

PencilTime User Guide

Version 1.10.0

Welcome to PencilTime - the digital planner that combines the flexibility of paper with the power of technology. This guide mirrors the in-app User Manual so the public documentation stays aligned with what users see in PencilTime.

What's New in v1.10.0

- Typed Notes Across Planner Pages - Add typed text to Note pages and the notes area on Year, Month, and Week pages
- Text + Apple Pencil Workflow - Switch between typing and drawing so typed notes and handwriting can live on the same page
- Restore Lines When Needed - Clear typed notes or restore the lined notes area from the notes text options menu
- Typed Day Page Text - Day page todos, priorities, and schedule notes still support clean typed text
- Find Notes Faster - Filter All Notes by date and tags, and expand the notes list when you need more room

Table of Contents

1. Getting Started (#getting-started)
2. Stickers - Emoji, Labels, Photos, Images & Links (#stickers---emoji-labels-photos-images-links)
3. Drawing & Writing Tools (#drawing-writing-tools)
4. Planner View Modes (#planner-view-modes)
5. Typed Notes (#typed-notes)
6. Calendar & Date Label Settings (#calendar-date-label-settings)
7. Note Pages with Tags & Smart Folders (#note-pages-with-tags-smart-folders)
8. Premium Features (#premium-features)
9. Bookmarks & Navigation (#bookmarks-navigation)
10. Troubleshooting (#troubleshooting)

Getting Started

Welcome to PencilTime - the digital planner that combines the flexibility of paper with the power of technology.

First Launch

When you first open PencilTime, you'll see a guided onboarding experience that introduces you to the

key features:

- Welcome Screen - Overview of PencilTime's capabilities
- Drawing Tools - Learn about natural writing and sketching with Apple Pencil support
- Color Palettes - Choose from 150+ colors across 6 themed palettes
- Stickers & Visual Content - Add emoji, label, photo, image, and link stickers, including notification reminders on label stickers
- Bookmarks & Recent Pages - Save important pages and return to recent work quickly
- Typed Notes - Add typed text on Note pages, Year/Month/Week notes areas, and supported Day page fields
- Note Pages & Smart Folders - Create notes, organize with tags, and filter with smart folders
- Universal App - Use PencilTime on iPad and iPhone
- View Modes - Switch between Day, Week, Month, and Year planning views
- Sharing - Export pages as PDF or PNG
- Premium Features - Discover unlimited notes, tags, smart folders, iCloud sync, Apple Calendar integration, and future date access

Basic Navigation

- Tap any date to create or view a planner page
- Swipe left/right to navigate between dates
- Use the colored tabs on the right side to switch between view modes
- Use Link Stickers, Bookmarks, and Recent Pages for quick navigation
- Access settings via the menu button in the top bar

Stickers - Emoji, Labels, Photos, Images & Links

IMPORTANT: How to Edit Stickers

To edit, move, or delete a sticker, you must long-press (press and hold for about 1 second) on the sticker to bring up the circular editing menu.

Why long-press?

- Single tap is reserved for the canvas drawing tools
- Long-press activates the sticker editing menu
- This prevents accidental edits while drawing

Adding Emoji Stickers

1. Tap the sticker button (📎 icon) in the top toolbar
2. Select "Emoji Sticker" from the menu
3. Browse categories or use the search bar to find your emoji
4. Tap an emoji to place it on your page
5. The sticker appears at the center of your screen

Adding Label Stickers

1. Tap the sticker button (📎 icon) in the top toolbar
2. Select "Label Sticker" from the menu
3. Type your text in the editor sheet
4. Customize appearance:
 - Choose from 150+ colors across 6 themed palettes
 - Adjust font size (18pt - 72pt)
 - Select corner style (square or rounded)
 - Add background color for emphasis
 - Add border for definition
5. Tap Save to place the sticker on your page

📎 Pro Tip: Each of the 5 label sticker slots remembers your last style settings!

