

WhatsApp Security Tips

For iPhone Users Only

Compiled by the Clinic to End Tech Abuse

Last Updated: May 28, 2020

Who is this guide for?

Anyone who would like to strengthen their security and privacy on WhatsApp. It is especially for anyone who is concerned that an abusive person may be secretly getting access to their account.

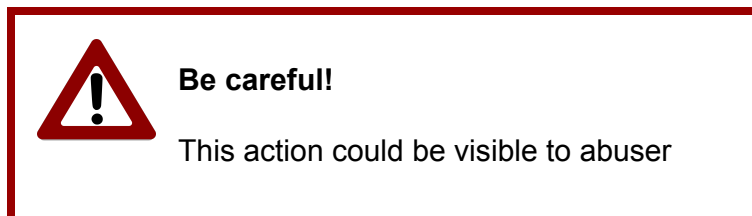
You can also look at WhatsApp's own guide here: <https://www.whatsapp.com/safety>

What does this guide cover?

- How to check whether someone else might be logging into your account
- Logging out any unfamiliar devices that are signed in
- Checking archived chats
- Checking privacy settings
- Checking if you are sharing your location in any chat
- How to check whether your chats are being backed up somewhere else, where another person could potentially get access to them
- How to enable screen lock
- How to turn on two-step verification

Before we start:

- If the abuser is currently logged into your WhatsApp account, they will know right away if you log them out.
- We strongly recommend that you talk to a domestic violence or other appropriate organization to make plans for your safety if you are worried about violence or threats.
- We have marked changes that could be visible to an abuser with the following sign:



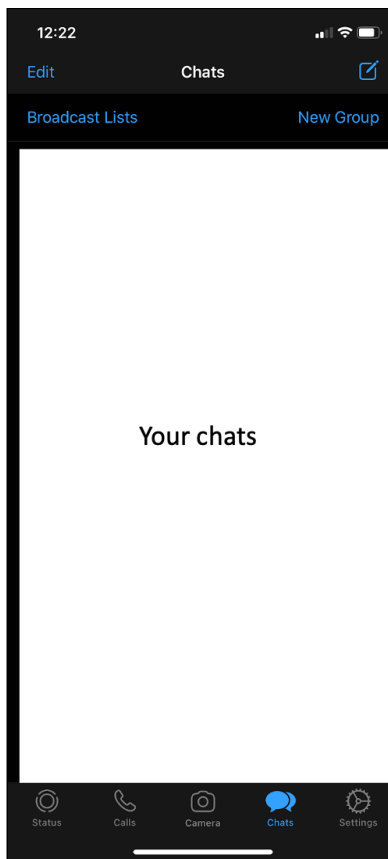
WhatsApp images are included below for educational and research purposes only.

I. Checking for Logins by Other People

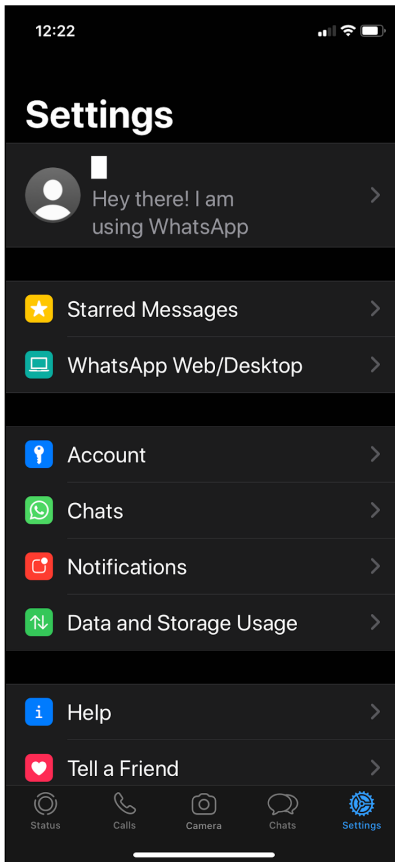
Open WhatsApp by tapping on its icon:



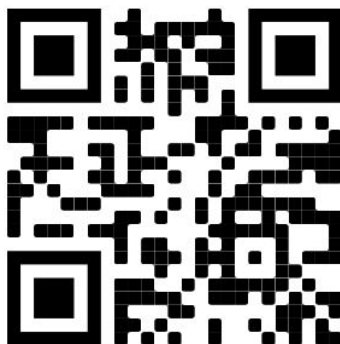
You will see something like this:



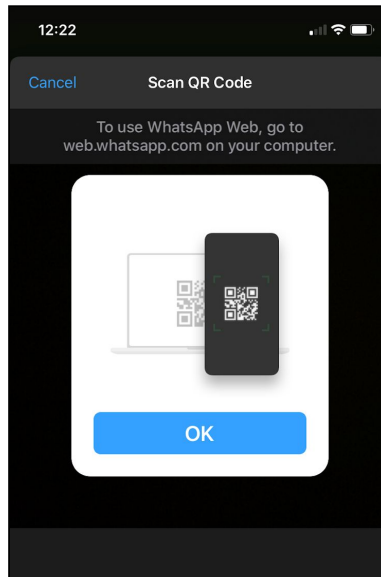
On the bottom menu, tap on **Settings**. You will see something like this:



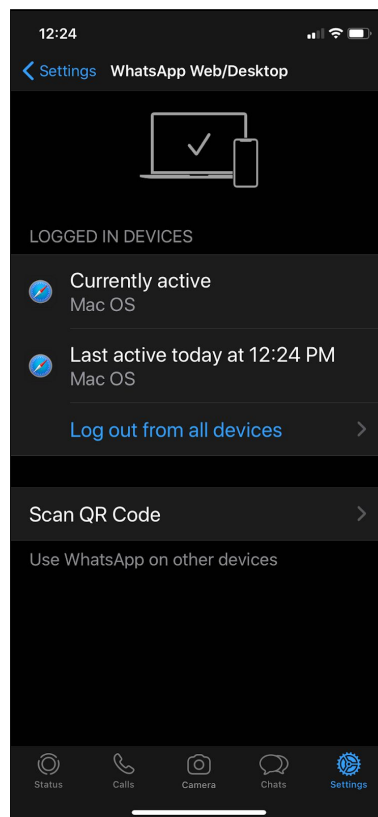
This screen has an option called **WhatsApp Web/Desktop**. This allows users to use WhatsApp in another device (e.g. a desktop computer). In order to do so, users have to visit <https://web.whatsapp.com> on a desktop computer and scan the QR shown in that website with their phone. A QR code looks like a box with black and white patterns and it can be used to store information (like a URL). This is an example QR code:



