

My First Tinkercad Guide (iPad)

Oct 5, 2026 · @DJ

Welcome, designer!

Tinkercad lets you build 3D models out of simple shapes, like digital building blocks. On an iPad you build with your fingers. By the end of this guide you will have made your own **name keyring** that could be 3D printed.

You will need:

- An iPad with the free **Tinkercad** app
- Your class code from your teacher
- About 45 minutes

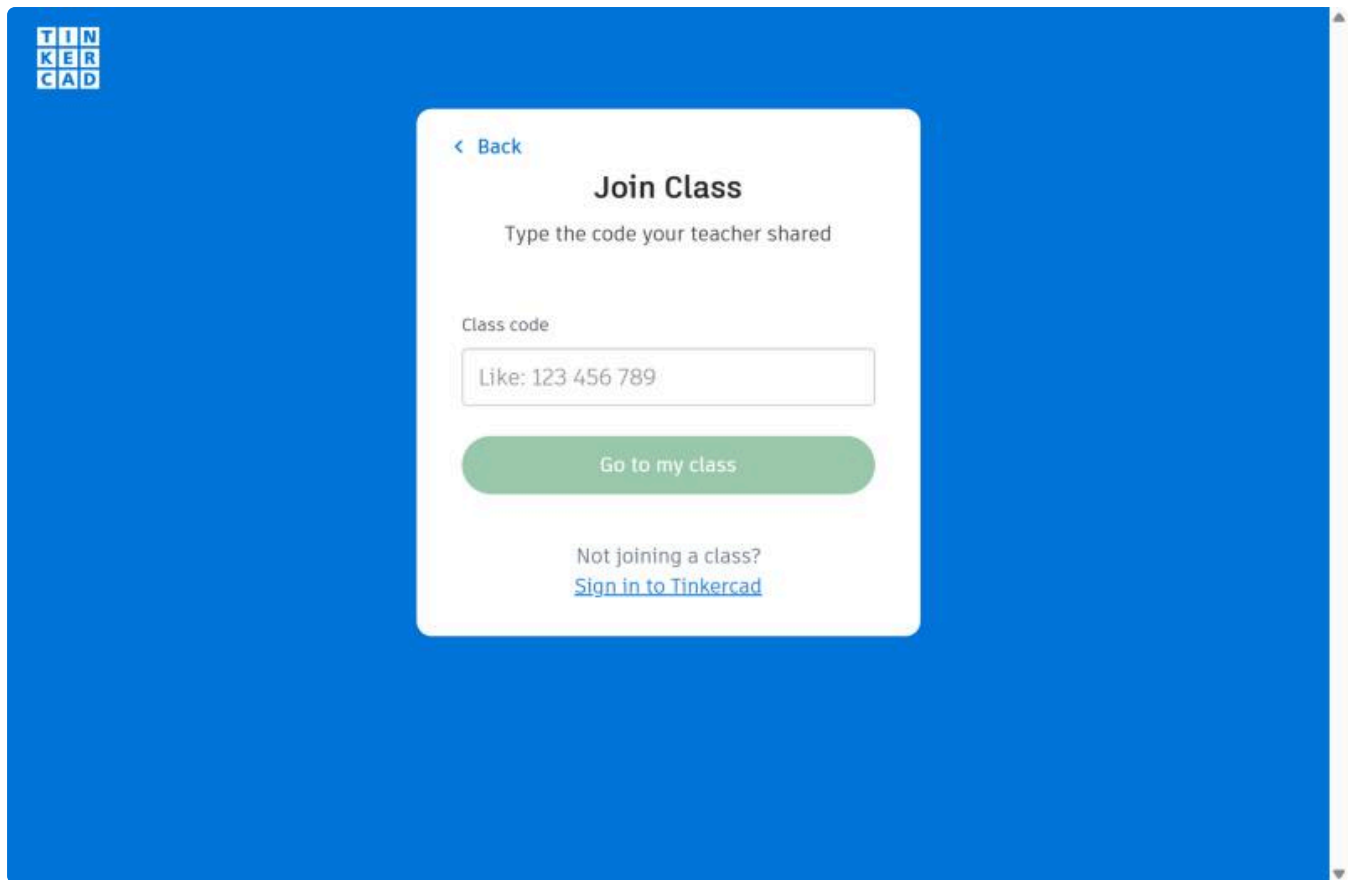
How to use this guide: do one step at a time. Read the step, look at the picture, then try it. Tick the box when you finish.

Golden rule: if something goes wrong, tap the **Undo** button (the curved arrow at the top). You cannot break Tinkercad!

The pictures in this guide come from Tinkercad on a computer. The iPad app looks very similar.

