BILL'S HOME TECH

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10 Things Your AirPods Can Do Besides Play Music

Your AirPods are far more than earbuds — ten genuinely useful tricks

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

AirPods do far more than play music. Turn on Announce Notifications to have texts read into your ear, and Announce Calls under Phone settings to hear who is calling before you answer. In a noisy room, AirPods Pro Transparency mode and Conversation Boost help you hear the person in front of you, and newer AirPods Pro even include an approved Hearing Aid feature set up with a quick test.

Find lost AirPods with Play Sound in the Find My app, block noise with Noise Cancellation, and let them pause when you remove a bud. Most settings live in one place: Settings, then tap your AirPods at the top.

1 The Short Version

Your AirPods are tiny computers that happen to play music. With a few settings turned on, they can read your messages into your ear, let you hear a conversation more clearly in a noisy restaurant, ring when you have lost them, and announce who is calling before you answer.

None of these cost anything extra — they are features already in your AirPods and iPhone, waiting to be switched on. Pick the ones that sound useful and ignore the rest; there is no need to do all ten.

- AirPods can read texts aloud, help you hear, and find themselves.
- Everything here is free and already built in.
- Most tricks are set up once in the AirPods settings, then just work.
- Newer AirPods Pro models add genuine hearing help.

> **TIP**
>
> Start by naming your AirPods and exploring their settings: with the AirPods connected, open Settings on your iPhone and tap their name at the very top. Everything in this guide lives in that one screen.

2 Finding the AirPods Settings

Almost every trick here is turned on in one place, so it helps to know how to get there.

1. Make sure your AirPods are in your ears or the open case, connected to your iPhone.
2. Open Settings on the iPhone.
3. Tap the AirPods' name near the very top of the Settings list (above your other settings).
4. This screen holds the controls for noise modes, ear detection, the press-and-hold actions, and more.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you do not see your AirPods at the top of Settings, open the case next to the phone or put them in your ears for a moment — the settings appear once they are connected.

3 1. Have Your Texts Read to You

AirPods can read incoming text messages into your ear and let you reply by voice — wonderful when your hands are busy or the phone is across the room.

1. Open Settings, then Notifications, then Announce Notifications.
2. Turn it on, and turn on Messages beneath it.
3. Now, with AirPods in, a new text is read aloud; just speak your reply when prompted.

> **TIP**
>
> You can choose which apps get announced, so you are not interrupted by every little thing — keep it to Messages and perhaps reminders, and leave the noisy apps off.

4 2. Hear a Conversation More Clearly

In a noisy room, AirPods can turn up the voice of the person in front of you. On AirPods Pro this is part of their listening modes; a related feature can even use the iPhone as a little microphone across the table.

1. With AirPods Pro in, switch to Transparency mode (press and hold the stem, or use Control Center) so you hear the room naturally.
2. To focus on one speaker, explore Conversation Boost in the AirPods accessibility settings, which emphasizes the voice in front of you.
3. Adjust the levels until the voice is clear and comfortable.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Conversation Boost and the hearing features are found under Settings, Accessibility, then your AirPods or the hearing section. They are designed for exactly the noisy-restaurant struggle so many people know well.

5 3. Use Them as a Hearing Aid

Newer AirPods Pro models include a clinical-grade Hearing Aid feature in the United States — a genuine, approved way to help with mild to moderate hearing loss, set up with a quick hearing test on your iPhone.

1. With supported AirPods Pro, open Settings and tap the AirPods at the top.
2. Look for the Hearing or Hearing Health section and take the built-in hearing test.
3. If it fits your needs, turn on the Hearing Aid feature, which tailors sound to your hearing.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> This is a real hearing-help feature, but it is not a substitute for seeing an audiologist if your hearing is a serious concern. Think of it as a helpful everyday boost. If you are unsure whether your AirPods support it or how to set it up, I am glad to help.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

6 4. Find Lost AirPods

Slip one down the couch? AirPods can play a sound and show their last known location on a map through the Find My app.

1. Open the Find My app on your iPhone (or any device on your account).
2. Tap Devices and choose your AirPods.
3. Tap Play Sound to make them chirp so you can follow the noise.
4. If they are out of range, the map shows where they last were.

TIP

Play Sound ramps up gradually, so listen closely at first. It is perfect for a single bud lost in bedding or under a cushion.

7 5. Announce Who's Calling

Your AirPods can say the caller's name in your ear before you decide to answer, so you never have to dig out the phone to see who it is.

1. Open Settings, then Phone, and find Announce Calls.
2. Choose "Headphones" (or "Headphones & Car").
3. Now an incoming call speaks the caller's name through your AirPods.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can answer or decline hands-free once the name is announced, which is especially handy while cooking, gardening, or driving.

8 6. Control Everything Without the Phone

You can play, pause, skip, answer calls, and summon Siri right from the AirPods, so the phone can stay in your pocket.

- Press the stem (AirPods Pro) or the AirPods to play or pause and answer calls.
- Press twice to skip forward, three times to go back.
- Press and hold to switch listening modes or call up Siri, depending on your settings.
- Say the Siri wake word to ask for a song, a timer, or a reminder, hands-free.

> **TIP**
> You can customize what press-and-hold does for each AirPod in the AirPods settings — set one side for Siri and the other for noise modes, whatever suits you.

9 7. Block Out Noise to Rest or Focus

AirPods Pro can actively hush the world around you, which is a blessing on a plane, in a waiting room, or when you simply want quiet.