Tap on **WhatsApp Web/Desktop**. You might be asked to grant WhatsApp permission to access your camera. Allow WhatsApp to access your camera. If there is no other device where you are logged in, you will see the following:



On the other hand, if someone has logged into your account on any other devices, you will see something like this:



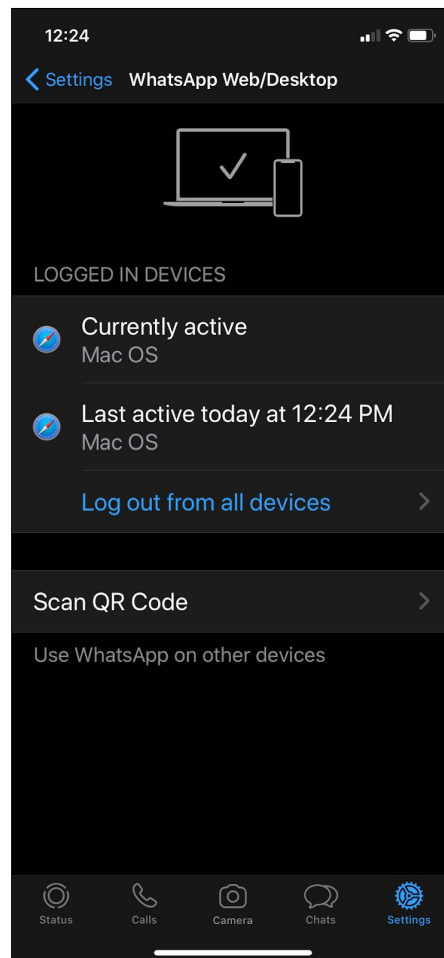
Check to see if you recognize the devices that are logged in. Are they likely yours? Would you have logged in at the time shown?

If a device looks unfamiliar or if the login time looks strange (for example, it's at a time when you're usually asleep), you can consider logging that device out of your account.

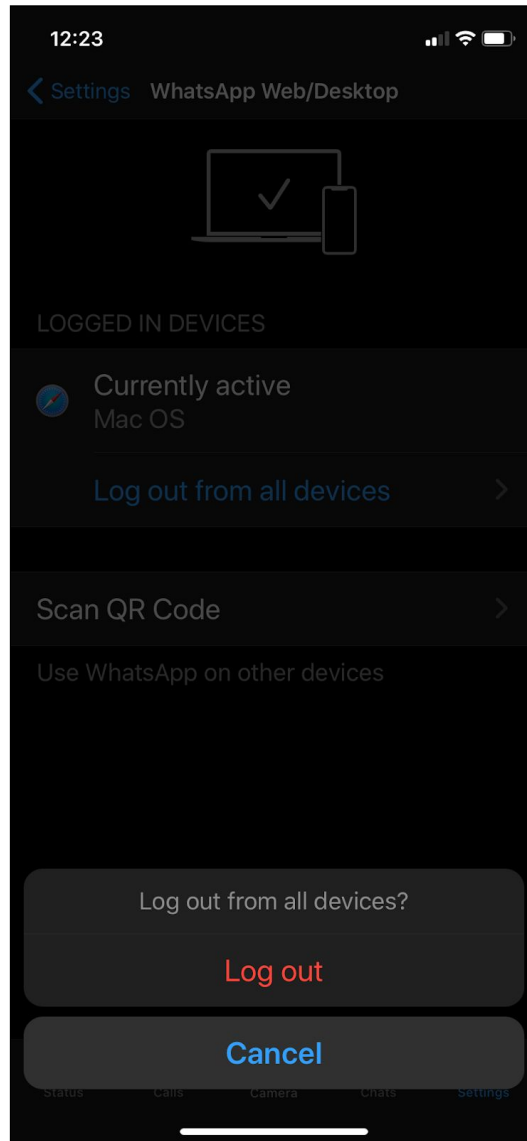
If you use the WhatsApp web feature, we recommend you to open it only on safe devices (e.g. devices that are not shared with an abusive partner).

II. Logging Other Devices Out

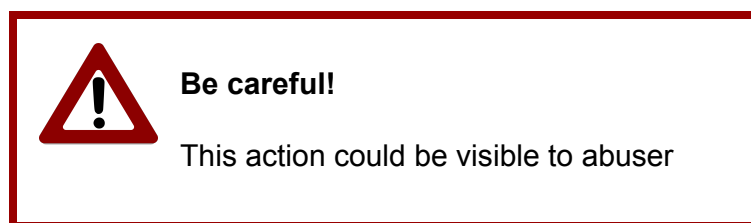
This is an example list of logged in devices:



If you want to log out from all other devices, tap on **Log out from all devices**. Then, you will see something like this:



Tap on **Log out** to confirm that you want to log out from all devices.



If the abuser is currently logged into your WhatsApp account, they will know right away if you log them out. We strongly recommend that you talk to a domestic violence or other appropriate organization to make plans for your safety if you are worried about violence or threats.

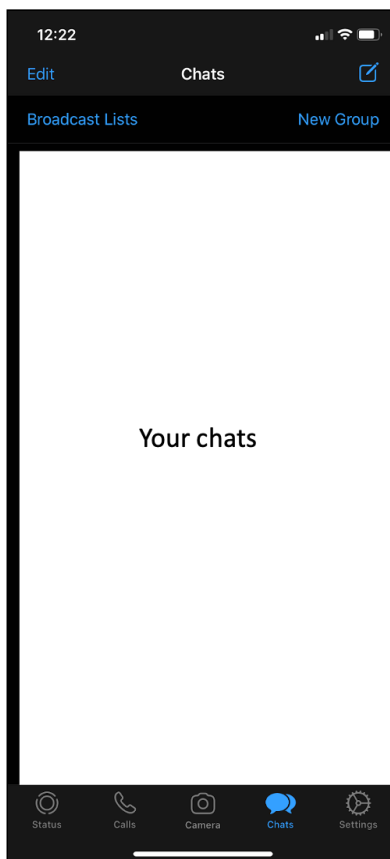
III. Checking archived chats

Archiving a chat is not the same as deleting it. Archived chats can still be seen within WhatsApp, which means an abusive partner could read them.