Step 1: Join your class and start a design

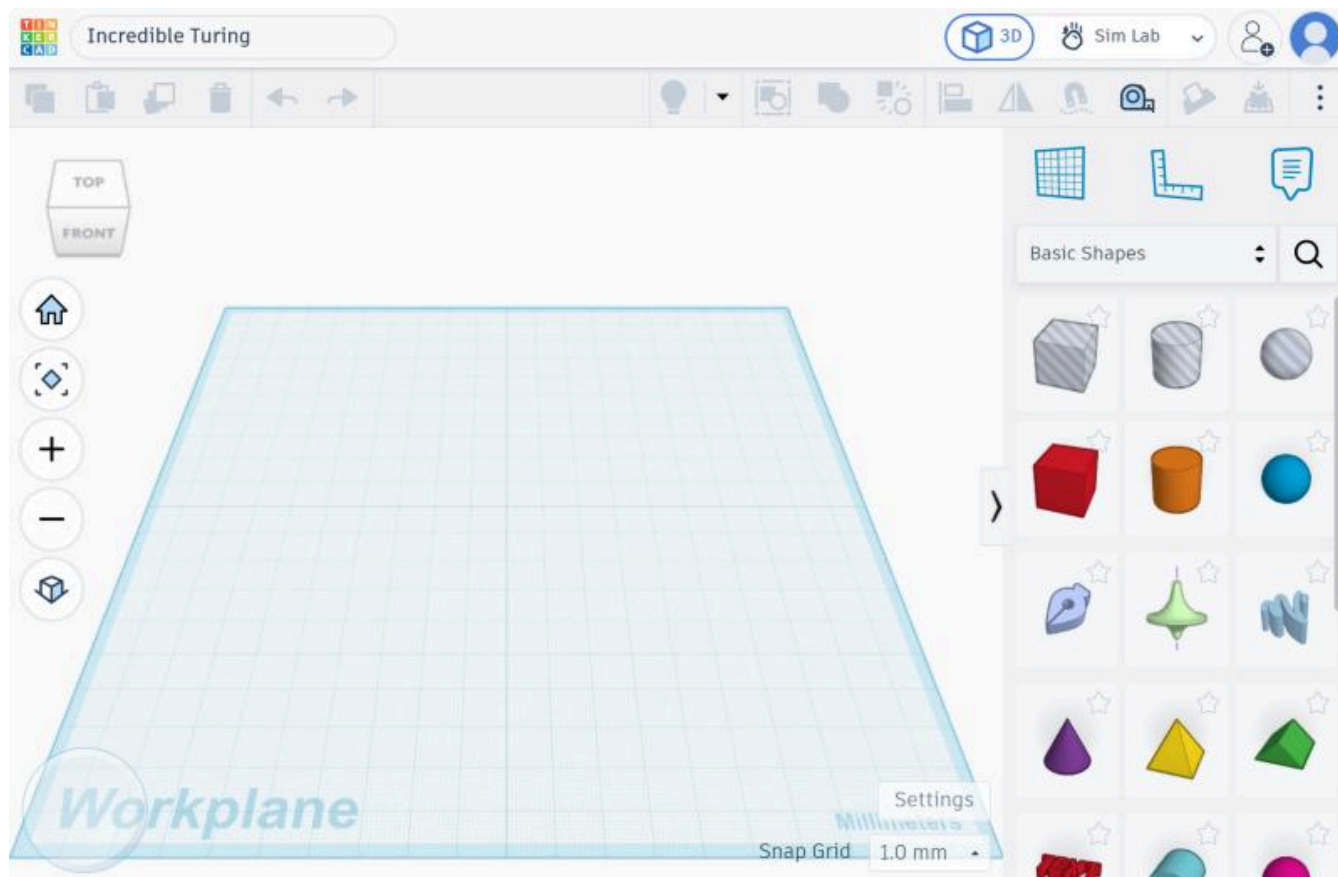
1. Tap the **Tinkercad** app on your iPad to open it.
2. Choose the option for **students joining a class**.
3. Type the **class code** your teacher gives you, then tap **Go to my class**.
4. Type your **name in lowercase letters** (for example: amy), then log in.



5. Tap **Create**, then tap **3D Design**. A new design opens with a funny made-up name. You will change it later.

☐ I have joined my class and opened a new 3D design

Step 2: Get to know the screen



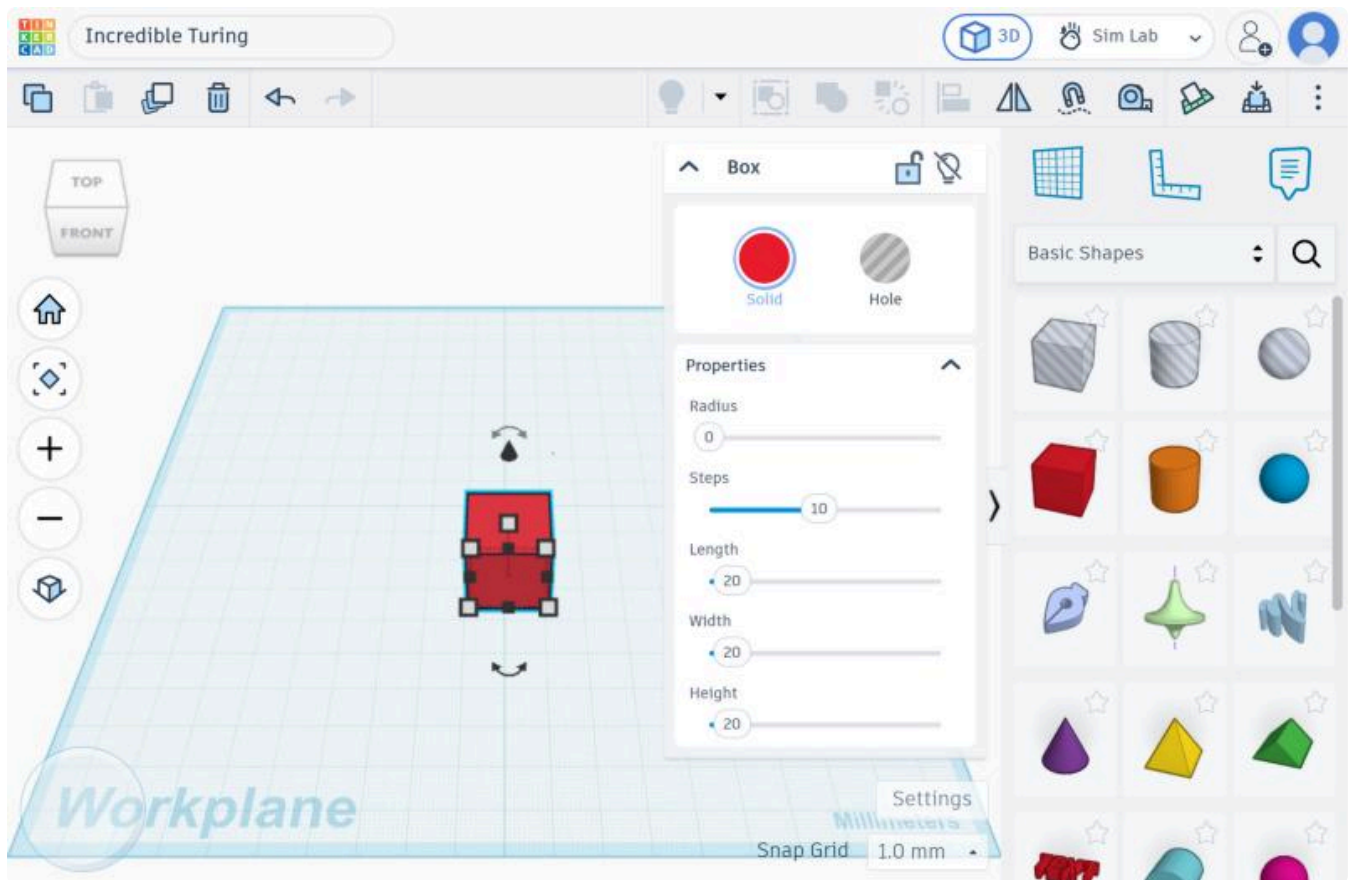
Find each of these parts on your iPad:

- **Workplane** is the blue grid in the middle. Everything you build sits on it.
- **Shapes panel** is on the right. It holds all the shapes you can use.
- **View Cube** is top left. Tap its sides to look at your model from different directions.
- **View buttons** sit under the View Cube: Home, Fit all, Zoom in and Zoom out.
- **Toolbar** is along the top: Copy, Paste, Duplicate, Delete, Undo and Redo.
- **Group and Align buttons** are near the top right. You will use them later.

☐ I can point to the Workplane, Shapes panel and View Cube

Step 3: Add your first shape

1. Find the red **Box** in the Shapes panel.
2. Put your finger on it and **keep it pressed down**.
3. Slide your finger onto the blue Workplane.
4. Lift your finger. Your box appears!



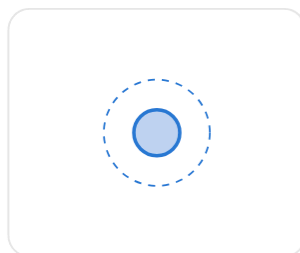
Choosing a shape: tap a shape to select it. Tap an empty part of the grid to unselect it.

Getting rid of a shape: select it and tap the **bin** (Delete) button at the top.

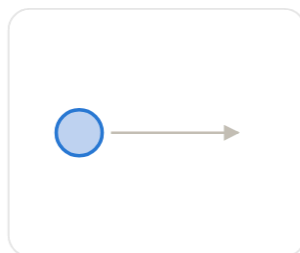
☐ I added a box, then a cylinder and a sphere

Step 4: Finger moves and looking around

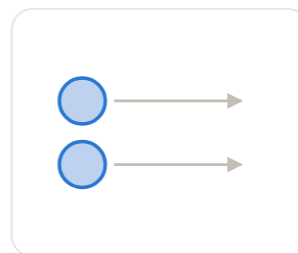
Four finger moves control Tinkercad on an iPad



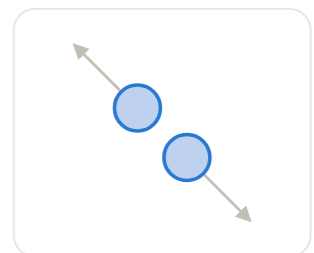
Tap
one finger, quick touch
chooses a shape



Drag
one finger, press and slide
moves a shape



Two-finger drag
two fingers slide together
spins or slides your view



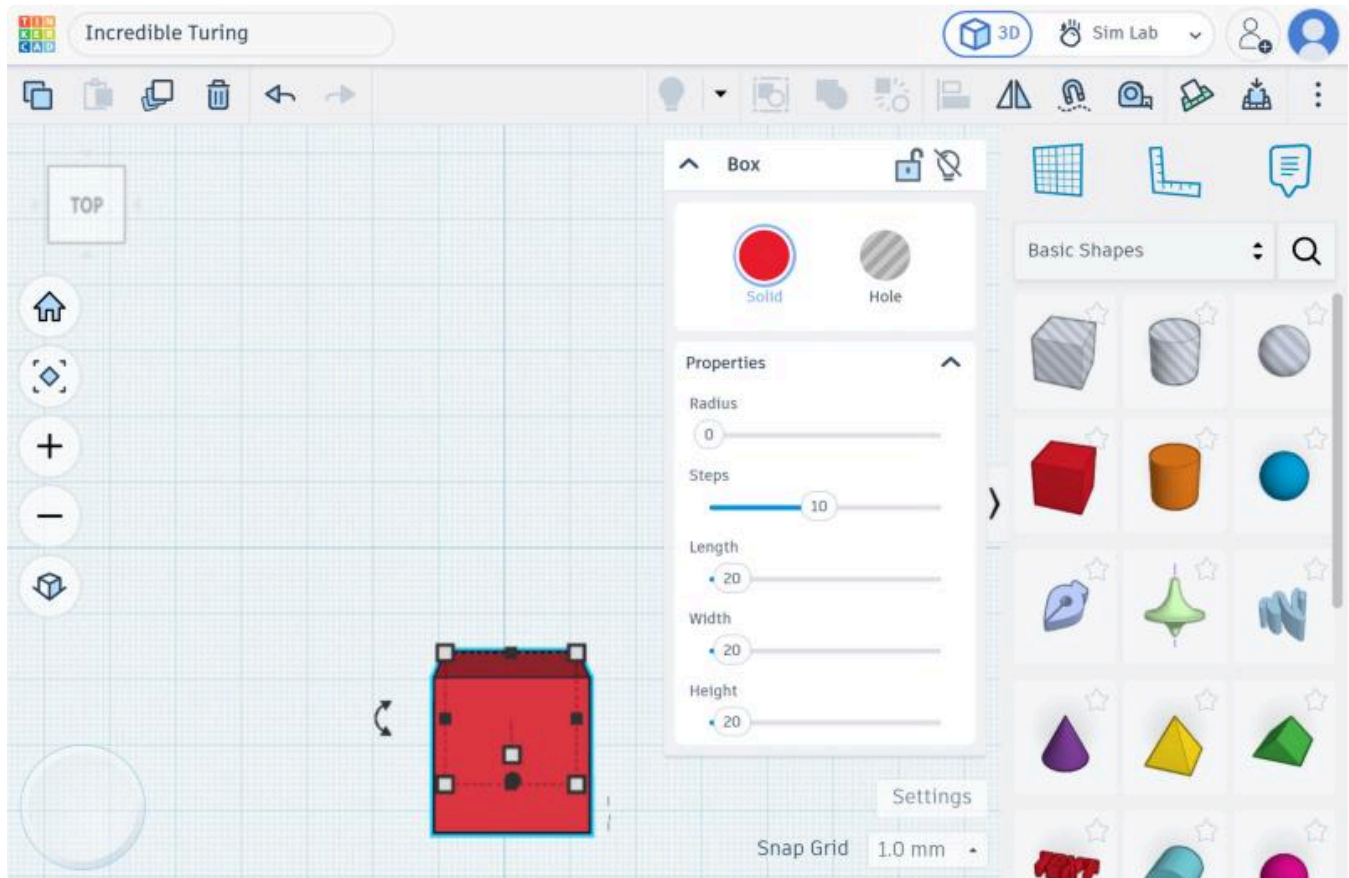
Pinch
fingers apart: zoom in
fingers together: zoom out

Tap, drag, two-finger drag and pinch

Designers look at their models from every side. Try each of these:

1. **Spin around:** put two fingers on the screen and slide them. The view turns.

