

Tips & Tricks for iPhone

# App Store A-Z



An Entire Alphabet  
of Essential iPhone Apps,  
From *Apollo* to *Zoom*

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of Essential iPhone Apps,  
From Apollo to Zoom**

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## An A-Z of iPhone Essentials

Everyone loves a good list, and if you're reading this you probably love a good app (or 26) too. That's why we've decided to compile a full A-Z of App Store essentials. One highly recommended app for each letter of the alphabet.

There are a few obvious picks here, but for the most part, we're ignoring the stuff most people are already familiar with; there's no point in recommending *Instagram* and *Netflix* as if you've never heard of them before. We're also ignoring the stock apps that come pre-installed with an iPhone, like *Photos* and *Safari*.

What's left is a selection of truly fantastic apps, from industry giants to indie darlings, many of which we'd consider must-haves for your Home Screen. For each, we've tried to capture just why the app is such a stand-out in its field and what kind of user would benefit from it.

Please remember this is a subjective list, and we had to leave a lot of great apps on the cutting room floor! In fact, it was so tricky to pare things down that we've also included an honorable mention for each letter of the alphabet. That means 52 recommendations in total, all of which are absolutely brilliant apps.

Welcome to **The App Store A-Z**.

**Tom Rolfe**

Editor, [Tips & Tricks for iPhone](#)



# A is for Apollo



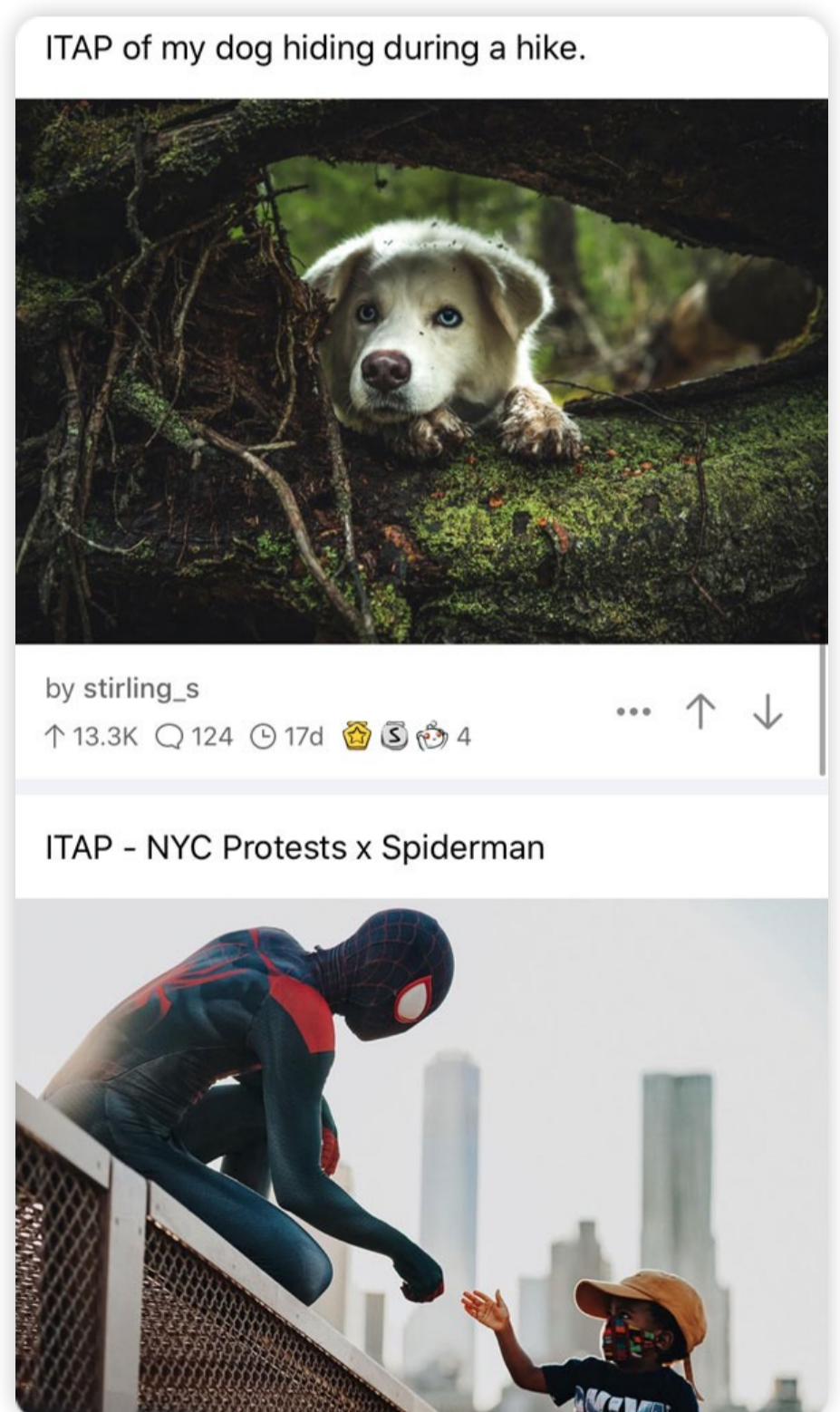
*Reddit* allows users to subscribe to ‘subreddits’ of constantly changing content covering their favorite topics. Everything is covered here, no matter how niche your interests. Anyone can submit posts, with an upvote system ensuring the best submissions rise to the top for easy discovery. But the Reddit website isn’t well optimized for mobile, and the official app leaves a lot to be desired.

In contrast, **Apollo** offers an impressive collection of powerful features that make discovery, navigation, posting, and commenting easy as pie. It’s a smart, slick way to browse Reddit built on a bed of common sense that the website sometimes lacks.

A reasonably-priced premium subscription unlocks some bonus stuff – but even for free, this app is an easy recommendation for anyone looking to dive into a Reddit rabbit hole.

🍏 Download on the App Store

**Honorable mentions:**  
**Annotable, Affinity Photo**



# B is for Bear



This is a note-taking app that aims to be as useful for shopping lists as it is for notes, poetry, diary entries, stories, research, and even web development. All forms of writing are welcome here, and they all look superb in **Bear's** slick, distraction-free interface. It's much more capable than Notes, and better looking than Evernote.

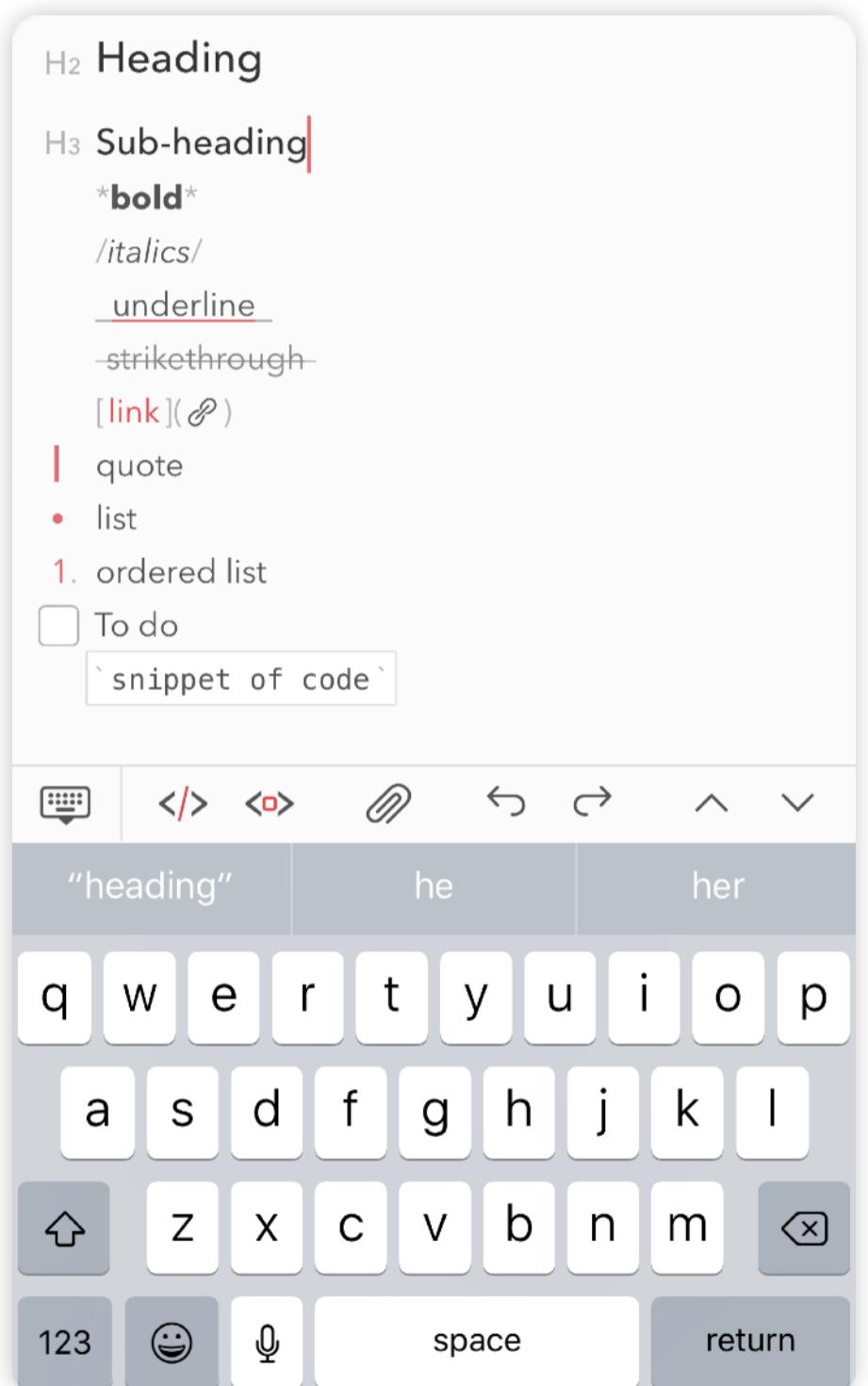
Pieces you write can be easily linked together to form a body of related writing, and the app boasts a variation on markdown for quick text formatting. There's more: Home Screen widgets, Dark Mode, trackpad support, and encrypted note locking. It also works great with Apple Pencil on the iPad.

