Smartphone Strategies for Tremor & Stiffness

Android

There are various options to make using your smartphone easier to use when you have tremors or stiffness due to Parkinson's Disease. Some small adjustments on your phone may result in your feeling much more confident in your ability to control your device.

Before you adjust your phone, be sure it is on a steady surface. A table, with proper posture can make the phone easier to use and reduce the effect a tremor can have. Some people prefer to purchase a stand to adjust the angle of the phone.

Touch Accommodations

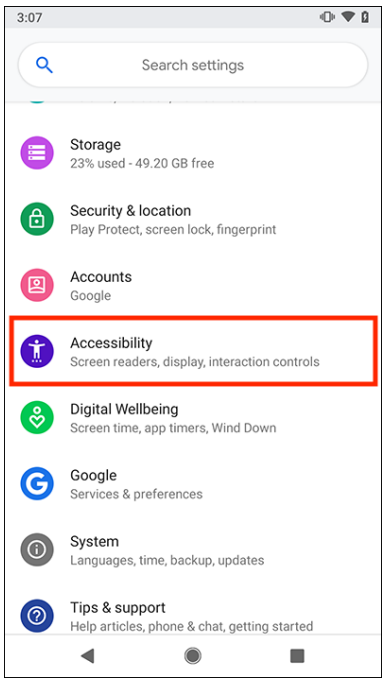
Using Touch Accommodations can change how the screen on your device responds to taps, swipes, and other gestures. This includes accidental touches that may occur when you have a tremor or stiffness. A longer touch & hold delay means that you need to keep your finger in the same place for longer before your tap becomes a touch & hold. If you find that you accidentally touch & hold when you intend to tap, consider choosing a longer delay.

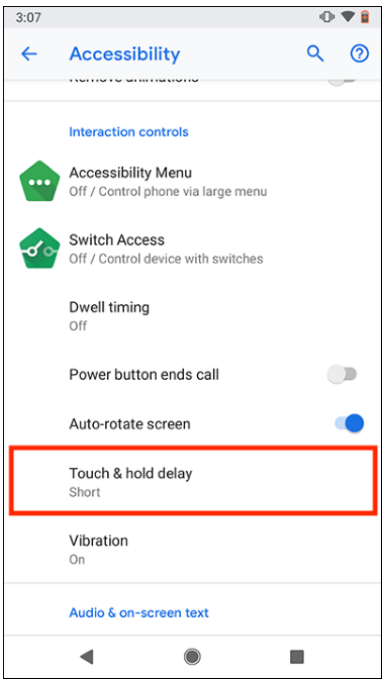
Touch and Hold Delay

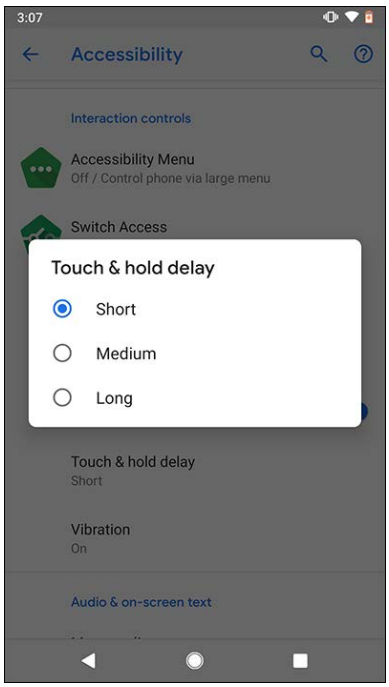
Touch and Hold Delay is a setting which allows you to adjust the amount of time before your touch on the screen becomes a "touch and hold." Also known as a "long press", touch and hold allows you to command specific actions on an Android device such as moving an app icon on your home screen. This accessibility feature includes options for short, medium or long delays depending on your needs.

To Turn on Touch and Hold Delay:

1. Open the **Settings** app.
2. Select **Accessibility**.
3. Select **Touch & hold delay**.
4. Select **Short, Medium, or Long**.







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Interaction and Dexterity (Samsung Galaxy S10 users)

The interaction and dexterity enhancements are designed for users with physical and motor skill impairments such as tremor or stiffness. These features are designed to make using the S10 easier by replacing or enhancing touch interactions.

