
RUN AI ON YOUR PHONE

THE 5 MINUTE GUIDE TO PRIVATE, OFFLINE AI

No account. No subscription. No internet.
Nothing you type ever leaves your device.

Let's be clear about something first

I'm not going to sugarcoat it: everything you type into ChatGPT goes to someone else's server. Your questions, your venting, your health stuff, your business ideas. Logged.

There's another way. You can run AI directly on the phone in your pocket. No account. No subscription. No internet. Nothing you type ever leaves your device.

It takes 5 minutes to set up. Here's exactly how.

STEP 1

Get the app

iPhone or iPad: download **Locally AI by LM Studio** from the App Store. Free. No login, no data collection, runs entirely on your device.

Android: download **PocketPal AI** from the Google Play Store. Free, open source, same idea: everything runs on your phone.

DO THIS NOW

Open your app store, search the app name above for your phone, and download it.

STEP 2

Download a model

A "model" is the AI brain. You download it once, then it lives on your phone forever, no internet needed. Open the app and browse the model list. Start small:

- **Newer phone (last 2 to 3 years):** grab a model around **3 to 4B** (like Qwen 4B or Gemma)
- **Older or budget phone:** grab a **1 to 2B** model (like Llama 3.2 1B)

The download is 1 to 3 GB, like downloading a movie. Do it on WiFi.

DO THIS NOW

In the app, download one small model. If it feels slow later, delete it and grab a smaller one. That's the whole tuning process.

STEP 3

Turn on airplane mode and chat

This is the part that clicks for people. Turn airplane mode ON. Open the app. Ask it something.

It answers. No signal, no WiFi, no cloud. The AI is running on the chip inside your phone. Nothing you type is being sent anywhere, because there's nowhere for it to go.

DO THIS NOW

Airplane mode on. Ask it to summarize something, draft a text, or answer a question. That conversation existed only on your phone.

STEP 4

Know what it's good for (honest version)

Real talk: a phone model is NOT as smart as ChatGPT. It's a smaller brain. Expect it to be genuinely useful, not genius.

Phone AI is great for:

- Private questions you'd never type into a cloud AI (health, money, personal stuff)
- Journaling and venting that stays yours
- Drafting texts and emails
- Quick summaries and explanations
- Flights, dead zones, and outages

It's weak at:

- Hard, multi-step reasoning
- Current events (it has no internet)
- Very long documents

Two things to know: heavy AI chatting drains battery about like a video call, and your phone may warm up during long sessions. Normal.

STEP 5

When to use local vs cloud

You don't have to pick a side. Use both, on purpose:

Use LOCAL (your phone) when: it's sensitive, it's personal, you're offline, or you just don't want it logged.

Use CLOUD (ChatGPT, Claude, etc.) when: you need the smartest possible answer, current information from the web, or heavy work on long documents.

DO THIS NOW

Memorize the rule: if you wouldn't say it to a stranger, don't type it into the cloud. That's what local is for.

LEVEL UP

Run bigger AI on your computer

Your computer can run much smarter models than your phone. Same idea, one app: download **LM Studio** (free) from lmstudio.ai. Open it, browse models, and here's the best part: it shows a **green badge** next to models your computer can handle, so you can't really mess it up. Download a green one, open the chat tab, go.

Do I have the specs?

Apple	Any Mac with an Apple chip (M1 or newer, roughly 2021 onward). Older Intel Macs won't work with LM Studio. 8GB memory runs small models, 16GB is the sweet spot, 32GB+ runs big, seriously smart models.
Windows	Almost any computer from the last decade can run something. 8GB RAM is the minimum for small models, 16GB is the sweet spot. A gaming graphics card is a big speed boost but NOT required.

If a model runs slow, pick a smaller one. That's it. The green badge does the thinking for you.

NOW WHAT?

You just took a piece of your privacy back

You now have private AI in your pocket that works on a plane and never reports back to anyone. That's a real win.

This is the starting point. If you want the full setup, which models are actually worth running, and the private AI system I use myself, follow [@truce_privacy](https://twitter.com/truce_privacy) and keep an eye out. This rabbit hole goes deep, and it's worth it.

This guide is for education. Apps and models change fast, so details may shift over time. Nothing here is professional advice.