Accessibility Features on Android
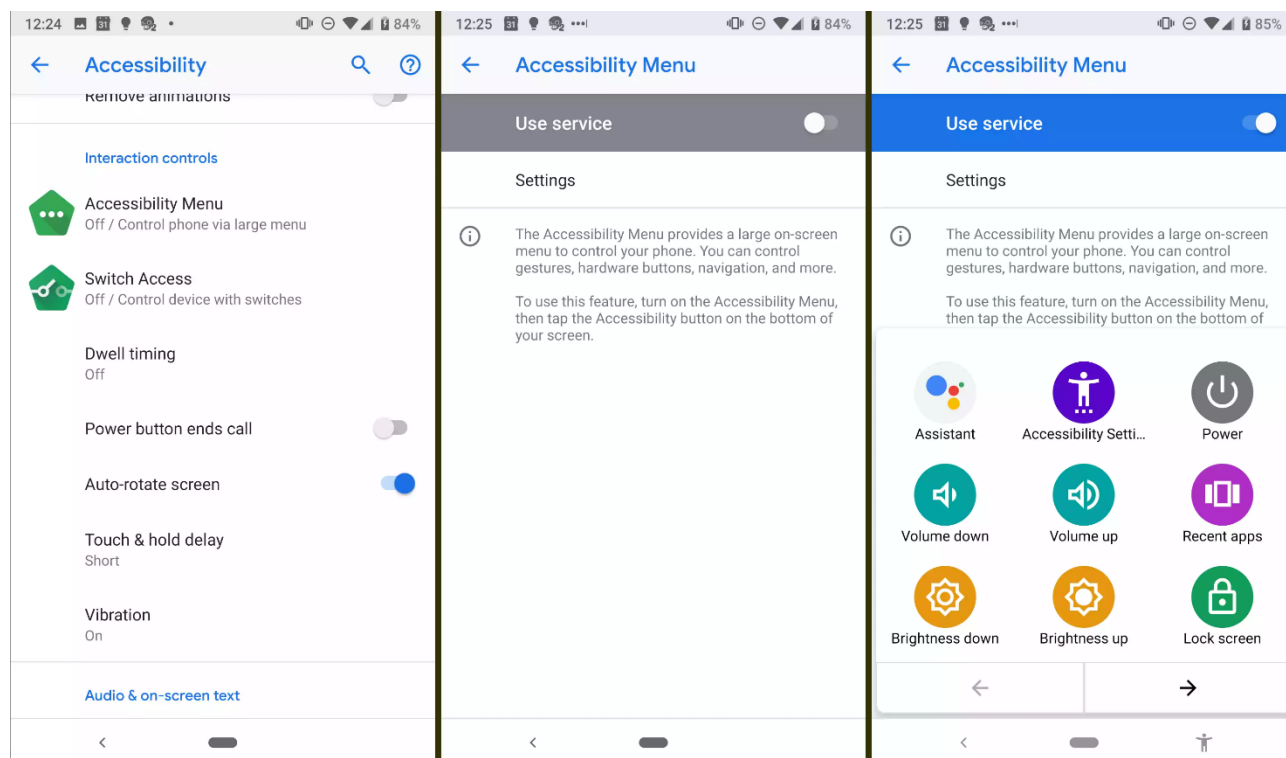
Accessibility features

Android phones have a selection of accessibility features to make it easier to use your device. We've highlighted some of the main features in this guide.[1]

Accessibility Suite

The Android Accessibility Suite includes four tools: Accessibility Menu, Switch Access, Select to Speak, and Talkback. To find the suite, navigate to **Settings > Accessibility**.

Please note varying models of phones will have different menus and will not necessarily look like the images below.

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[1] The information in this guide is reproduced by kind permission of LifeWire.

