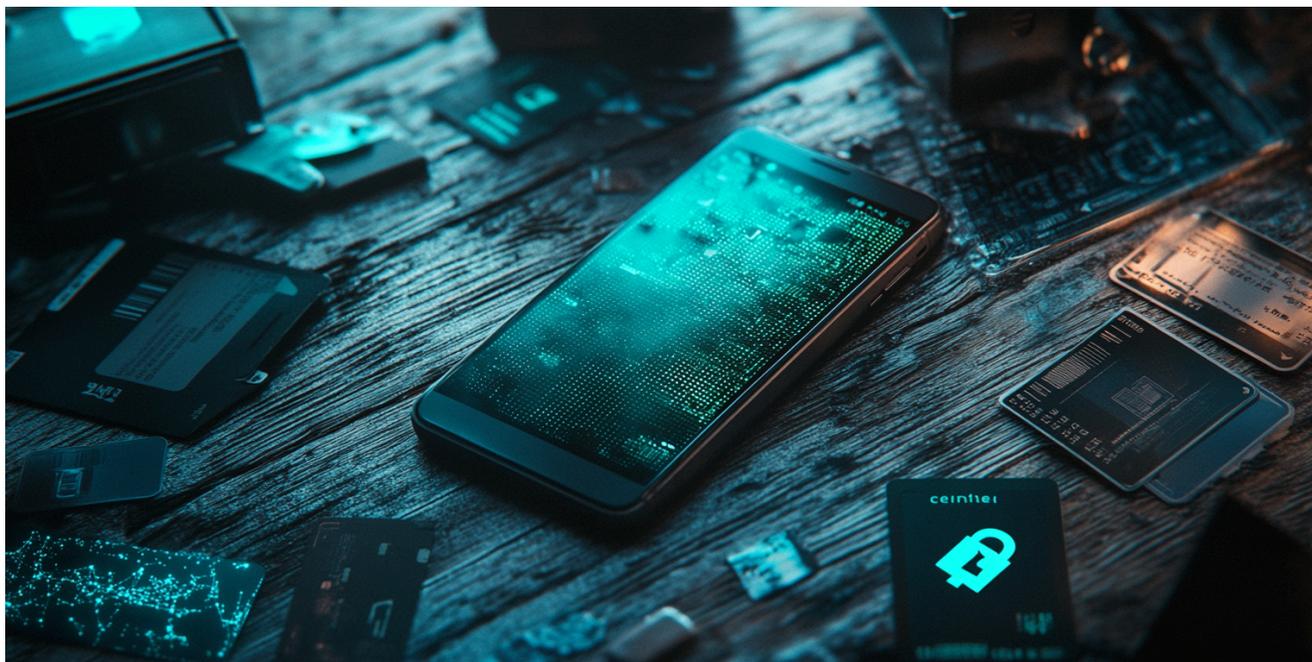# Quick Steps to an Untrackable Phone:
An Abbreviated Guide

Building an Anonymous Phone: The Big Picture

Creating an untraceable phone is about blending in and avoiding behaviors that make you stand out. By using everyday tools, like prepaid SIMs and mid-range devices, and following simple privacy habits, you can make it costly and challenging for anyone to track you. Perfect privacy isn't achievable, but this guide shows how to make it incredibly difficult for adversaries.

Below is an abbreviated version of our more detailed Guide of everything you should do to create and maintain an untrackable phone.

For the FULL version, see the link below.

How to Set Up a Phone That Can't Be Traced

Cheatsheet for Staying Anonymous

The process centers on a **layered approach** to anonymity. Think of it as building a fortress—each layer adds another barrier, making it harder for someone to break through. Here's how it works:

- **Separate Your Identity**
  Use cash and prepaid options. Never link your phone, accounts, or payments to your real identity.
- **Choose Privacy-Friendly Tools**
  Use mid-range phones and prepaid SIMs without personal details. Start with secure apps like Signal for encrypted messaging, and consider adding a privacy-focused operating system, such as GrapheneOS or CalyxOS, for enhanced protection.
- **Minimize Your Digital Footprint**
  Avoid personal networks (home, work) and stick to prepaid mobile data. Public Wi-Fi is risky unless used carefully..
- **Disable Tracking Features**
  Turn off GPS, Bluetooth, and unnecessary permissions. Use privacy-focused browsers like Tor or Brave.
- **Keep It Separate**
  Don't mix your anonymous phone with personal accounts, devices, or familiar networks.
- **Stay Unpredictable**
  Avoid routines—rotate where you shop, use public Wi-Fi, and keep behaviors unpredictable.
- **Refresh Often**
  Periodically wipe and reset your phone. Tools like Faraday bags can help block signals when not in use.