2. **Zoom:** pinch your fingers apart to get closer, or together to move away.
3. **Use the View Cube:** tap **TOP** on the cube to look straight down. Tap **FRONT** to look from the front.
4. **Go home:** tap the little **house** button to go back to the normal view.

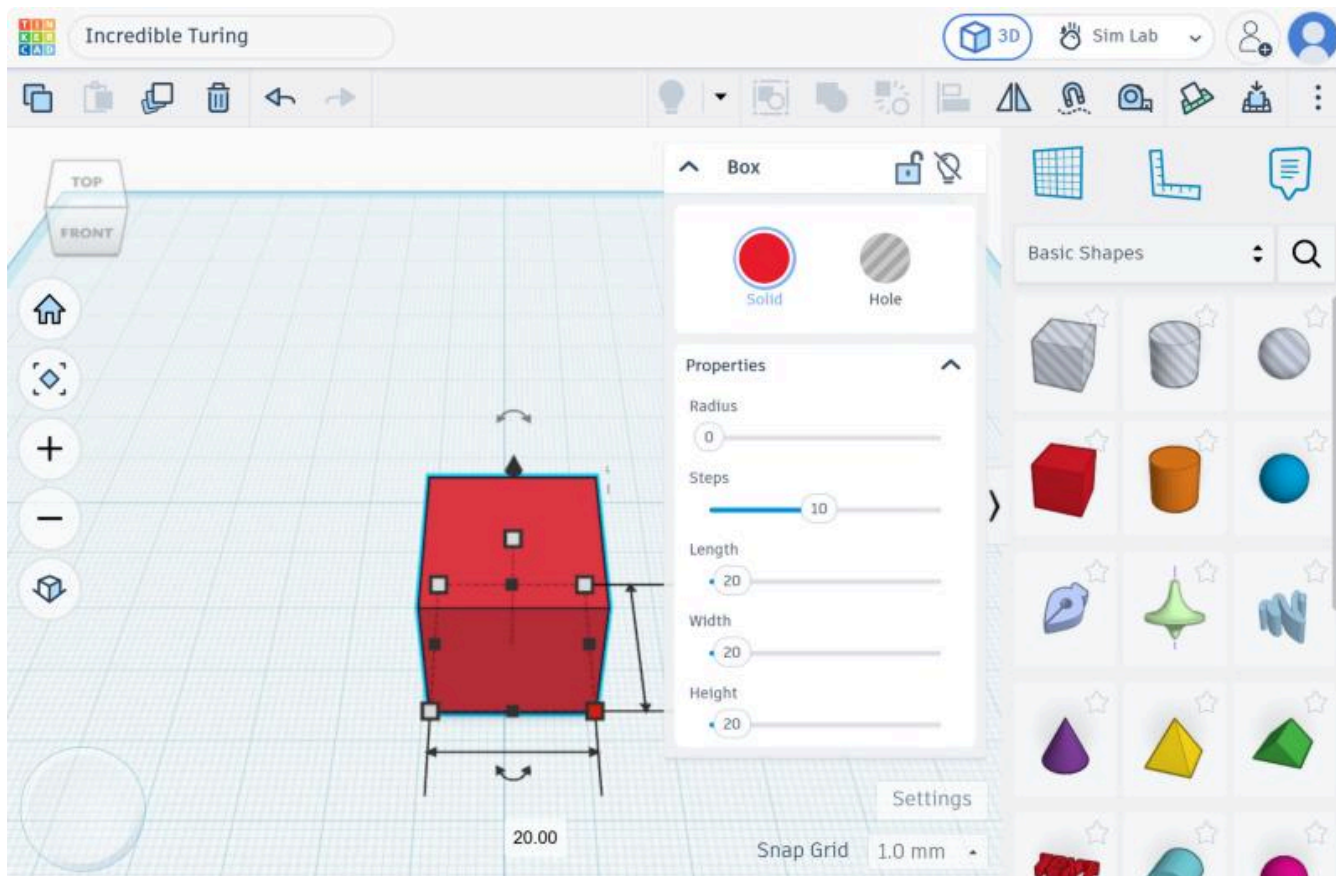


Tip: be gentle! Use the pads of your fingers, not your nails.

☐ I can spin, zoom and go back home

Step 5: Make shapes bigger and smaller

Tap your box to select it. Little squares called **handles** appear around it.



1. Drag a **white square on a corner** to change how long and wide the box is.
2. Drag a **small black square on a side** to stretch the box in just one direction.
3. Drag the **white square on the top** to make the box taller or shorter.
4. Numbers show the size in **millimetres (mm)**. Tap a number and the iPad keyboard pops up. Type a new size and tap **Return**.
5. You can also slide the **Length, Width and Height** sliders in the Shape window.

Try it: make your box 40 mm long, 20 mm wide and 10 mm tall.

