was not necessarily determining where to go for shots, but rather how to schedule the appointments via their phones.

From my research, I've found that not everyone rushes out to buy the latest, most expensive phones. I suspected as much because that's

my philosophy as well. So, I used eight different phone models and brands (Samsung, Pixel, and OnePlus), and not just the latest-and-greatest; older phones upgraded to new software easily. The figure in this introduction shows screens from some of my "coauthors" for this book.

The Coauthors

The coauthor phones ran the latest version of Android 14 and a Beta (not fully released) Android 15. They include a 2021 OnePlus 9 Pro 5G, a 2024 OnePlus 12 and OnePlus 12R, a 2021 Pixel 6 Pro (used by my Tech Editor, TJ), a 2022 Pixel 7 Pro, 2024 Pixel 8 Pro, Samsung Galaxy S22, 2022 and a Samsung Galaxy Flip 4.

All these phones are really *impressive*, and the manufacturers did a great job with the design and functionality. Even the oldest phone performed flawlessly when upgraded to the latest software.

Foolish Assumptions

I assume that you have used a smartphone — or at least used a computer. I also assume that you may be in the market for a phone or have just acquired one. I guide you through the intricacies of buying a phone that best meets your needs, the specific features to look for in a mobile service provider, the basic operations of navigating your Android smartphone, and the most important apps you need to master (even for photography and entertainment). I highlight ways to use your phone that we (my editors and I) expect will improve your Android experience. Most importantly, I present the content in non-technical language!

Icons Used in This Book

I'm all about illustrating a book. Many figures illustrate the phone screens and tasks laid out in the chapters. You'll also see small icons that point to special advice from me — here they are:

Tips are short notes — from me to you — that make the process of using your smartphone easier.

These notes are like tips, but a bit more technical sounding. I provide only the technical info that's both important and worthwhile to know.

Don't forget these notes. They show up often and are good to stash in the back of your mind.

Warnings contain information that you need to heed. Sometimes, performing certain actions can cause an expensive problem, but *don't worry:* You won't find many of these.

Beyond the Book

You can find a section on www.dummies.com with more Android tips and new Android features as they roll out. While visiting dummies.com, type **Android Smartphones For Seniors For Dummies, 2nd Edition** in the search box to find the book's Cheat Sheet. I also have a blog at https://mcollier.blogspot.com, where I post related articles.

In this book, I give you links and contact information for the tech support department for several major phone manufacturers, which should help with any immediate issue.

If you have specific questions, feel free to reach me by completing the contact form at my website (http://www.coolebaytools.com/contact) or on any of the social media platforms. I'd love to hear from you about the topics you want me to add to the next edition.

You can hear my tech news segment every Thursday with Mr. Mo Kelly on the Los Angeles KFI AM 640 and the iHeartRadio Radio network. I also have a podcast, "Computer and Technology Radio," which I host with Marc Cohen. You can find it on your favorite podcast platform.

Where to Go from Here

Start reading this book anywhere you want. The incredible index will help you find almost any topic you want to learn about. Go to the table of contents and pick a chapter that interests you or read the book from the beginning.

Interesting and helpful nuggets of information for you abound everywhere in this book. I really hope you enjoy it.

1 Your Phone in the Android Universe

IN THIS PART . . .

Meeting the Android OS

Setting up a Google account

Choosing a smartphone and accessories

Options for buying your phone

Starting up and connecting your phone

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Knowing the origins and scope of Android
- Seeing why you need a Google account
- Understanding the many choices
- Practicing privacy going forward

Chapter 1

Why Android? What's the Deal?

The smartphone is undoubtedly the most common yet powerful personal technology in your life. Living in the United States, you have this main choice: an Apple iPhone (iOS) or an Android-based phone.

The smartphone platform you choose is a matter of preference. Some people use both Apple and Android products, but in the end usually tend to favor one *operating system* (OS, the software that supports your smartphone's basic functions) platform over the other.

Because the iPhone lives in a *walled garden* (a space seen as closed to outsiders), Apple makes the decisions and takes the profits on the phone, accessories, services, and apps. Apple products and software work in sync; you have few choices to make.

Conversely, no matter the brand, all Android phones have similar genetics and are the same at their core. But you will find a wide

variety of options for accessories, phone brands, services, apps, and (most of all) prices.

The competition for dollars in the Android marketplace begets innovation, and I believe that opting to spend *your* dollars in that marketplace is a good choice. In this chapter, I offer some foundational information to help make the Android experience even better.

