Apple Watch Series 3 Force Touch Gasket Replacement

This guide shows how to remove and replace the Force Touch gasket in the Apple Watch Series 3. The gasket has adhesive on both sides which is also replaced.

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INTRODUCTION

Use this guide to replace the Force Touch gasket in your Apple Watch Series 3. This guide shows the procedure while leaving the display connected. If you are also replacing the display, refer to this guide and replace the Force Touch gasket after having the display removed and before reconnecting the new display. This makes it a little easier to position the gasket.

If Force Touch function works correctly and you just need fresh adhesive to re-seal your display, follow the adhesive replacement guide instead.

The device shown in the photos of this guide is the GPS-only version of the Apple Watch Series 3. There are some minor differences between the GPS and the Cellular versions of the Apple Watch. **If you have the Cellular version, follow all the written directions closely and pay extra attention to the warnings about discrepancies between the two devices.**

TOOLS:

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

PARTS:

- Apple Watch (42 mm Series 3 GPS) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket (1)
- Apple Watch (38 mm Series 3 GPS) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket (1)
- Apple Watch (38 mm Series 2 & Series 3 Cellular) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket (1)
- Apple Watch (42 mm Series 2 & Series 3 Cellular) Force Touch Sensor Adhesive Gasket (1)

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Step 1 — Power off your Apple Watch

- Before starting repairs, take your watch off the charger and power it down.
  - (i) 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.

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(i) 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

(i) 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.

(i) 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).

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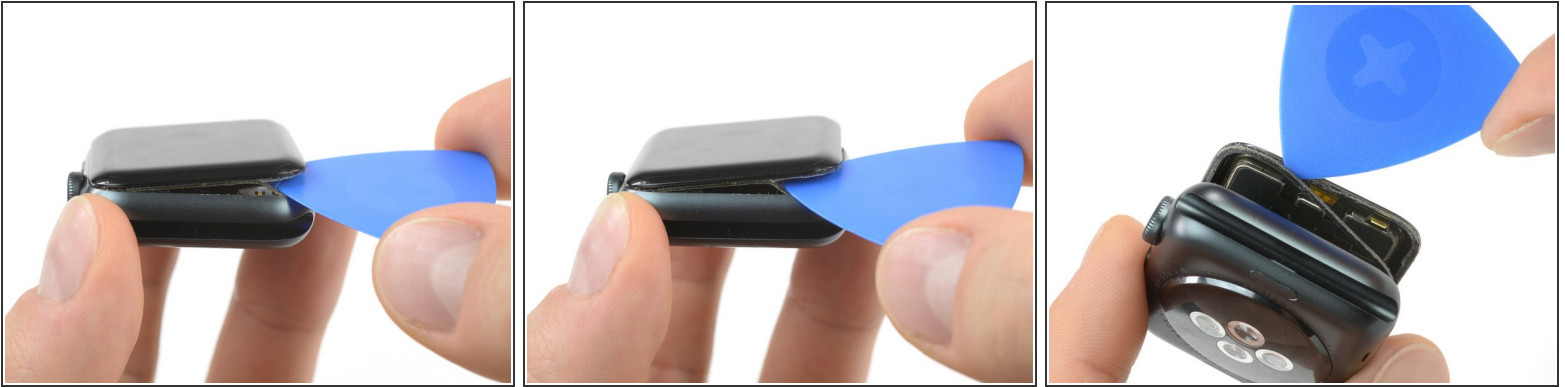
Step 5

- 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.

  - (i) 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

- ⓘ 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 — Force Touch Gasket

- Use the point of a pry tool to disconnect the Force Touch gasket by prying its connector straight up.