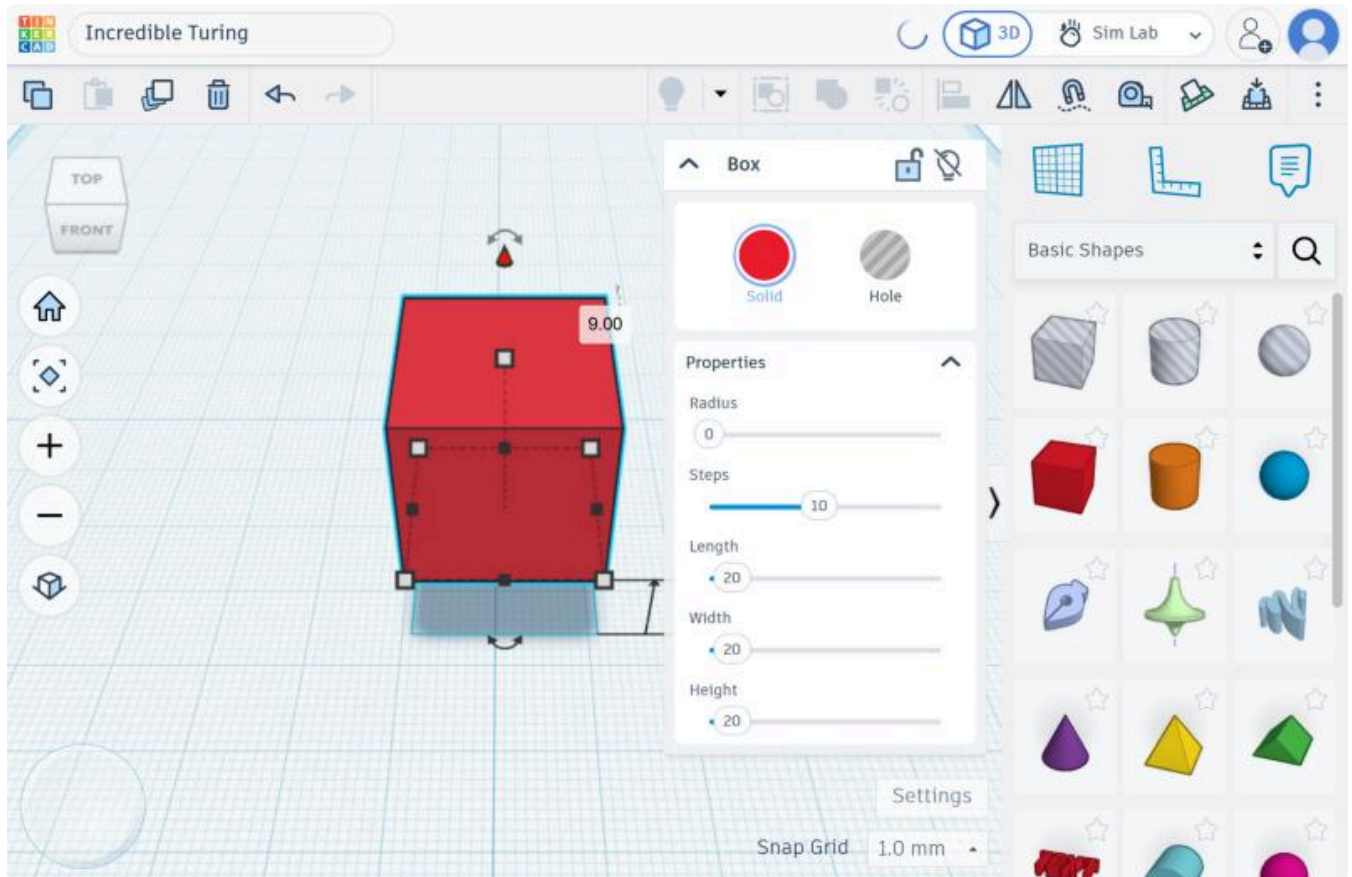
Tip: handles are small. If you keep missing them, pinch to zoom in first.

☐ I changed the size of a shape by dragging and by typing

Step 6: Lift and turn shapes

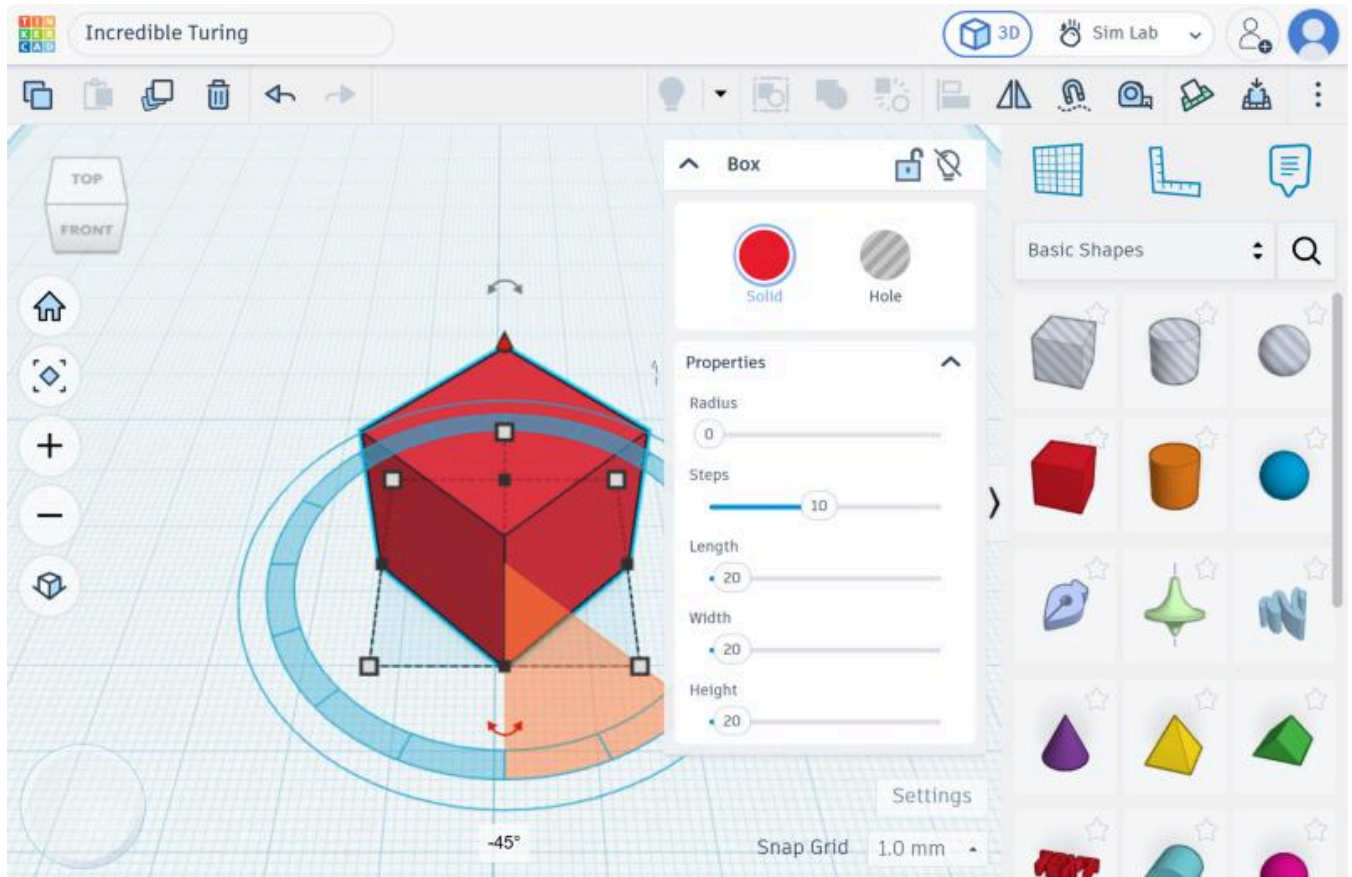
To lift a shape off the ground:

