SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Turn Off Voicemail

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Introduction: Why You Might Want to Disable Voicemail

Voicemail has been a staple of mobile communication for decades, but it's not for everyone. Perhaps you're tired of constantly checking messages, annoyed by robocalls filling up your inbox, or simply prefer text-based communication like SMS or messaging apps. Maybe you travel internationally and want to avoid roaming charges from people leaving lengthy messages. Whatever the reason, learning **how to turn off voicemail**can give you back control over your phone's call management. This guide provides clear, step-by-step instructions for the most common carriers and devices. By the end, you'll be able to disable voicemail quickly and understand what happens to your missed calls afterward.

Understanding How Voicemail Works on Your Phone

Voicemail is a service provided by your mobile carrier, not your phone manufacturer. When you miss a call, the caller is redirected to your carrier's voicemail system, where they can leave a recorded message. To disable it, you need to either contact your carrier, use a special code, or change settings on your device. The method varies depending on whether you have an iPhone, an Android phone, and which carrier you use. Below, we break down the most reliable approaches.

Carrier-Level vs. Device-Level Control

Most people mistakenly think voicemail can be turned off in the phone's settings app. In reality, the toggle you see in settings often only disables visual voicemail—not the underlying service. To completely stop callers from being directed to voicemail, you must either deactivate the service with your carrier or redirect unanswered calls to a different number (like a busy signal or an automated announcement). The instructions below cover both scenarios.

How to Turn Off Voicemail on iPhone

Apple's iPhone uses Visual Voicemail by default, which is tightly integrated with the Phone app. Here's how to disable it effectively.

Method 1: Disable Visual Voicemail in Settings

1. Open the Settings app.
2. Scroll down and tap Phone.
3. Tap Call Forwarding (if available on your carrier) – set it to off. This prevents calls from being forwarded to voicemail.
4. Scroll further and tap Change Voicemail Password. You can reset it, but this does not turn off the service.
5. If you have a carrier that supports it, you may see a Voicemail toggle under Phone settings. Toggle it off. This only disables Visual Voicemail, so callers may still be sent to a basic voicemail system.

This method often does not fully turn off voicemail; it only hides the visual interface. To ensure callers are not forwarded, use the next method.

Method 2: Contact Your Carrier from the iPhone

1. Open the Phone app and go to the keypad.
2. Dial the carrier-specific code to disable voicemail (see table below).
3. Press Call. You may hear a confirmation tone or hear a message. The service should be disabled.

Alternatively, you can call your carrier's customer service directly through the iPhone and request "disable voicemail" on your line.

How to Turn Off Voicemail on Android

Android phones vary by manufacturer and Android version, but the general principles remain the same.

Method 1: Use the Phone App Settings

1. Open the Phone app (the dialer).
2. Tap the three-dot menu (or More) and select Settings.
3. Look for Voicemail or Call forwarding.
4. Tap Call forwarding and ensure all forwarding options are disabled, especially "Forward when unanswered" and "Forward when busy."
5. If you find a Voicemail service option, you can set it to "Off" or "Your carrier's voicemail – disable."

Note: On some Android devices (like Samsung Galaxy), you may also find a **Voicemail settings** under the Samsung Phone app settings. Tap on it and select **Clear voicemail** or **Deactivate**.

Method 2: Dial a Deactivation Code

Just like iPhone, Android can use MMI codes to disable voicemail. Dial the appropriate code for your carrier (see below) and press call. Your voicemail service will be deactivated immediately.

Voicemail Deactivation Codes for Major US Carriers

These are standard MMI or feature codes that work on most phones. They directly contact your carrier's system to disable voicemail.

- Verizon: Dial *73 or *73# to disable call forwarding (including voicemail). Also, you can dial *86 to access voicemail and then follow prompts to deactivate, but *73 is more direct.
- AT&T: Dial ##004# to disable all call forwarding (including voicemail). Alternatively, dial *73# (same as Verizon) may work on some AT&T lines.
- T-Mobile (including former Sprint): Dial ##61# to disable voice call forwarding (voicemail). Also, ##004# works on most GSM lines.
- Sprint (now on T-Mobile network): Dial *73 or ##73# to deactivate voicemail. You can also log in to your Sprint account and disable via the web.
- Google Fi: Open the Fi app, go to Account, then Manage plan, and toggle off Voicemail. Or dial *73#.

