Touch Gestures

What is it for?

Imagine trying to open a heavy door, but the rule is you can only use your pinky fingers. For someone with shaky hands, or someone who uses a special typing wand held in their mouth, doing a pinch-to-zoom or a three-finger swipe on a screen is just as hard. If a map app only lets you zoom in by pinching, those users are completely stuck.

How to support it

Always give users a simple one-finger tap way to do things.

- If there's a map you can pinch to zoom, also add simple buttons that can be tapped (like + and -)
- If there's a side panel you have to swipe to open, also add a visible Menu button to tap
- Make sure no important action requires twisting, pinching, or using multiple fingers at the same time

You don't have to get rid of fun swipes and pinches completely. Those complex gestures are fantastic shortcuts for people who can easily perform them. However, make sure they're not the only way to get the job done. Every fancy shortcut needs a standard, simple path too.

Useful links

- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) - Understanding Pointer Gestures
- WebAIM - Motor Disabilities