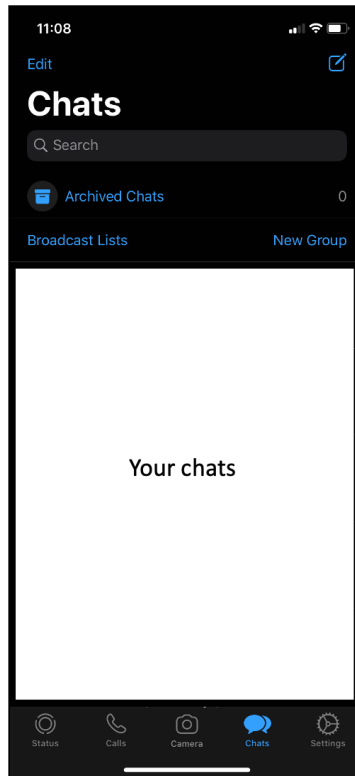
Open WhatsApp by tapping on its icon:



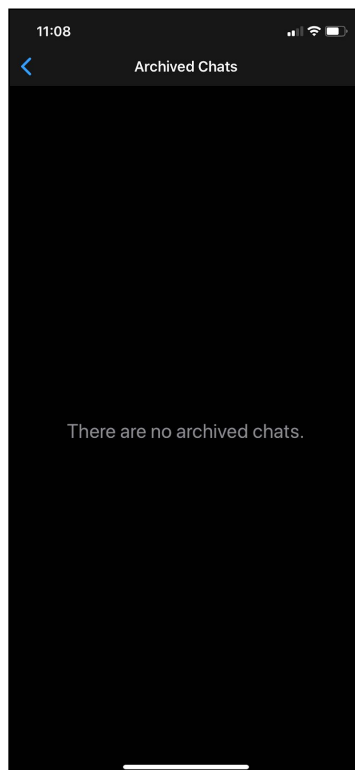
You will see something like this:



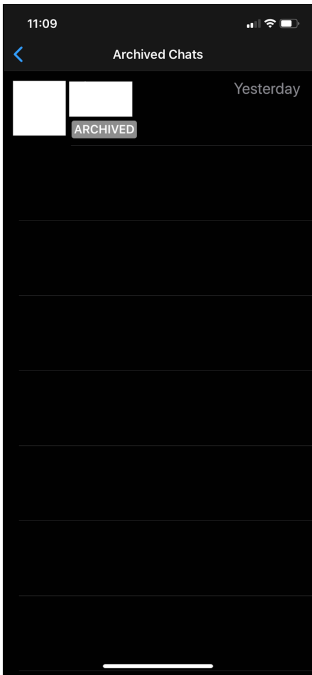
If you swipe down, some options will be displayed at the top:



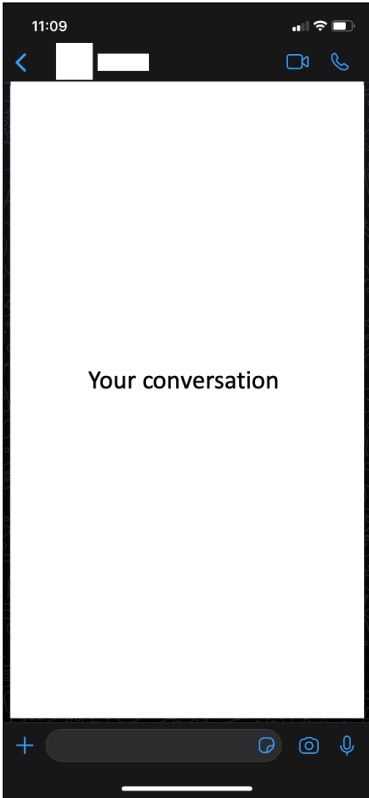
Tap on **Archived Chats**. If you have no archived chats, you will see something like this:




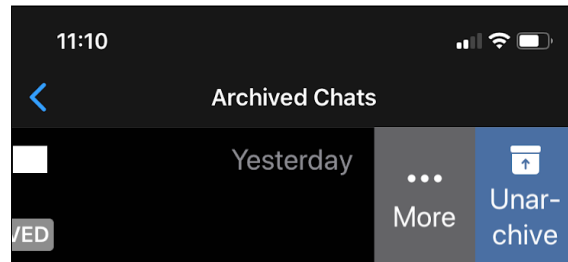
If you have archived chats, you will a list with the chats that were archived:



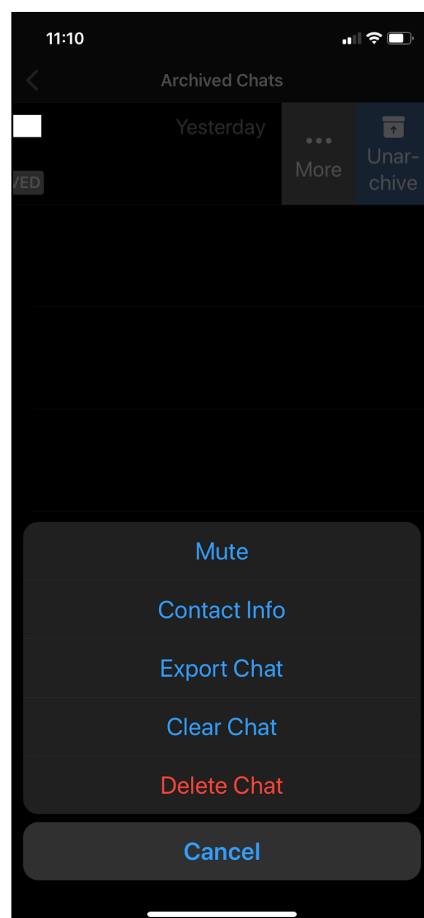
If you tap on one of the archived chats, you will see the entire conversation you had:



If you go back to the list of archived chats (by tapping ) , you can delete the archived chats you want. Swipe to the left the chat you want to delete. A menu will appear:



Tap on **More**. A menu at the bottom will appear:

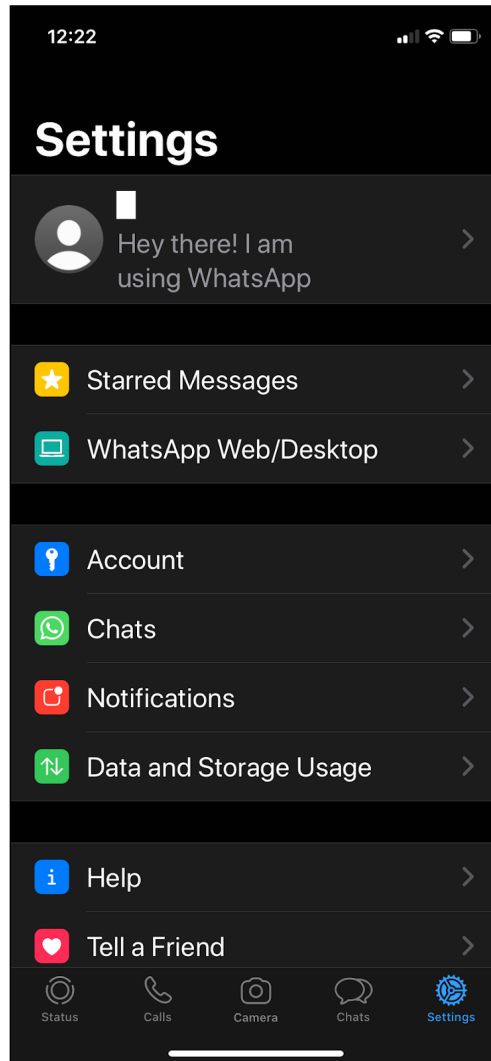


To delete the archived chat, tap on **Delete Chat**.

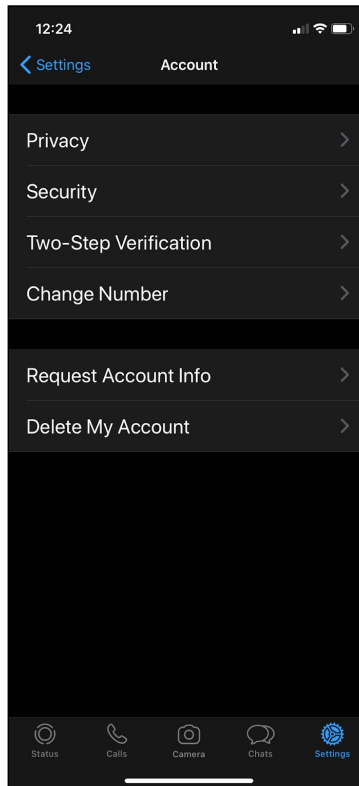
IV. Checking Privacy Settings

Checking your privacy settings can help you control who sees information about you and your WhatsApp activity.

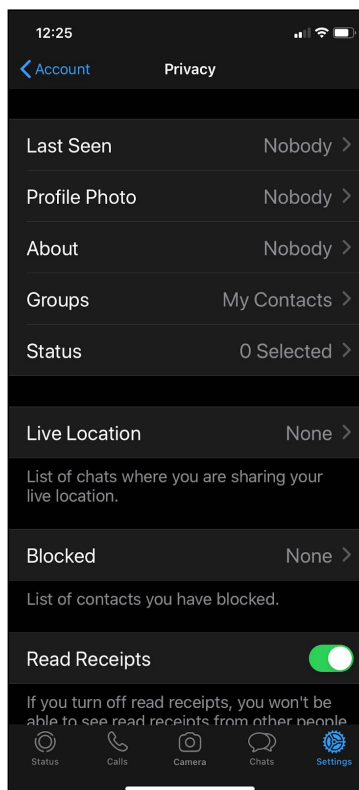
This is WhatsApp's Settings screen:



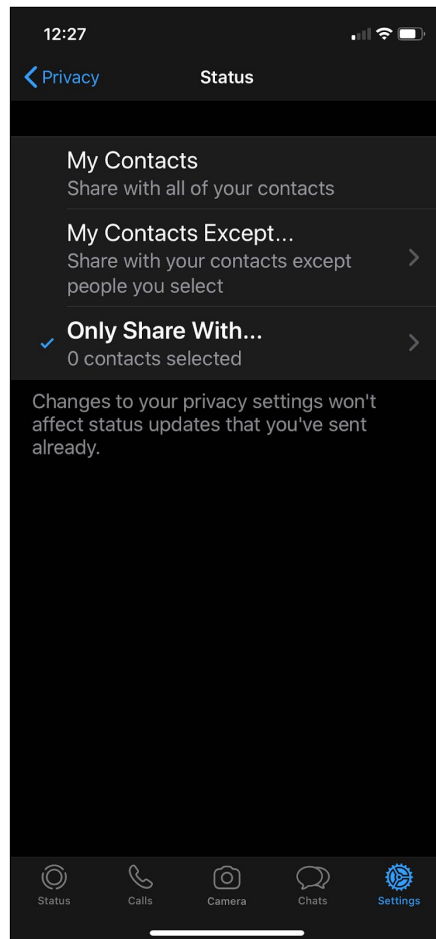
Tap on **Account**. You will see something like this:



Tap on **Privacy**. You will see something like this:



In this menu, you can set who can see your profile photo, your “About” description, and your status, among other information. For example, if you tap on **Status**, you will see something like this:

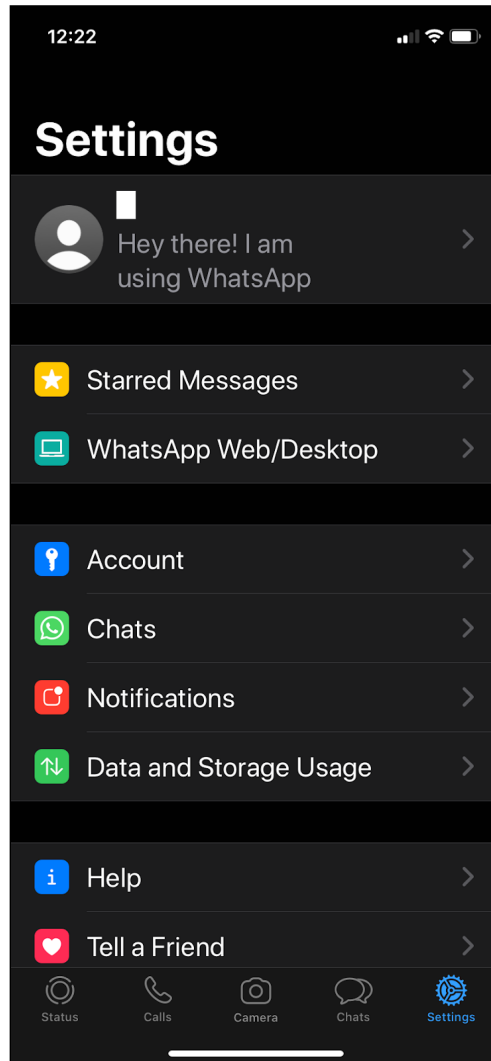


In the above screen, you can set who can see your Status (all contacts, all contacts except some people, a few contacts, or no one).

