

Why Is Gmail Not Syncing On My Mobile And How Do I Solve It?

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Gmail usually stops syncing on a phone for one of four reasons: sync is turned off, the app or phone is stuck, the phone is blocking background refresh, or storage/account issues are preventing updates. Google's current troubleshooting guidance for Android and iPhone starts with a manual refresh, app update, device restart, sync settings check, and storage review.

Best fix order for Android phones

1. Manually refresh Gmail first. Open the Gmail app and swipe down from the top of the inbox. Google notes that sync can sometimes take up to 15 minutes, and longer if the device has not been used for some time.
2. Check that Gmail sync is enabled inside the Gmail app. Open Gmail > Menu > Settings > your account and make sure Sync Gmail is turned on. This is one of the most common reasons mail stops updating.
3. Check Android account sync. Go to Settings > About phone > Google Account > Account sync, select the affected account if needed, and make sure Gmail sync is enabled. You can also tap More > Sync now to force a sync. Google specifically recommends this for account sync problems.
4. Verify internet access. Make sure Wi-Fi or mobile data is on, Airplane Mode is off, and load a web page in your browser. If Gmail works only when you open it manually, the problem is often network or background restriction related.
5. Update the Gmail app. Install the latest Gmail version from Google Play. Google recommends updating because sync bugs are often fixed in app updates.
6. Restart the phone. A normal reboot clears temporary sync and notification failures. Google includes this as a core troubleshooting step.
7. Check device storage and Google Account storage. If the phone is low on storage, or the Google Account storage is full, sync can fail or become delayed. Google's Gmail troubleshooting explicitly tells users to check both device storage and account storage.
8. Clear Gmail cache and app data if syncing is still broken. On most phones, go to: 'Settings > Apps > Gmail > Storage & cache > Clear cache' If that does not help, use Clear storage or Clear data, then open Gmail again and sign back in if required. Google lists clearing Gmail information as a supported fix for Android sync errors.
9. Check battery and background restrictions. Some Android phones delay or block Gmail in the background when battery-saving features are aggressive. Set Gmail to unrestricted battery use if your phone offers that option: 'Settings > Apps > Gmail > Battery > Unrestricted' Google's Pixel guidance states that battery optimization can reduce performance and delay notifications, which can look like sync failure.
10. Check background data permissions. If background data is disabled, Gmail may not refresh until you open it. On Android, make sure background or unrestricted data use is allowed for the app. Google's Play guidance documents how Android background-data restrictions can block app updates in the background.
11. Remove and re-add the Google account if nothing else works. This is a last-resort fix for stuck account sync on Android. After re-adding the account, run a manual sync again. Google's Android sync documentation recommends rechecking sync after each step and manually forcing a sync to confirm the issue is resolved.

Best fix order for iPhone and iPad

1. If you use the Gmail app, check Gmail sync settings first. Open Gmail > Menu > Settings > Data usage > Sync settings and make sure sync is enabled for enough days of mail. Google's iPhone Gmail guidance specifically points to this setting.
2. Update the Gmail app and restart the iPhone. Google recommends using the latest Gmail app build and restarting the device to clear temporary issues.
3. If you use Apple Mail instead of the Gmail app, check Fetch settings. On current iPhone versions, go to: 'Settings > Apps > Mail > Mail Accounts > Fetch New Data' Apple explains that if Push is not available, the account uses Fetch instead, and the selected fetch schedule controls how often new mail appears. If it is set to Manually, Gmail will not sync automatically.
4. Check notifications if email arrives late but does eventually appear. On iPhone, open: 'Settings > Notifications > Mail' or for the Gmail app: 'Settings > Notifications > Gmail' Make sure Allow Notifications is enabled. Apple documents notification settings separately from account sync, so late alerts are not always a Gmail problem.
5. Confirm the account is still connected. In Apple Mail, go to Settings > Apps > Mail > Accounts and confirm the Gmail account is still present and enabled. Apple's Mail settings page lists account management there.
6. Remove and re-add the Gmail account if Apple Mail still will not update. This often fixes stale authentication or broken Mail configuration. Apple's Mail settings documentation supports removing and re-adding accounts from the Accounts section.
7. Install the latest iOS update. Apple recommends keeping iPhone updated, and Google's Gmail community guidance for current iPhone sync problems also points users to updating iOS and using the Gmail app when Apple Mail is unreliable.

Fastest way to tell what is actually broken

1. Open gmail.com in a browser on the same phone.
2. If new mail appears on the web but not in the app, the problem is app sync, background refresh, or device settings .
3. If new mail does not appear on the web either, the issue is account-side , such as storage limits or mail not arriving at Gmail at all. Google's help pages call out shared Google storage as a direct cause of Gmail issues.

What usually fixes it fastest

- Android: Turn on Sync Gmail , confirm Account sync is enabled, update Gmail, clear cache, then remove battery/background restrictions.
- iPhone using Gmail app: Check Sync settings in Gmail, update the app, then restart the phone.
- iPhone using Apple Mail: Set Fetch New Data to Automatically or a timed fetch interval instead of Manually , then re-add the Gmail account if needed.

Why This Happens

Gmail sync on mobile is not controlled by just one setting. On Android, it depends on both the Gmail app sync setting and the phone's Google Account sync setting. On iPhone, it also depends on whether you use the Gmail app or Apple Mail, because Apple Mail relies on its own Fetch New Data schedule. That is why Gmail may work in a browser while the mobile app still looks stuck.

Another common cause is that the phone is trying to save battery or data. Google's Android guidance notes that battery optimization can delay notifications and background activity, and Android data restrictions can stop apps from refreshing in the background. On iPhone, Mail may simply be set to manual fetch, which prevents automatic checking for new Gmail messages.

If none of the above works

- Test the same Gmail account on another device.
- Check whether your Google Account storage is full.
- Remove and re-add the account.
- Switch to the official Gmail app if Apple Mail is the only app failing on iPhone.
- Use Google's Gmail sync troubleshooting page for your platform if the issue persists.

Quote: Important: If Gmail is only delayed by a few minutes, that may be normal behavior rather than a fault. Google says Gmail sync can take up to 15 minutes in some cases, especially when the device has been idle.