Adding Reminder Label Stickers

Turn a Label Sticker into a reminder directly on your planner page.

1. Create or edit a Label Sticker
2. Enable Notify in the sticker editor
3. Choose a future date and time
4. Tap Save to place the sticker and schedule the notification

Important: PencilTime compares the reminder to the current time when you save. If the selected date/time is now or in the past, the sticker is not saved until you choose a future time.

📎 Tip: Notifications use your local time zone and can appear as banners, sounds, badges, and Notification Center items depending on your iOS notification settings.

iCloud Sync: Premium iCloud sync carries the Reminder Label Sticker, its reminder date, and whether the reminder is enabled to your other devices. The actual iOS notification is scheduled separately on each device after PencilTime receives the synced sticker, so each device needs PencilTime notifications allowed and the reminder time still needs to be in the future when it syncs.

Adding Photo Stickers

1. Tap the sticker button (📎 icon) in the top toolbar
2. Select "Photo Sticker" from the menu
3. Choose a photo from your photo library
4. The photo appears at the center of your screen
5. Long-press to resize, rotate, or move the photo

📎 Perfect for: Vision boards, meal planning, vacation memories, and visual inspiration!

Adding Image Stickers (Files)

1. Tap the sticker button (📎 icon) in the top toolbar

2. Select "Image Sticker" from the menu
3. Browse Files app (iCloud Drive, Downloads, cloud storage)
4. Select an image file:
 - PNG - Photos, screenshots, graphics, and transparent sticker packs
 - JPEG - Photos and images
 - PDF - Diagrams, documents (first page only)
5. The image appears at the center of your screen
6. Long-press to resize, rotate, or move the image

👉 Perfect for: GoodNotes-compatible sticker packs, Etsy PNG stickers, design assets, diagrams, charts, screenshots, and professional graphics!

👉 Transparency Tip: PNG images with transparent backgrounds stay transparent when imported from Photos or Files.

Adding Link Stickers (v1.7.0)

Create interactive navigation labels to connect related pages across your planning system!

1. Tap the sticker button (📌 icon) in the top toolbar
2. Select "Link Sticker" from the menu
3. Enter your label text (e.g., 'Meeting Notes', 'Project Plan')
4. Choose destination type:
 - Planner Page - Link to specific date (Day, Week, Month, Year view)
 - Note Page - Link to any note page
5. Select the destination using the date picker or note picker
6. Customize appearance (same options as Label Stickers)
7. Tap Save to place the sticker

How to Use Link Stickers:

- Long-press the label body (📌) Shows editing menu (move, resize, edit, copy, delete)
- Long-press the arrow icon (➡) Instantly navigates to the linked page

👉 Perfect for: Cross-referencing tasks, linking project pages, connecting related notes, creating navigation shortcuts!

👉 Pro Tip: Create a 'Dashboard' note page with Link Stickers to your most important pages for instant navigation!

Link Stickers vs Bookmarks:

- Link Stickers live on a page and connect one note, task, dashboard, or calendar area to another page
- Bookmarks live in the bookmark list and are best for pages you visit often

Editing Stickers: The Circular Menu

Step 1: Long-Press the Sticker

Press and hold on any sticker for about 1 second until the circular editing menu appears around your finger or Apple Pencil.

Step 2: Use the Menu Options

The circular menu provides 5 editing handles:

- Lock (Top) - Prevents accidental changes to the sticker
- Rotate/Resize (Right) - Tap to enable rotate/resize mode. Pinch with two fingers to rotate, pinch with two fingers to change angle
- Copy (Bottom Right) - Creates a copy of the sticker to clipboard
- Edit (Bottom) - Opens text editor (text stickers) or delete (emoji stickers)
- Delete (Bottom Left) - Removes the sticker immediately

Moving Stickers

Method 1: Direct Drag (Quick)

1. Tap and hold on the sticker
2. Drag to new position
3. Release to drop

Method 2: Via Circular Menu (Precise)

1. Long-press to bring up circular menu
2. Tap the sticker again (while menu is showing)
3. Drag to new position
4. Tap outside to finish

Pro Tip: Method 2 is better for precise positioning, especially on small screens.