Turning on the Accessibility Menu gives you a sizeable on-screen menu that you use to control your phone, including gestures, navigation, and hardware buttons.
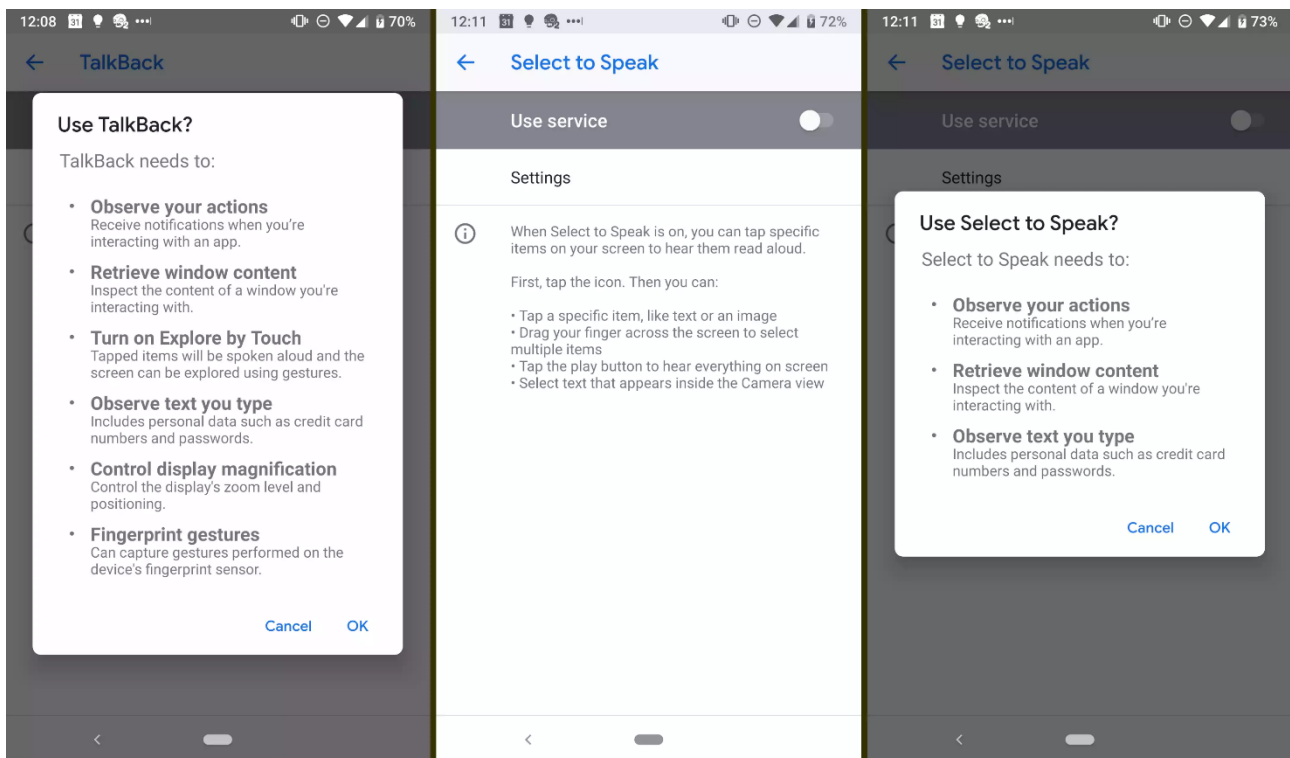
You can use one or more switches or a keyboard to control your phone rather than using the touch screen with Switch Access.

Talkback screen reader and Select to Speak

The Talkback screen reader helps you as you navigate your smartphone. On a given screen, it will tell you what kind of screen it is, and what's on it.

For example, if you're on a settings page, Talkback will read out the section name (such as notifications). When you tap an icon or item, your selection gets a green outline, and the assistant identifies it. Double tapping the same icon opens it. Talkback reminds you to double tap when you tap on an item.

