

Developer beta for next iOS update helps iPhone users unlock phones with face masks

May 1 2020, by Coral Murphy



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For iPhone users, using Face ID to unlock their phones was turning into a hassle now that face masks are necessary to perform essential tasks, but Apple will soon fix that problem.

On Wednesday, Apple released the developer beta of iOS 13.5 with

updates to Face ID and Group FaceTime, the company told U.S. TODAY via email.

"iOS 13.5 will be available to the public soon," said Apple.

The update simplifies the unlock process for people wearing a medical mask by automatically presenting the passcode field after swiping up from the bottom of the Lock screen.

The new feature could halt users from removing their masks to unlock their phones.

The feature also works when authenticating with the App Store, Apple Books, Apple Pay, iTunes and other apps that support signing in with Face ID.

This will prevent users from repeatedly having to use Face ID to unlock their phones. The update is available for models iPhone X, XS and 11, including their Plus and Pro versions.

In addition to the Face ID update, users who call through Group FaceTime don't have to worry about video tiles changing size when a participant speaks thanks to a new feature that lets users control automatic prominence. If a user enables this preference, the tiles are still laid out asymmetrically and a user will need to tap on an individual tile to make it larger.

The beta of iOS 13.5 will also contain the first version of its exposure notification API for COVID-19 contact tracing.

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Citation: Developer beta for next iOS update helps iPhone users unlock phones with face masks (2020, May 1) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-05-beta-ios-iphone-users-masks.html>

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