Common Sticker Issues

Issue: "I can't edit my sticker!"

Solution: Make sure you're long-pressing (hold for 1 second), not quick-tapping. The circular menu only appears with long-press.

Issue: "The circular menu disappeared!"

Solution: If you tap outside the sticker, the menu closes. Long-press again to bring it back.

Issue: "I can't move/delete a sticker!"

Solution: The sticker may be locked (look for lock icon). Long-press and tap Lock handle to unlock.

Issue: "Single tap doesn't open sticker menu!"

Solution: This is by design. Single tap is for drawing tools. Long-press is required for stickers.

Pro Tips & Best Practices

1. Long-press is key - This is the most important gesture to remember!
2. Lock decorative elements - Prevents accidental changes while drawing
3. Use consistent colors - Helps with visual organization
4. Copy recurring elements - Paste weekly/monthly repeated stickers
5. Combine with drawing - Mix stickers with handwritten notes

Drawing & Writing Tools

Access drawing tools from the top toolbar:

📱 iPhone Users: The pencil/finger draw toggle is now in the top bar for quick access in portrait mode. Swipe the bottom pen toolbar left or right to access less frequent tool options. The settings menu (⚙️) is pinned to the right edge.

How to Use Drawing Tools

1. Tap once to select a drawing tool
2. Tap the selected tool again to open the drawing tool configuration editor
3. ⚙️ Pro Tip: Double-tap any option (tool type, color, width, etc.) to instantly save and close

Available Tools

- Fountain Pen - Smooth, elegant writing
- Ballpoint Pen - Standard writing experience
- Pencil - Natural sketching feel
- Highlighter - Emphasis and marking
- Eraser - Remove unwanted marks (has its own configuration editor)
- Lasso - Select, move, copy, and edit handwritten content

Lasso Tool: Select, Copy & Paste

The Lasso tool lets you select handwritten content and drawings to move, copy, or delete them.

How to use the Lasso:

1. Tap the Lasso tool (circle icon in the toolbar)
2. Draw around the content you want to select
3. Tap the selected area to see editing options
4. Choose an action from the popup menu:
 - Cut - Remove and copy to clipboard
 - Copy - Copy to clipboard (keeps original)
 - Delete - Remove immediately
 - Duplicate - Create a copy on the same page

Copying between pages:

1. Select and copy content with the Lasso
2. Navigate to destination page (any calendar or note page)
3. Long-press on the canvas and tap "Paste"

🔗 Pro Tips:

- Copy recurring to-dos from one month to the next
- Duplicate repeated elements like headers or layouts
- Move content between note pages and calendar dates
- Works across all page types - Day, Week, Month, Year, and Note Pages

Customization Options

Colors: 150+ colors across 6 themed palettes (Standard, Pastel, Neon, Earth Tones, Ocean, Sunset)

Line Width: 5 different sizes from fine to bold

Opacity: Transparency slider for effects (100% default)

Apple Pencil Support

- Pressure sensitivity for natural line variation
- Tilt support for shading with pencil tools
- Palm rejection for comfortable writing

Planner View Modes

PencilTime offers four distinct view modes, each optimized for different planning needs:

Day View

Best for: Detailed daily planning and time blocking

- Hourly time slots from 7 AM to 11 PM (customizable)
- Typed text support for todos, priorities, and time slots on supported day templates
- Simple text styling with color, size, bold, underline, bullets, numbering, and indentation
- Integrated calendar events showing your schedule (Premium)
- All-day event section at the top

Week View

Best for: Weekly overview and planning ahead

- 7-day spread with clear day columns
- Typed notes area for weekly plans, goals, and reminders
- Calendar event integration across all days (Premium)
- Color-coded events by calendar

Month View

Best for: Long-term planning and month-at-a-glance

- Full month calendar grid
- Event indicators on each date (Premium)
- Typed notes area for monthly plans, goals, or trackers

Year View

Best for: Annual goal setting and long-term vision

- 12-month overview
- Typed notes area for annual plans, goals, or trackers

Typed Notes

PencilTime supports typed text in places where typing helps keep plans readable while keeping Apple Pencil drawing available.