A Little Android History

Android is the operating system on the majority of the world's smartphones. It's an open-source operating system led by Google developers (according to `https://source.android.com/`):

As an open-source project, Android's goal is to avoid any central point of failure in which one industry player can restrict or control the innovations of any other player. ***Translation:*** If you come up with a new device — smartphone or tablet, for example — you, too, can use the Android operating system to power it for free. (I'm not that smart.)

I believe that much of the magic of Android lies with Google Mobile Services (GMS) — the collection of apps and functionalities that make the Android ecosystem a *useful* environment.

As an Android user, you may wonder why you feel more comfortable using the operating system. The answer is a surprise to many: the Android mobile operating system is based on Linux (another open-source operating system) and many Microsoft patents. The influence of these two giants in the software world accounts for the familiarity, and thus the comfort, you may feel when using an Android device. The nearby sidebar "The scope of Microsoft involvement" gives a quick look at the Android–Microsoft connection.

TIP

Note that many Android phones come with Microsoft Office preinstalled. Also, did you know that you can send text messages on your phone from your Windows desktop PC? Android phone owners can just go to `messages.google.com/web` to connect the devices.

THE SCOPE OF MICROSOFT INVOLVEMENT

It is rumored that Microsoft can make as much as $24 per Android device sold, as payment for its patents used in the Android operating system. Even smartphone manufacturers cross-license Microsoft intellectual property (IP). Based on these patents, in the past few years Samsung paid Microsoft more than a billion dollars in royalty payments for patent usage. In 2014, it was estimated that Microsoft made $2 billion.

Microsoft has never revealed the depth of its patent licensing, but in 2014 the Chinese Ministry of Commerce completed an antitrust investigation. The regulators published their results on the internet, stating that Microsoft owned 310 Android-implementing patents.

Note: The numbers in this sidebar may not be independently verified but have shown up in court documents over the years.

The Many Flavors (Versions) of Android

Throughout this book, I offer stories about the beginnings of, and evolution of, the Android platform. For now, you should know that the latest version of Android I'm using for this book is Android 14. Android 15 is scheduled to release around the time this book publishes. I got hold of a beta (not-ready-for-prime-time) version so that I can see the similarities and show the differences in the new upgrade.

The Android mascot (Bugdroid) is a small, green robot, shown on the left in **Figure 1-1**. Bugdroid, who gets dressed up with each new version of Android, was designed in 2008 to be an internationally understood symbol — like airport signs — because Android was designed for everyone. Since the platform's inception, Bugdroid appears in advertising and has undergone minor changes over the years. Today, the mascot's green color is updated, and just the top of the head shows (on the right in Figure 1-1).

"The Android robot is reproduced from work created and shared by Google and used according to terms described in the Creative Commons 3.0 Attribution License." https://source.android.com/setup/start/brands#robot-android

FIGURE 1-1

The initial versions of Android, except for A and B, had nicknames based on sweet treats. The nicknames gave a friendly, homey feeling to each update and personalized it to its users. Android 1.5 (Android C) was Cupcake, which was apparently when the naming system began. From there on, the charming version nicknames followed the alphabet, and even though Google publicly discontinued the cute code nicknames, they're still embraced by fans. After 2021, Android 12 is Snow Cone; Android 13, Tiramisu; Android 14, Upside Down Cake, and Android 15 is Vanilla Ice Cream. Yum!

Reasons That People Choose Android

REMEMBER

Not all smartphones are iPhones.

The most excellent aspect of Android is that it's highly customizable. If you don't like one way of doing (or seeing) things, you can switch to another mode. Android is as simple or as complex as you want it to be.

Here are several features I love about owning an Android smartphone:

- **Keyboards and default apps:** I love having the option to try out different keyboards and browsers. You can download many apps for free from the Google Play Store and try them out. If you come to realize that an app isn't your cup of tea, (or you don't use it), just uninstall it.
- **Sharing:** Whenever you want to share a photo, a web page, an email — you name it — tapping the Share icon (shown at the left) brings up a simple sheet with app icons. Just tap the one you want to share to, and you're on the way. You can find more about sharing in Chapter 13.
- **Navigating screens:** As many times as I've used iOS devices (iPhone, iPad), my productivity always freezes when it comes to going back a page or a screen. On Android, you can use hand gestures or the bottom-of-screen back arrow to navigate simply. When you set up your phone, you can make a choice about this navigation.
- **Notifications:** They're easy to control. You can control how you see these notices — from your email, social media apps (such as Facebook), news feeds, and so on — organized on the Home or Lock screen, app by app.

