

## Searching for the Perfect iPhone Case

Posted on December 7, 2012 by Shawn Wilkins



Many people on the hunt for the ultimate in iPhone protection are realizing how elusive the perfect case really is. Pinpointing the perfect case is a substantial challenge when there are options other than the simplicity of its design and the overall protection it ensures. Apple debuted the iPhone 5 earlier this year, and the perfect case for it is far from found. There are a few that I've used, and surprisingly, some are much better than expected. Those that I expected to be better, however, don't stand a chance anymore.

### Incase Snap

Incase is a pioneer in the creation of sustainable cases, covers, and sleeves. The difference between this year and last is that the iPhone 5 has taken on a slimmer form factor. Thus, Incase has switched some minor things in the Snap's design that, oddly enough, make the case less appealing than it once was. The iPhone 4 and 4S have a smaller, thicker body, and with the headphone jack above the display instead of below, having two large openings makes perfect sense. However, the iPhone 5 does not fit that criteria. The iPhone 5's headphone jack is below the phone along with the speakers, microphone, and Lightning connector port. Consequently, the major cutouts of the Incase Snap are far from ideal: there is a large one atop the phone and another of equal length below. These large cutouts make the phone seem less protected than previous models. In addition, there is another fairly large cutout where the volume control and silence buttons are. Again, not ideal since the iPhone 5 is more prone to scratches than any previous generation. With reports [put reports here] saying that the anodized aluminum on the iPhone scratches easily, I wouldn't want to risk seeing unwanted marks on its band and be denied a replacement because the warranty doesn't cover "normal wear and tear."

What's more, the Incase Snap that I received has a purple tint to it as opposed to the "smoke" color that I assumed it would be. Apple has secured the back of the iPhone 5 with a large aluminum slab while the top and bottom portions are the traditional glass of the previous two generations. Because of this, the case seems purple when looking at the aluminum in high light but closer to the smoke color when looking directly at the glass.

The case's durability is also somewhat worrisome. The Snap is thinner than similar cases, but its plastic is definitely of higher quality than its competitors; it's smooth but durable. The worry arises when looking at the case's construction. The case has three openings — two large openings and one about half the size of the other two. It feels as if I were to drop the phone, the case would immediately crack. If I expect any minimal-coverage case to pass a test of strength, though, it would be this one.

Despite the above criticisms, I enjoy the overall feel and use of the case itself. There hasn't been a single case on the market that matches what Incase is doing in terms of style and quality. The case is soft to the touch and feels as if Incase put in an enormous amount of effort to craft a case that will not only feel natural in the hand, but feel as if it belongs on the phone. Even when looking at the case in high light with purple tint staring back at you, the Snap still manages to look superior to others.

In the end, this case is lovely looking and functions as it should. It protects the phone and looks just as good as past iterations. The purple tint and large cutouts are major drawbacks for some, but the feel, look, and protection the Snap offers are incredible. Incase's support is also superior to others', so if your case cracks or breaks, you can easily get a replacement.

### Poetic Atmosphere

Poetic is a company that I hadn't heard of until this year. They specialize in the creation of cases that are both slim and protective. They use high grade TPU (rubber) and mix that with hard plastic.

Their Atmosphere case is one of the first cases I've gotten and thoroughly enjoyed. The outer areas that come into contact with your phone while snapping it in are made of TPU and prevent the phone from scratching while placing it in the case. The rest of the case is made of a frosted, hard plastic. You can vaguely see the Apple logo and FCC labels on the back of the device with the case in place, but you can definitely see the color of the iPhone while it's protected.

When it comes to the Poetic Atmosphere's design, it's seemingly lacking. Some people see the case as gaudy and ugly, but I think it's too slim to be called unimpressive. According to critics, the major drawback is the four tiny, unnecessary rubber pads in the corners of the case, visible from the back. They're neither protruding nor helping anything. It's as if Poetic had a surplus of rubber and had to think of ways to get rid of it. While it's not bothersome to me, some people view it as a deal breaker.

The protection of this case is remarkable. I accidentally dropped my phone while in the kitchen, and it was perfectly fine. The shock absorbance of the rubber left no scratches, arks, dents, or blemishes on my phone or the case itself. Everything was perfect. The usage of the TPU is great and should replace silicone as far as protection goes.

The Poetic Atmosphere is one case that I can't help but recommend. Especially at its price of nearly \$15, you should at least buy it to see if you like it. If not, return it. The case itself looks nice, feels nice, and overall, it protects your phone well.

### Noot

There is a little-known case for the iPhone called the Noot. The company name is unknown, and I can't find a website for it, but it's too nice to avoid mentioning.

The Noot case is very simple, so there's not much to discuss about its design or construction. The case is made of 100% thickened TPU that bends on and wraps around your phone while you snugly snap it into place.

The Noot looks and feels better than any of the cases I've ever used, but the use of 100% TPU means it can morph, and sadly, mine has. The top portion of the case has disfigured ever so slightly that it allows lint and dust to become trapped under the case on the top band of my phone. While this may seem like a minuscule issue to some, it bothers me enough to pass on using the case. With that said, it was \$5, and I could've bought another one or found a way to restructure the case.

All in all, the Noot case is very simple and does what it's supposed to. It protects the phone from scratches and impact, all while looking nice. There's not much else to look for in a case, but if you want something worthwhile, and especially cheap, I'd suggest the Noot. It can either be purchased as an add-on item on Amazon or for \$10 on eBay.