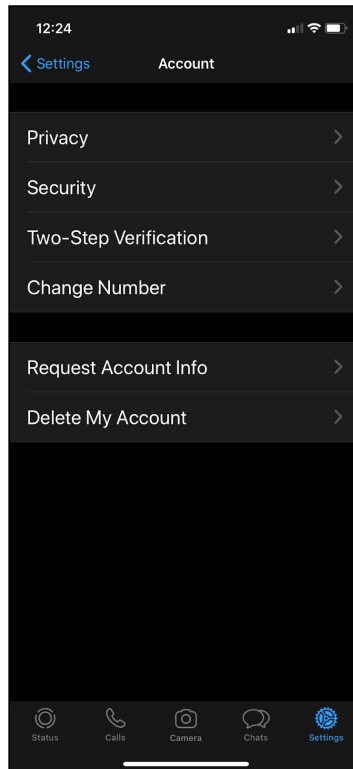
V. Checking if you are sharing your location in any chat

If you are sharing your location in WhatsApp, an abusive person or other people might be able to find out where you are when you have WhatsApp conversations.

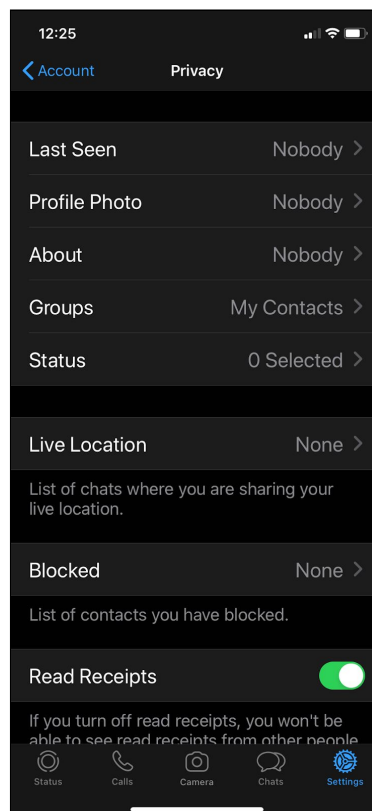
This is WhatsApp's settings screen:



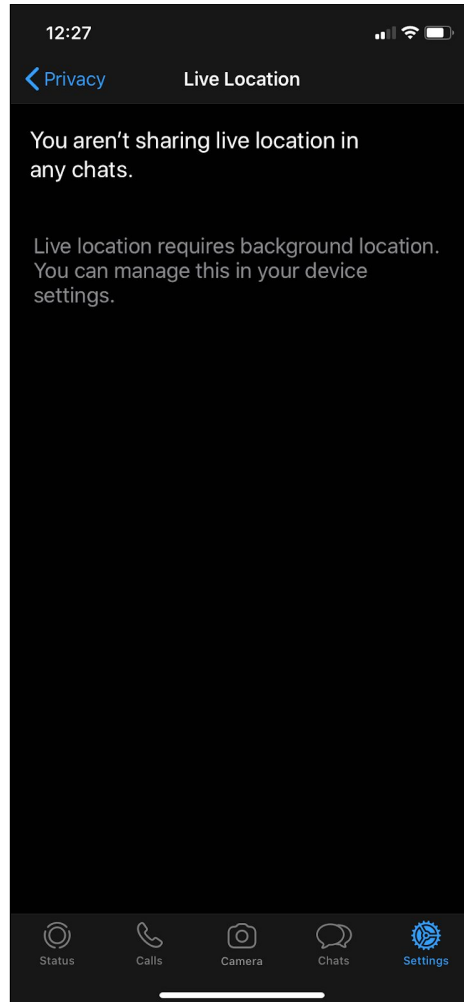
Tap on **Account**. You will see something like this:



Now tap on **Privacy**. You will see something like this:



Tap on **Live Location**. Now, you will see something like this:

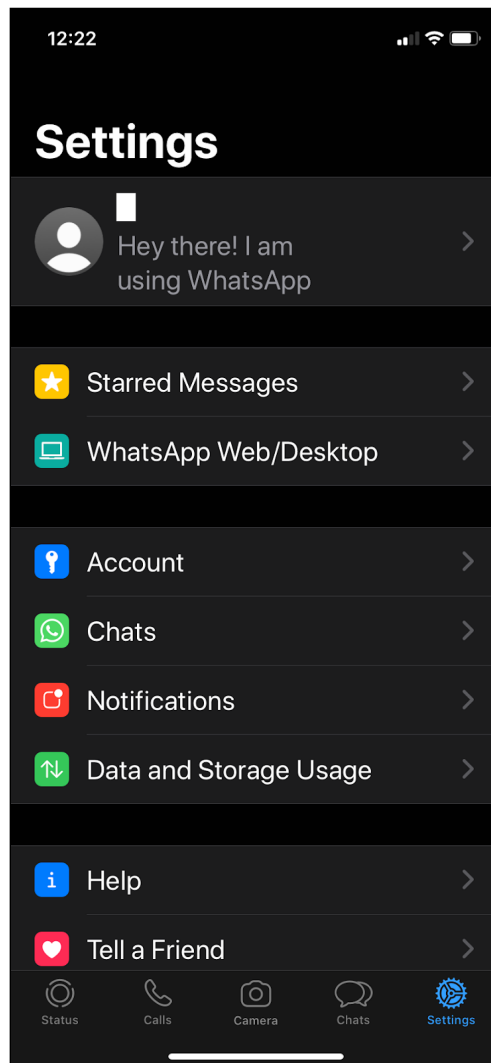


In this screen, you will be able to check if you are sharing your live location information in any chat.

