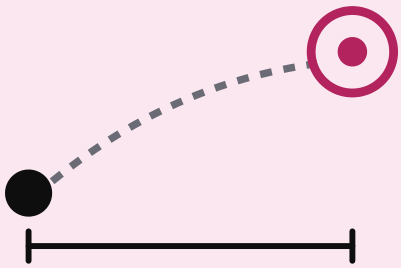
Concept

Fitts's law

The time it takes us to point at something grows the farther away it is and the smaller it is.



In Spanish
Ley de Fitts

Origin
Fitts (1954)

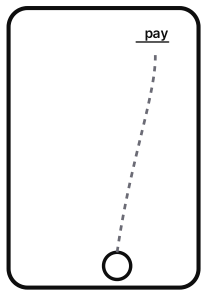
What problem it addresses

Explains why small or distant buttons are hard to hit, and why important ones should be large and within reach.

An example

The pay button in an online store, on your phone.

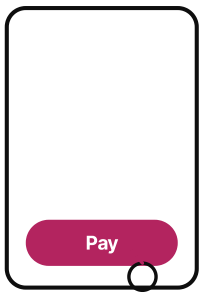
Small and far



Small and far
from the thumb

A small link at the very top, far from the thumb. **Hard to hit.**

Large and close



Large and close
to the thumb

A wide button at the bottom, where the thumb rests. **You tap it without looking.**

What the button does doesn't change; what changes is how much effort it takes to reach it.

Why it happens

1 

A fast movement is imprecise.

2 

The smaller and farther away the target, the more you have to slow down and correct.

3 

Each correction adds time.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Make the most used buttons large and close.

Avoid

Putting the main action small and in a hard-to-reach corner.

Don't fall for it

Placing two opposite actions, like "Save" and "Delete", very close together makes it easy to press the wrong one.

0.18 s vs. 0.73 s

Close and wide

Far and narrow 

What the research says

That was the average time per tap with a close, wide target and with a distant, narrow one, in Fitts's experiments (1954).

●●● **Solid evidence.** The law describes the act of pointing. It does not measure how long we take to decide where to point.

Connections

Used in

- Mobile app design
- UI design
- Inclusive design

Related to

- Ergonomics and human factors
- Human-computer interaction (HCI)
- Hick's law

Authors and works

1954	**Paul M. Fitts**	Measured how the time of a movement changes with the distance and size of the target.
1983	**Stuart K. Card, Thomas P. Moran and Allen Newell**	Built the law into models for predicting interface use.

Sources

Original sources

- Fitts, P. M. (1954). The information capacity of the human motor system in controlling the amplitude of movement. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 47(6), 381–391. View source (https://doi.org/10.1037/h0055392)
- Card, S. K., Moran, T. P., & Newell, A. (1983). The psychology of human-computer interaction. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Last reviewed: October 25, 2026

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