Note Page Text Mode

1. Open a Note page with a blank template
2. Tap the keyboard button in the pen toolbar to switch to text edit mode
3. Type directly on the page
4. Use the text toolbar to choose text size, color, bold, underline, bullets, numbering, and indentation
5. Tap the draw button to return to Apple Pencil drawing mode

Text on Note pages stays within the page canvas. It scrolls and zooms with the page, just like handwriting.

Year, Month, and Week Notes Areas

The basic Year, Month, and Week templates include a notes area. You can keep it as lined paper for handwriting, or switch it to a blank typed notes area.

1. Tap the keyboard button at the top-right of the notes area
2. Confirm that you want to switch the lined notes area to text
3. Type in the notes area
4. Tap the draw button to leave text edit mode and continue drawing

After switching to typed notes, use the options button (...) next to the keyboard/draw button:

- Clear Text removes the typed text but keeps the blank text area
- Restore Lines removes the typed notes area and returns to the lined notes layout
- If typed text exists, Restore Lines confirms that the text will be deleted

Day Page Text Fields

Supported Day templates still allow typed todos, priorities, and schedule notes. Tap the active checkbox, priority marker, or schedule label to edit text, color, size, and style.

Calendar & Date Label Settings

PencilTime can follow your device's regional calendar settings, or you can override them inside the app.

Device Settings

iOS controls the system defaults from Settings > General > Language & Region.

- First Day of Week controls whether weeks start on Sunday, Monday, or another weekday when PencilTime is set to System Default
- Preferred Languages controls the device language PencilTime uses for month and weekday names when Date Labels is set to Device Language

PencilTime refreshes planner pages and calendar tabs after these settings change.

PencilTime First Day Setting

Use this when you want PencilTime to follow the device setting or override it just for your planner.

1. Open Settings from the top-right menu
2. Tap First Day
3. Choose System Default to follow iOS Language & Region
4. Or choose a specific weekday, such as Sunday or Monday, to override the device setting

When System Default is selected, the menu also shows the current device weekday, such as System Default (Monday).

PencilTime Date Labels Setting

Use this to choose the language for month and weekday names shown on planner templates.

1. Open Settings from the top-right menu
2. Tap Date Labels
3. Choose English to keep date labels in English
4. Choose Device Language to use your iOS preferred language, such as Chinese, French, or Spanish

This updates month names on planner pages and the side tabs. Week and Today use calendar icons so they work well in every language.

Important: Date Labels changes the planner's month and weekday names. It does not translate every app button or menu.

How Overrides Work

- First Day: System Default follows iOS Settings > General > Language & Region > First Day of Week

- First Day: Sunday/Monday/etc. overrides iOS for PencilTime planner pages
- Date Labels: English keeps planner date labels in English
- Date Labels: Device Language follows the first language in iOS Preferred Languages

Changing these settings refreshes the planner so week, month, and year templates use the current calendar and language choices.

📅 Note Pages with Tags & Smart Folders

Create dedicated note pages for client lists, meeting notes, project planning, and more. Organize with hashtags and smart folders.

Creating Note Pages

From Notes Browser:

1. Tap the Notes button (📅 icon) in the top toolbar
2. Tap the + button in the Notes browser
3. Enter a title (e.g., "Client Projects")
4. Choose a template:
 - Blank - Clean canvas for freeform notes
 - Lined - Horizontal lines for writing
 - Grid - Square grid for diagrams and layouts
 - Dotted - Subtle dots for bullet journaling
5. Tap Create - Your note page is ready!

