

NOKIA SMARTPHONE HACKS™

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HACK
#29

Use Calling Cards with Your Mobile Phone

Use a discount-rate calling card without the hassle of manually dialing PINs or even access numbers. Also, make the calling card work with your Contacts program!

Calling cards are good companions for mobile phones. Mobile phone calling plans, especially regional plans, sometimes have expensive long-distance rates. Even for national plans, the rates for international calls are often very expensive. Using calling cards, you can call in a local or a 1-800 access number, and then have the calling card service connect you to the destination number via a landline or even the Internet at very cheap rates. You'll still use up your plan minutes, but you won't pay as much in long-distance charges.



Long-distance calling cards discussed in this hack are different from prepaid mobile phone cards discussed in “Use Prepaid Calling Cards” [Hack #28].

However, making a calling card call on a mobile phone manually can be a real hassle. You have to key in a 10-digit access number; wait for the prompt; key in the PIN code (which is normally longer than 8 digits); wait for the prompt; and finally key in up to 16 digits of destination phone numbers (in the case of an international call). Try that when you are walking or driving! Fortunately, a couple of tricks are available that can make it easier to use calling cards.

Use Speed Dialing

With so many calling card services, you can shop around for the one that provides the best services and the best rate. Some calling card services provide two key features for easy mobile dialing:

No-PIN authentication

Some cards allow you to register several preauthorized phone numbers with your account. If the calling card service caller ID detects that you are calling the access number from one of the authorized phone numbers, it automatically authenticates you without asking for your PIN number.

Speed dial for destination numbers

Some services allow you to assign two- or three-digit speed-dial codes for your frequently called numbers. Once you are authenticated and authorized to access your account, you can use those codes to dial long numbers quickly.

Using these two features, you can shorten a 36+ digit international call to 14 or so digits. They are great timesavers. We recommend you use calling services that provide those features.

Store Calling Card Numbers in the Contacts List

If you make frequent calling card calls, you can put the calling card access number, the PIN, and the destination number in one entry in your phone's Contacts list. Then, you can dial it quickly by locating the contact or even set it for speed dialing or voice commands.

But the problem is that the phone cannot just dial all the digits without a pause. The calling card service needs to accept the call after you dial the access number, before you can dial the PIN. It also needs to verify the PIN before you are prompted to dial the destination number. How do you put pauses between the access number and the PIN, and then between the PIN and the destination number, without human intervention?

Nokia phones have a nifty feature that puts pauses in a stream of digits. You just enter the phone number normally in the contact entry. When you need a pause between numbers, you click the * key three times until the letter “p” appears. If you need a longer pause, you can enter more than one “p” consecutively. Then you can go on to enter the next number after the pause. [Figure 5-9](#) shows this process.

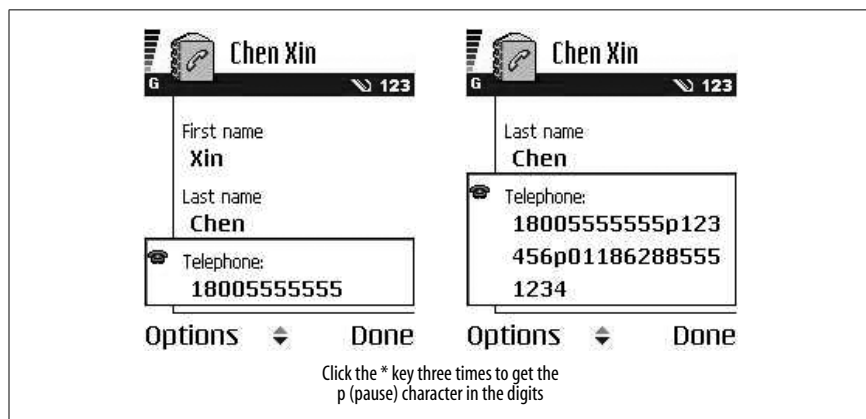


Figure 5-9. Entering a calling card number in the Contacts list

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