

Dynamic Island area on iPhone 16 Pro or Now Bar on Galaxy S25 is better?

With iPhone 16 Pro and Galaxy S25, do users choose to experience Dynamic Island or Now Bar?

Apple introduced Dynamic Island to the public more than two years ago, and since then, the area has become a key part of the design of all iPhone 16 and iPhone 15 models, especially when Live Activities were developed alongside it. However, Samsung has only recently joined the game with the Now Bar, a similar concept - only available on the Galaxy S25 series.

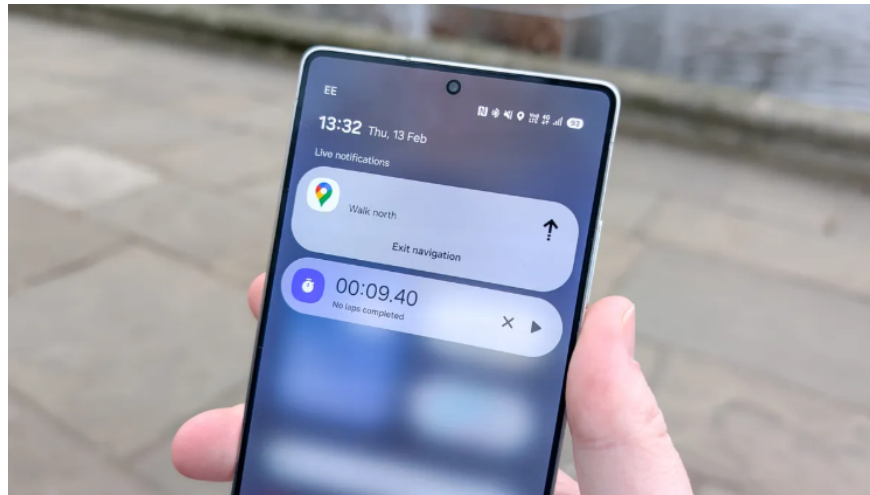


iPhone 16 Pro and Galaxy S25.

But how do these two details differ? Tech experts have put their full capabilities to the test.

How are they designed?

Apple and Samsung both use 'pill' shaped bubbles to hold their respective widgets, and both have the option to expand them to show more information or controls with a long tap. Samsung's Now Bar is larger by default, but can only be found on the lock screen or notification shade.



Samsung Now Bar.

In contrast, Apple's Dynamic Island area is always visible around the camera cutout at the top of the iPhone's screen, while Live Activities are more detailed on the lock screen. You can see both the Now Bar and Live Activities on the always-on display if they're enabled, but both limit the information that's visible when the phone is locked.

The always-on nature of Dynamic Island is distracting, but users can swipe horizontally to dismiss or recall the widget on demand. Swiping left or right on the Now Bar has no effect on the lock screen, but swiping on the notification shade will remove the widget entirely. Users will have to reopen the app and close it again to get the bar back.

Samsung allows the Now Bar to stack multiple widgets on top of each other, making it easy to switch between active widgets on the lock screen. Dynamic Island is much more limited, showing only one full-size widget and optionally a minimized widget at a time. However, both show all active activities in their notification panes.

What can they do?

Functionally, there's a lot of overlap between Now Bar and Live Activities - Dynamic Island, but there are some interesting differences to note.



Dynamic Island on iPhone.

First, you can toggle the Now Bar on and off for each compatible app, or turn it off entirely in the Settings app. Since Dynamic Island is built into the core of iOS, you can't turn it off. iFan can also block Live Activities from appearing on the iPhone's lock screen.

Compatible apps for the Now Bar and Live Activities are similar. But since the Now Bar is newer, it doesn't yet support any third-party apps. Meanwhile, Apple's Live Activities are used for a number of different apps, such as delivery and ride-sharing services or task management apps.

One slightly confusing part of the Now Bar is that it can show the currently playing music or video on the lock screen but not in the notification shade. On the other hand, Apple isn't shy about doubling up on media controls in Dynamic Island, even when Control Center is open.

Which is better?

Obviously, the best version is a combination of Dynamic Island and the iPhone's Live Activities. They do more than the all-new Now Bar.



These two display bars need to be further optimized.

The Galaxy S25's Now Bar is pretty mature for some of the new features it's launching with, but it needs to support more apps to unlock its potential.

Both features can learn from each other, so Apple could add Dynamic Island functionality when it introduces iOS 19 this summer, or Samsung could add an upgrade to One UI 8 that's coming later this year.

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