Apple, please don’t take all of the buttons away

Look, I know it’s probably too late, but since reports have been surfacing for a while now that Apple is planning to remove the physical buttons from the iPhone 15 Pro, replacing them with solid-state “taptic” buttons. Some new, alleged renders of the iPhone 15 published by *9to5Mac* seem to confirm the news: it’s time to bid the physical volume rocker and power switch goodbye, at least on some upcoming models. Surely it is too late to change anyone’s mind in Cupertino, but I’m going to make the case anyway. Please don’t take the buttons away, Apple.

For starters, there’s just no haptic button that feels as good or reassuringly clicky as a physical button. This is a completely objective observation based on data gathered by one individual: me, a person who has been pressing buttons for several decades. They rule.

Also, I have a 2016 iPhone SE and a 2022 iPhone SE in front of me. One has a physical home button, and the other has a haptic “button.” Push the button on the 2016 phone and voila! Travel, glorious travel. I know, deep within my soul, that I have pressed a button. The comparatively wimpy haptic response of the new SE’s button feels lifeless and unsatisfying.

I rest my case, your honor.

It’s not that I think *every* button should be saved. I’ll admit that I don’t really miss the home button. I’m fine using on-screen or gesture navigations to get around. But that’s because I’m already looking at the screen when I’m doing something I used the home button for — that’s not always the

case with the volume controls or wake button. Sometimes you want to check that the alert switch is set to off without taking your phone out of your pocket. Maybe you're in public and you started accidentally blasting TikTok out of your phone's speakers rather than your earbuds. In that scenario, I want a real button at my fingertips to reduce any further shame as quickly as I can.

Physical buttons do not suffer this problem because they *just work every time you press them*

And gloves! Sure, gloves with capacitive fingertips exist, and Apple will probably engineer ways for these pretend buttons to play nicely with gloves. But you can't deny that physical buttons are easier to use when you're wearing gloves, even if these new haptic buttons are really good. Same goes for damp hands – it's possible that you'll need to try a couple of times to hit that haptic volume button if your hands are a little wet. Physical buttons do not suffer this problem because they *just work every time you press them.* Apple knows this, too – that's why it put one on the Watch Ultra.

It's possible that Apple can make some haptic buttons that feel almost as good to use as physical ones – the Force Touch trackpad is a good example. It uses haptics to simulate the feel of a button press, and it's like 95 percent as good as a trackpad with a real button press. But here's the thing: *why?* Physical buttons are working just fine for us. Why replace them with a technology that's a little bit worse when absolutely nobody was asking for it?

But here's the thing: *why?*

Will removing physical buttons save some space? Will it cut down on weather sealing costs? Is this just a stop on the journey toward a little black box with no buttons and no ports? Will it be the ultimate manifestation of Steve Jobs' hatred of buttons? I have a feeling it is and that moving to a

buttonless iPhone has very little to do with the person using the phone and a lot more to do with aesthetics.

If this is the future we have to look forward to – and it seems like it is – then I guess all we can do is cherish and protect the buttons we have left. Because truly, what’s next, cars??

https://www.theverge.com/2023/2/18/23604808/apple-iphone-15-pro-button-rumor-haptic