These are just a few features, but the truth is, Android is about choice and creativity. You're not forced to use any specific brand, and your phone can link to many different devices in your home (such as the thermostat, electric outlets, or lights) with the Google Home app.

Why You Need a Google Account

If you've ever purchased an Apple product (iPhone, iPod, or iPad), you know that you had to sign up for an Apple ID. Apple asked me to input my credit card information, even though I had no desire to purchase anything in the App Store. I couldn't register the phone without it.

To use the Google apps, you also need an ID and password, which is officially your Gmail account. *But* you don't have to supply any credit card information until you reach the point where you actually want to purchase something.

REMEMBER

Technically speaking, you don't *need* a Google account, but I believe that it makes your Android experience better. You do need a Google account to identify you over Android Mobile Services. And having the account gets you full value from the many native Android apps, such as Gmail, Calendar, Photos, Play Store, or Maps.

Accessing your Google account

The native apps are free to use, but accessing everything from your account, all in one place, is *handy.* And all the apps are personalized just for you, based on how you use each app on the platform.

You can access your Google account on your devices in a few ways.

From the App Drawer on your phone:

1. Swipe your finger up from the bottom of your screen to the top. This action brings you to your App Drawer, which appears on your screen to replace the Home screen.

2. Scroll through the alphabetical icons (you can swipe with your finger side-to-side to view all the apps), find the Settings app icon (which looks like a gear and is shown on the left), and tap it.

You can also find the Settings app from your Home page drop-down menu by swiping your finger from the top of your screen to the bottom.

3. When the Settings app opens, scroll down (using your finger to move the list of settings) to find the Google entry and tap it.
4. On the resulting screen, tap Manage Your Google Account to see the screen shown on the right in **Figure 1-2**.

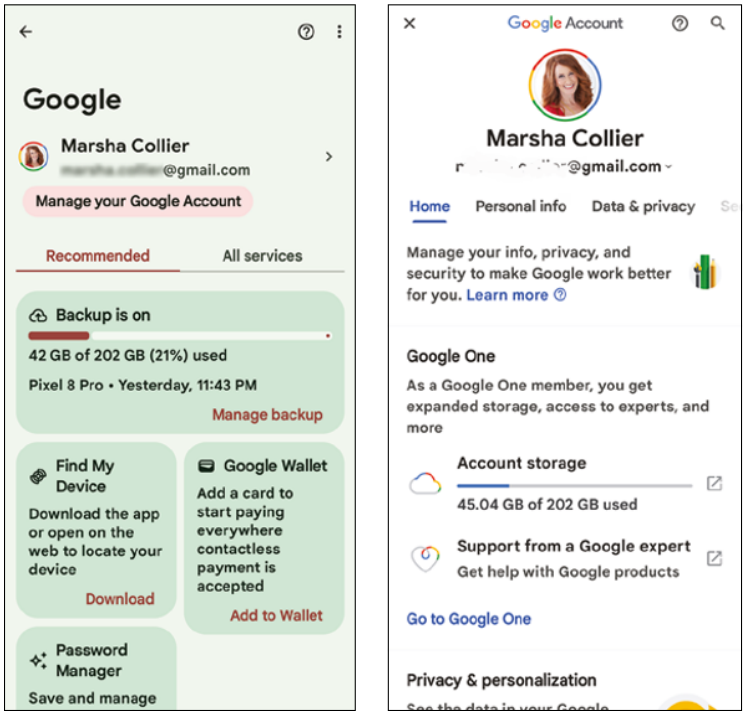

FIGURE 1-2

From any Google app (such as Gmail) on your phone:

1. Find your photo in the upper-right corner (or you may see your initial if you haven't uploaded a photo) within the app.
2. Tap your photo or initial icon, and then tap the Manage Your Google Account button (or Google Account on Samsung) to go directly to your account.

From a PC:

1. Open your browser, for example, Google Chrome.
2. Type `myaccount.google.com` into the browser search bar and press Enter to arrive at the website shown in **Figure 1-3**.

From this page, you can make selections from the list on the left to adjust the settings related to your interactions with Google.

