



Apple Watch Series 3 Screen Replacement

How to replace a cracked or damaged OLED screen (a.k.a. display assembly) on your Apple Watch Series 3.

Written By: Tobias Isakeit



INTRODUCTION

Use this guide to replace a broken, cracked, or defective display on your **Apple Watch Series 3**.

Make sure to update your Apple Watch to **watchOS 5** or later (and the paired iPhone to **iOS 12** or later) to avoid pairing issues after a display replacement.

Replacing the display can cause issues with **Apple Pay**. If possible, to reduce the likelihood of problems, delete all your Apple Pay account info before the replacement, and then re-enter it with the new display installed.

This guide shows the procedure on the standard, GPS-only version of the watch, but the cellular/LTE version is similar. Any important differences are noted in the text.



TOOLS:

- [iOpener](#) (1)
- [Curved Razor Blade](#) (1)
- [iFixit Opening Tools](#) (1)
- [iFixit Opening Picks set of 6](#) (1)
- [Tweezers](#) (1)
- [Tri-point Y000 Screwdriver Bit](#) (1)



PARTS:

- [Apple Watch \(42 mm Series 2/3\) Display Connectors Sticker Set](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(38 mm Series 2/3\) Display Connectors Sticker Set](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(42 mm Series 3 Cellular\) Screen](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(42 mm Series 3 GPS\) Screen](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(38 mm Series 3 Cellular\) Screen](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(38 mm Series 3 GPS\) Screen](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(42 mm Series 3 GPS\) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(42 mm Series 2 & Series 3 Cellular\) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(38 mm Series 2 & Series 3 Cellular\) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket](#) (1)
- [Apple Watch \(38 mm Series 3 GPS\) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket](#) (1)

Step 1 — Power off your Apple Watch



- Before starting repairs, take your watch off the charger and power it down.
 - ⓘ If your touchscreen is broken and prevents powering off the watch, [use this alternate method to power it down](#).

Step 2 — Apply heat



- [Prepare an iOpener](#) (or grab a hair dryer or heat gun) and heat the face of the watch until it's slightly too hot to touch.
- Leave the iOpener on the watch for at least a minute to fully heat the screen and soften the adhesive holding it to the case.

- ① You may need to reheat the iOpener, or move it around on the screen as sections cool, to heat the screen enough to pry it off.

Step 3 — Observe all warnings



- ① Because the gap between the screen and watch body is so thin, a sharp blade is needed to separate the two. **Read the following warnings carefully before proceeding.**
 - ⚠ **Protect your fingers** by keeping them completely clear of the knife. If in doubt, protect your free hand with a heavy glove, such as a leather shop glove or gardening glove.
 - ⚠ Be careful **not to apply too much pressure**, as this might cause the knife to slip and cut you, or damage the watch.
 - ⚠ **Wear [eye protection](#).** The knife or glass may break, sending pieces flying.
- ① Feel free to attach or remove the watch band as needed to provide more control as you make repairs.

Step 4 — Pry up the screen




- Place the edge of a curved blade into the thin gap between the display and the outer case. Start at the short side of the display, closest to the digital crown.
 - Press firmly *straight down* into the gap.
 - Once inserted, tilt the blade to pry the display open slightly.
- ⚠ Do not insert the knife more than 1/16th of an inch (~2 mm).

Step 5



- Once you've opened a small gap with the curved blade, remove the blade and insert the thinner edge of an opening tool into the gap.
- Push the opening tool into the gap, using your thumb as a pivot to lift the display open a bit farther.

 Don't try to fully open or detach the display yet.


Step 6



- Insert an opening pick under the display and carefully separate the Force Touch gasket from the display.
 - ⓘ iFixit screen and battery repair kits include a replacement Force Touch gasket, so don't fret too much if yours is damaged.
 - ⚠ Otherwise, to preserve the Force Touch gasket, pry carefully under the edge of the display. If the Force Touch gasket splits when lifting the display, or if you separate the gasket layers, you'll also need to replace the Force Touch gasket itself.
- Slide the pick around the display to separate the adhesive between the Force Touch gasket and the display.
 - ⚠ Don't insert the opening pick deeper than 1/16th of an inch (~2 mm).

Step 7



 To avoid straining the display cables, don't open the display all the way yet.

- Open the display to about a 45° angle, and use tweezers to peel off the adhesive between the display and the Force Touch gasket.
- Thread the adhesive around and behind the display cables to get it off completely.

Step 8 — Battery Disconnection



- Use a Y000 driver to remove the tri-point screw securing the metal cover plate.
- Use a pair of tweezers to remove the cover plate.
 - First open the plate all the way to unhinge the two flaps.
 - Then close it halfway to remove it completely by lifting it out.