If there's text on the screen, Talkback will read it to you; for messages, it will also tell you the day and time they were sent. It will even tell you when your phone's screen turns off. When you reactivate the screen, it will read out the time. The first time you turn on Talkback, a tutorial appears that walks you through the features.
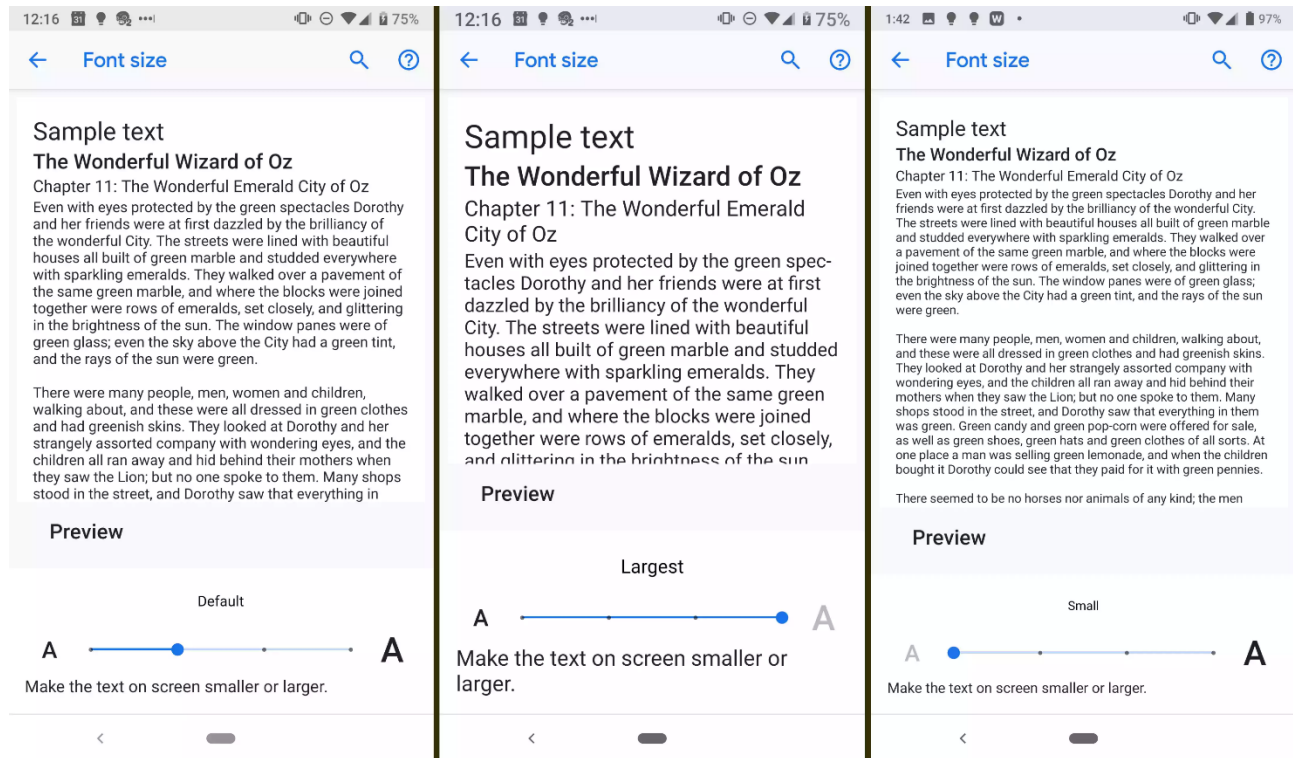

Talkback also has several gestures you can use to navigate your smartphone and adjust volume and other settings. Tap on the Wi-Fi icon to verify that you're connected and the battery icon to find out how much juice you have left.

If you don't need everything to be read out to you all the time, you can enable Select to Speak, which reads to you on request. Select to Speak has an icon; tap it first, and then tap or drag your finger to another item to get spoken feedback.