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Step 11

- [Heat your iOpener](#) for another 30 seconds and place it on top of the Force Touch gasket to soften the adhesive underneath. (Alternatively, apply heat using a hair dryer or heat gun.)
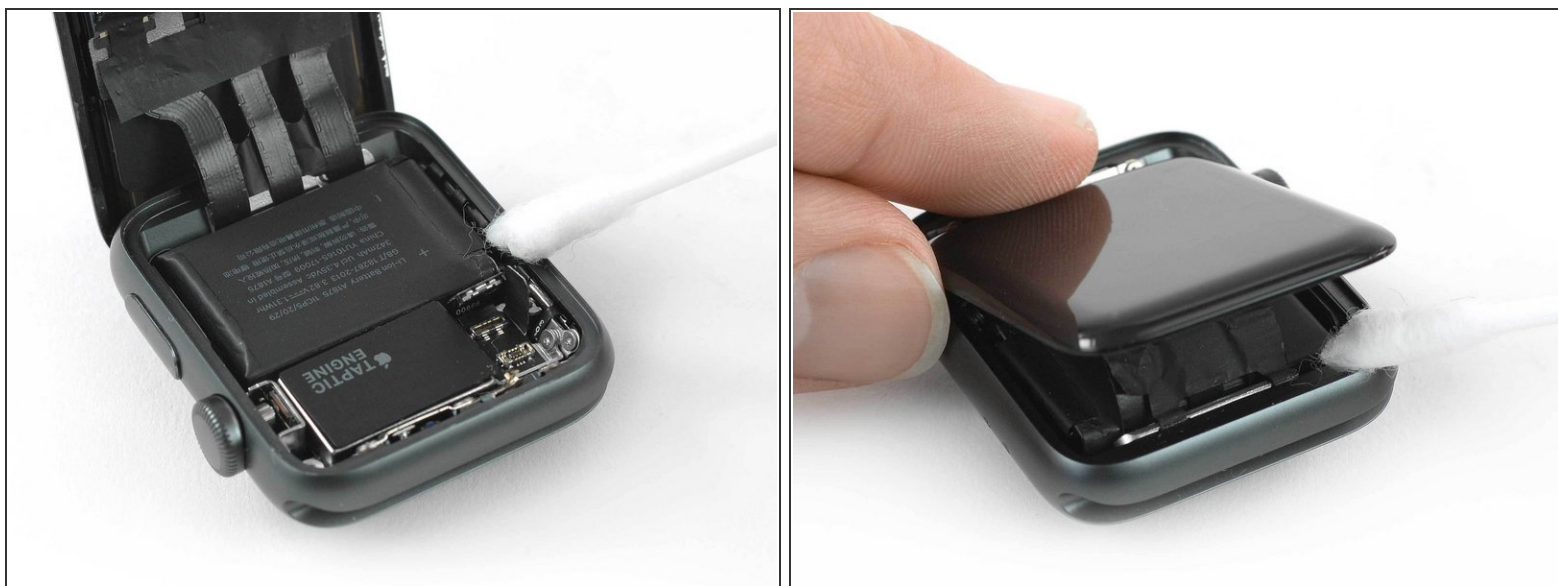
⚠️ Be very careful not to strain or tear the display cables.

Step 12

- Use a pair of tweezers to peel off the Force Touch gasket.

- Slightly tilt the display forward and hold the Force Touch gasket diagonally to thread it over the display and remove it.

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Step 13

- Clean all traces of adhesive (and broken glass, if any) thoroughly from the case before re-sealing your watch.

  - Scour the case using a [cleaning pad](#), or use the tip of an opening tool or spudger wrapped in a lint-free cloth or coffee filter, along with a little isopropyl alcohol (90% concentration or greater). In a pinch, a Q-tip may also work.

  - ⓘ To remove the adhesive near the display cables, fold the display back down over the watch and carefully tilt it away from the frame so there's room to work.

- ⚠ Don't rush this step. Even a small amount of residue can prevent your display from bonding to the case, causing it to come loose over time.

