

Want to curb your robocall agony? Try these 3 things now

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We all hate robocalls and spam calls, but there's an easy solution for answering the phone with ease.

Want to know that the person is calling is real and someone you trust? It can really take only these three tips to slow the ever-increasing flood of [phone](#) calls from unwanted solicitors.

You ready? First, assign them to your contacts and give them a unique ringtone.

For the rest of the time, just don't answer the phone, or block all callers not assigned to your contacts.

If it's important, the caller will leave you a message.

That said, make these changes, and at least you'll know that when the phone rings, you'll actually want to answer it.

Assign contacts

This is pretty simple, but not everyone does it. When you get a call, go to phone settings, pull up the number and that's probably all you'll see, a bunch of digits and the location of the call.

On iPhone, click Create New Contact and add the name of the caller.

Click "Done."

On Android phones, it's even easier. Under the phone number in recent calls, there's a "+" sign and "Add to Contacts." From there, add in the details and click save.

But for double protection:

Assign ringtones

Apple iPhones have dozens of free ringtones available. Use them!

You could assign everyone in your contacts with the same, non-default ringtone that's already in place or apply different ones to different folks. For instance, my mother, brother and wife each get a unique one. (Showing how I never grew up, my brother has the Ms. Pac-Man tone, the wife gets Super Mario, and I gave Donald Duck to my mom.)

How to assign a tone:

—On an iPhone, open the contact list and click "Edit," This will get you to an option for RINGTONE, which is now probably listed as DEFAULT.

Click on Default, and you'll see a list of other potential free tones, as well as a link to a "Tone Store," to buy new ones. Select the tone of your choice, click Done, and it's now assigned to your contact.

—On an Android phone, go to your contacts, find the name, click edit, and at the bottom of the page, select More. From there, you'll see ringtones. There are some 25 choices available. Select one, click save, and you're done.

Making your own 'Do Not Call' list

So now, you've assigned unique tones to your contacts, and made sure that [random numbers](#) showing up have names attached to them.

So what now, do you block all the other callers that come in after you discover they are robots?

You can, by going to the bottom of the contact page, and clicking Block This Caller. But that's an exercise in futility. The number is probably a spoof, one that attaches a name to a local [phone number](#) to trick you into opening it up. (For instance, one savvy spoofer recently wrote me as Evan Spiegel from Santa Monica, California. As if the Snap Inc. CEO had really randomly tried to call me to say hi. It wasn't him.)

Now that you've assigned all your contact, you could get tough on all other callers and tell your phone only to accept calls from the people you know. That would kick everyone else direct to voicemail.

iPhone users do this in Settings, by clicking on "Do Not Disturb" and "Allow Calls From" then "All Contacts."

For Android, this is in the Phone app. Click the three lines on the top right, select Settings and Block Numbers. Click on "Block Unknown Callers," and only numbers from your contacts will ring.

There are smartphone apps available to block calls, including Robokiller and Nomorobo, but they will charge you a subscription, which you may or may not want to pay. The wireless carriers all offer services they claim will stop these calls as well, for a monthly fee, but trust me—I subscribe to T-Mobile and the Scam Likely service, and still get at least 10 unwanted calls daily.

The Federal Communications Commission this week announced new rules it said would tackle the avalanche of robocalls we're getting, but didn't really offer anything that's not available now.

It said it would vote on a ruling that would allow phone companies to have call-blocking as a default. implement strong call-blocking services as the default setting for their customers and to make it easier for folks to block unwanted calls.

"That means your phone is only going to ring if the call is coming from somebody in your list of contacts," said FCC chairman Ajit Pai.

And readers know you can already do that today. You don't need to wait for government intervention.

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