Bear's core functions are entirely free, with multi-device sync unlocked via a subscription that's miles cheaper than its competitors. Considering the app doesn't compromise on much, it's a great choice for voracious note-takers.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**

**Bear Focus Timer, Blinkist**



# C is for **CARROT** Weather



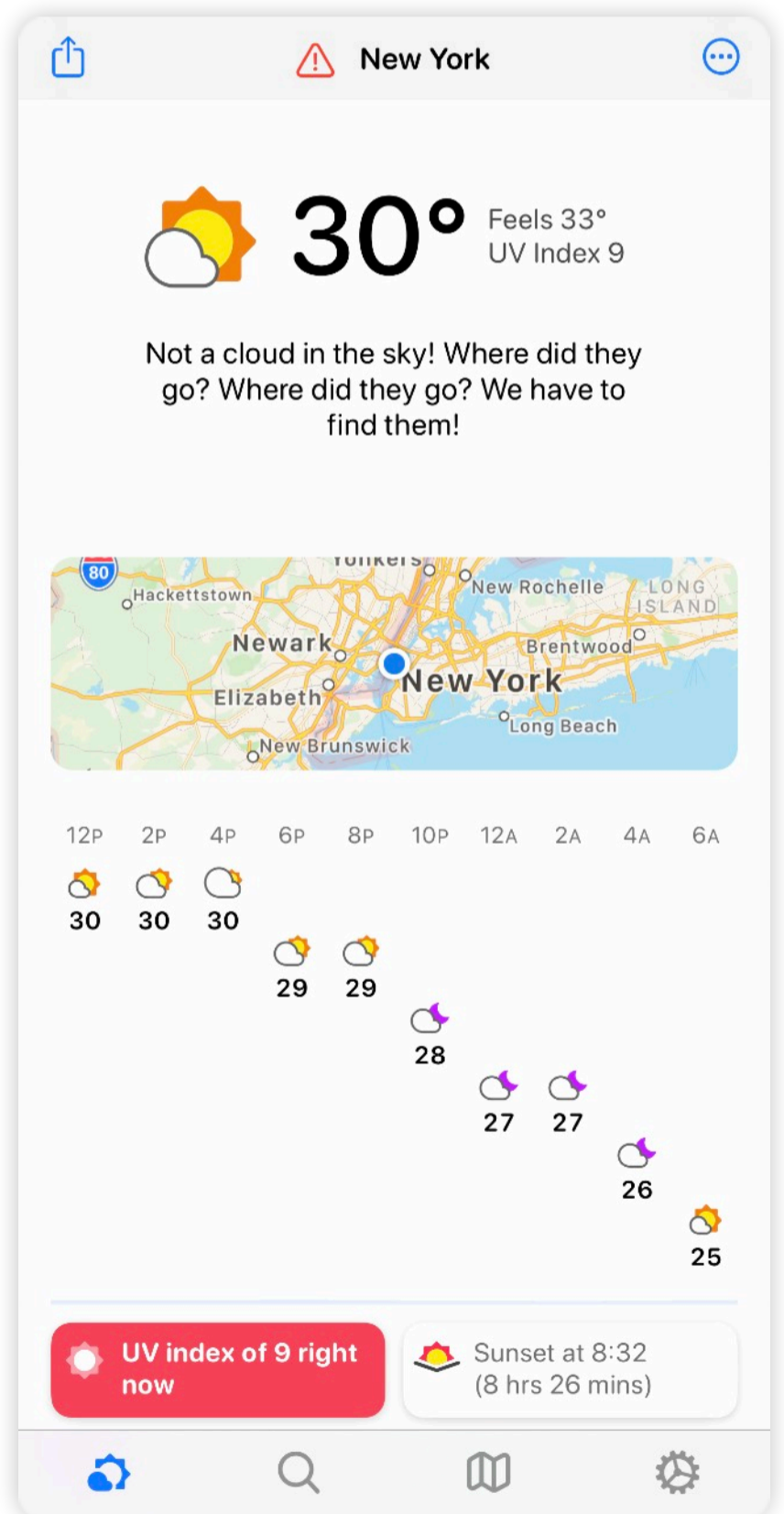
Unlike other weather forecasts, this one is delivered by a snarky artificial intelligence with a distaste for humans. It adds a layer of amusement to the boring task of checking the weather, diverging from the ultra-serious norm of these sorts of apps. But what started life as a weather app that valued personality over professionalism has grown into perhaps the best weather app around, period.

The snarky AI is still there to make you laugh if you want it to, but **CARROT** has very much grown up. You get a choice of multiple weather sources, all kinds of great data, and even a surprisingly powerful interface builder to tailor the layout to your exact needs.

You'll need to pay up for some of those features, but if you want a smart, premium weather app that feels like it was designed just for you, it's the best option on iPhone and iPad.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**  
**[Cheatsheet](#), [Citymapper](#)**



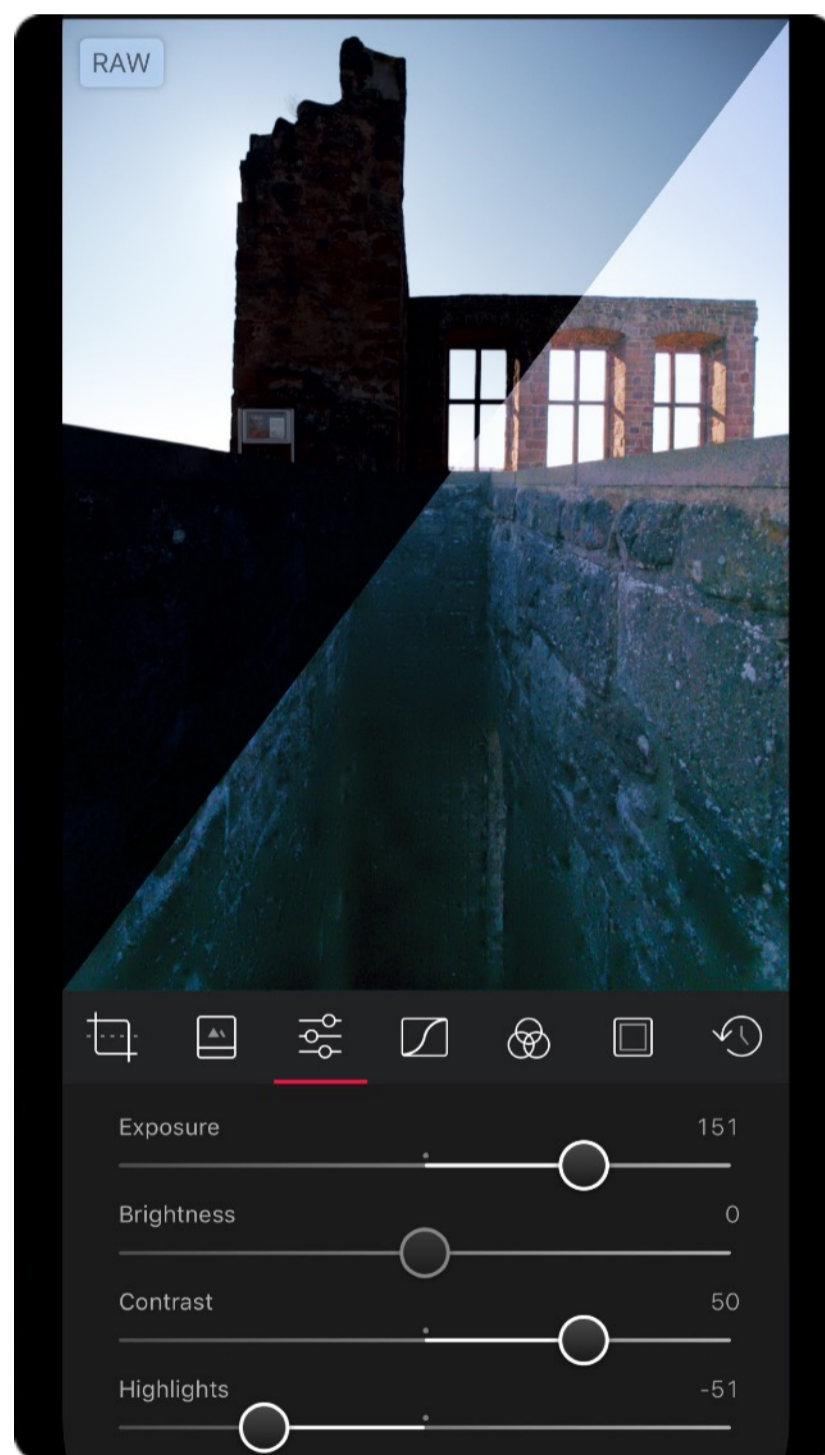
# D is for Darkroom



**Darkroom** is a deceptively powerful photo editing app. Behind an understated interface lies every essential editing feature a photographer could need.

Casual snappers can improve their work in a flash with intuitive controls and slick filters, while pros will appreciate the inclusion of curves, selective color tweaks, RAW photo support, and batch edits. You can even toy with the foreground and background of Portrait images separately, and it all works just as well on video files.

The thumb-able sliders and streamlined interface are usable, approachable, and tactile. And although there is that ‘pro’ option for gaining extra goodies, this app comes highly recommended in its free incarnation. It’s ideal if you want a more powerful editor than *Photos*, but don’t want to deal with the complexity of something like *Affinity Photo*.



🍏 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: DuckDuckGo Browser, Duolingo**

# E is for eBay



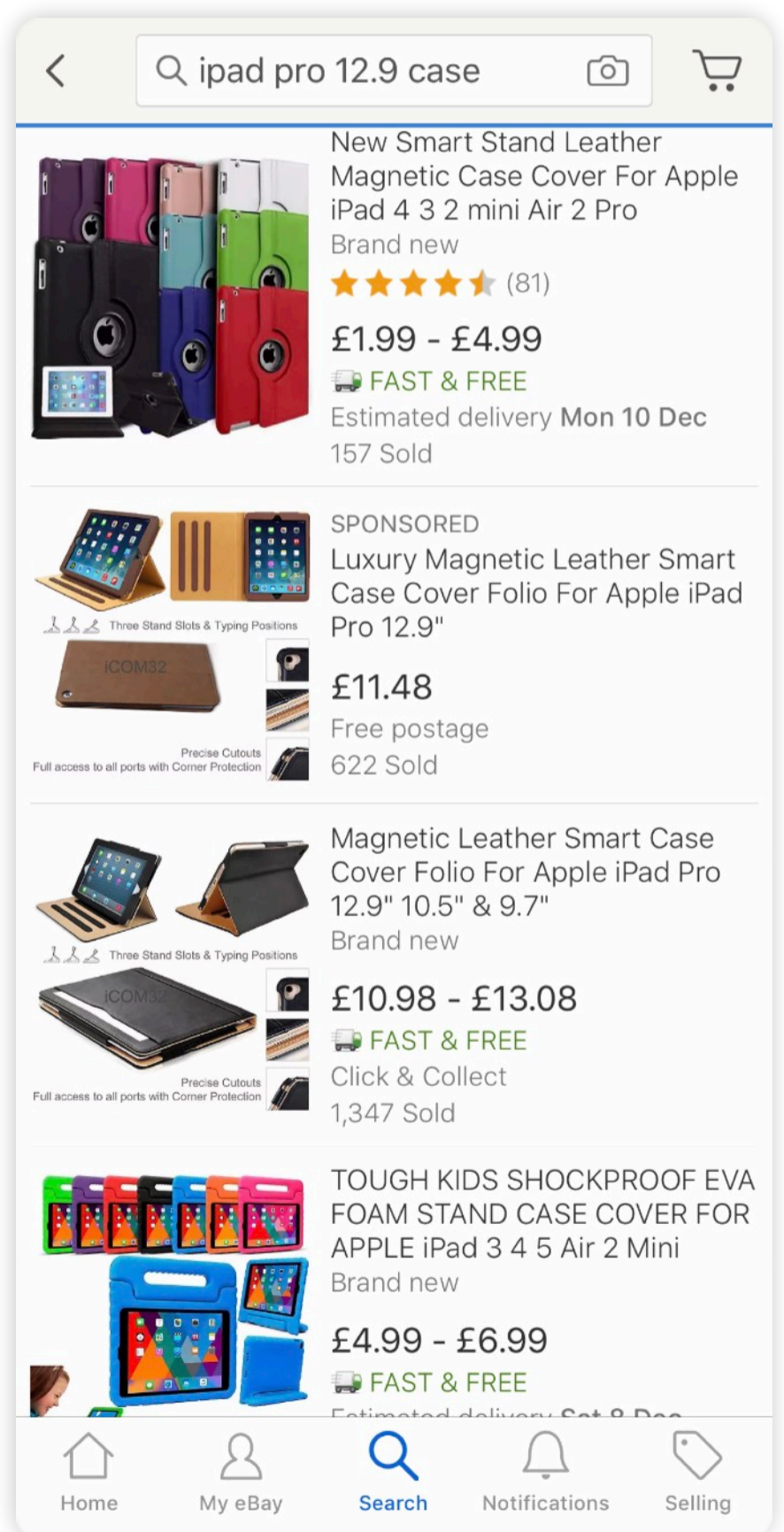
Founded in 1995, **eBay** grew to become a colossal online auction and shopping website. For sellers, it's a place where the sheer number of users massively increases the chances of a sale. And for buyers, the likelihood of finding rarities and bargains is high.