From iPad (Quick Access):

- Tap the floating + button (bottom right, blue circle) when viewing a note page
- Choose New Note to start a separate note
- Choose Continue Current Note to create the next page of the note you are already on

Free vs Premium

- Free Tier: 1 note page per day (perfect for daily notes)
- Premium: Unlimited notes anytime + Tags & Smart Folders

Using Tags (#hashtags)

Adding Tags to Notes:

1. Open a note page from the Notes browser

2. Add #hashtags to the note title when creating or renaming a note (e.g., #work, #personal)
3. Tags are detected from the title and shown on the note page and in the Notes browser
4. Manage tags manually from the Tags button in the Notes browser

Managing Tags:

- Tap Tags button in Notes browser to see all tags
- View usage count for each tag (e.g., #clients: 5 notes)
- Rename tags to standardize naming (e.g., merge #client and #clients)
- Delete unused tags to keep your system clean

Ø=Üj Pro Tip: Use consistent tag names (e.g., always #client, never #clients) for better organization.

Smart Folders (Premium Only)

What are Smart Folders?

Smart Folders automatically collect notes matching specific criteria - like iTunes Smart Playlists for your notes!

Creating Smart Folders:

1. Tap Smart Folders button in Notes browser
2. Tap + to create new folder
3. Set filter rules:
 - Match - Any (OR) or All (AND) conditions
 - Tag contains - Notes with specific tags (e.g., #urgent)
 - Title contains - Keywords in note titles (e.g., "Meeting")
 - Date created - Filter by creation date
4. Name your folder (e.g., "Active Projects", "Urgent Items")
5. Tap Save - Folder updates automatically!

Example Smart Folders:

- Work Notes - Any note with #work tag
- Urgent Items - Notes with #urgent tag
- This Week's Notes - Notes created in last 7 days
- Project Alpha - Title contains "Alpha" OR tag contains #alpha

Sorting & Filtering Notes

Sort Options (tap Sort button):

- Date Created - Newest or oldest first
- Title (A-Z) - Alphabetical order
- Last Modified - Recently edited notes

Filter by Tags:

1. Tap tag name in Notes browser sidebar

2. View all notes with that tag
3. Tap All Notes to clear filter

Searching Notes

Quick Search:

1. Tap search bar at top of Notes browser
2. Type keywords - Searches note titles and tags
3. Results update instantly as you type

Tip: Add useful keywords and #hashtags to note titles so search and smart folders can find them quickly.

Real-World Workflows

Client Management Example:

1. Create "Client Contact List" note page
2. Add #clients and #contacts tags
3. Create Smart Folder: Tag contains #clients
4. New client inquiry? Add notes to this page
5. All client information centralized and searchable!

Project Management Example:

1. Create note for each project (e.g., "Website Redesign")
2. Tag with #project and #urgent or #ongoing
3. Smart Folder "Urgent Projects": #project AND #urgent
4. Smart Folder "All Projects": Tag contains #project
5. Quick overview of all active work!

Tips & Best Practices

1. Use descriptive titles - Makes searching easier
2. Create templates - Save time with pre-tagged note structures
3. Tag consistently - Decide on naming convention (#client vs #clients)
4. Smart Folders for workflows - Automate organization patterns
5. Combine with stickers - Add emoji/text labels to note pages too!
6. Archive completed notes - Use #archive tag + Smart Folder

🔒 Premium Features

Unlimited Note Pages with Tags & Smart Folders

Create as many note pages as you need, anytime

- Unlimited notes - No daily limits (Free: 1 note/day)
- Tags system - Organize notes with #hashtags
- Smart Folders - Auto-collect notes by criteria (Premium only)
- Advanced search - Find notes by title, tags, or date

Unrestricted Access to All Dates

Premium users have full access to create and edit planner pages for any date - past, present, or future.