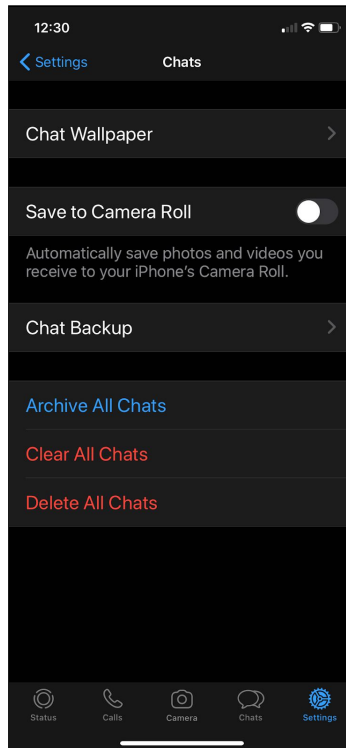
VI. How to Check Chat Backup

If your WhatsApp chats are being backed up to iCloud, then anyone who gets access to your iCloud account could also see your chats. You can stop backing up your chats to iCloud, and/or think about making sure your iCloud account is as secure as possible. CETA has posted a guide to making your iCloud more secure at ceta.tech.cornell.edu.

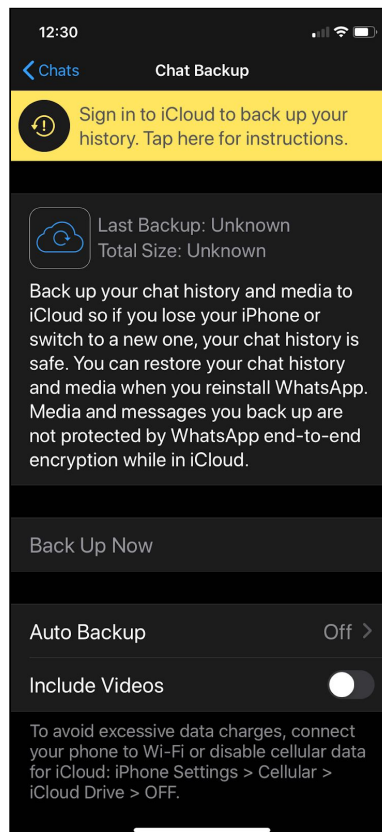
To see if your WhatsApp chats are being backed up, first go to WhatsApp's settings screen:



Tap on **Chats**. You will see something like this:



Tap on **Chat Backup**. You will see something like this:



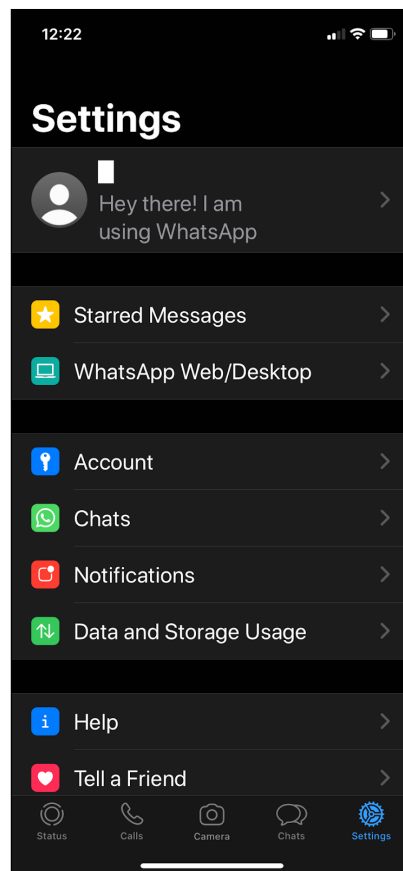
If you think an abusive person might be getting information about you from the chat backups, you can consider disabling the Auto Backup option (by tapping on **Auto Backup** and then tapping **Off**).

VII. Enabling Screen Lock

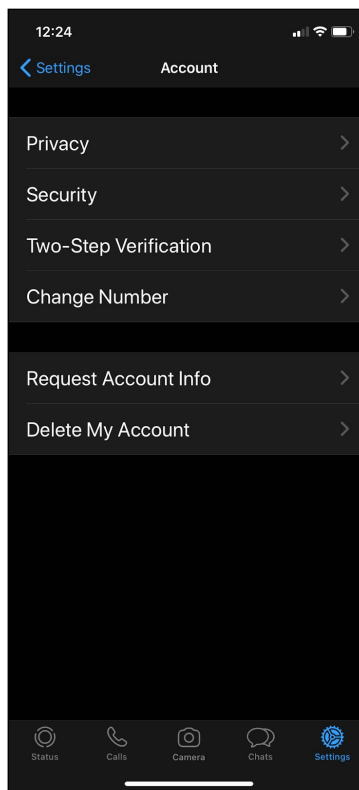
Using Screen Lock can help you keep other people out of your WhatsApp account if they have physical access to your phone.

However, please know that if someone else is able to handle your phone, they could hold it in front of or over your face to unlock WhatsApp -- for example, when you are asleep.

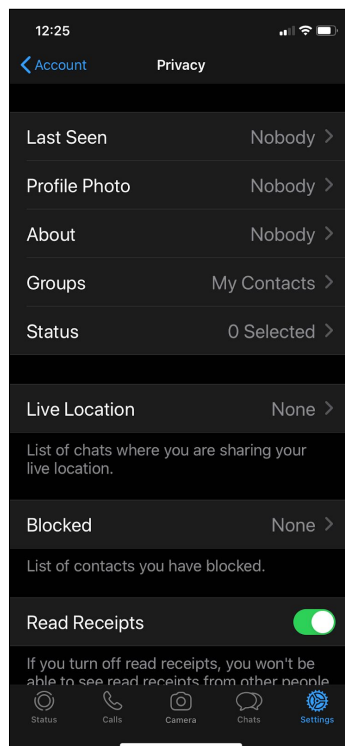
This is WhatsApp's settings screen:



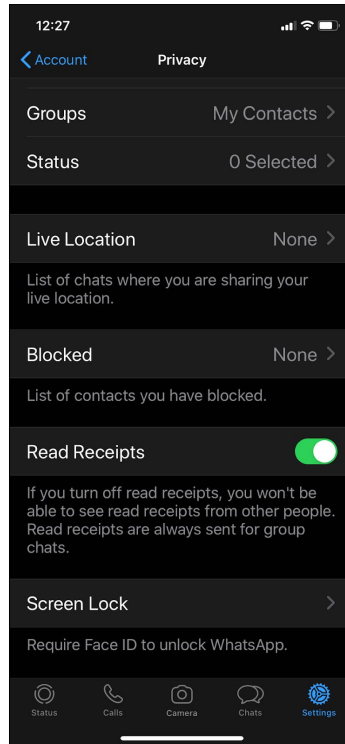
Tap on **Account**. You will see something like this:



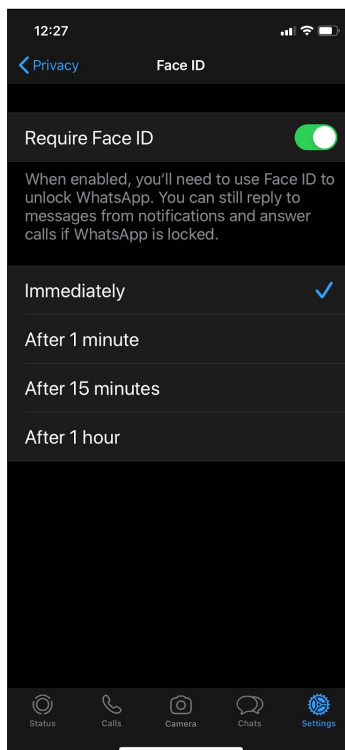
Tap on **Privacy**. You will see something like this:



Swipe up to **Screen Lock**:



Now tap on **Screen Lock**. You will see something like this:

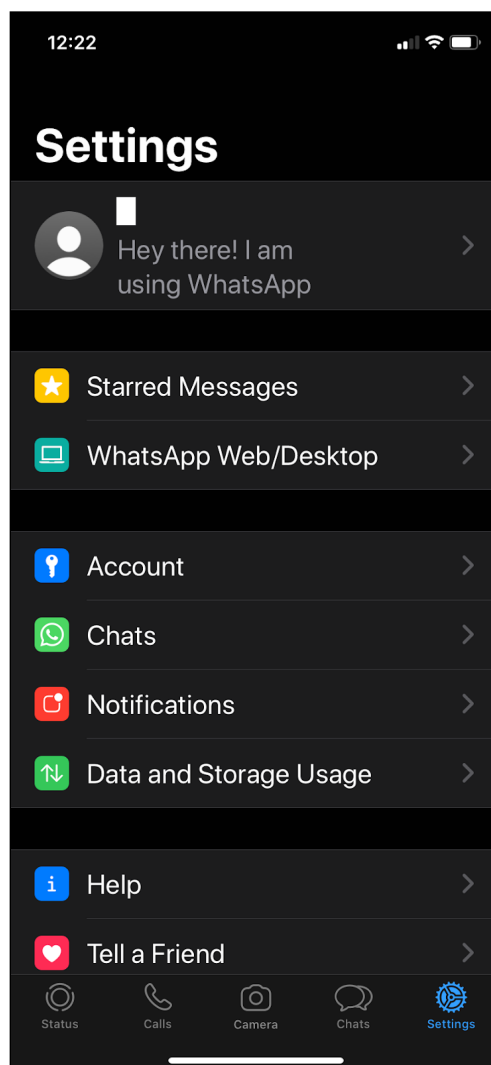


If you enable this option, you will have to use Face ID (Apple's face recognition authentication system) when you open WhatsApp.

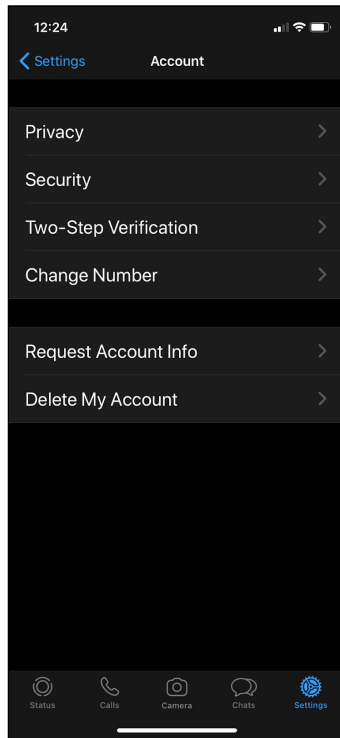
VIII. How to Turn on Two-Step Verification

Two-step verification is an extra security check that can help keep other people out of your WhatsApp account -- even if they find out what your password is.

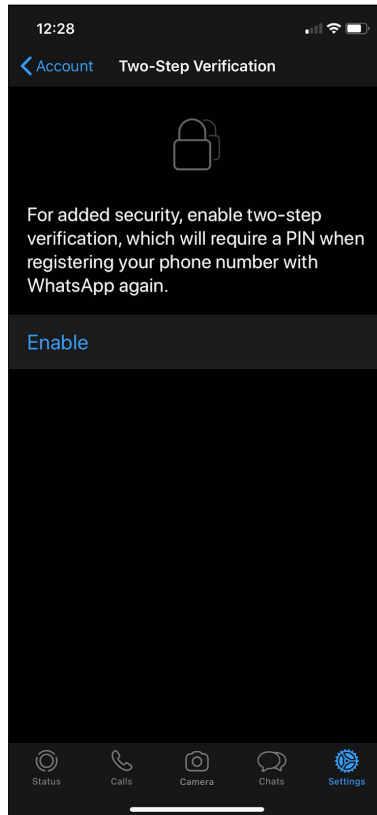
This is WhatsApp's settings screen:



Tap on **Account**. You will see something like this:



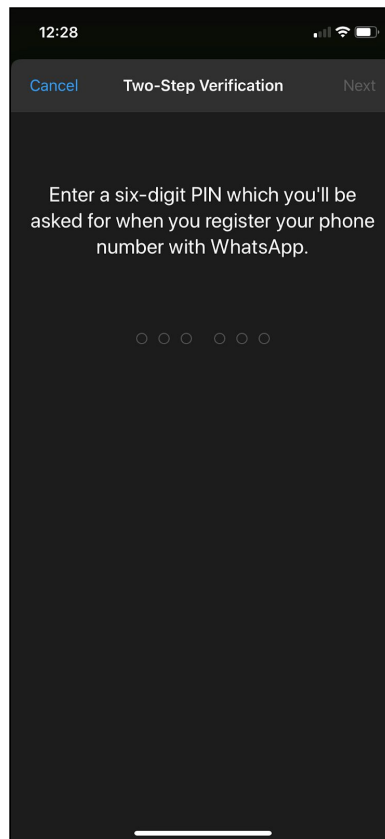
Tap on **Two-Step Verification**. You will see something like this:



If you enable this option, you will need a PIN when you register your phone number with WhatsApp again.