Naturally, you can do everything on **eBay** using your iPhone – in fact, the app makes it incredible simple to get started. There are comprehensive search options for buyers, and a handy watchlist to keep tabs on auctions.

Selling from the app is easy, too, and arguably the best place to go if you want to squeeze the highest price from your sales. You can filter sold items to gauge historical prices and interest – and creating a listing can be done in a matter of minutes, entirely in-app.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Elk, EyeEm**





# F is for Fantastical

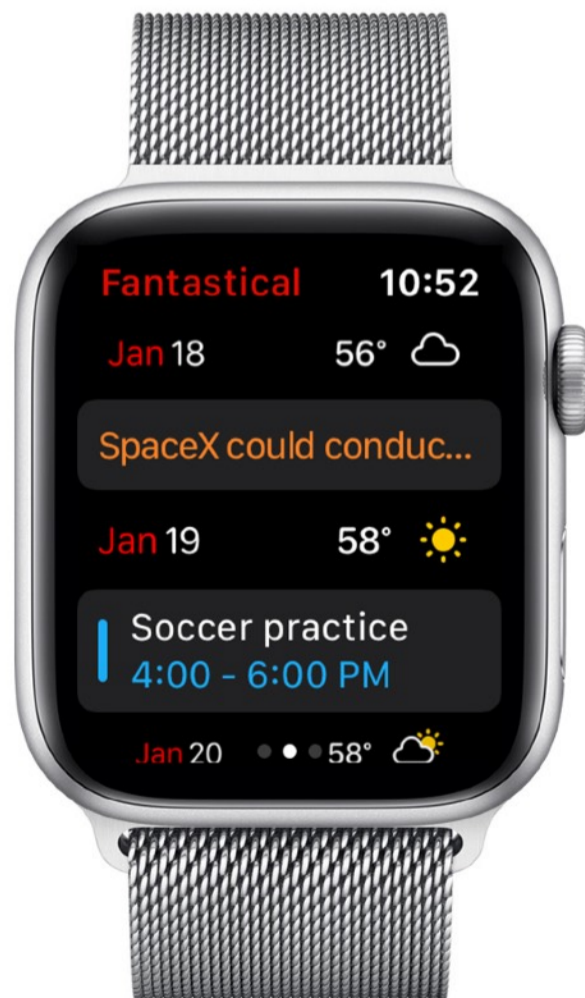
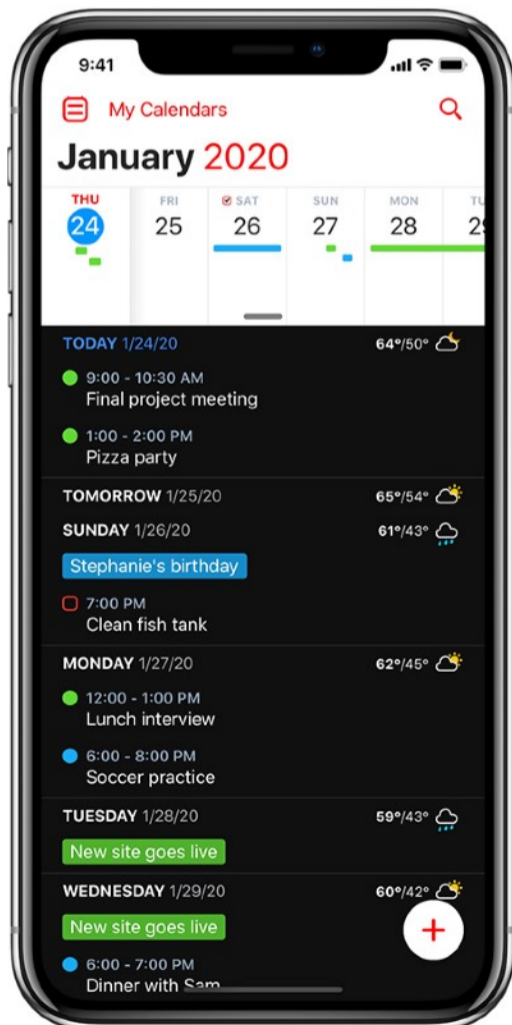


The default iOS Calendar is fine, but if you want something smarter, better-looking, and more robust, you'll be hard pressed to find a better app than Fantastical. It's been around for years, has won an Apple Design Award, and is often lauded for its smart dynamic interface and natural language input. It seamlessly tracks tasks, reminders, weather, and offers nice extras like widgets and conference call detection.

A controversial switch to a subscription model takes nothing away from the brilliance of the app, and it remains our favorite productivity pick on the App Store.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Foldify, Firefox**



# G is for GarageBand



**GarageBand** is a legendary stepping-on point for anyone with a smidgen of musical curiosity. But even if you don't have any musical talent to speak of, that doesn't mean you can't make the most of Apple's fabulous music app.

Its clever Live Loops feature combined with a wealth of built-in sounds and samples means you can make something that sounds good in a matter of minutes. The fact **GarageBand** crams so many high-quality music-making tools into a single app – for free – is mind boggling.

🍏 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Grammarly, Google Maps**



# H is for Headspace



This is the king of the relaxation apps, co-founded by a former Tibetan Buddhist monk who now shares his mindful learning through a mobile app.

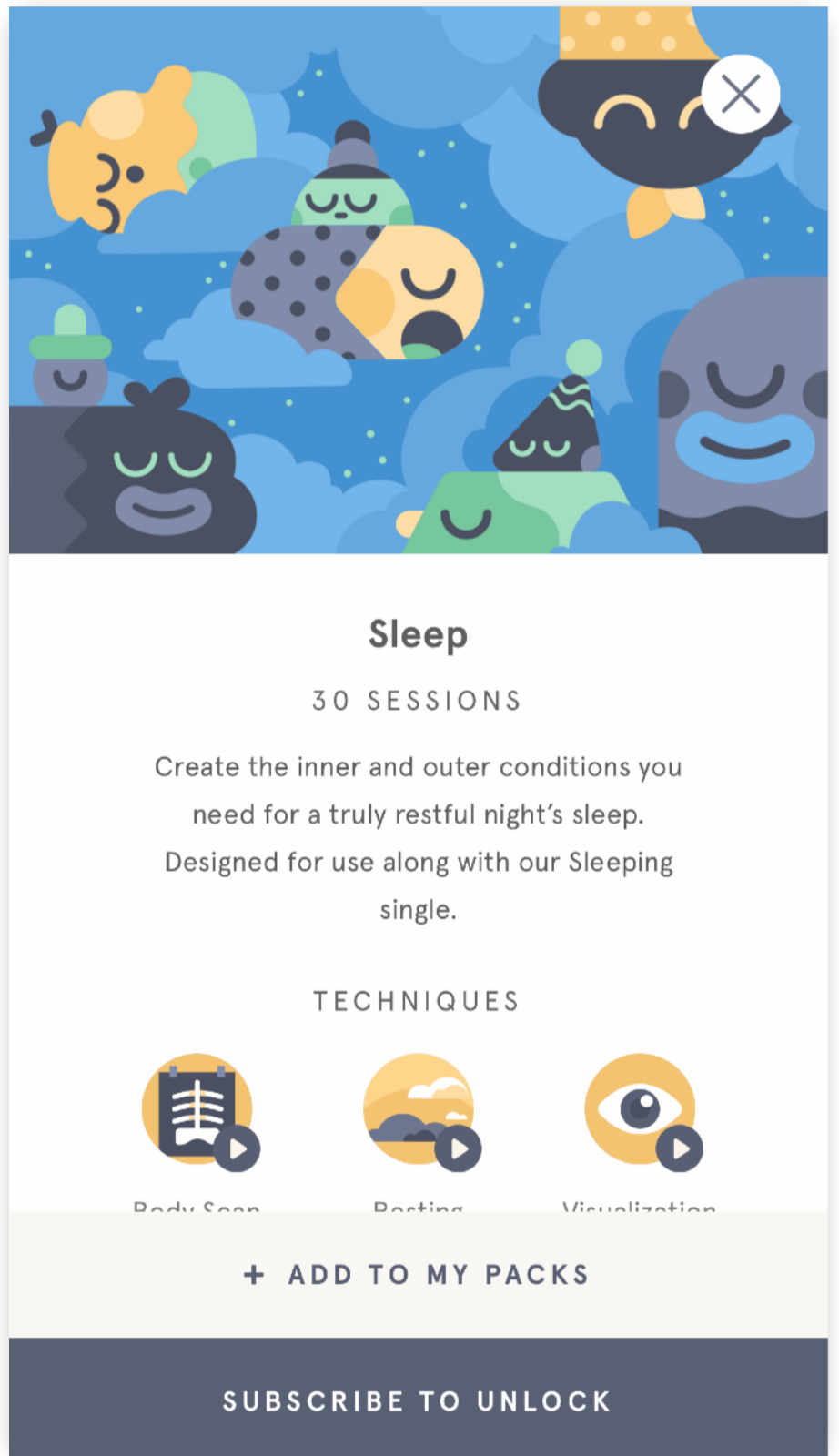
**Headspace** offers a perfect starting point for beginners with little experience of meditation, or a great continuation for folks who already meditate regularly.

The app also offers plenty of tools to support sleep and health habits. You've got mindful bedtime stories, sleep meditations, soundscapes, plus guided exercises with video demos.

Community stories and interviews enhance Headspace's claim to being a one stop shop for all things self-care.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**  
**Hipstamatic, Hiya**



The screenshot displays the 'Sleep' section of the Headspace app. At the top, there's a colorful illustration of various cartoon characters with different expressions and colors (yellow, green, blue, purple) against a blue background with stars. Below the illustration, the text reads 'Sleep' in a bold font, followed by '30 SESSIONS'. A descriptive paragraph states: 'Create the inner and outer conditions you need for a truly restful night's sleep. Designed for use along with our Sleeping single.' Underneath, the 'TECHNIQUES' section features three icons: a clipboard with a checklist, a landscape with a sun and clouds, and an eye. Below these icons, the text '+ ADD TO MY PACKS' is visible. At the bottom of the screen, a dark blue bar contains the text 'SUBSCRIBE TO UNLOCK'.