1. Tap the shape to select it.
2. Find the small **black cone** above it.
3. Drag the cone up. The shape floats! A number shows how high it is.
4. To put it back down, drag the cone down until the number says **0**, or tap **Undo**.



To turn a shape:

1. Tap the shape to select it.
2. Find the **curved arrows** around it.
3. Drag a curved arrow to spin the shape. A ring shows you the angle.
4. To get an exact angle, tap the angle number and type it in, like **90**.



- ☐ I lifted a shape and put it back down
- ☐ I turned a shape on its side

Step 7: Change colours and make holes

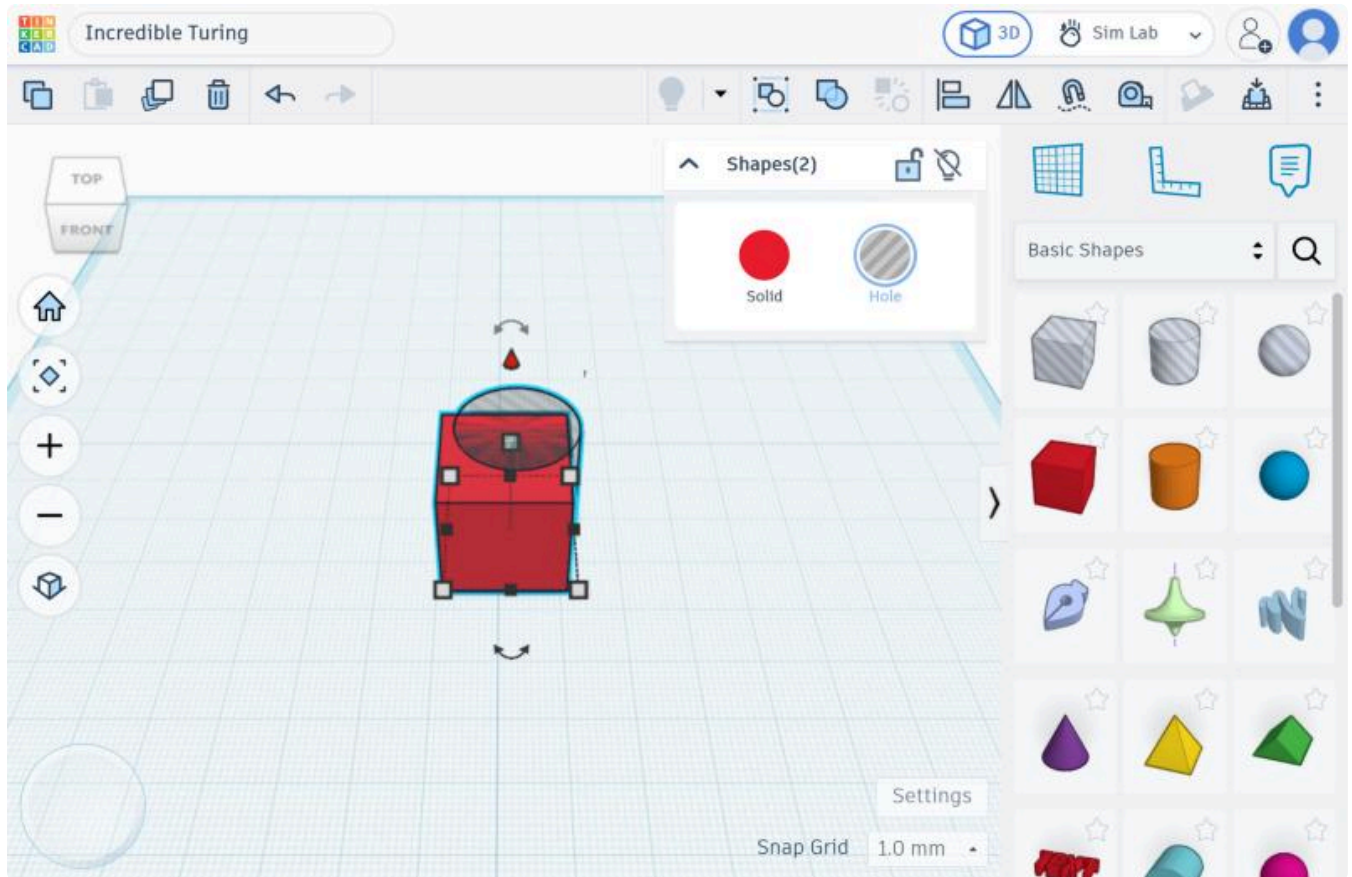
When you select a shape, a small **Shape** window opens near the top right.

