PAULO VASCONCELOS FREITAS
Tech Atelier

IPHONE TIPS · NO. 07 | UPDATED FOR IOS 27

iPhone maintenance and cleaning

Quiet earpiece, trouble charging or a muffled microphone? Often it is just dirt



? Do you recognise any of these symptoms?

CONNECTOR
Charges badly
Only charges with the cable at a certain angle, or starts and stops.

CONNECTOR
Loose cable
The plug doesn't go all the way in, doesn't "click" or falls out.

CONNECTOR
Strange alerts
"Accessory not supported" or a liquid alert when the iPhone hasn't been wet.

EARPIECE
Getting quieter
On calls, with the iPhone to your ear, the sound is weak even at full volume.

MICROPHONES
People can't hear you
The person on the other end says your voice sounds quiet, distant or muffled.

SPEAKER
Muffled sound
Ringtone, speakerphone or videos sound quieter or "hoarse".

In most cases, no parts need replacing

These symptoms are almost always caused by **lint, dust and grease** building up over months in the connector, the grilles and the earpiece. Charging ports and speakers are often replaced **unnecessarily**, when a professional clean would have solved the problem.

PAULO VASCONCELOS FREITAS – Tech Atelier: cleaning the charging port and the earpiece is free of charge. If the problem continues after cleaning, we diagnose it.

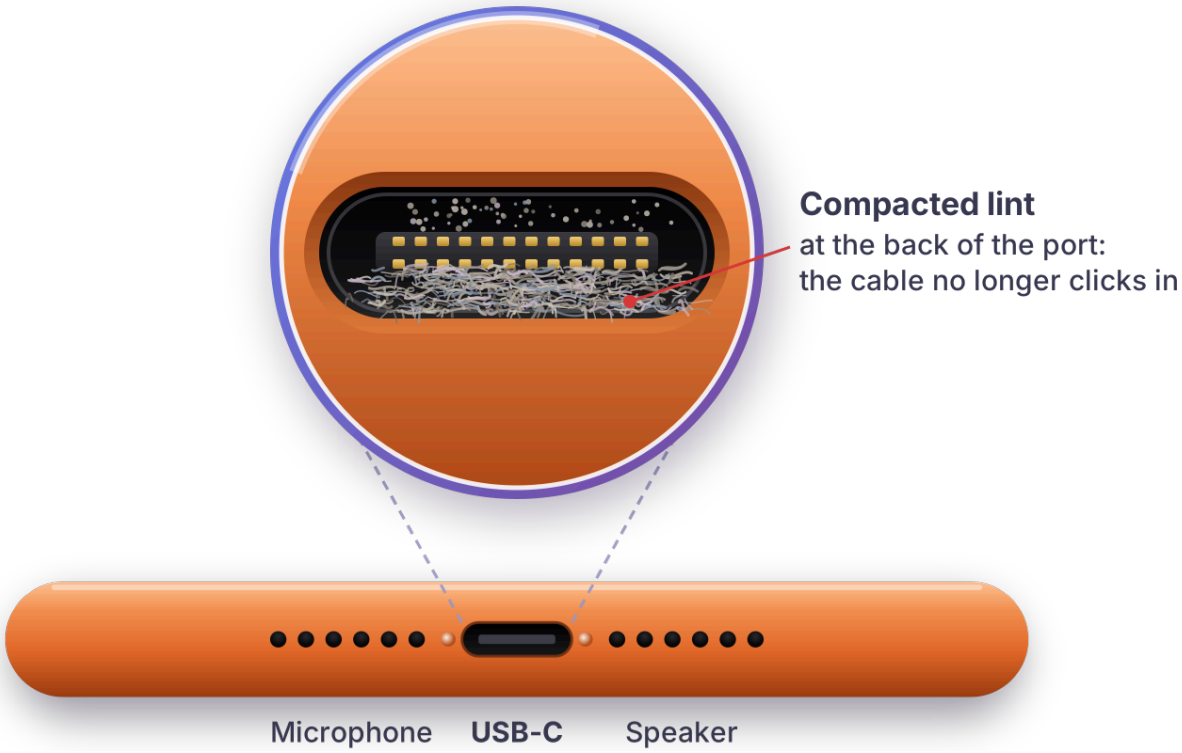
1 Why it happens

Your iPhone lives in pockets, bags and the car. **Fabric lint** gets into the connector and, every time you plug in the cable, it is pushed further in and compacted at the back, until the plug no longer goes all the way in. In the grilles and earpiece, **dust, sand, skin oil and make-up** build up and gradually block the sound.