Newer versions of Android include a built-in braille keyboard as part of TalkBack. The on-screen keyboard has a 6-key layout that is intuitive for users familiar with braille. To enable the braille keyboard, open TalkBack and go to **TalkBack settings > Braille keyboard > Set up braille keyboard**.
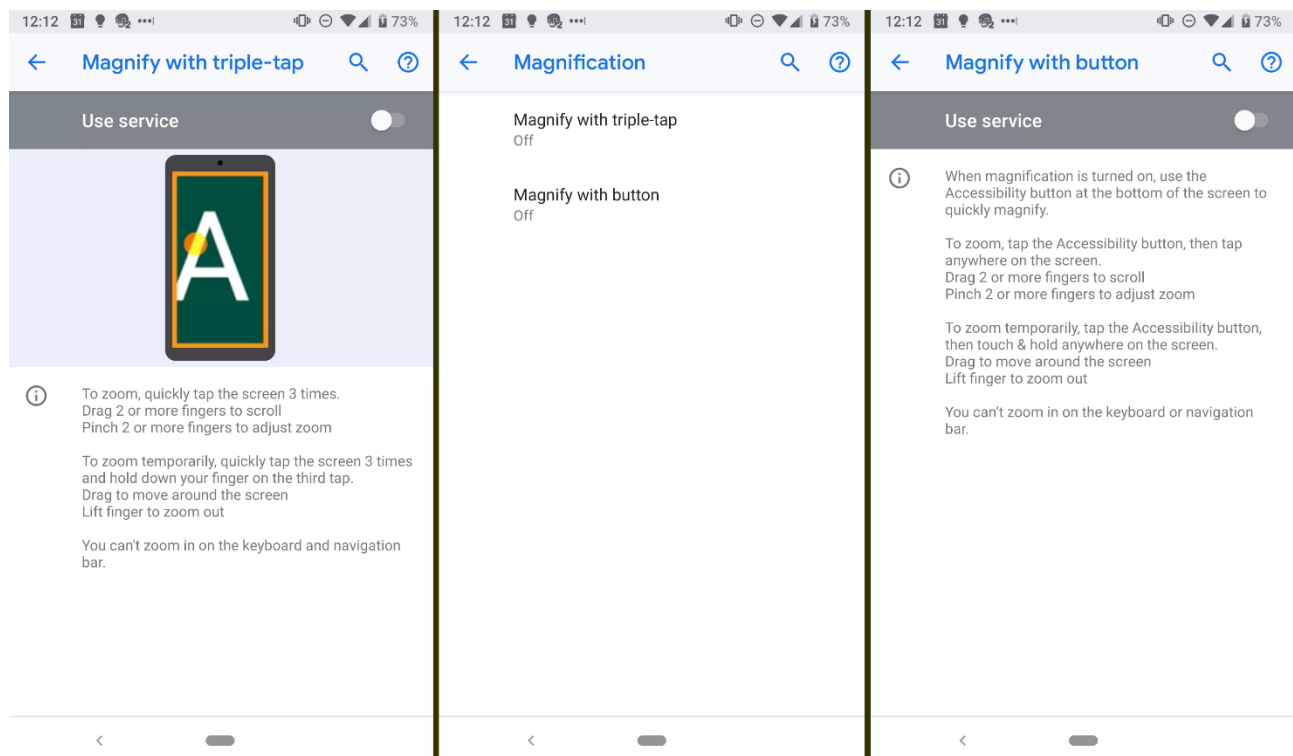
Font Size and High Contrast

This setting lets you change the font size on your device from the default. You can make the text smaller than the default, or various levels larger. As you make adjustments, you can see how the text will look.

In addition to size, you can also increase the contrast between the text and the background. This setting can't be adjusted; it's either on or off.

Magnification

Separately from adjusting the font size, you can use a gesture to zoom in on certain parts of your screen. Once you enable the feature in settings, you can zoom in by tapping the screen three times with your finger (triple-tap) or via an Accessibility button. Tap the button, then tap anywhere on the screen. Drag two or more fingers to scroll, and pinch two or more fingers to adjust zoom.

You can also zoom temporarily by tapping the screen three times and holding your finger down on the third tap. Once you lift your finger, your screen will zoom back out. Note that you can't zoom in on the stock keyboard or navigation bar.

Interaction Controls

Voice Access: Voice Access lets you control your device with spoken commands. Use your voice to open apps, navigate and edit text, hands-free.

Switch Access: Switch Access lets you interact with your Android device using one or more switches instead of the touch screen. You can use a switch or keyboard to control your device.

Accessibility support at the University of Aberdeen

For more information or support using any of the software mentioned in this guide, please contact atech@abdn.ac.uk