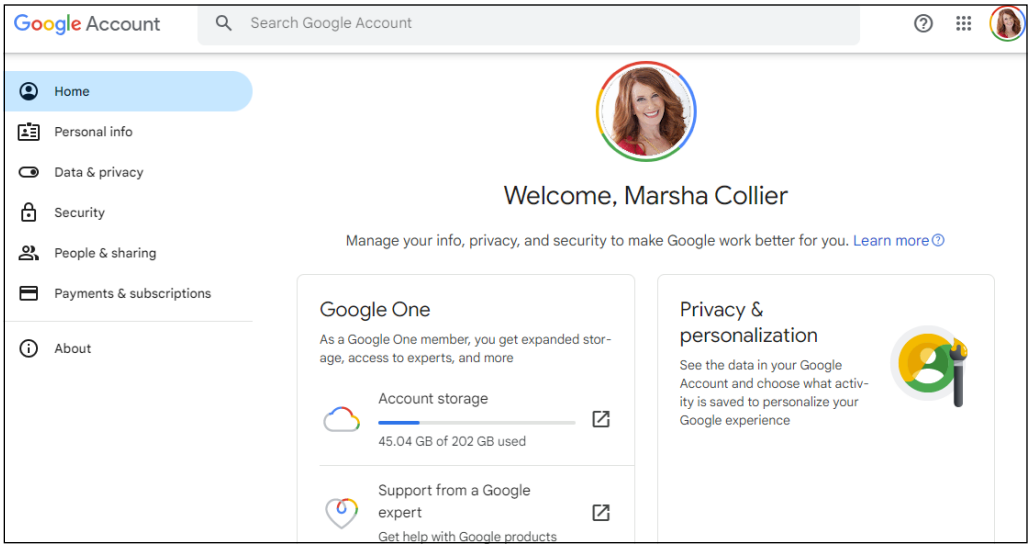

FIGURE 1-3

REMEMBER

Whether you choose to access your Google account on your smartphone or computer, you have the ability to edit the account settings related to everything from your personal information to privacy, security, and more from the tabs and selections that you find on your device's screen.

TIP

If your photo doesn't appear in your Google Account, tap the letter that's in the photo circle to upload one from your mobile device or PC. That way, whenever you are in any Google app on a computer, tablet, or your phone, your picture appears in the upper right. Tap it, and it opens up to Manage Your Google Account.

Bequeathing your Google account

From your Google account (in Data & Privacy), you can determine what should be done with the account should you not log in for a while. Google can notify someone that you name, give that person access to your data, or delete the account altogether. The screen on the left in **Figure 1-4** shows the Inactive Account Manager when you access it for the first time, and the screen on the right shows my plan already set up. I definitely want my daughter to have access to my photo archive after I'm gone or no longer accessing my account. Anyway, you can set it all up there.

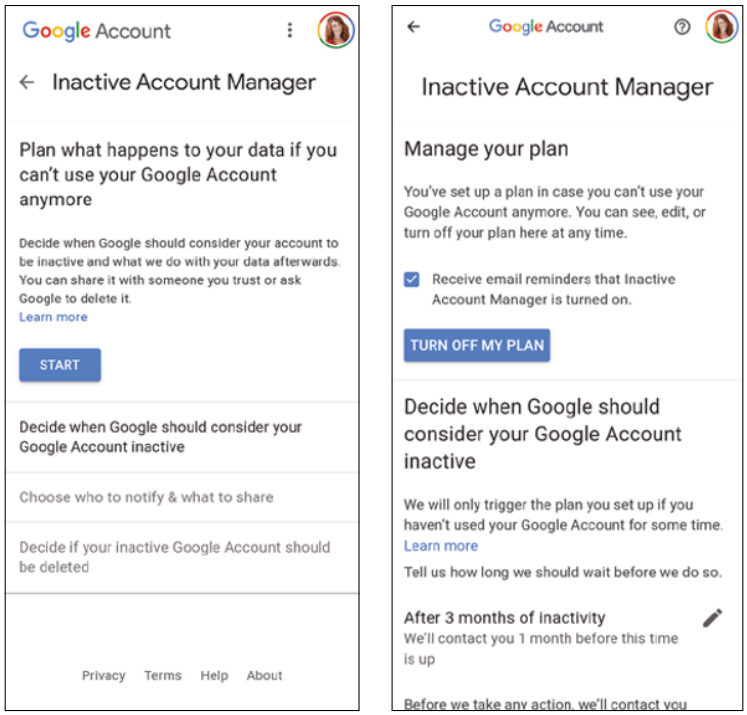

FIGURE 1-4

GOOGLE ONE

After you've used your Google account for a while — and backed up your data — you may fill up a lot of storage space in your complimentary 15 GB or, *gigabytes*. (One GB is approximately 1,000 MB, or *megabytes*).