By following these principles, you'll build a phone setup that's tailored for privacy. Whether you're new to the idea or an experienced privacy advocate, this guide equips you to stay ahead of the game and make your digital life as anonymous as possible. Ready to get started? Let's dive in:

5 Quick Steps to an Untrackable Phone

1: Preparation
2: Secure the Device
3: Anonymous Set Up
4: Load Secure Apps
5: Stay Anonymous in Use

Advanced Tricks
Behavioral Cautions

⭕ Step 1: Preparation

Use Cash	Get a Device

1. Use Cash
- Buy a prepaid SIM card and gift card with cash at large retailers. Select carriers like ⭐ **Mint Mobile**, ⭐ **Tracfone**, or **Lycamobile**, which don't require IDs. It's best to purchase at a large busy retailer where you never shop. Use cash.
- Obtain an **Apple Store or Google Play gift card** with cash, depending on your choice of OS. Use a different retailer. If you want to purchase other types of gift cards to enhance privacy of transactions, see this Guide:
  >> **ObscureIQ's Guide to Prepaid Cards**.

2. Get a Device
- Buy a used phone with cash (local pawn shops or online marketplaces) or reuse an old one. Ensure no ties to your personal identity.
- Don't get a current version, but something a couple of years old. It will have less tracking and still do what you need.
- If you want detailed advice, see this Guide:
  >> **ObscureIQ's How to Buy a Used Phone for Privacy**.

⭕ Step 2: Secure the Device

Factory Reset	Install OS (Android)
Turn Off Tracking	Setup a VPN

1. Factory Reset the Phone
- Erase all existing data by performing a factory reset.

2. (Optional for Android) Install a Privacy-Focused OS
- Use GrapheneOS or CalyxOS

3. Turn Off Tracking Features
- Disable Bluetooth, GPS, and unnecessary permissions like advertising IDs and analytics, personal assistants, etc..

4. Setup a VPN

- Install a VPN like Mullvad or ProtonVPN. **Mullvad** is unique because it doesn't require an email address, allowing you to set up a VPN without compromising privacy.

🔴 Step 3: Set Up Phone Anonymously

Using public Wi-Fi to set up a VPN before activating your anonymous phone is crucial because it prevents any direct connection between your device and a location or network that could identify you. This ensures your phone's setup is as untraceable as possible.

Public Wi-Fi	Private Accounts	Activate SIM

1. Find Public Wi-Fi
- Use Wi-Fi at a library, café, or public space that is not linked to you.
- Choose a location you rarely visit or never plan to return to.
- **Do not use your home or work Wi-Fi.**

2. Create Private Accounts

- **Create Private Email**
  With VPN active, use a secure, privacy-focused email provider to create an account without requiring personal information. Recommended options:

  - ⭐ **Proton Mail**: Highly secure, offers anonymous sign-ups, and doesn't require a phone number.
  - ⭐ **Tutanota**: End-to-end encryption with anonymous account creation and optional paid plans for expanded storage.

  - Use non-identifiable information (e.g., random usernames) during sign-up. Avoid anything that can be tied back to you. Do not link this email to any existing personal accounts. No email forwarding. That's inconvenient but important.

- **Set Up Your Apple or Google Account, Privately**
  With VPN active, use your new private email and the gift card you purchased to create an account without using your personal information. Recommended options:

  - Input a random billing address if prompted.

3. Activate the SIM Card
- Insert the prepaid SIM card into the phone.
- Activate it using the public Wi-Fi and the active VPN.

- Avoid entering any personal information.

⭕ Step 4: Load Secure Apps

Private Browsing	Encrypted Messaging
Disable Cloud Services	

1. Get a Private Browser
- Replace the default browser with **Tor Browser** or **Brave** or **Duck Duck Go** for better privacy.
- **Do not use Chrome Browser**

2. Get Encrypted Messaging
- Install secure apps like **Signal** for private, end-to-end encrypted communication.
- Avoid linking these apps to personal accounts or phone numbers.

3. Disable Cloud Services
- Disable cloud backups like **Google Drive** and **iCloud**
- If you want secure Cloud services, use something like **Proton Drive**

⭕ Step 5: Stay Anonymous

Tips for keeping your anonymity when using your phone. Getting it set up right is crucial, but you can do things that compromise that privacy if you are not careful.

Mobile Data	Rotate Locations
Stay Separate	Refresh Periodically

Use Prepaid Mobile Data
- Avoid public Wi-Fi.

Rotate Locations
- Vary the places where you use the phone.

Stay Separate
- Never connect the phone to personal devices or networks.

Refresh Periodically
- Wipe and reset the phone every 6-12 months.

🔴 Advanced Tricks

Faraday Bag	Private DNS	Multi Devices

1. Faraday Bag
- Use a **Faraday bag** when the phone is not in use to block RF signals entirely.

2. Secure DNS
- Use Secure DNS. It prevents ISPs, attackers, or other intermediaries from tracking the websites you visit.
  - **NextDNS** (premium)
  - **Quad9** (non-profit)

3. Use separate devices for different activities
- Use one for calls, another for browsing. Browsing is often the most dangerous activity.

⚠️ Behavioral Cautions

Avoid repetitive patterns like using the same Wi-Fi, stores, or routines. These activities create identifiable behaviors and enable tracking, potentially allowing someone to tie you to a device.

Disclaimer

The tools and services mentioned in this guide are recommended based on their current reputation and features as of the time of writing. However, privacy-focused technologies, policies, and security practices can change over time. It is essential to independently verify the current status, terms of service, and effectiveness of any recommended tools or services before relying on them for anonymity or security. Always stay informed by consulting official websites, privacy advocate resources, or trusted reviews to ensure these solutions meet your needs and provide the expected level of privacy.