Step 14

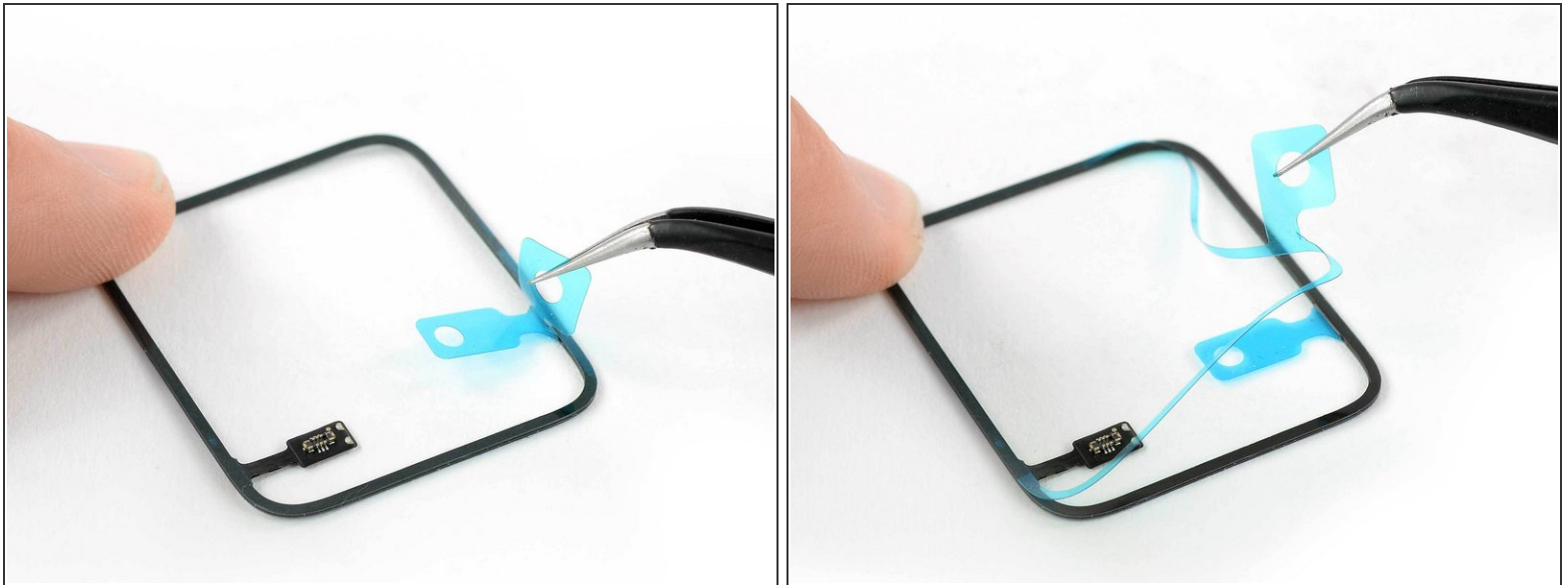- If you are re-using your existing display, carefully clean any adhesive residue stuck to the back.
  - (i) It helps to flip the watch upside-down so the display lays flat. Just be sure to support the rest of the watch, and take care not to strain the cables.

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Step 15

- Use a pair of tweezers to carefully remove the blue protective liner from the bottom of the replacement Force Touch gasket, exposing the adhesive underneath.

  📌 Make sure the connector pins are facing toward you, or you'll remove the liner from the wrong side.

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Step 16

- With the exposed adhesive facing down, thread the Force Touch gasket down over the display (if connected) and set it into position in the case.

  - Slightly tilt the display forward so you can align the Force Touch gasket with the frame.

  - Make sure the connector lines up with its socket.

- ⓘ You can use the end of a pry tool to press the new Force Touch gasket into place all around the perimeter of the watch.

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Step 17

⚠️ Make sure your display is connected before you reconnect the battery.

- Reconnect the Force Touch gasket and battery flex cable by pressing their connectors straight down until they click into place.

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Step 18

- Use a pair of tweezers to place the metal plate covering the battery connector back in its original position.

- Install the Y000 tri-point screw.

- ⭐ At this point, it's a good idea to power on your watch and test all its functions before sealing the display in place.

Step 19

- Use a pair of tweezers to gently remove the blue protective liner on top of the Force Touch gasket, exposing the last of the adhesive.

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Step 20

- Align the screen and press it down firmly onto the adhesive.

- For best results, apply heat from your iOpener, heat gun, or hair dryer to help set the adhesive.

- Then, apply some pressure for a few hours—wrapping the watch with a couple rubber bands, or placing it under a heavy book or two.

- As a final check, power on your watch and make sure Force Touch works correctly—a hard press on the screen should cause the watch to vibrate, and the press should register on the display.

Take your e-waste to an [R2 or e-Stewards certified recycler](#).

Repair didn't go as planned? Try some [basic troubleshooting](#), or search our [Answers forum](#) for help.

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