



If you've ever relied on your phone's hotspot to get your laptop online, you know it works, but it isn't always ideal. There's a better way called USB internet sharing, or more commonly USB tethering. Instead of broadcasting a Wi-Fi network, you plug your phone straight into your computer with a cable and let your phone act like a wired internet source.

Here's why that matters. When you share internet over Wi-Fi, your phone is acting like a mini router. That's great in a pinch, but it can drain battery fast, slow down when the signal gets weak, or create interference from other wireless networks. USB tethering solves most of those problems. Because it's a physical connection, it often gives you a more reliable and stable internet connection, just like plugging into your ethernet outlets at home.

Another big benefit? Security and privacy. With a Wi-Fi hotspot, your phone is broadcasting a network that other people might see. Even if you use a password, there's more wireless traffic around you that could be intercepted. USB tethering doesn't broadcast anything, the data travels straight through the cable between your phone and the device you're sharing with.

And don't forget battery life. Hotspots can run down your phone's battery quickly because the phone is both serving Wi-Fi and handling mobile data. With USB tethering, your phone is charging while it shares internet, which means you can stay connected longer without hunting for a charger.

How to Set Up USB Internet Sharing on an iPhone

1. **Enable Personal Hotspot on your iPhone:** Go to **Settings**, then **Personal Hotspot** and turn it on. You may be asked to allow the connection to share over USB only or with Wi-Fi too, choose whatever fits your needs.
2. **Connect your iPhone to your computer with a USB cable:** Use a good cable (the one that came with your phone is ideal).
3. **Trust the computer if prompted:** Your iPhone may ask you to Trust This Computer. Tap Trust or Yes and enter your passcode which should show on the screen
4. **Use the phone connection on your computer:** On a Mac, you may need to disable Wi-Fi and then pick iPhone USB in Network settings. On Windows, your computer should recognize the iPhone automatically once the Personal Hotspot is enabled.

Once connected, your computer uses your phone's mobile data just like any other internet connection but with the stability of a wired link.

How to Set Up USB Internet Sharing on Android

1. **Connect your Android phone to your computer with a USB cable:** Unlock your phone if needed.
2. **Enable USB tethering on your phone:** Swipe down to open your notifications and tap the USB connection notification, then choose **USB tethering**. Or go into **Settings** → **Network & Internet** → **Hotspot & tethering** and turn on **USB tethering**.

3. **Check your computer connection:** Most Windows PCs pick this up automatically. On a Mac, you might need to go into **Network** settings and add the phone as a wired network connection.

Android's tethering works the same core way: turn on a setting and let your phone share its data through the cable. It's quick, and you don't need any extra apps or tools.

USB internet sharing isn't something you'll use every single day, but it can save your day in the right situations:

- **Traveling or remote work:** If you're in a café, airport, or hotel with spotty Wi-Fi, USB tethering gives you consistent internet without sharing a questionable wireless network.
- **Video calls or large downloads:** A wired connection can be more stable than Wi-Fi, especially when your speed or reliability matters.
- **Battery life concerns:** Phones stay charged while sharing internet, which means you aren't draining your phone just to keep your laptop online.
- **Public places:** When you're concerned about security, USB tethering keeps your data flowing through a private cable instead of an open-air signal.

USB internet sharing is one of those hidden little features that makes life easier when you really need it. Once you know how to do it, it's a dependable trick for working on the go and it's easier than a lot of people think.