1. With AirPods Pro in, press and hold the stem to cycle to Noise Cancellation.
2. Or open Control Center, press and hold the volume slider, and choose Noise Cancellation.
3. Enjoy the quiet; switch back to Transparency when you need to hear around you.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Noise Cancellation does not have to be playing music — you can wear them in silence just to soften a loud room. Many people use them this way to rest or concentrate.

10

8. Automatically Pause When You Take Them Out

A small but delightful trick: AirPods sense when they are in your ears, so your music pauses the moment you remove one and resumes when you pop it back in.

1. Open Settings and tap your AirPods at the top.
2. Make sure Automatic Ear Detection is turned on.
3. Now removing a bud pauses playback; replacing it resumes.

> **TIP**
> If your audio keeps playing out of the phone speaker instead of the AirPods, or does not pause when you remove a bud, Automatic Ear Detection being off is the usual reason — turn it back on.

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9. Share Audio With a Friend

Two sets of AirPods can listen to the same thing from one iPhone — lovely for watching a show together on a flight or sharing a song without disturbing anyone.

1. Start playing audio on your iPhone with your AirPods connected.
2. Open Control Center and tap the audio card, then the share-audio icon.
3. Bring the second pair of AirPods close and follow the prompt to join.
4. Both pairs now hear the same audio, each with its own volume.

GOOD TO KNOW

This works with two sets of AirPods, or an AirPods and some compatible Beats headphones. It is a quiet, considerate way to share.

12 10. Switch Between Your Devices Automatically

If you have more than one Apple device, AirPods can hop to whichever you are using — from the iPad you were watching to the iPhone that just rang.

1. Make sure your devices are on the same Apple Account.
2. Start audio on one device; the AirPods connect to it.
3. Answer a call or start audio on another, and the AirPods switch over automatically.
4. If they switch when you did not want them to, tap the AirPods name on the device you prefer to pull them back.

TIP

If the automatic switching ever gets in your way, you can turn it off in the AirPods settings so they stay put on one device until you choose otherwise.

13 Keeping Them Working Well

A little care keeps AirPods reliable and sounding their best, and avoids the frustration of a bud that will not connect or dies early.

- Keep them charged in their case; the case charges the buds.
- Wipe the buds and case gently with a dry, soft cloth — earwax on the mesh dulls the sound.
- Keep your iPhone updated so the features stay current.
- If one bud goes quiet or will not connect, put both back in the case, wait, and take them out again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Most "my AirPods stopped working" moments are a quick reset: hold them in the closed case for a few seconds, or use the Forget-and-reconnect steps. If that does not do it, I am happy to sort it out with you.

14 Which AirPods Do You Have?

A few of the best tricks — especially the hearing features and the strongest noise cancellation — depend on which AirPods you own, so it helps to know. The simplest way to tell is right in the settings: with the AirPods connected, open Settings on your iPhone and tap their name at the top, and you will see the model listed.

In broad terms, the standard AirPods are the ones without the soft silicone tips, and they handle most tricks here — reading texts, finding themselves, announcing calls, automatic switching. The AirPods Pro have the soft tips that seal your ear, and they add the listening modes: Transparency to hear the room, Noise Cancellation to shut it out, and on the newer Pro models, the approved Hearing Aid feature.

If you are not sure which you have, that model line in Settings tells you, and I am glad to look with you.

None of this means you need to rush out and buy a newer pair. Whatever model you own already does more than you were shown, and the tricks it supports are the ones worth learning first. Knowing the model simply saves you hunting for a feature your particular AirPods do not have.

15 A Real Example: A Noisy Family Dinner

Imagine a busy restaurant with the grandchildren, where the clatter of the room makes it hard to follow what your daughter is saying across the table. This is exactly the situation the AirPods Pro listening features were built for, and using them is far more discreet than most people expect — they look like ordinary earbuds.

You slip in your AirPods Pro and switch to Transparency mode so you still hear the room naturally, then turn on Conversation Boost from the accessibility settings, which lifts the voice of whoever is in front of you above the background din. The clatter softens into the background and your daughter's words come through clearly. You can adjust how strong the effect is until it feels comfortable, and switch it off the moment the meal winds down.

WATCH OUT

These features genuinely help in noisy rooms, but if following conversations has become a real daily struggle, it is worth seeing an audiologist as well — the AirPods are a helpful everyday boost, not a full replacement for a proper hearing evaluation.

16 When to Call Bill

None of this is a test, and there is no prize for struggling. Most of these tricks take a minute once you know where to look, and this guide gets you there. But if a setting hides somewhere new on your version, or you would simply rather have someone set it up with you and show you once, that is exactly the kind of visit I make.

I come to you here in Portage County, sit down beside you, and set these up on your own phone or tablet so they work the way you want. I will show you each one slowly, write down the few steps that matter, and make sure you can do it yourself afterward. No rush, no jargon, and no question is too small.

- You want texts-aloud, caller announcements, or the hearing features set up and tuned.
- Your AirPods keep switching devices or will not stay connected.
- You would like a patient walk-through of the three or four tricks most useful to you.
- You would simply rather have it set up correctly the first time, with someone showing you how.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Most tricks live in Settings tap your AirPods at the top.

I want to...	Do this...
Hear texts read aloud	Settings Notifications Announce Notifications Messages
Hear better in noise	AirPods Pro: Transparency; Accessibility Conversation Boost
Use as a hearing aid	Supported AirPods Pro: Settings AirPods Hearing take the test
Find lost AirPods	Find My app Devices your AirPods Play Sound
Hear who's calling	Settings Phone Announce Calls Headphones
Block out noise	AirPods Pro: press and hold stem Noise Cancellation
Pause when removed	Settings AirPods Automatic Ear Detection on
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

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KEY SPECS

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Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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