Technology is allowing us to do more and more things through our mobile phones – from shopping to banking to social media – as well as making calls and sending texts.

Not only are our mobile phones more valuable in themselves, but many of them will also contain valuable data, whether that's downloaded music and films, the photographs you have taken, or other personal information. As a result, mobile phones can be a very tempting target for thieves, with the loss of a phone causing great inconvenience to the user.

However, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect your mobile phone against theft including:

- use the security features provided
- know how to identify your mobile phone when it is stolen
- be aware of your surroundings

Security features

Most mobile phones have a range of security features that are intended to stop anyone else accessing and using them should they be stolen. These security features include:

- requiring access control such as a **unique code** (a PIN, password or some form of pattern) or **biometric authentication** (such as fingerprint or facial recognition) to be entered on the user interface of your handset to unlock it
- **tracing the location** of your handset using a remote service
- **wiping data** from, or **locking** your handset **remotely** (for example, by using another internet enabled device)
- a function to display a **home/lock screen message** to someone who may find your handset to help you recover it.
- preventing thieves from simply **resetting your handset to its factory setting in order to bypass any unique codes or other security features** that you are using to protect your handset.

However, these features will only protect your mobile phone **if you have them switched on**. The table below is intended to signpost readers to the sort of security features on offer from a number of major mobile phone manufacturers. Some of these features may not be available on certain handsets. **For further details about what is available on specific handsets**, please follow the relevant link to the site of the manufacturer/software provider. The Home Office has no control over the contents of those sites or resources, and accepts no responsibility for them or for any loss or damage that may arise from your use of them.

You can find more information about your phone's security features in the following places:
Apple
https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT5818 (opens in a new window)
https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT5883 (opens in a new window)
https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201472 (opens in a new window)
Blackberry
For BlackBerry 10 devices
http://helpblog.blackberry.com/2015/06/getting-started-with-anti-theft-protection-in-blackberry-10-os-version-10-3-2/ (opens in a new window)
https://help.blackberry.com/en/blackberry-protect/1.3/help/als1343420540228.html (opens in a new window)
https://protect.blackberry.com (opens in a new window)

For earlier Blackberry devices
https://appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/content/20844/?lang=eng (opens in a new window)
Huawei
https://consumer.huawei.com/en/support/index.htm (opens in a new window)
https://support.google.com/nexus/answer/2824802?hl=en (opens in a new window)
HTC
https://www.htc.com/uk/smartphones/ (opens in a new window)
https://www.google.co.uk/android/devicemanager (opens in a new window)
LG
https://www.lg.com/uk/support (opens in a new window)
https://www.google.com/android/devicemanager (opens in a new window)
Samsung
https://www.samsung.com/uk/support (opens in a new window)
Sony
http://support.sonymobile.com/global-en/xperiaz3plus/userguide/Resetting-your-device/ (opens in a new window)
http://support.sonymobile.com/global-en/xperiaz3/kb/0231018807c614a08013cec540b5700749d/ (opens in a new window)
http://support.sonymobile.com/global-en/xperiaz3/kb/801930740459b7de40150830a2e050065bb/ (opens in a new window)
Windows Phone
https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/11579 (opens in a new window)
https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/10549/microsoft-account-protect-my-phone (opens in a new window)

Knowing how to identify your mobile phone if it is stolen

You need to know more than the model and colour of your handset. Each mobile phone manufactured for use in the UK has a unique International Mobile Equipment Identity number (IMEI) hardwired into it during the manufacturing process. Knowing the IMEI will help the police and insurance companies identify your handset should it be stolen. UK network operators will also prevent a stolen phone from working across their respective networks if they know its IMEI.
You can find your handset's IMEI by:

- typing `*#06#` into the keypad or dialer of your handset
- looking inside the battery or SIM card compartment of your handset
- looking on the side of the box, or on the associated paperwork, that you received when purchasing the handset.

Being aware of your surroundings when using your mobile phone

Here are three simple things to consider in order to protect your handset from opportunist thieves:

- **busy locations** such as concert venues, shopping centres, and public transport (where close contact with others is normal) are popular places for pickpockets, especially if your handset is visible in an open bag, or hanging out of your back pocket
- thinking about **when** you use your mobile phone – outside underground stations can be popular venues for snatch theft, as people instinctively get their handsets out to check for signal and any missed calls
- don't leave your handset **unattended** in public places - you would not leave your wallet unattended, but a surprising number of people leave their mobile phone on the table while they go to the bar to order a drink, or go to the toilet
  https://www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice/protecting-your-mobile-phone/