To change colour:

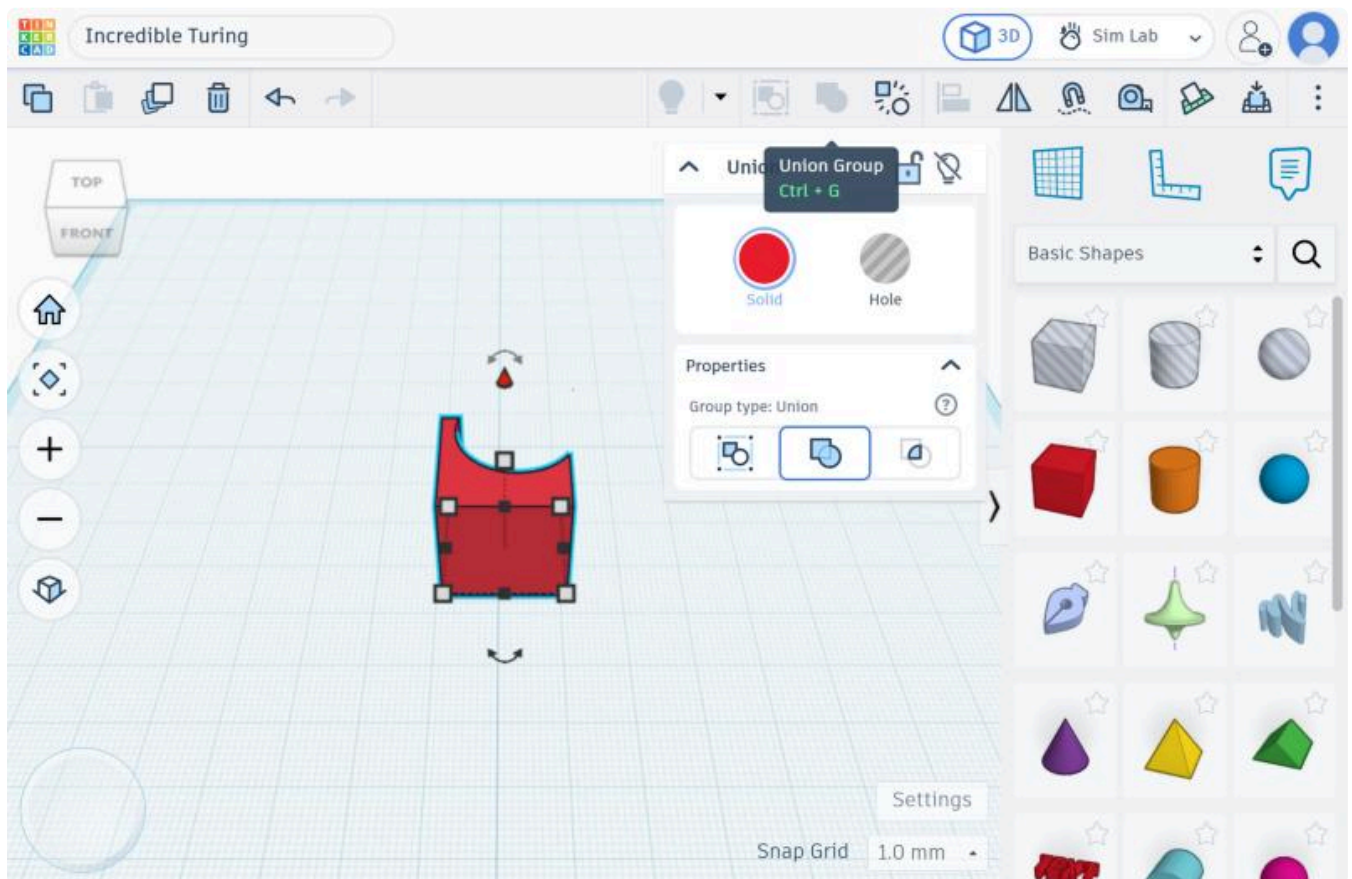
1. Tap the **Solid** button.
2. Tap a colour you like.

To make a hole:

1. Drag a **Cylinder** onto the Workplane next to your box.
2. With the cylinder selected, tap **Hole** in the Shape window. It turns see-through and stripy. (The stripy grey shapes at the top of the Shapes panel are already holes.)
3. Drag the hole so it pokes into the box.
4. Select both shapes (see Step 8).



5. Tap the **Union Group** button in the top toolbar. The hole cuts a piece out of the box!



☐ I changed a shape's colour

☐ I made a hole in a shape

Step 8: Group and line up shapes

Choosing more than one shape: put one finger on an **empty** part of the grid and drag it to draw a box around all the shapes you want. Let go and they are all selected.

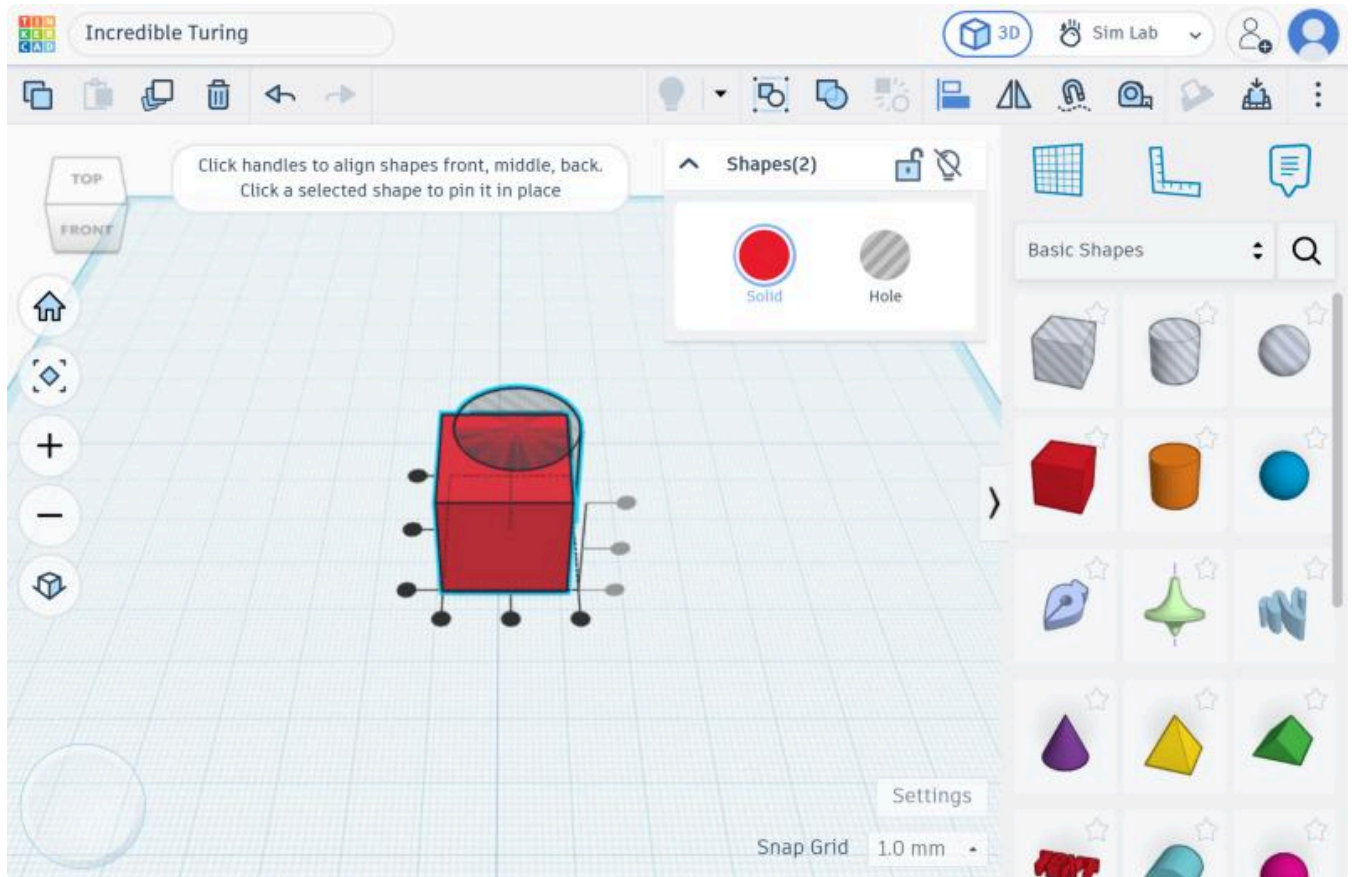
Two kinds of group:

Button	What it does
Union Group	Joins shapes into one big shape. Holes cut pieces away.
Bundle Group	Keeps shapes together so they move as one, without joining them.

Changed your mind? Select the group and tap the **Ungroup** button.

Lining shapes up with Align:

1. Choose two or more shapes.
2. Tap the **Align** button in the top toolbar.
3. Little black dots appear around the shapes. Tap a **middle dot** to line the shapes up through their centres.

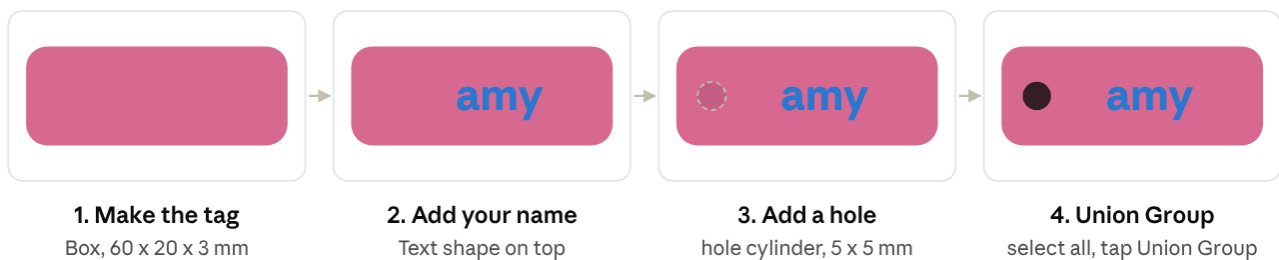


- ☐ I joined two shapes with Union Group
- ☐ I lined two shapes up with Align

Step 9: Project - make a name keyring

Now use everything you have learned to make a keyring with your name on it.

A name keyring is built in four steps (seen from the top)



The four stages of the name keyring

Part 1: The tag

1. Drag a **Box** onto the Workplane.
2. Tap the size numbers and make it **60 mm** long, **20 mm** wide and **3 mm** tall.
3. In the Shape window, slide **Radius** up a little to give it round corners.

4. Pick a colour you like.

Part 2: Your name

1. Scroll down the Shapes panel with one finger and find **Text**.
2. Drag it **on top of** your tag. It sits on the tag's top.
3. In the Shape window, tap the text box, delete the word TEXT and type your name.
4. Make the letters **3 mm** tall. Resize them so they fit on the tag, leaving space at one end.
5. Give your name a different colour so it stands out.

Part 3: The keyring hole

1. Drag a stripy **Cylinder hole** to the empty end of your tag.
2. Make it **5 mm** long and **5 mm** wide.
3. Make it **10 mm** tall so it goes right through the tag.

Part 4: Finish it

1. Drag one finger across empty grid to draw a box around everything.
2. Tap **Union Group**. The hole is cut through and your keyring is one shape!
3. Use two fingers to spin around it and check it from every side.

- ☐ My keyring has a tag, my name and a hole
- ☐ I grouped it into one shape

Saving, quick fixes and challenges

Saving and naming your design

- Tinkercad **saves your work by itself** as you go.
- To give your design a proper name, tap its funny name at the top left, type a new name (like *amy keyring*) and tap **Return**.
- To find it again, go back to your designs list in the app.

Handy buttons along the top

Button	What it does
Undo (curved arrow left)	Takes back your last move. Fixes mistakes!
Redo (curved arrow right)	Puts it back again
Duplicate	Makes a copy of the selected shape
Delete (bin)	Removes the selected shape

Oops! Quick fixes

- **Something went wrong?** Tap Undo until it's fixed.
- **Can't see your model?** Tap the Home button under the View Cube.
- **The view keeps spinning when you want to move a shape?** Use **one** finger on the shape. Two fingers move the view.
- **Can't grab a handle?** Pinch to zoom in, then try again.

Challenges for fast finishers

- ☐ Add a border around your keyring using a hole box that is slightly smaller than the tag
- ☐ Add a star or heart from the Shapes panel
- ☐ Build a house with a roof, a door hole and windows
- ☐ Make a robot from at least six shapes, then Bundle Group it

My Tinkercad checklist

- ☐ I can add, move and delete shapes
- ☐ I can change size, colour and angle
- ☐ I can make holes and group shapes
- ☐ I made and named my own keyring