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10 everyday uses for your phone's camera

Most mobile phones have built-in cameras, and their image quality is getting better and better. They're also convenient because people keep their phones with them wherever they go. Because of this, the built-in camera is actually a really useful tool—not just for snapshots, but also for **scanning documents** and **recording almost any type of information** you want to remember.

Here are 10 situations where a camera phone is useful.

1. Nutrition Facts labels

If you're keeping track of calories or other nutritional information, it may be easier to take a picture of the labels and then write everything down at the end of the day. You can find this information on boxes, restaurant menus, or online.

2. Comparing prices

When you're out shopping, you may like to compare prices at different stores. Just take a picture of the item's price, and try to include the item itself in the photo. The price isn't the only thing that matters; if one store sells a pack of 48 plastic cups and

another store sells a pack of 96, you'll need to include this information in the photo so you can make an accurate comparison.

3. Product dimensions

If you're shopping for furniture, shelves, or appliances, it's best to measure the space before going to the store. But if you forget to do this, you can take a picture of the item's dimensions (on the front or back of the box), then measure the space when you get home. This is usually easier than buying it and having to return it if it isn't right, especially if it is large or heavy.

4. Parking lots

If you've parked at an airport or the mall, you might forget where your car is. Right after you park, take a picture of your car, and be sure to include an identifying feature like a sign or a building. When you're looking for your car, the photo can help jog your memory. Similarly, if you're visiting another city, you can take a picture of the street signs near your hotel so it's easier to find after a long day of sightseeing.

5. Car accidents

If you're involved in a car accident, it's a good idea to take pictures of your car and all other cars that were involved. If there is a dispute about who's at fault, the photos may help support your side of the story.

6. Scanning documents

You don't need a scanner to keep a record of documents. If your phone has a good camera, you can just take pictures of tax forms, bills, letters, and other documents. Even if the quality isn't perfect, it still may be good enough to read small text. For higher quality, keep the papers as flat as possible by putting them on a table or floor.

7. Rental cars

Most rental car companies require you to return the car with the same amount of gas in the tank (or more) to avoid extra fees. They'll give you a document that shows the

current fuel level, but it's easy to misplace it. The first time you start the car, take a picture of the gas gauge. You can then check the photo before refueling the car.

8. Confirmation numbers

If you're buying tickets online for a movie, concert, or baseball game, you may need to bring your confirmation number to the ticket window. If you take a picture of the confirmation number on your computer screen, you won't have to worry about bringing it with you.

9. Making repairs

If you've ever taken something apart to repair it, you know that the hardest part is putting it back together. Before you start disassembling something, take a photo of it, and if necessary take more photos as you take it apart. Later, when you forget which part goes where, you'll be glad you have the photos to remind you.

Note: Do not take apart any electrical appliance or device unless you know how to do it safely. Electric shocks can cause injury or death.

10. Saving evidence

Remember that Twilight Zone episode where William Shatner (or John Lithgow in the movie version) sees a gremlin on the wing of the airplane and no one believes him? A camera phone would have been helpful in that situation. If you're telling your friends about something unbelievable that happened (for example, catching a really big fish), it's nice to have proof. Take several photos, just in case your friends are still skeptical.

With all of these tips, you'll have better luck if you know the basics of taking photos. To learn how to take photos with the iPhone, you can review our **iPhone Basics** tutorial. For more general photography tips, review our **Digital Photography** tutorial.

Previous: Taking Photos with a Smartphone **Return to Playlist: Digital Photography**

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