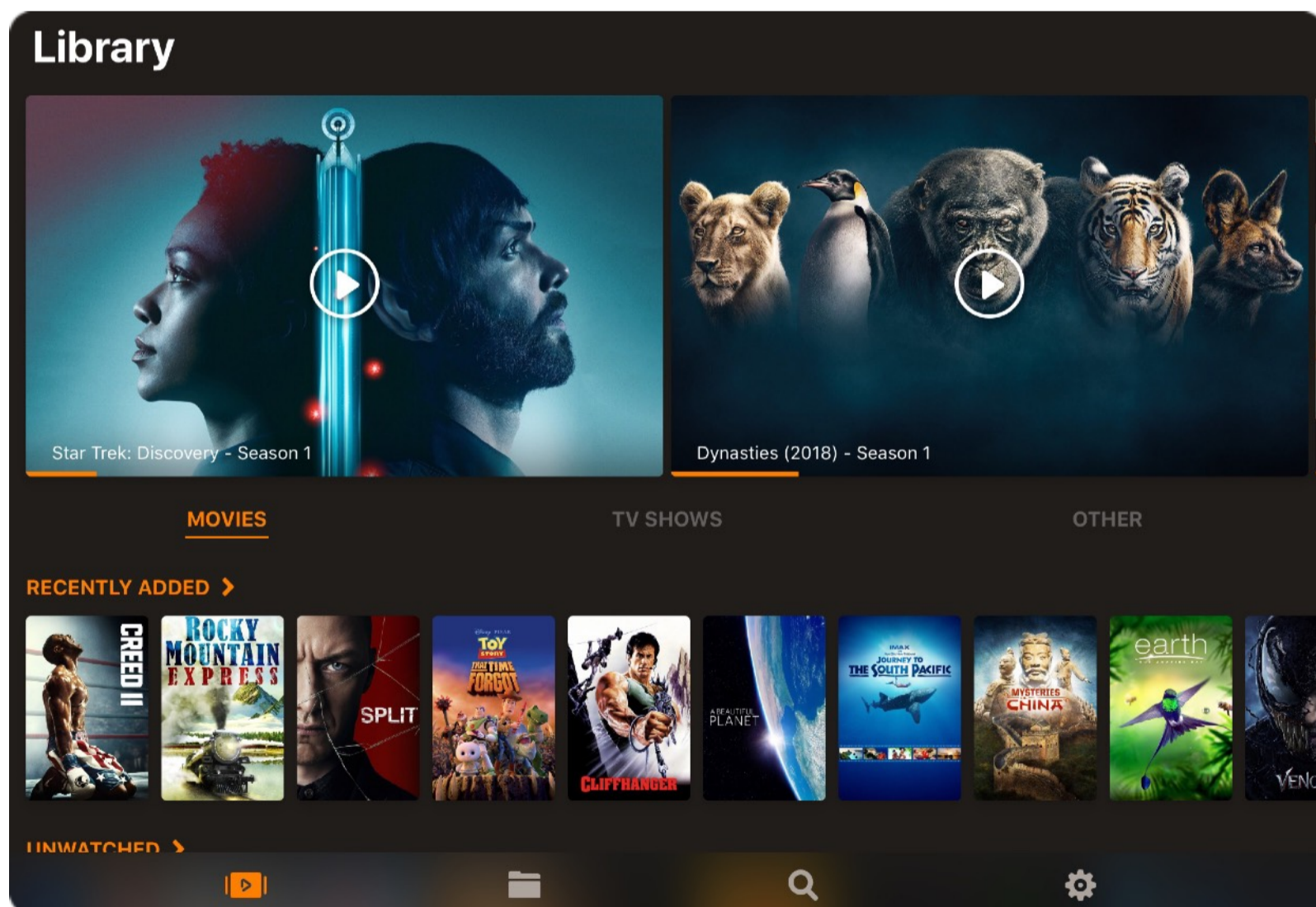
# I is for Infuse



These days, a great many people stream movies and shows from the likes of Netflix. But if you have your own digital video collection on a computer or hard drive somewhere, **Infuse Pro** is the ideal app to get it playing on your iPhone, iPad, or Apple TV. It'll connect to a range of sources, live-convert all kinds of formats, and even attempt to provide cover art and synopses for everything it finds.

🍏 Download on the App Store

Honorable mentions: [Instapaper](#), [Imgur](#)



# J is for **Just Press Record**

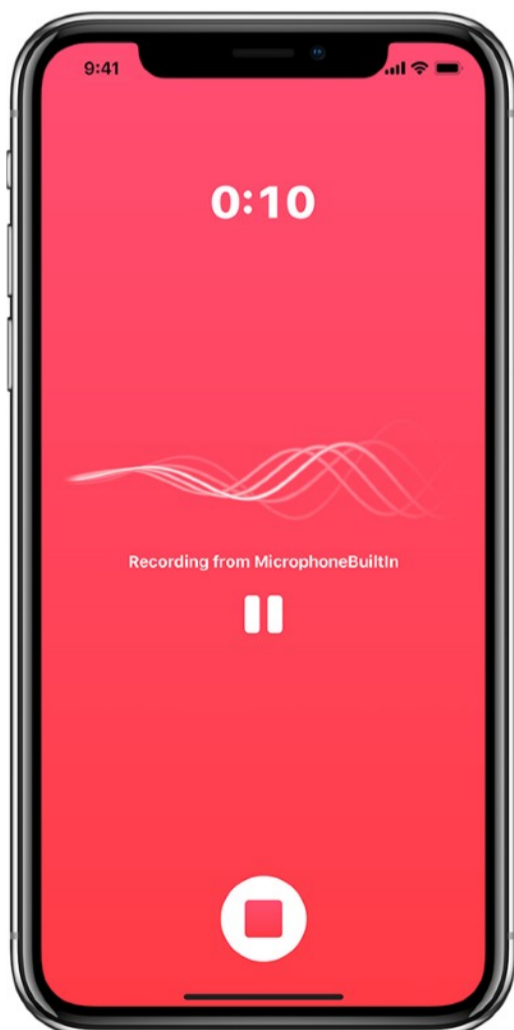


A mobile dictaphone of sorts, **Just Press Record** has some additional smarts over merely recording: your memos are synced across iCloud, and their contents can be quickly transcribed.

It's great for taking down ideas the moment you have them, without touching the iOS keyboard. It's like a juiced up **Voice Memos** app, and is especially handy if you have an Apple Watch.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mention: JustWatch**



# K is for Kitchen Stories



There are thousands of cookery apps on iOS, but this one stands above the rest for its elegant and thoughtful presentation. **Kitchen Stories** combines delicious recipes with a vast array of clear and concise tutorial videos.

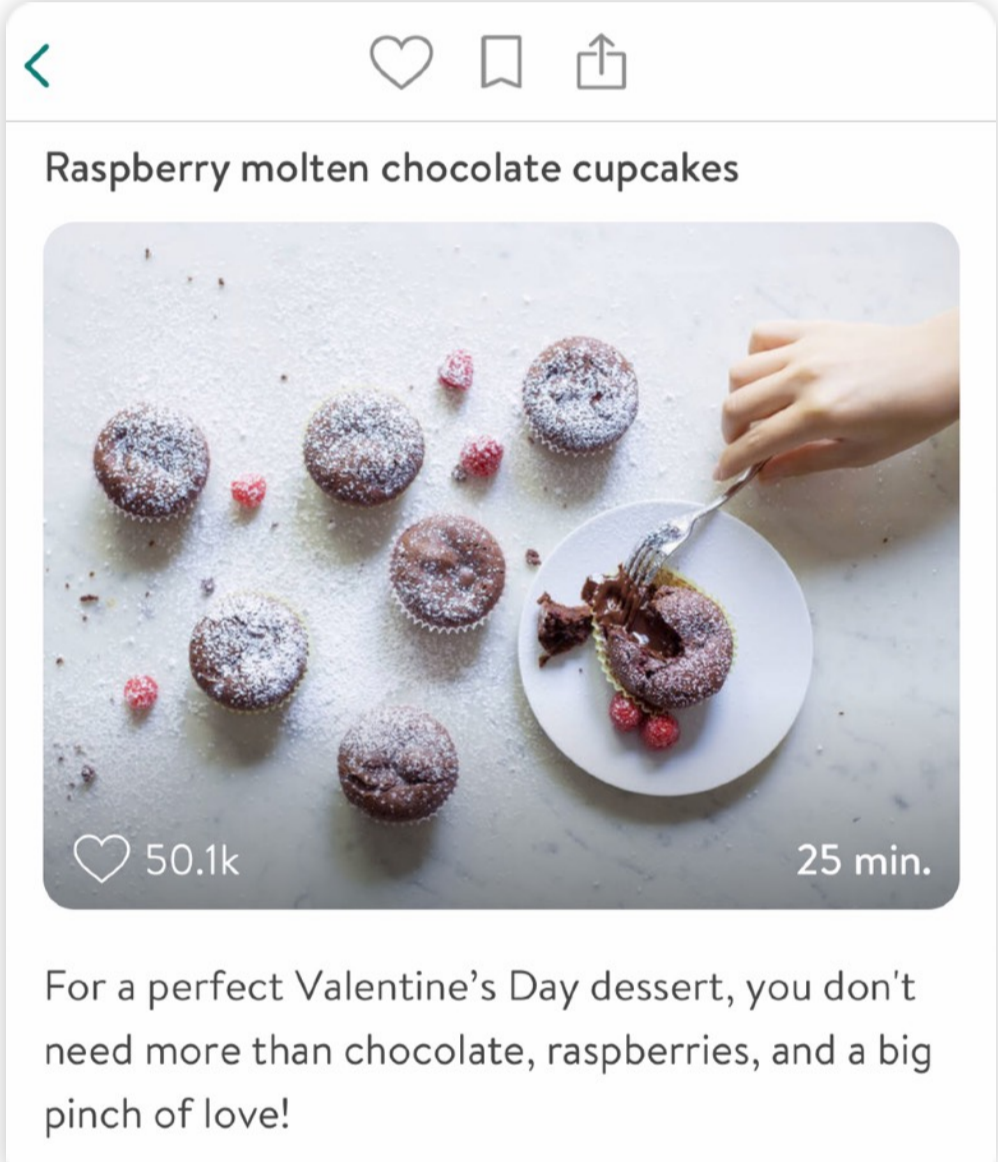
Kitchen Stories can help every step of the way: its in-depth “stories” will provide plenty of inspiration for dinners, while its gorgeous photo-heavy recipes will ensure nothing goes wrong in the execution – and helpful difficulty guides ensure you don’t bite off more than you can chew.

You can create your own virtual cookbook of favorite recipes, and easily convert any of them into a shopping list in an instant.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mention:**

**Korg Gadget**



Raspberry molten chocolate cupcakes

50.1k 25 min.

For a perfect Valentine’s Day dessert, you don’t need more than chocolate, raspberries, and a big pinch of love!