### Switcheasy NUDE

Switcheasy has been around for years. They've taken numerous risks as far as the design of their cases goes, and they've done some less than admirable things with their materials. They use a cheaper plastic and their included screen protectors are laughably bad. With that said, the Switcheasy NUDE is the case that I'm currently using on my iPhone 5.

The Switcheasy NUDE sets the standard when it comes to ideal clear cases for the newest generation iPhone. The case covers all seen areas and has an included protective piece for when your phone is not being charged or when you're listening to music. You snap the phone in the case, pop the little tab into the Lightning port, and you're ready to go.

There are some problems that I and a few others have had with this case, however, and while they may be minor issues with easy fixes, I think it says a lot about the manufacturing process and care that Switcheasy puts into the construction of their products.

When I received my case, all of the buttons were stuck in place. The volume buttons on the case would push down the volume buttons on my phone, causing continuous volume fluctuation. The power button was also nonfunctioning and required an immediate fix. The easy fix for all of the buttons is to pop them up by using a fingernail as you would a nail with the claw of a hammer. That's all there is to it. You shouldn't apply so much force that you completely remove the buttons; once you hear a faint popping noise, all will be okay with your case.

On top of the shoddy button construction, the feel of the Switcheasy NUDE is odd. The plastic feels cheap, and I wonder if there were any thought put into how the case would feel in the hand. The case isn't as prone to scratches as I previously thought, but as time went on, I began to notice the small dents and bends that plague every product made from poor-quality plastic. This paired with the substandard feel makes the case feel just that: cheap. It's hard to get over the idea of using a cheap case to protect a phone that you've paid upwards of \$500 for.

The Switcheasy NUDE is a very mediocre case. It doesn't offer anything different. It protects my phone and shows it off lovingly, but it fails in areas where it should excel. It goes to show that with years of case development, some companies can still be lacking in the field. Three years later and the Switcheasy NUDE is still using the cheapest available plastic and isn't doing much aside from making sure its form factor fits the device it's suited for.

### Anker Glaze

The Anker Glaze is a case that is unique to me. It's not like any other case on the market and doesn't seem to follow any norms. Like the Noot, the case is constructed of a very basic TPU layer. This goes on first followed by a plastic shell. This plastic outer casing does what the Noot should: it keeps the TPU in place. The sides of the case are incredibly thin in order to keep the entire build at a super slim level while still offering incredible protection.

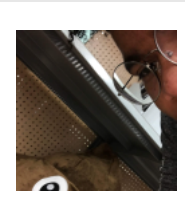
Unfortunately, along with that protection comes oddities. The back of the case itself is thin, but because of the two layers, the sides end up looking thick (not incredibly bulky and off-putting, but definitely chunkier than advertised). The iPhone goes from being a slim, rounded device to a rectangular, toyish block. The case serves its purpose by protecting the phone and looking sleek while doing so, but the added cartoonish feel is a turn-off.

I recommend the Anker Glaze to those who want proper protection for all activities involving their iPhone, want to maintain some sense of style, and want to avoid Otterbox or Lifeproof cases. While the Anker Glaze definitely won't provide their level of support, it will definitely protect your phone from various drops or accidents you may have with it.

### Conclusion

Due to the remarkably thin new form factor of the iPhone 5, case manufacturers were thrown a hurdle this year. Unfortunately, only some have learned how to jump over it. The slimmness of the iPhone 5 and the elongated screen make it challenging to design that perfect case or accessory. Some manufacturers take this into account while others just metaphorically copy and paste past years' work. Some newcomers want to show their individuality and creativity by making something great while other manufacturers are still lost by the amount of thought required to create a perfect case.

The search for the perfect iPhone case is never-ending for me. While some may find comfort in the cases mentioned above, it seems nearly impossible to flawlessly mix aesthetics, use, protection, and longevity. Some cases look hideous but protect the iPhone well. Some barely protect it but look gorgeous. Some have horrible problems but are still fair contenders. It's a massive toss-up on what will come of future cases, but when we do find the perfect one, we'll be sure to let you know.



#### About Shawn Wilkins

An enthusiastic writer who values quality over quantity. The abundance of posts shouldn't make the site, but rather, the quality of them. Aiming for perfection is the goal and anything less isn't acceptable. Long walks on the beach are accepted, however.

[View all posts by Shawn Wilkins](#) →

#### Latest Reviews

Unread — RSS for iOS 7 & Giveaway!  
Jared Sinclair is mostly known for his previous offerings in the App Store: Pilboxie is a medication

A Gameboy That Plays 3DS Games  
I bought a 2DS. Upon ordering the handheld, I knew exactly what I was signing

Keep Quiet with the Das Keyboard Model S ...with Quiet Key Design. The essential thing to notice in that title is the emphasis

Limelight — Beautiful Movie Tracking  
Limelight is a new app from the team at 9:42AM that makes tracking movies simple

SurfacePad for iPhone — Designed for Some  
The Twelve South SurfacePad for iPhone is a special accessory made for a specific group

On Mine: Memento App  
Looking back, I wish I had done a lot of things differently. Taken out less

Keep It Light with the Power Support Air Jacket  
Since the launch of the iPhone 5, the arms race to create the best case

Tough as Glass with the Bodyguardz Pure  
There's always a brief period of time wherein I consider applying a screen protector to

Searching for the Perfect iPhone Case  
Many people on the hunt for the ultimate in iPhone protection are realizing how elusive

Twitterrific 5 — Changing the Game. Again.  
Twitterrific is old; Twitterrific is new. Twitterrific is traditional; Twitterrific is innovative. Remarkably, Twitterrific 5