Tip: If the code doesn't work, call customer service and ask them to "remove the voicemail feature" from your line. It usually takes effect immediately.

How to Turn Off Voicemail on Landlines and VoIP Services

Voicemail isn't limited to mobile phones. If you have a home phone or a VoIP service like Ooma, Vonage, or Google Voice, the steps differ.

Traditional Landline

For landlines, voicemail is often a separate feature from the phone company. You usually need to call customer service and request removal. Some landline phones allow you to press a "Menu" button and disable "Answering Machine" or "Voicemail" in the settings.

Google Voice

1. Open Google Voice in a web browser or the app.
2. Go to Settings (gear icon).
3. Under the Voicemail tab, set Voicemail greeting to "Do not record voicemail" or choose "No greeting – send to missed calls."
4. Alternatively, disable "Screen calls" and set "Call forwarding" to only forward to a number that doesn't go to voicemail.

What Happens When You Turn Off Voicemail?

Once voicemail is disabled, callers who reach you when you are unavailable (or if you reject the call) will hear one of the following:

- Busy signal (if your line is busy or you are on another call).
- Standard network message like "The number you have dialed is not available" or "Please try again later."
- Ring indefinitely until the call is dropped (if no forwarding is set).

You will not be notified of missed calls via voicemail indicator. However, you will still see missed call notifications in your call log. If you want to be able to receive messages again, you can reactivate voicemail by calling your carrier or dialing the appropriate activation code (usually ***86** or ***98**).

Precautions Before Disabling Voicemail

Before you permanently turn off voicemail, consider these factors:

- Business or personal necessity: If you frequently miss important calls, voicemail provides a record. Consider using a transcription service or visual voicemail instead of disabling entirely.
- Emergency contacts: Ensure family or work knows you won't receive messages. They might need to text or email.
- Carrier restrictions: Some prepaid carriers or phone plans may not allow you to remove voicemail. In that case, you can set call forwarding to a number that plays a "not in service" message.
- Privacy: Without voicemail, you avoid the risk of someone else accessing your messages, but you also lose the ability to retrieve messages from missed calls.

Alternative: Using Visual Voicemail or Third-Party Apps

If you dislike traditional voicemail but still want a way to receive messages, consider these alternatives:

- Visual Voicemail: Many carriers offer visual voicemail apps that display messages as a list, allow you to read transcriptions, and delete without dialing in. You can keep the service but manage it more efficiently.
- Google Voice: Use Google Voice as a secondary number; it transcribes voicemails and emails them to you. You can even set it to only transcribe without ringing your phone.
- Third-party apps: Apps like YouMail or HulloMail provide advanced voicemail management and spam blocking. They replace your carrier's voicemail with a smarter system.

These options give you the benefits of voicemail without the clutter.

Step-by-Step: Turning Off Voicemail on Verizon (Detailed Example)

Because carrier procedures vary, here’s a full walkthrough for Verizon customers, which is one of the most common requests.

1. Option A: From Your Phone – Open the Phone app and dial *73. Press Call. You will hear a confirmation that call forwarding (including voicemail) is disabled. This works for most Verizon lines.

2. Option B: Visual Voicemail – If you have an iPhone, go to Settings > Phone > Voicemail and toggle off "Visual Voicemail." On Android, open Phone app settings and turn off visual voicemail. This does not disable basic voicemail, so callers may still be sent to standard voicemail.

3. Option C: My Verizon Account – Log in to my Verizon online or the app. Go to Account > Manage Plan > Manage Features. Under "Calling Features," you may see "Voicemail." Tap to remove the feature. If not visible, contact customer service via chat or call *611 and ask to deactivate voicemail.

4. Option D: Call Customer Service – Dial *611 from your Verizon phone. Tell the representative you want to "disable voicemail on my line permanently." They will do it instantly. Confirm that callers will get a busy signal or a "not available" message.

After disabling, test by calling your number from another phone. Make sure you don't hear the voicemail greeting.

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