Apple Calendar Integration

Seamlessly blend your digital calendar with your handwritten planner

- See your schedule at a glance - Calendar events appear directly on planner pages
- Toggle on/off easily - Hide events when you want to focus on drawings
- Color-coded events - Each calendar uses its own distinct color

Setup Instructions:

1. Upgrade to Premium - Apple Calendar integration requires a Premium subscription
2. Grant permissions - Allow PencilTime to access your calendar when prompted
3. Select calendars - Choose which calendars to display in Settings
4. Toggle display - Use the calendar button in the top toolbar

iCloud Sync

Automatic synchronization across all your devices

- Real-time sync - Changes appear instantly on all devices
- Backup protection - Your data is safely stored in iCloud
- Device switching - Start on iPad, continue on iPhone
- Reminder stickers - Reminder Label Stickers sync with Premium, and each device schedules its own local notification after the sticker is received

Subscription Options

- Monthly: Flexible subscription, with a free trial when StoreKit confirms eligibility
- Yearly: Best value subscription, with a free trial when StoreKit confirms eligibility
- Lifetime: One-time purchase with no subscription

The Premium screen shows selectable plan cards and a disclosure under Continue with the exact terms for the selected plan.

Ø=Ý Bookmarks & Navigation

Bookmarking Pages

Save your important pages for quick access later:

- Tap the bookmark icon (🔖) in the top bar to bookmark the current page
- Icon fills when page is bookmarked, empty when not bookmarked
- Works on all page types: Day, Week, Month, Year, and Notes

Viewing Bookmarks

Access all your bookmarks and recent pages:

- Tap the arrow-right-square icon in the top bar
- Recent Pages: Last 3 pages you visited
- Bookmarks: All your saved pages organized by date
- Tap any item to navigate instantly

Managing Bookmarks

Keep your bookmarks organized:

- Tap the trash icon on any bookmark to delete
- Confirmation dialog prevents accidental deletion
- Recent pages update automatically as you navigate

Tips

- Bookmark pages you visit frequently (goals, habit trackers, project plans)
- Use Link Stickers when a shortcut should appear directly on a planner or note page
- Use Recent Pages for quick back-navigation
- Bookmarks sync via iCloud with Premium subscription

🔧 Troubleshooting

Calendar Integration Issues (Premium)

Issue: Calendar events not appearing

Solutions:

1. Check Premium subscription status
2. Verify calendar permissions in Settings > Privacy > Calendars
3. Ensure calendars are selected in Settings > Calendar Settings
4. Toggle calendar display button in top toolbar

Issue: Event interactions not responding

Solutions:

1. Use long-press (hold for 0.5+ seconds) instead of quick taps
2. Ensure you're pressing directly on the event, not empty space
3. Try restarting the app if gesture recognition seems unresponsive

Sync Problems

Issue: Changes not appearing on other devices

Solutions:

1. Check iCloud is enabled in Settings > [Your Name] > iCloud
2. Ensure strong internet connection on all devices
3. Force quit and restart PencilTime
4. Check Premium subscription status

Reminder Sticker Issues

Issue: Sticker notification did not appear

Solutions:

1. Open iOS Settings > Notifications > PencilTime and turn on Allow Notifications. If PencilTime is not listed there, open Settings > Apps > PencilTime > Notifications.
2. Make sure Lock Screen, Notification Center, Banners, Sounds, and Badges are enabled as desired
3. Confirm the sticker reminder was saved for a future date/time
4. If the sticker synced from another device, open PencilTime on this device and allow time for iCloud sync to finish
5. Remember that notifications are scheduled in your local time zone and each device schedules its own notification

Drawing Issues

Issue: Apple Pencil not responding properly

Solutions:

1. Check Apple Pencil battery level
2. Re-pair Apple Pencil in iPad Settings
3. Clean Apple Pencil tip and iPad screen
4. Restart iPad

Getting Help

For additional support or feature requests, please contact us through the App Store or visit our website.

PencilTime User Guide v1.10.0 - © 2026 Semore Software