

Top 3 Tips for a Malware-Free Phone



Hackers, like all criminals, follow the money. When most online transactions were conducted on PCs, hackers targeted PCs with their malicious software (malware). Today commerce is exploding on smartphones and other mobile devices, so the malware business is now exploding on those devices as well.

Here are three tips to help you ensure that your mobile devices stay malware free.

1. Don't click those links.

When you were a kid, grown-ups always told you not to talk to strangers. Today the best advice is, don't click on links from strangers. No matter how tempting the offer, a link in what can only be described as junk mail is just as likely as not to lead to disaster.

However, you also need to be very careful about clicking on items *from people you know*. That's right. Your friend may get a copy of the world's funniest cat video and then forward it to you, not realizing that the world's funniest cat video is embedded with malware. Unless you're certain of where a file *originated*, you probably shouldn't click it.



2. Keep Your Phone's Software Updated

Here's how it works. We'll use Android as an example, but it works the same way on Apple devices. First, a hacker identifies a vulnerability in the Android operating system and builds malware around that vulnerability. Next, Google finds out about the malware and issues a software update to "patch" that vulnerability. Then hackers find the next vulnerability, and so on.

The important point is, all those software patches won't do you a bit of good unless you keep your software up to date. If you're using an older version of your phone's operating system, regardless of the brand, you're just asking for trouble.

3. Only download legitimate apps.

By "legitimate apps," we're talking about apps that are available from either Google Play or Apple's App Store. If you happen to come across an app that's available for direct download instead of through one of these two services, ***don't download it. Ever.***

Can a hacker sneak malware into the App Store? Theoretically, anything is possible, but the chances are beyond slim.

In short, you just need to be smarter than your smartphone.