# L is for Launcher



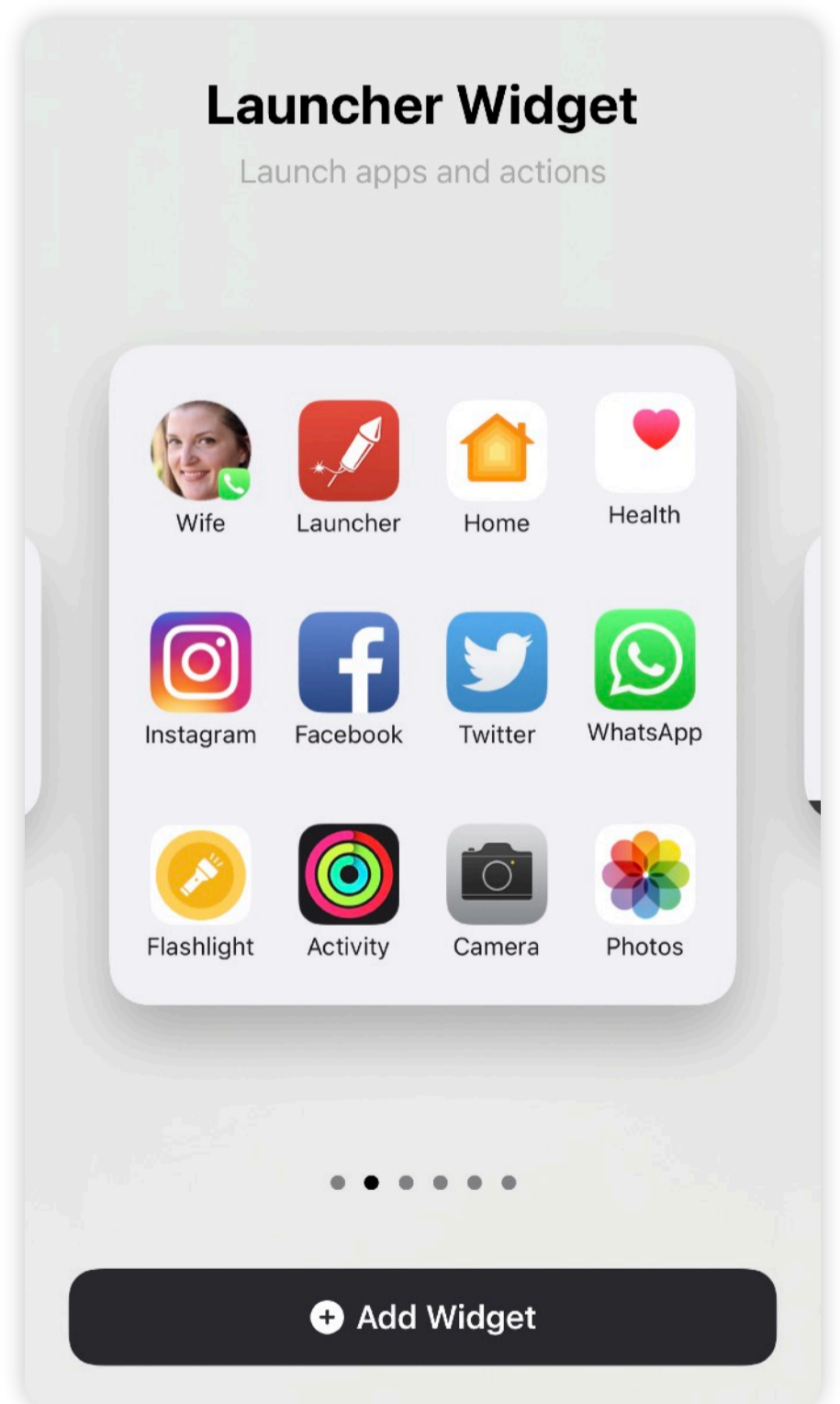
**Launcher** has always been a handy way to add custom buttons to Notification Center. But since the introduction of Shortcuts and Home Screen widgets, its usefulness and power have grown.

The app's ability to nestle extra functions amongst your regular app is a boon for anyone with the urge to redesign their Home Screen. Its DIY widgets are not just a way to break out of Apple's standard grid of icons, but will genuinely save you time if you put enough thought into them.

For anyone keen on customization, Launcher is a must.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**  
**LumaFusion, LuckyTrip**



# M is for MasterClass



**MasterClass** offers in-depth video lessons from household names on a broad range of subjects. With a single membership, you can learn about interior design, poker, singing, business leadership, photography, chess, gardening, and even space exploration.

There's an overwhelming amount of knowledge on offer from an impressive array of familiar faces – including Martin Scorsese, Gordon Ramsay, Margaret Atwood, and Serena Williams, to name just a few.

🍏 Download on the App Store

**Honorable mentions: Mextures, MindNode**





# N is for NordVPN



Not only does a VPN make your internet browsing secure and anonymous, it can also be used to protect your data, avoid hackers and government surveillance, and even stream TV shows that are region-locked to another country.

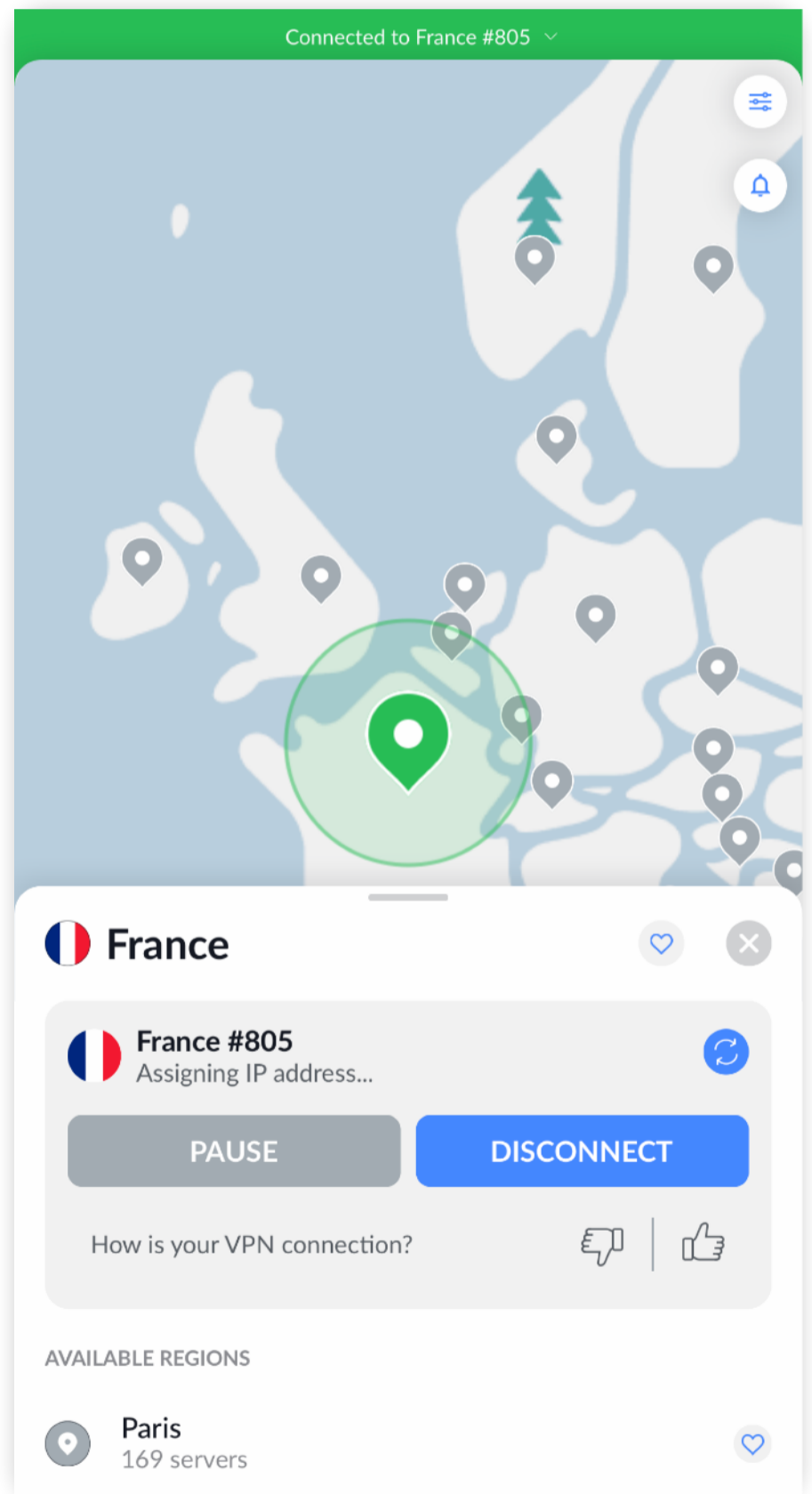
A VPN also protects against tracking and the risks of public Wi-Fi.

There are plenty of VPNs out there, but for our money, **NordVPN** is the best around. It's affordable, has a solid iOS app, and has a strict no-logs policy that means your activity is never stored anywhere. It also has a neat feature called CyberSec, which automatically blocks ads and malware.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**

**Noted, Newton**



# O is for Overcast

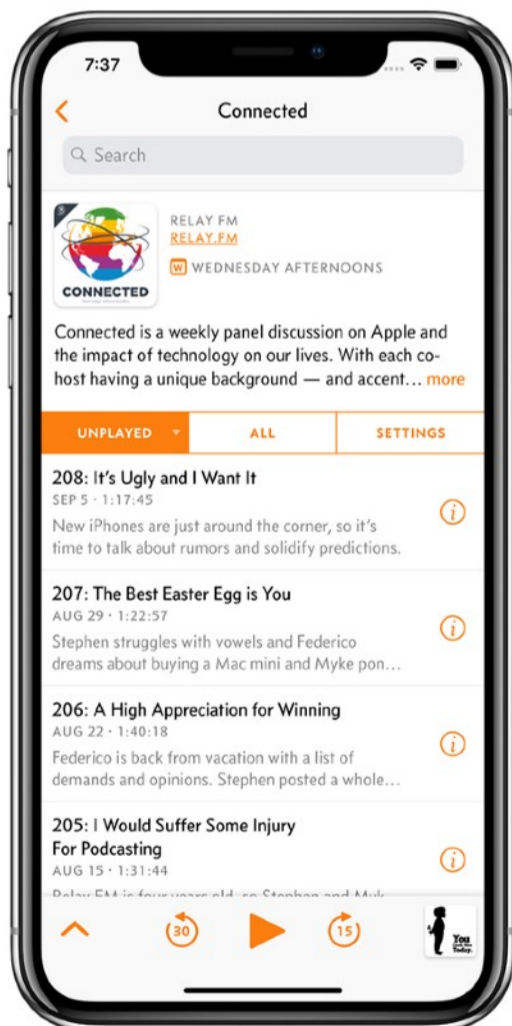


We could bang on about **Overcast's** features all day: the vibrant, usable interface; smart playlists; support for streaming and downloaded podcasts. But our favorite bit is playback – **Overcast** simply sounds better than its rivals, due to superb smart speed and voice boost features, and smart resume, which rewinds your podcast a bit if it's paused, to remind you where you left off.

Since pioneering many features that are now taken for granted in podcast players, Overcast's regular app updates have ensured it stays clear of the pack.