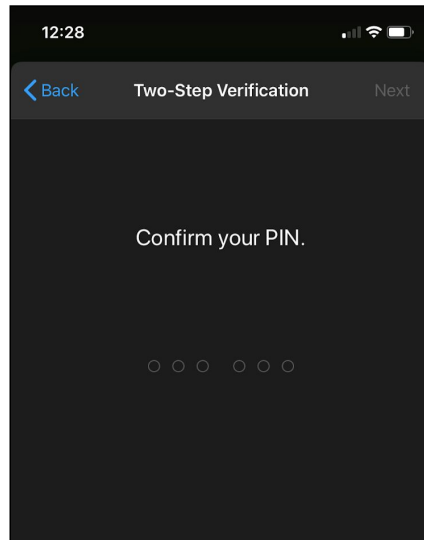
This will help stop a hacker or an abuser from getting into your account.

To enable Two-Step Verification, tap on **Enable**. You will see something like this:

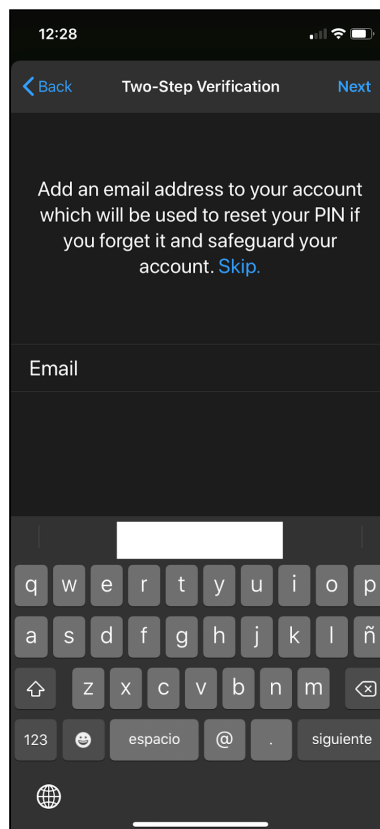


You will need to choose a six-digit code that you will then have to enter when registering your phone number with WhatsApp. We recommend choosing a code that would be hard for anyone else to guess. This means avoiding numbers such as your birthday or a child's birthday.

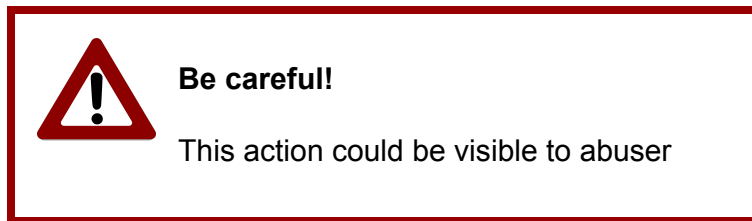
After you've picked and entered a six-digit number, tap on **Next**. You will see something like this:



Enter the six-digit number again and tap on **Next**. You will see something like this:

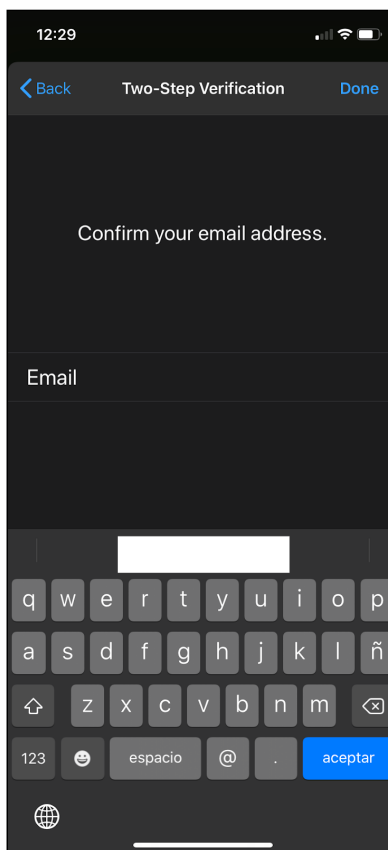


Here, you can enter an email address. If you forget your six-digit number, WhatsApp will help you recover it by sending a message to this email address.

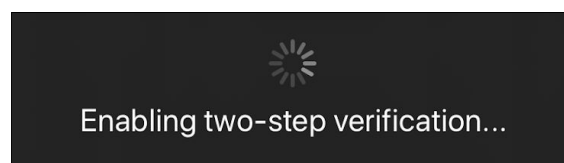


If someone else has access to your email account, they could see email notifications like the one described above from WhatsApp.

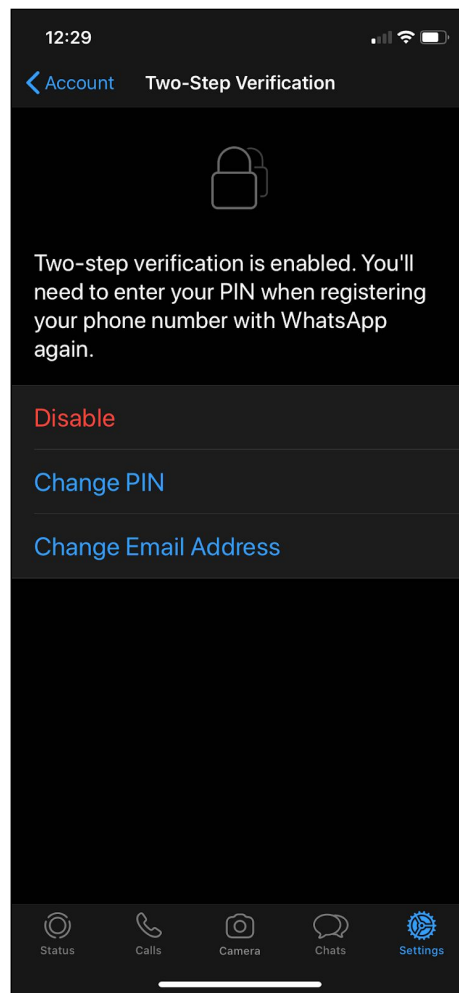
If you decide to do this, tap on **Next**. You will see something like this:



Enter the email address again and tap on **Done**. You will see something like this:



After a few seconds, the next screen will appear:



Congratulations!

You have enabled Two-Step Verification!

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