Everything you save on Google counts toward this storage amount — Gmail messages, photos, documents in Drive. I've had my Gmail account for years and use it as a *de facto* filing cabinet. I've saved all my important emails there because they're easy to search; it's a perfect system. I uploaded my entire photo library to Google Photos, not only for archival purposes but also because Google Photos has fun and useful features. Going beyond a digital storehouse, Google Photos enables you to print photo books with selected pictures to give as special-occasion gifts.

After more than a decade, I have exceeded my 15 free gigabytes and now need to pay for more storage. The price was quite reasonable. I signed up for 200 GB of storage for $29.99 a year — a small price to pay for the security of having my data backed up.

With the new storage on hand, I now have a Google One account, which provides the aforementioned 200 GB of storage, access to Google experts for premium support for any problems, 3 percent back in credit at the online Google Store (`https://store.google.com`), and more.

To find out more about Google One services, download the Google One app from the Play Store or go to `one.google.com` in your browser on your phone or laptop.

So Many Choices!

Many companies make Android phones, and each one works hard to put its own spin on the device. Or not. A Google Pixel phone is pure Android. Every update to the Android OS comes to a Pixel phone first, making it the most innovative device.

The additions that manufacturers put on their devices become Android combined operating systems, or *skins*, as software overlays that deliver the interface design of the phone. A lot of extra software

can be piled on a phone this way. I remember being given a popular brand's phone to review, and I couldn't get past the complexity of the skin. Screenshots in this book illustrate that similar screens can look different between phones because each manufacturer's device has its own skin design. You'll notice that even Android icons are modified ever so slightly.

Android skin customizations offer the user an enhanced experience. It's up to you to decide which one works best in your day-to-day phone use.

Just as Android names each version of the software, it's probably no surprise (because branding is important to manufacturers) that each OS skin has its own name: OncPlus = OxygenOS, Samsung = One UI, Motorola = My UX, Google Pixel = Google Pixel OS (catchy, no?).

Note: You receive separate updates on your phone for security, the Android operating system, and the manufacturer's operating system.

Flagship versus mid-range versus feature phones

Because Android is a free, open-source platform, you can buy Android phones at many price points. You can even buy a brand-new phone inexpensively (for way less than the $1000+ flagship variety). Many of us don't really care to have the latest-and-greatest (and, therefore, most expensive). But the cheapest *new* phone may not be the best choice. Perhaps consider last year's model of name brand phones or a refurbished model?

Feature flip phones are the simplest of all, but texting is a nightmare because most don't have a full keyboard. If all you want to do is make phone calls, you don't need an Android smartphone. (They call them *smart* for a reason).

For example, I don't use processor-hungry games on my phone, so I don't really need the fastest possible *central processing unit* (CPU, the main component in a smartphone that carries out its tasks). But I do

care about having a quality camera, and some new mid-range brand-name phones (with mid-range price points) have quality cameras these days.

Samsung has an A series (*A* for *a*ffordable, perhaps?). Google Pixel A, OnePlus R, and other manufacturers also make basic phones that won't put a dent in your budget. The more bells and whistles a manufacturer adds, the more it ratchets up the price you pay. A *flagship* (top-of-the-line) Android phone can be as expensive as a computer. (You can find more advice about picking out your phone in Chapter 2.)

Tech support options

In Chapter 2, you find out about buying a phone, but know that you don't have to buy your smartphone from the cellular carrier. You can buy direct from the manufacturer's website. Because both the manufacturer and carrier are intertwined with your phone, you *might* receive better tech support by contacting the manufacturer.

In **Table 1-1**, I give you tech support contact information for the major phone manufacturers. I have added an X (formerly known as Twitter) handle for brands that have a dedicated tech support Twitter account. Reaching brands via social media can be the fastest way to find service.

TABLE 1-1 **Customer Service Contact Info for Android Phone Manufacturers**

Manufacturer	X (Twitter) Handle	Link	Phone #
Google Pixel	@Google	https://support.google.com/pixelphone/	
Lenovo	@LenovoSupport	https://lenovomobilesupport.lenovo.com/us/en	(866) 426-0911
LG	@LGUSSupport	www.lg.com/us/support	(800) 243-0000

(continued)