🍏 Download on the App Store

Honorable mention: **Oilist**



# P is for Procreate

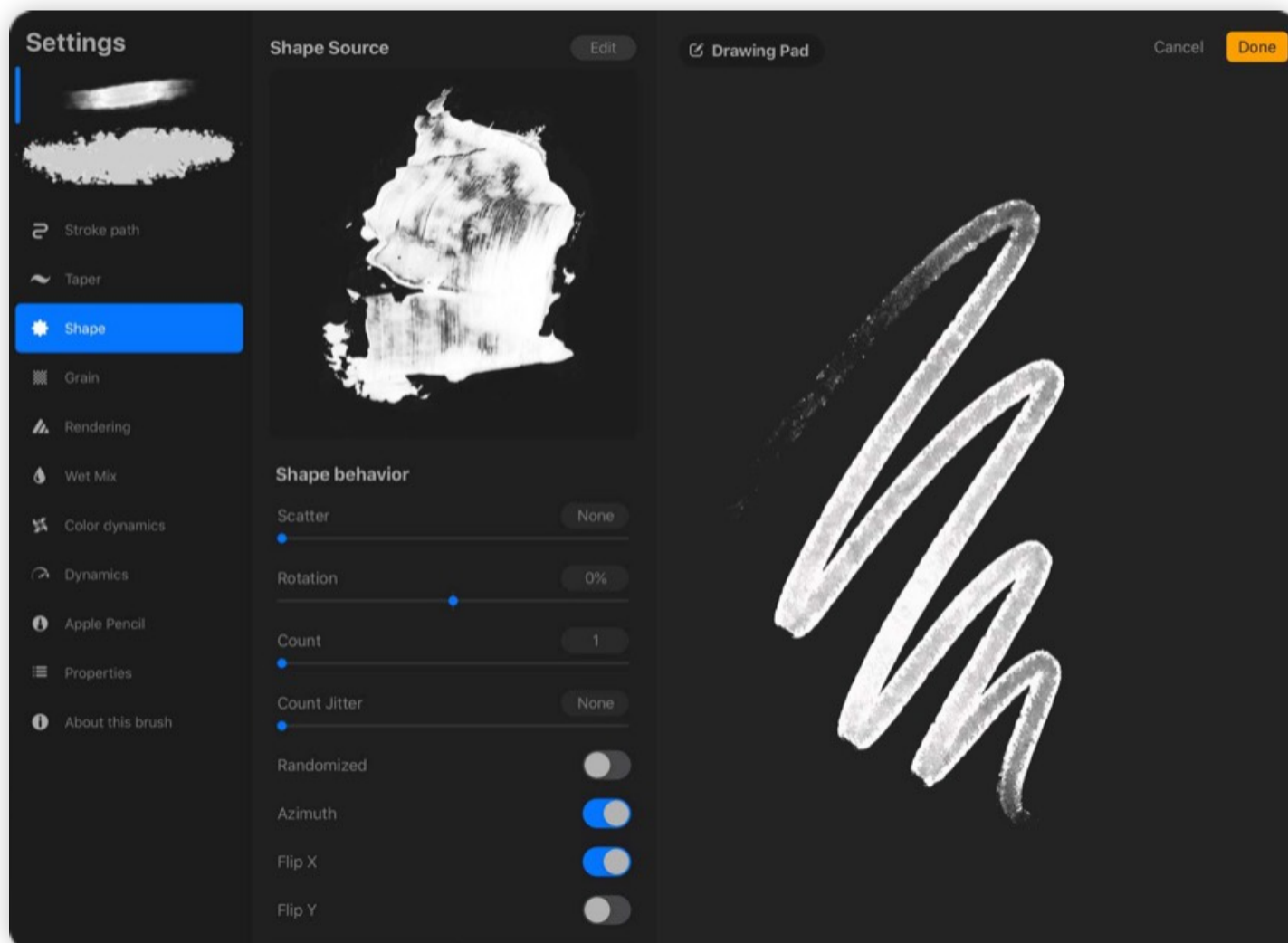


**Procreate** is the app of choice for many professional illustrators, crammed to bursting with amazing brushes, textures, and drawing tools – but it remains approachable even for rookie sketchers.

Armed with an iPad and Apple Pencil, it's truly fantastic. But sister app **Procreate Pocket** does a remarkable job of squeezing all that power onto the iPhone without compromising its capabilities. If you're remotely artistic, this is a must-have app.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Pennies, PicCollage**



# Q is for Quik



Pick some videos and a theme, and **Quik** (or **GoPro Quik**, to grant its full name and mess up our alphabetization) does the editing for you, creating amazing video montages that sync up perfectly to your choice of music.

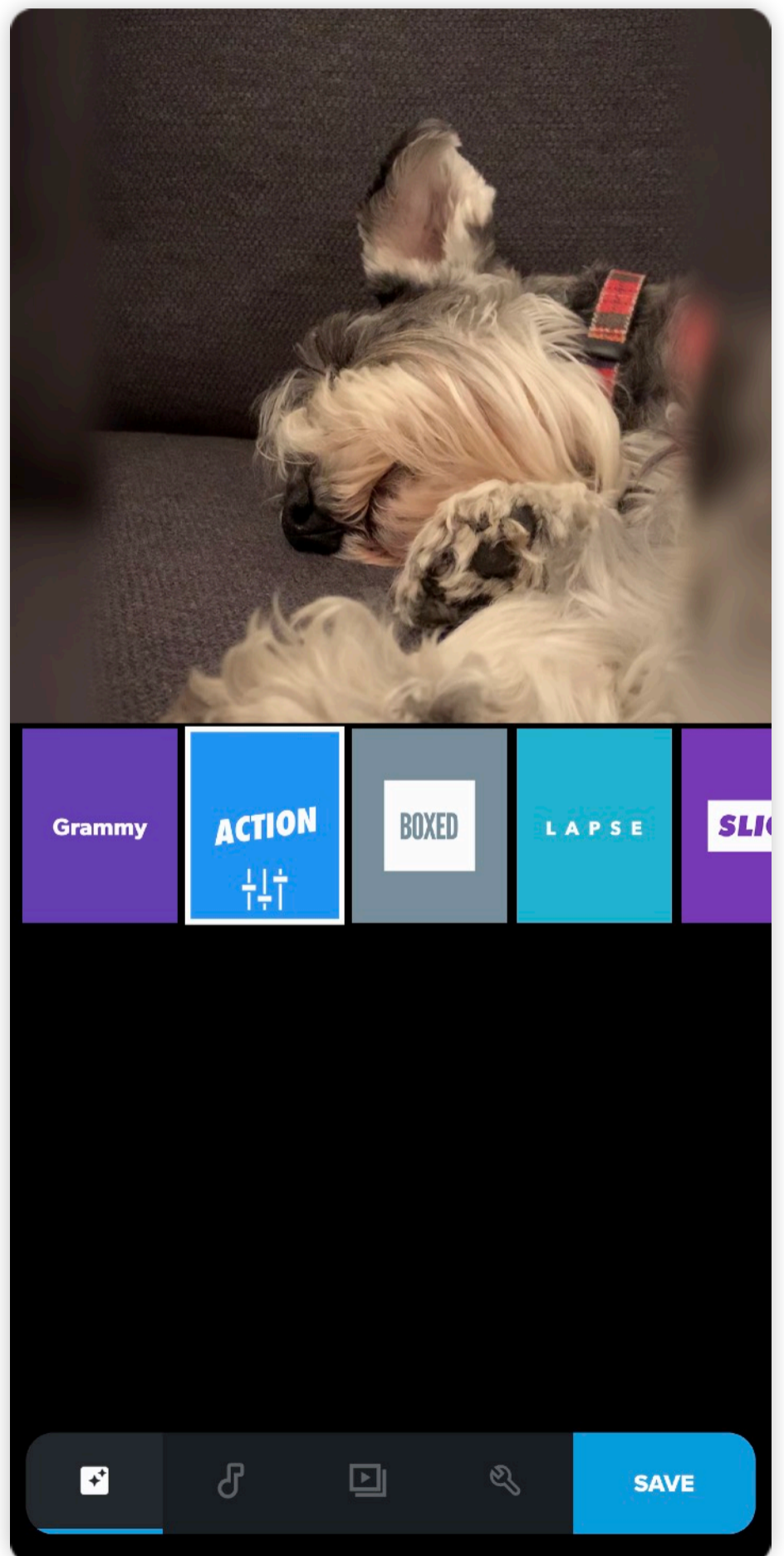
If the result irks your inner director, that's no problem – clips, titles, effects, music, and more, can all be manually adjusted. It's a more stylized and customizable version of Apple's photo memories.

The app is particularly good for editing slow motion footage and action shots, which is no surprise considering it's made by the team behind the GoPro action camera.

But you can throw nearly any home movies into the app and get something short and watchable in just a few minutes.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mention:**  
**Quartz Brief**



# R is for Runkeeper



For socially minded people who want to get fit outside, **Runkeeper's** an excellent choice. Whether you're walking, running, or cycling, it'll map where you go, calories burned, and time taken.

You can join groups of friends to see how sickeningly fit they are, and challenge yourself to eventually reign supreme. The ongoing data readout is clear as day, and when you're done you can delve into all kinds of facts, figures, and maps.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mention: Retrospecs, Reeder**



# S is for Streaks

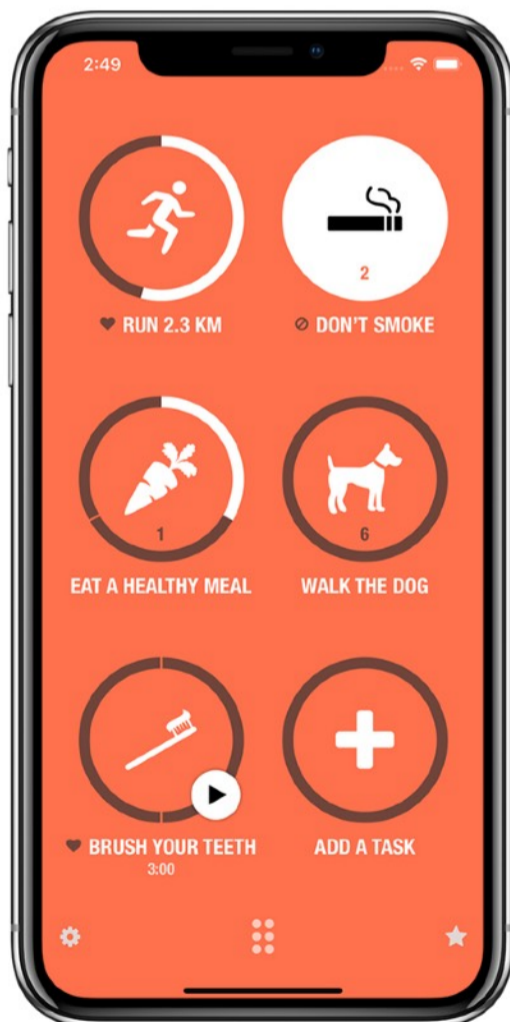


This to-do list app is framed around small tasks you want to perform on a regular basis, in order to improve your life. This might include daily exercise, reading often, or giving up smoking.

