

## Short guide to a few recommended altimeter apps for cell phones

Don't want to spend the money for a classic wristwatch altimeter, one more gadget? Basically all SmartPhones nowadays have GPS capability. This means that they can pinpoint your spatial position without cell service, which is often spotty or non-existent in the backcountry (and searching for a signal drains the battery, in case you haven't noticed). Many of the newer models (iPhone 6 and later, for example) also have a pressure sensor. This can be used for extra correction or a cross-check of elevation by barometric pressure (which is what wristwatch altimeters use) but that is not really necessary and requires more frequent calibration.

Here are recommendations for two very basic apps for Android and two for iPhones.

	<b>App Name</b>	<b>Device</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Cost</b>
	<a href="#">Gareth Altimeter</a>	Android	Gareth Price	free
	<a href="#">Accurate Altimeter</a>	Android	AR Labs	free
	<a href="#">Pro Altimeter</a>	iPhone	Hunter Research and Technology	\$0.99
	<a href="#">Altimeter Plus</a>	iPhone	Sichtwerk AG	free

**Selection Criteria (not in order of importance):** low or no cost, easy to use, no cell service required, no ads, low memory and storage usage, reasonable speed at obtaining GPS signals, clear numerical display, recommendation from Mountaineers member(s) who have used it in the field.

There are many more out there, more all the time, and increasingly with features in addition to GPS-based elevation. We invite you to try them, see how they work for you, and let us know if they don't work as advertised. If you want additional information, there is an article in Navigation Northwest (<https://www.mountaineers.org/blog/how-to-pick-an-altimeter>) describing a systematic comparison of several Android apps. Also, The Mountaineers currently has a deal for free use of GAIA Pro which basically turns your cell phone into an advanced GPS device. Check the website under "Benefits" (<https://www.mountaineers.org/membership/benefits/instructions-for-redeeming-member-benefits>). It is highly recommended but requires time and practice to set up and use efficiently. Backcountry Navigator, another full-service GPS app, also has many followers. Both are well worth it, in my opinion, but a paper map, compass and altimeter app will get you a long ways, both on and off-trail.

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