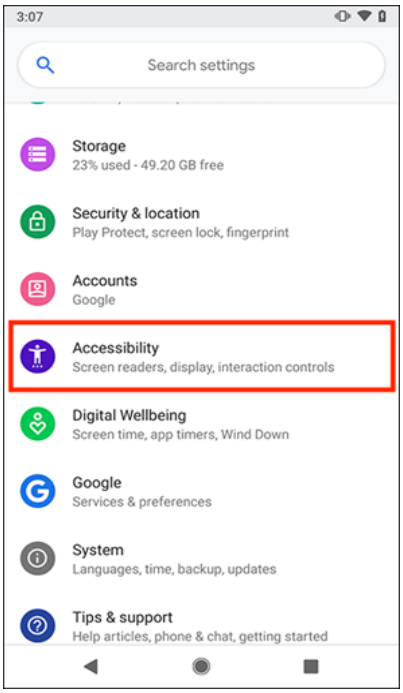
By selecting **Slow Keys,** users are able to choose how long a key must be held before it is recognized as being pressed.

If you find that you strike the screen multiple times due to a tremor, selecting the **Bounce Keys** option will help the phone ignore unintentional repeated strikes.

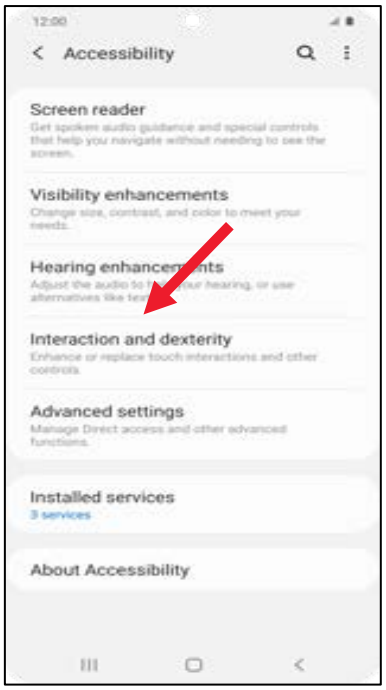
You will need to try out the various options to find the setting best suited to your needs.

To Turn on Interaction and Dexterity:

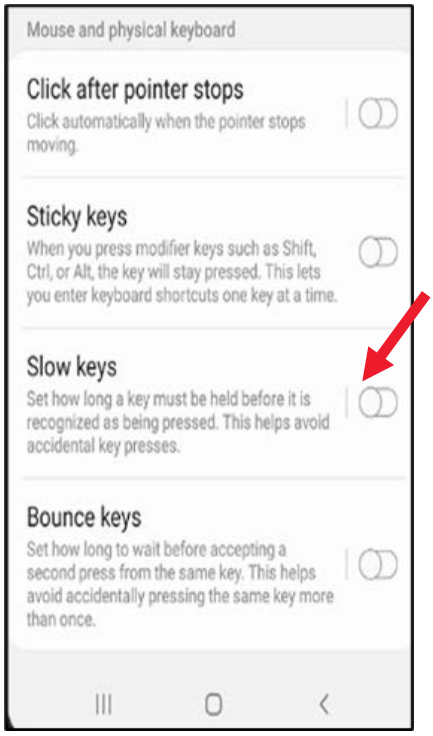
1. Select **Accessibility.**



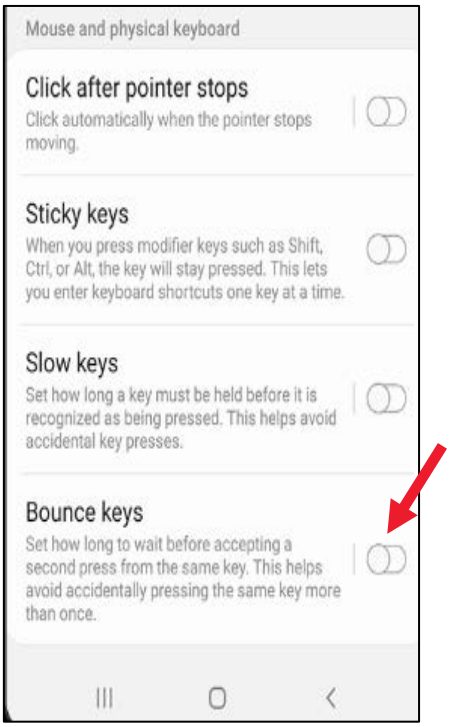
2. Select **Interaction and dexterity**.