The interface couldn't be simpler: up to six massive buttons fill the screen, one per habit. You tick them off on the daily, trying to avoid the inevitable guilt felt if you break your streak and miss a day.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Souolver, Scrivener**



# T is for Things

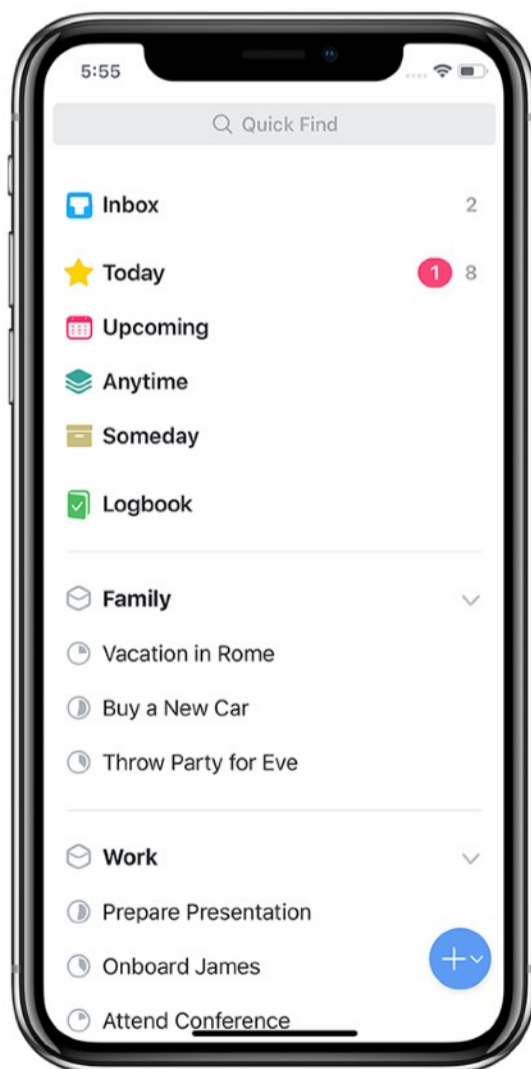


This full-fledged GTD (Get Things Done) tool wants you to be hugely organized. It balances simplicity and power, making it a cinch to juggle hundreds of to-dos.

With **Things**, you get something not unlike an email client, which stashes to-dos in an inbox alongside events synced from your calendar. It's a clever rethinking of the to-do list that puts everything you need for the current day in one place, and hides the rest until relevant.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Touch Retouch, Tinycards**



# U is for Ulysses



**Ulysses** is a great app for anyone who wants a single repository to house all of their writing projects. It offers a clean and focused writing environment that can really do it all, with support for markdown formatting, keyboard and trackpad shortcuts, DOC and PDF exports, and more.

Where the app really shines is in its ability to organize and lay out ambitious, sprawling projects – if you’re writing a novel, a screenplay, a guidebook, or even planning an RPG campaign, this is the ideal place to do it.

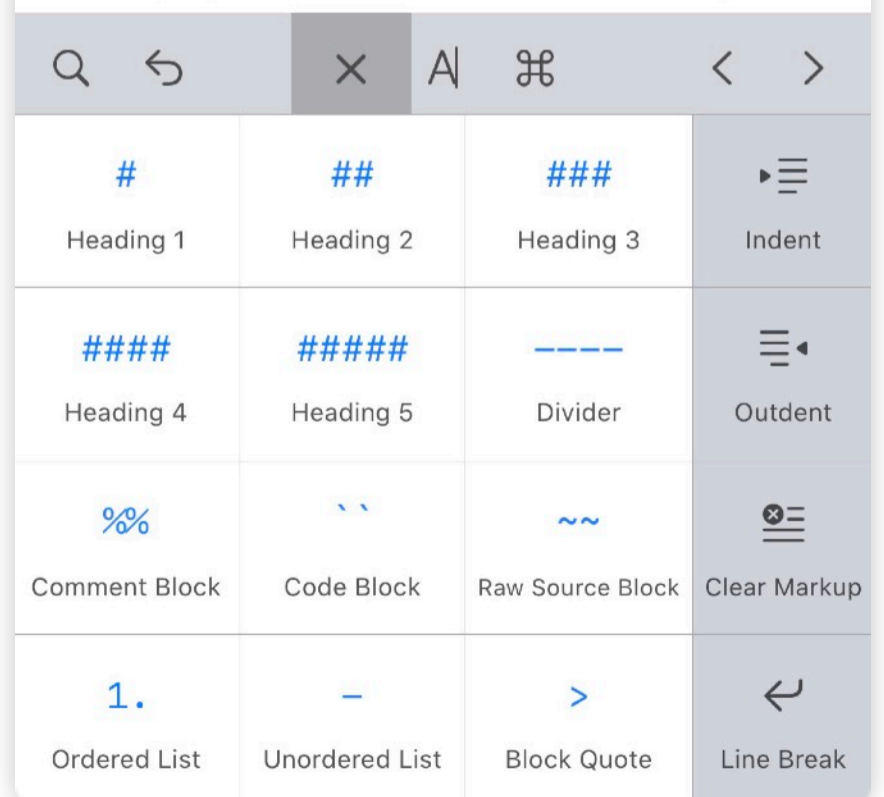
🍏 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions:**  
**[Universe in a Nutshell](#), [Udemy](#)**

## # How to use Spotify’s new Group Sessions to co-DJ in your home

No-one likes it when someone hogs the DJ duties – especially if you’re in the middle of a months-long quarantine. It’s great having millions of tracks to stream to your AirPlay speakers, but let’s be honest: dad’s Rolling Stones are a far cry from the kids’ Billie Eilish.

Spotify’s solution to this problem is Group Sessions – a feature for paid Premium subscribers which lets folks in the same house edit a playlist and interact with various aspects





# V is for Vellum



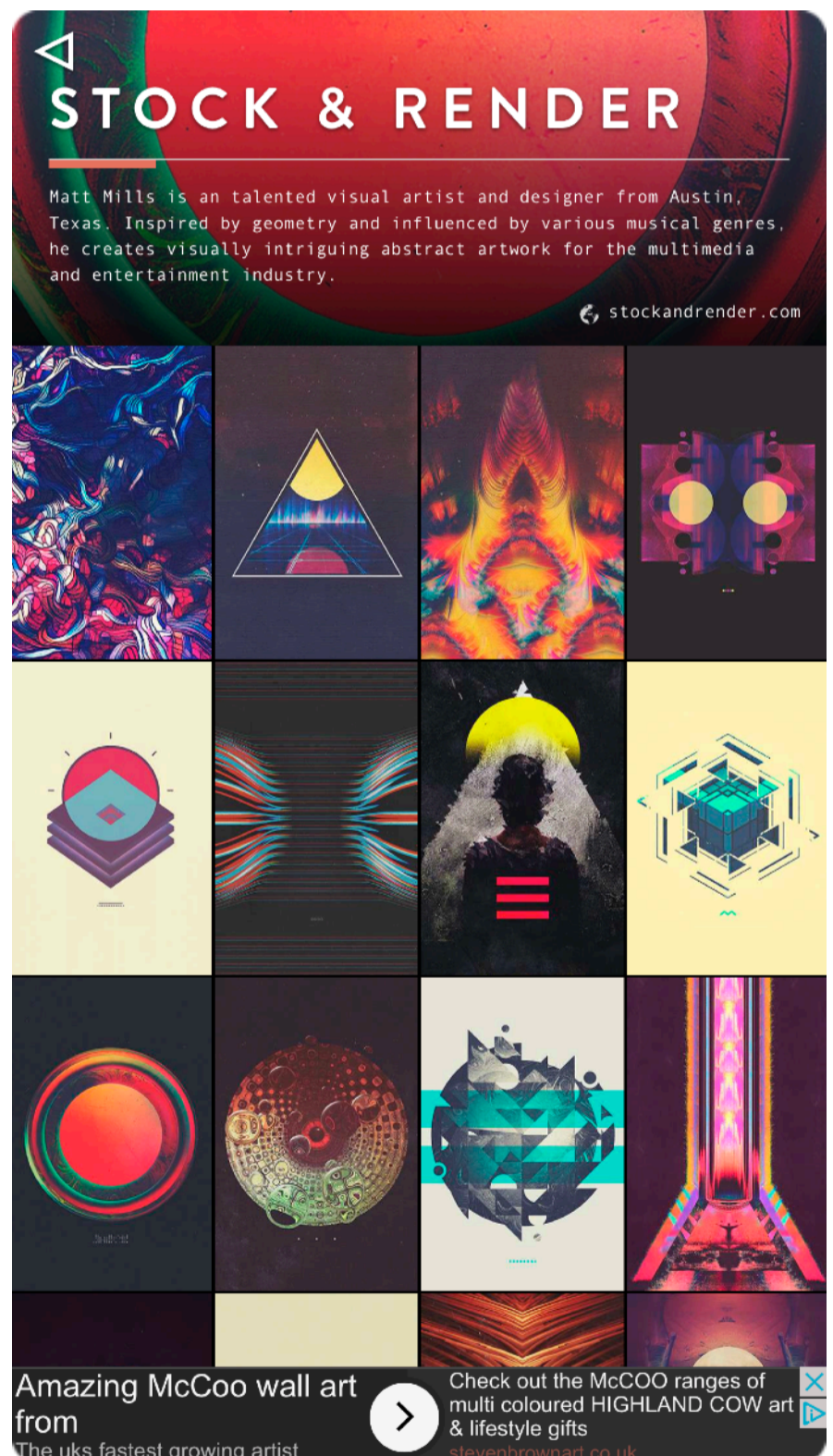
If you want your iPhone to have the wow factor, you'll need an eye-catching lock screen background. There's no better place to look than **Vellum**, which curates incredible art and photography that you'll actually *want* to stare at 50 times a day.

While there are other resources available for wallpapers, few are so well assembled and curated than those on offer here.

The app is from the creator of photo filters app *Mextures*, and the artistic influence and attention to detail is clear in many of these collections.

 Download on the App Store

Honorable mentions:  
**V for Wikipedia**



# W is for WhatsApp



**WhatsApp** is the world's most popular messaging app, almost single-handedly sending SMS texts the way of the dodo. You can send photos and videos, make voice or video calls, and it's all done over an internet connection so it won't eat into your cell plan's allotted texts or minutes.

Conversations are end-to-end encrypted, so nobody can spy on what you're saying. Groups are simple to set up. It falls short of iMessage on a couple of details, but unlike iMessage, it doesn't shut the door on non-Apple customers.

The big advantage with WhatsApp over the competition is its installed user base – north of two billion devices. Chances are, whoever you want to chat with is already using it. Even if they aren't, the barrier to entry is low, with a swift sign-up process.

🍏 Download on the App Store

**Honorable mentions:**

**White Noise+, what3words**



# X is for Xbox



For **Xbox** owners, this is a no-brainer, offering control over invites, messages, party chat, and shared video clips. But the truly exciting part is that with this app, you can play full-blown games from your **Xbox** console.

Hook up a Bluetooth controller and you can stream your games library in real-time on your iPhone. Cool!