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2 Where dirt builds up



Bottom edge of an iPhone 17 Pro Max (to scale), with the inside of the connector magnified

- **Charging port:** lint compacted at the back. It is the No. 1 cause of charging problems.
- **Bottom grilles:** the microphone on one side, the speaker on the other.
- **Earpiece:** the thin slot at the top of the screen, above the Dynamic Island. It collects grease and make-up.
- **Other microphones:** next to the rear cameras and at the top, used for videos and speakerphone.

3 What you can do at home

Safe to do

- **Turn the iPhone off** before cleaning.
- Shine a **torch** into the connector and check for lint at the back.
- Gently brush the grilles and earpiece with a **soft, clean, dry brush** (a new toothbrush will do).
- Wipe the outside with a dry or slightly damp **microfibre cloth**.

Never

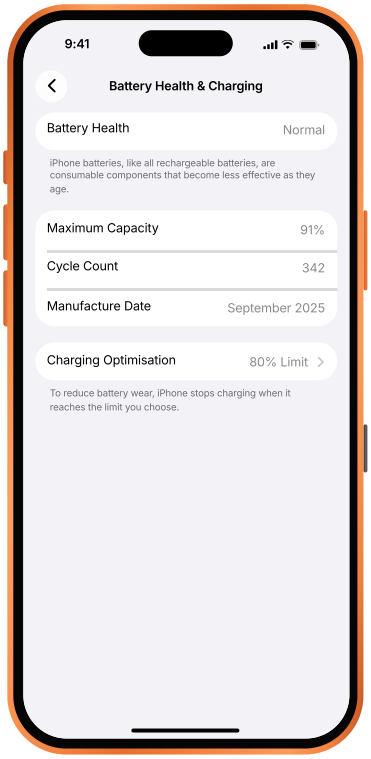
- Push **needles, pins, paper clips** or any metal into the connector: it scratches the contacts and can cause a short circuit.
- Use **compressed air** or blow into it: it pushes dirt further in, and the moisture in your breath does harm.
- Put **alcohol, water or cleaning products** inside the connector or grilles.
- Scrape hard: compacted lint comes out with **proper tools**.

4 Test before concluding it is faulty

1. **Try another certified cable and charger.** The problem is often the cable.
2. **Bottom microphone:** record a note in the **Voice Memos** app and play it back.
3. **Other microphones:** record one video with the front camera and another with the rear camera.
4. **Speaker:** in *Settings › Sounds & Haptics*, drag the ringtone volume and listen.
5. **Earpiece:** make a call without a case or screen protector covering the top slot.
6. **Case and screen protector:** check they don't cover the grilles, earpiece or connector.

5 Everyday care

- **Clean case:** take it off now and then. Sand and dust trapped between case and iPhone scratch the frame and back.
- **Pockets and bags:** avoid keeping your iPhone with lint, crumbs, keys and coins.
- **Heat:** don't leave your iPhone in the sun or in the car. Heat is the battery's worst enemy.
- **Battery:** check its condition in *Settings › Battery › Battery Health & Charging*. Below **80%** maximum capacity, it is time to replace it.
- **Charge limit:** on models that support it, turn on the **80% limit** to make the battery last longer.
- **Updates:** keep iOS up to date. Many updates include battery and sound fixes.



Settings › Battery ›
Battery Health & Charging

Bring your iPhone to PAULO VASCONCELOS FREITAS – Tech Atelier, in Funchal or Horta. **Cleaning the charging port and the earpiece is free of charge** and, in most cases, solves the problem without replacing parts.