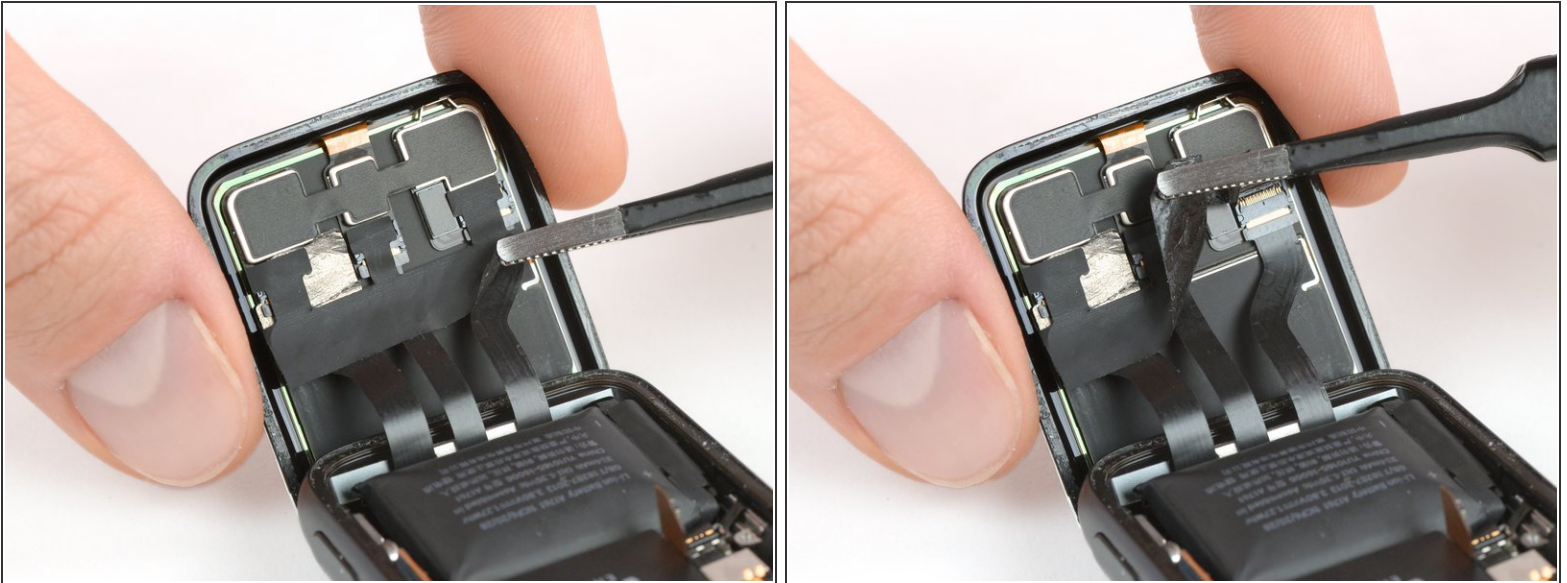
Step 9



i On the GPS-only version it is possible to disconnect the battery immediately. For the cellular/LTE version, you need to disconnect the Force Touch gasket and fold it out of the way first, in order to disconnect the battery.

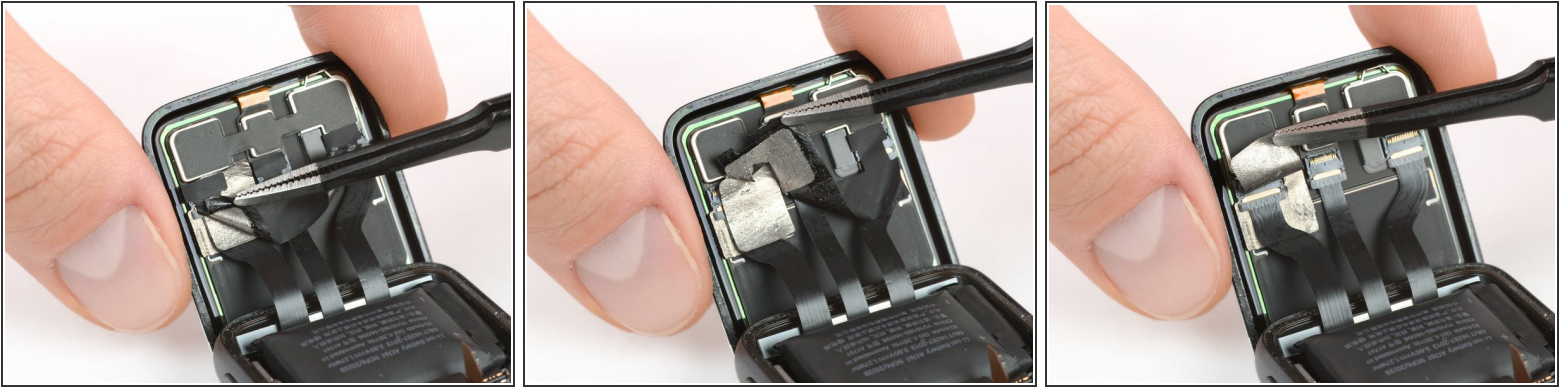
- Disconnect the battery by prying its connector straight up.
- Bend the connector up slightly to make sure it does not make contact by accident.