 [Download on the App Store](#)



# Y is for Yousician

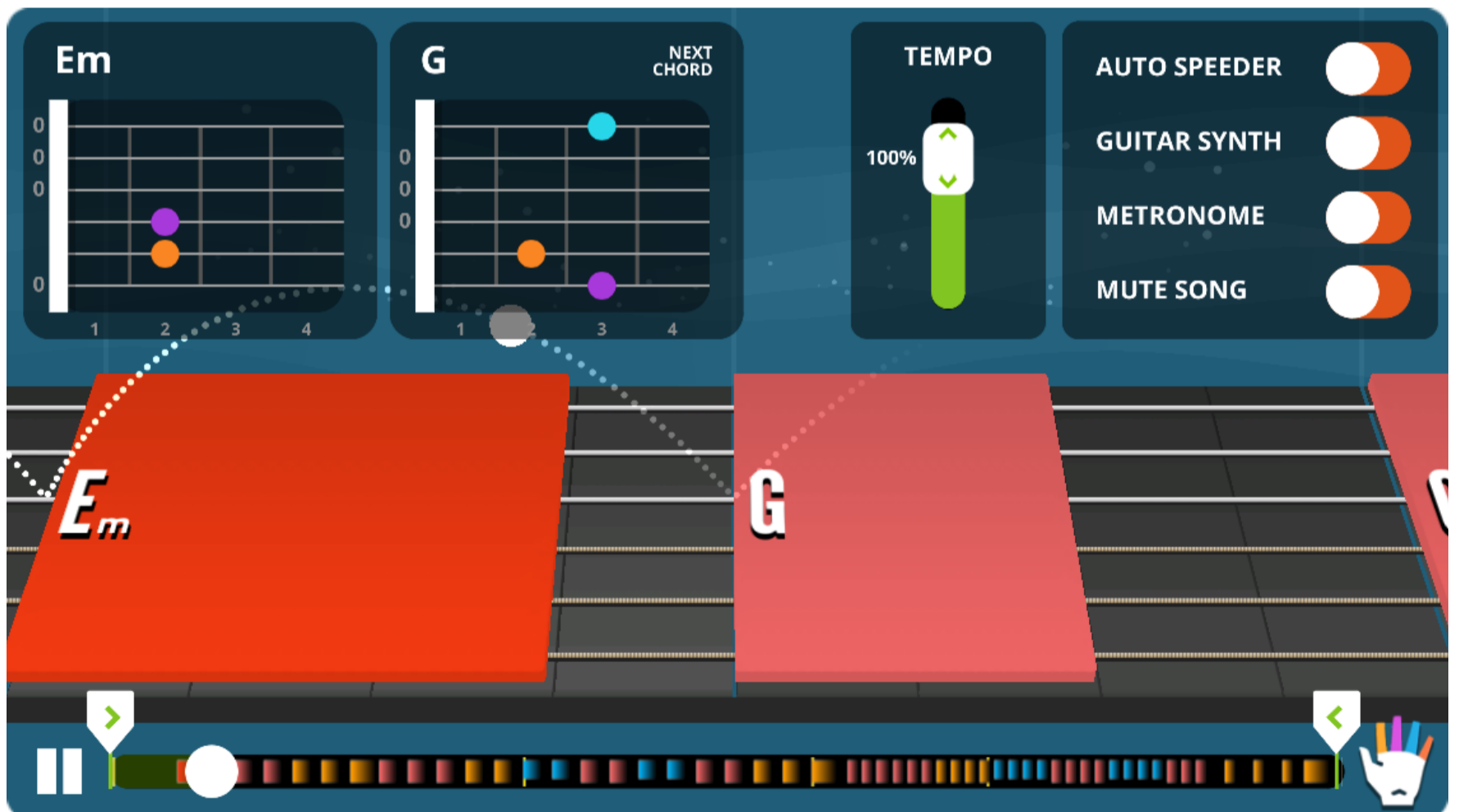


**Yousician** is a distinctly game-oriented take on music lessons. You use your own keyboard, guitar, ukulele or piano, and the app acts as a personal tutor, providing exercises for you to play along with.

There's a sense of fun throughout, with exercises often feeling like a round of *Guitar Hero* as you match chords and notes that scroll across the screen. (Though the piano lessons are a touch more conventional).

🍏 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: YouTube Kids**



# Z is for Zoom

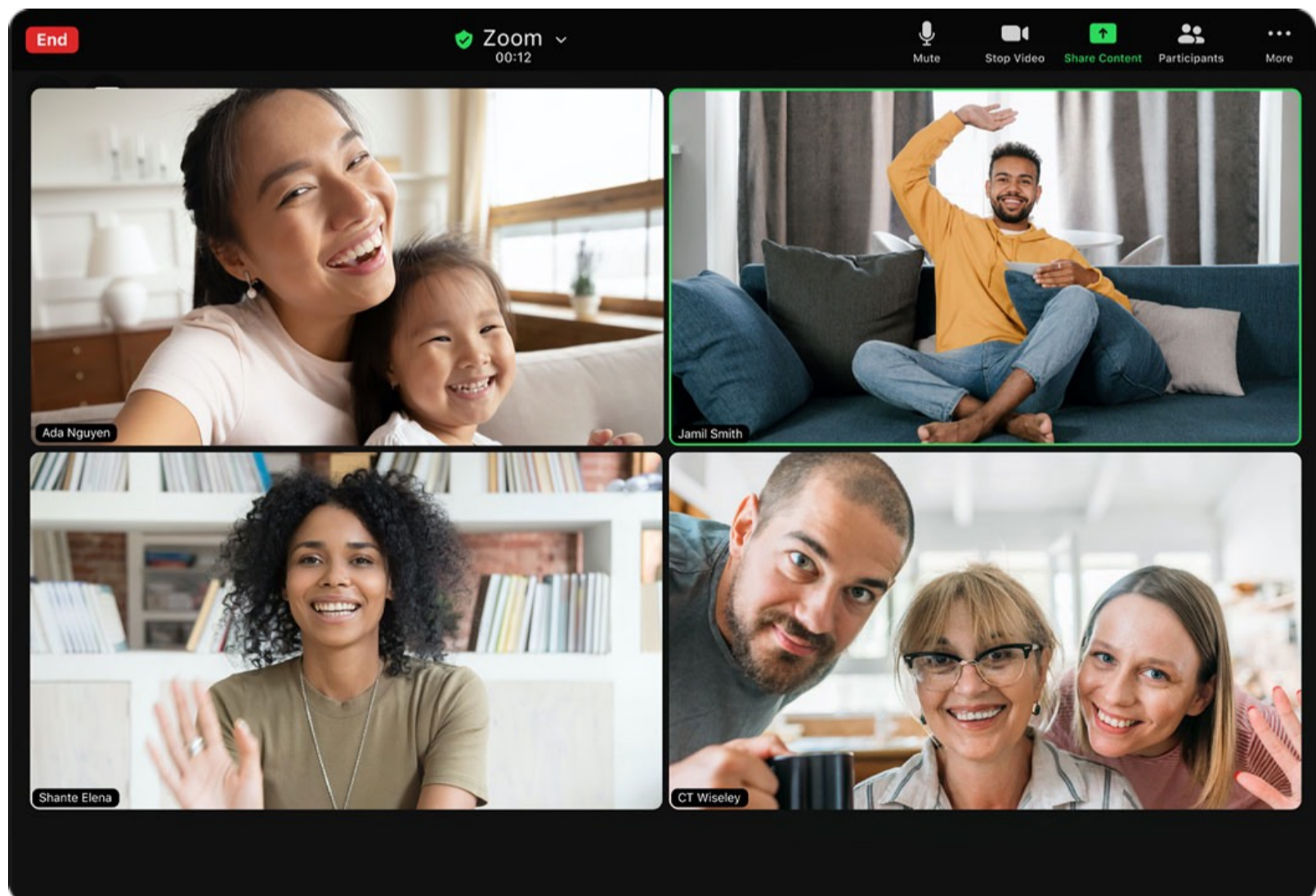


**Zoom** has been around for years, but it blew up and became a household name during the COVID-19 pandemic that forced the world indoors.

As a result, this free video calling app has become the go-to service for conference calls, with robust support for 100-member link-ups and an extensive suite of options. Virtual backgrounds are great fun, while the public scrutiny on the app as it rose in popularity forced its devs to really beef up security and reliability too.

🍏 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: Zones**



## Bonus: **1Password**



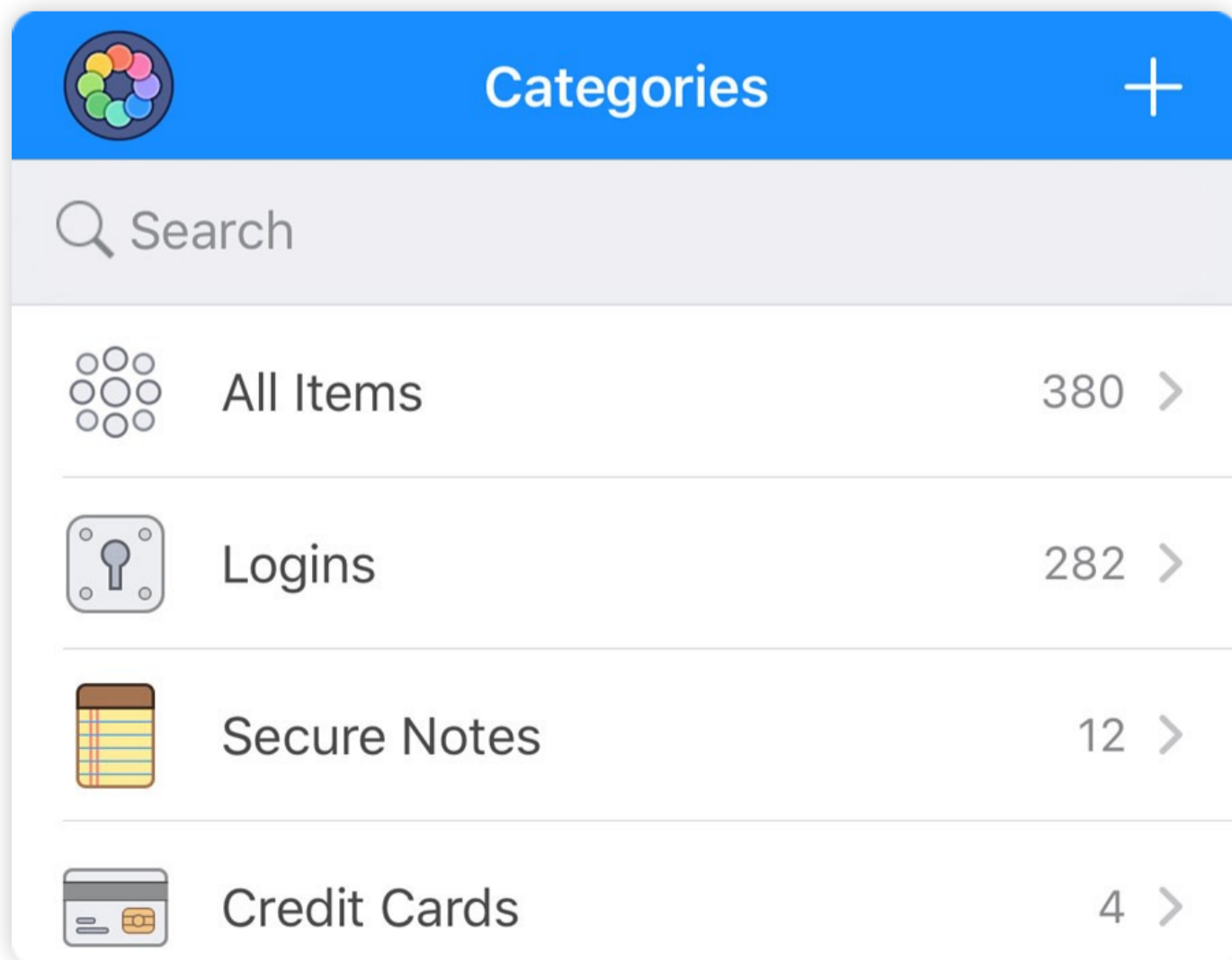
It wouldn't be fair to leave the numerically named apps out, would it?

It's bad practice to reuse the same password across multiple sites and services; if just one gets breached, it can leave you vulnerable everywhere.

With **1Password**, you can keep your login and payment details safe and yet readily accessible on all your devices (not just iOS), create complex unbreakable new passwords with a single tap, and explore existing login details in a user-friendly manner. Additionally, a feature called Watchtower keeps an eye on existing passwords, flagging vulnerabilities.

 [Download on the App Store](#)

**Honorable mentions: 1 Second Everyday, 1Blocker**



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