3. Select **Slow Keys.**



4. Select **Bounce Keys**

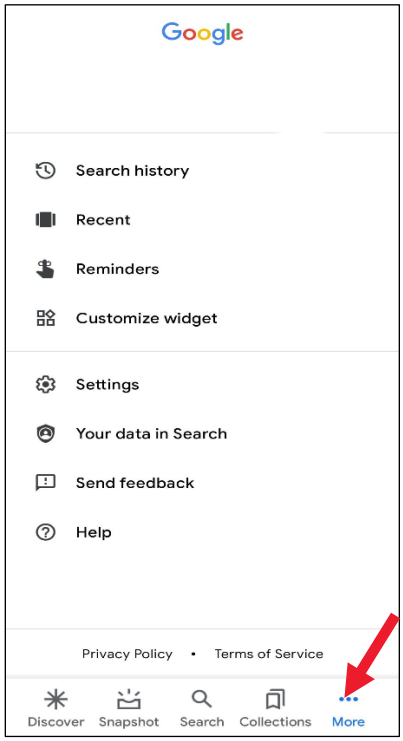


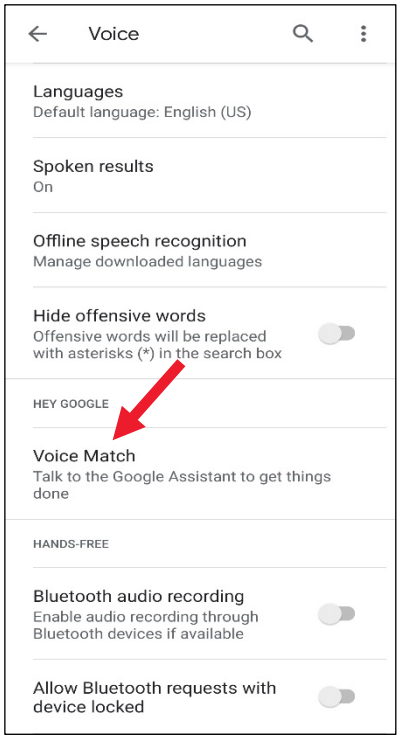
Voice Commands

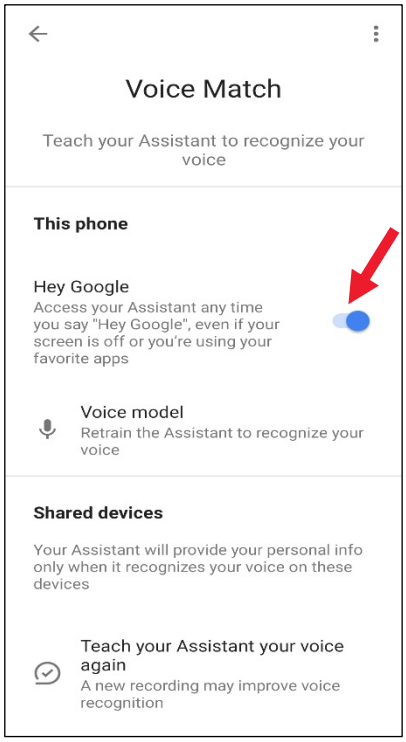
Using Android's built-in voice commands such as Google Assistant is a nice way to reduce the need to use your hands for phone access. Enabling Google Assistant is the first step to getting started with voice commands. To do this, open your Google app, then make sure Google Assistant (which is at the top of the screen) is switched to on. If you have not used it in a while and it is already in the on position, go ahead and switch it off, then on again. When you switch from the off position to on you will begin a tutorial to teach Google Assistant your voice. Simply follow the prompts on the screen. Google Assistant has the ability to accomplish a wide range of activities, including texting, emailing, finding information, and more.

To Turn on Google Assistant:

1. Open the **Google** app .
2. At the bottom right, tap **More** Settings. Voice.
3. Under **the** Voice Screen, tap **Voice Match**.
4. Turn on **Hey Google**.







After you start Voice Access, you can use commands to control your device. For example, "Open Gmail," "Go home," or "Turn on Wi-Fi."

If you are still having trouble after making these adjustments or if your needs change, there are also exercises that an occupational therapist can guide you through to work on the basic skills needed for phone access. If you are in the Chicago area, you can schedule an appointment at the **Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's Tech Center (312-238-2988).** If not, please ask your neurologist or VR counselor for a recommendation for an occupational therapist that specializes in working with people with Parkinson's and/or access to technology in your area.