Step 10 — Screen



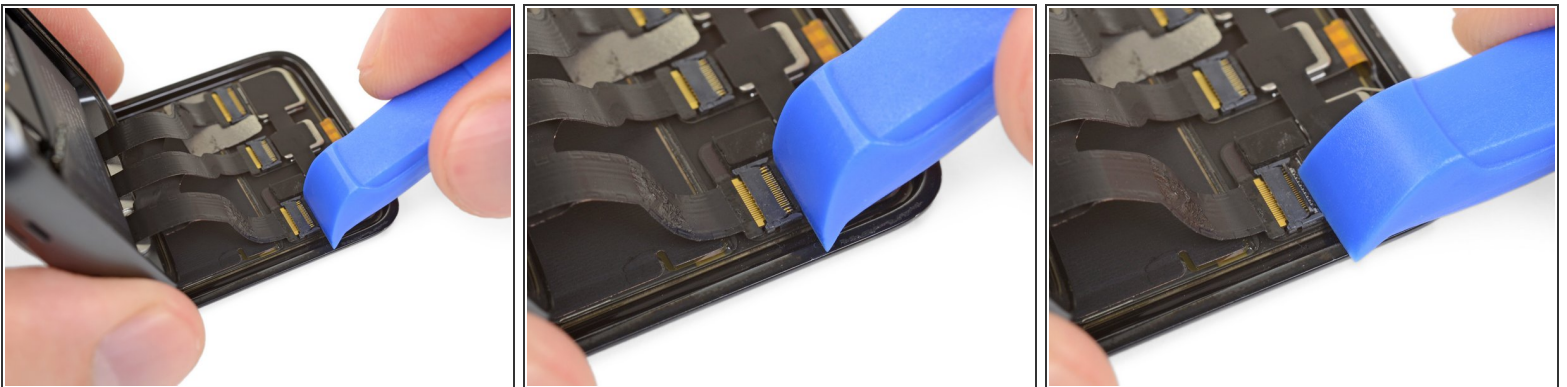
- Use a pair of tweezers to peel off the tape covering the display cable connectors.
 - Start from the bottom right of the tape and carefully work your way towards the connector in the middle.
- ⓘ The tape can be stubborn, so take care not to pull too hard and damage the cables underneath. If needed, apply a little heat or some isopropyl alcohol to help soften the adhesive.

Step 11



- i The leftmost connector contains a piece of conductive foil, which may tear when taking off the tape.
- If it tears, grab it from the bottom left to remove it completely. This way the matching foil underneath (on the display) will remain unharmed.

Step 12



- Carefully use a pry tool or a clean fingernail to unlock the first of the three [ZIF](#) connectors by prying up the small black locking flap opposite the cable.

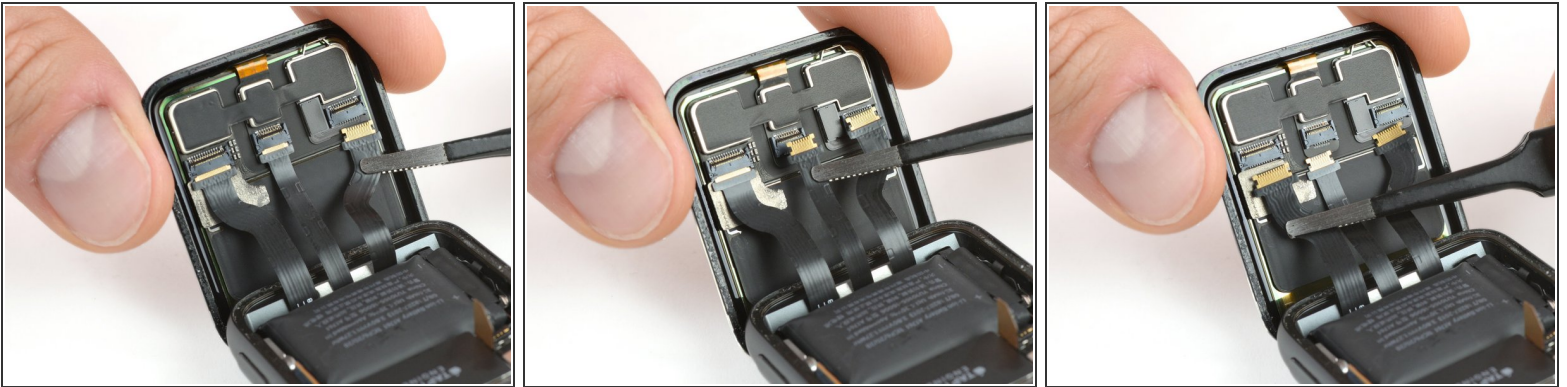
Step 13



- Pry up the locking flaps on the remaining two ZIF connectors.

☑ Replacement screens usually ship with these locking flaps closed. During reassembly, make sure the flaps are **open** before inserting the cables, or you may damage your watch.

Step 14



- Use a pair of tweezers to disconnect the display flex cables by gently pulling them out.
 - ❗ If the cables are stubborn, try carefully walking them out in a left-to-right-motion while pulling gently.

Step 15



- Remove the display.
- ★ For detailed reassembly instructions, including replacing the Force Touch gasket and surrounding adhesive, see the guide linked in the conclusion below.

Continue from Step 10 of our [Force Touch Sensor guide](#) to re-seal your watch and complete your repair. For best results, don't connect your new display until after Step 16.