

iOS 27 Could Bring a Proper AirPods Equalizer, New Gestures and Better Controls

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In brief

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Some of these features are expected to work only with newer AirPods models, so the experience will depend on the hardware you use.

AirPods could finally get a proper equalizer

One of the most useful changes in iOS 27 is a new equalizer for AirPods.

Apple has offered limited sound adjustment options for AirPods until now. The new controls are expected to let users manually adjust bass, midrange and treble.

When the AirPods are connected, the equalizer can reportedly be found under:

Settings > Bluetooth > AirPods > Audio and Routing > Equalizer > Custom

This should be useful for users who want stronger bass for music, clearer vocals for podcasts or a more balanced sound.

More control over noise cancellation

Compatible AirPods are also expected to get better noise control settings.

iOS 27 reportedly adds an adjustment slider that lets users control how much outside noise is reduced. This can be useful when switching between places such as public transport, offices and quieter indoor spaces.

The option is expected to be available through AirPods settings and the volume controls in Control Center.

Head gestures for calls and other actions

Apple is also adding more hands-free controls.

Users will reportedly be able to nod their head to accept an action and shake their head to reject it.

This could make AirPods easier to use while walking, travelling or exercising, when reaching for the phone may not be convenient.

AirPods can control the iPhone camera

Another new feature allows the AirPods stem to work as a remote control for the iPhone camera.

A press or hold on the stem can be used to take a photo.

This can be useful for group photos, selfies and shots taken with the iPhone placed on a tripod or stand.

Fitness tracking with supported AirPods

AirPods models with supported health sensors will also get deeper fitness integration.

Workout data such as heart rate and estimated calorie burn can be sent to the iPhone Fitness app and compatible GymKit equipment.

This gives users another option for basic workout tracking without depending entirely on an Apple Watch.

However, data recorded through AirPods may not count towards all Apple Watch activity awards and related features.

Find My gets better AirPods tracking

Apple is also improving AirPods tracking through the Find My app.

The updated version is expected to provide more precise directional guidance when searching for misplaced AirPods. Users can also play a sound to help locate them nearby.

The feature should also work with compatible Apple Watch models running watchOS 27.

Siri changes could improve the AirPods experience

Siri is getting a wider upgrade with iOS 27, and AirPods users are likely to benefit from it as well.

The updated Siri is expected to keep track of previous parts of a conversation more effectively and ask follow-up questions when a request is unclear.

That should reduce mistakes when sending messages, making calls or performing other voice-controlled tasks through AirPods.

iOS 27 includes wider changes across the iPhone

The AirPods features are part of a much larger iOS 27 update.

Apple is also working on new Siri and Apple Intelligence features across apps such as Messages, Mail, Safari, Photos and Shortcuts.

Safari is expected to get automatic tab grouping and a feature that can watch webpages for changes. Photos is getting new AI-assisted editing tools, while Shortcuts will allow users to describe an automation instead of building every step manually.

Apple is also adding more control over the Liquid Glass interface, including an option to adjust how transparent or tinted parts of the interface appear.

Which AirPods will support the new features?

Not every feature is expected to work on every AirPods model.

Some of the more advanced functions depend on newer hardware, including AirPods with Apple's H2 chip or supported health sensors. Older models may still receive smaller software improvements, but they are unlikely to support the full set of new controls.

Apple is expected to provide a clearer compatibility list when iOS 27 reaches its public release.

When will iOS 27 be released?

The stable version of iOS 27 is expected in September 2026.

The software is already in the later stages of beta testing, which means most major features are likely to be close to their final form. Apple can still change, delay or limit individual features before release.

Once iOS 27 becomes available, users with a compatible iPhone will be able to check for the update under Settings > General > Software Update.

For AirPods users, the new equalizer may be the most noticeable addition. The other changes, including head gestures, camera controls, improved tracking and fitness integration, should make supported AirPods more useful beyond music and calls.