BILL'S HOME TECH

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Alexa+ Is Smarter Now — What to Ask It in 2026

The Echo you already own got a big upgrade — here's what the new Alexa+ can really do

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

The smarter 2026 version of Alexa is called Alexa+, and it understands plain, natural speech instead of stiff commands — you can ramble, change your mind, and ask follow-ups without starting over. Just say "Alexa," then talk normally: ask about the weather, set reminders and timers, control smart lights, make family calls, or ask bigger how-to questions.

It's included with Amazon Prime, or about $20 a month on its own. Check what you have by asking "Alexa, are you Alexa Plus?" It can still be confidently wrong, so double-check health, money, hours, and phone numbers — and never speak passwords or card numbers to it.

Review and delete recordings in the app's Alexa Privacy settings.

- Talk naturally and follow up — it remembers the thread.
- "Alexa, stop" halts anything instantly.
- Double-check anything consequential; never speak secrets aloud to it.

1 The Short Version

If you have an Amazon Echo speaker, the Alexa inside it got a big upgrade. The smarter 2026 version is called Alexa+, and it understands you far better than the old one. You no longer have to phrase things in a stiff, robotic way — you can talk to it the way you would talk to a helpful person, change your mind mid-sentence, and ask follow-up questions without starting over.

This guide shows you what the new Alexa+ can do, how to tell if you have it, and the genuinely useful things to ask it. We will keep it practical — no gadgets to buy, just better conversations with the speaker you already own. And we will be honest about the parts where it still slips up.

- The smarter 2026 version of Alexa is called Alexa+.

- It understands plain, natural speech and remembers what you just said.
- It is included for Amazon Prime members, or about $20 a month on its own.
- It can still be wrong, so double-check anything that really matters.

> **TIP**
>
> You talk to Alexa+ the same way as before — just say "Alexa," then your request. The difference is you can be far more natural about it. Try "Alexa, what should I make for dinner with what's probably in my fridge?" and see how much more human it feels.

2 What Changed With Alexa+

The old Alexa was a bit like a vending machine for facts: say the exact right words and get a short answer, phrase it slightly wrong and get "I don't know that one." Alexa+ is built on newer AI, so it understands meaning, not just keywords. You can be vague, ramble, or correct yourself, and it keeps up.

- It holds a conversation: ask a follow-up and it remembers what you were just talking about.
- It handles several things in one breath: "Turn off the kitchen lights and set an alarm for seven."
- It speaks in a warmer, more natural voice and gives fuller answers.
- It can help plan and organize, not just report facts.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> You do not need a new speaker for most of this. Amazon designed Alexa+ to work on the Echo devices people already own, so in most cases the upgrade simply arrives — there is nothing to buy or plug in.

3 Do You Have Alexa+? How to Tell

Alexa+ rolled out gradually through 2026, so not everyone got it on the same day. There is an easy way to check without digging through menus.

1. Just ask: "Alexa, are you Alexa Plus?" It will tell you.
2. Or open the Alexa app on your phone and look for an Alexa+ banner or setting.
3. Notice how it handles a vague request — if it follows a rambling question easily, you likely have it.
4. If you are not sure, it is fine; the everyday commands in this guide work on the older Alexa too.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Alexa+ is included at no extra charge for Amazon Prime members. If you are not a Prime member, Amazon offers it for a monthly fee (reported around $20 a month in 2026), and there is a limited free version. Prices and terms change, so check in the Alexa app before paying for anything.

4 Everyday Questions It Answers Well

Start here. These are the bread-and-butter requests that just work, and they are a comfortable way to get a feel for the new, more natural Alexa+.

- "What's the weather this weekend, and do I need a coat tomorrow?"
- "How many tablespoons are in a quarter cup?"
- "What time does the pharmacy on Main Street close today?"
- "Remind me to take my medication at eight every morning."
- "Set a timer for the roast, an hour and fifteen minutes."
- "What's a word that means happy? I need it for a crossword."

TIP

Because Alexa+ remembers the thread, you can keep going without repeating yourself. After the weather answer, just say "What about Sunday?" and it knows you still mean the weather.

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5 Help Around the House

A lot of Alexa+'s value is in small daily help that saves you walking to find your phone or a pen. None of this needs extra gadgets beyond the speaker itself.

- Timers and alarms, including several at once with names: "Set a pasta timer and a bread timer."
- Shopping and to-do lists you add to by voice and view later in the app.
- Reminders tied to a time or a day, read aloud when the moment comes.
- Simple math, unit conversions, and spelling.
- Reading the news, a daily briefing, or the audiobook you left off on.

GOOD TO KNOW

Lists and reminders you make by voice show up in the Alexa app on your phone, so you can glance at the grocery list at the store. If a family member shares the household, they can see and add to shared lists too.

6 Controlling Lights and Devices by Voice

If you have any smart lights, plugs, or a smart thermostat set up, Alexa+ controls them by voice, and it is noticeably better at understanding natural requests than before. This is one of the most genuinely life-easing uses for anyone who finds getting up to flip a switch a bother.

1. Make sure the smart device is already set up in the Alexa app (this is the part worth help with the first time).
2. Then just speak naturally: "Turn on the living room lamp," "Dim the bedroom lights," "Make it a bit warmer in here."
3. Group things if you like: "Turn off all the downstairs lights."

> **WATCH OUT**
> Getting smart lights, plugs, or a thermostat connected to Alexa the first time is the fiddly part, and it is a perfect thing to have set up properly on a visit. Once it is done, the voice control is the easy, everyday payoff — and I'll make sure the names you say match the names Alexa knows.

7 Staying Connected With Family

Echo speakers can help you keep in touch, which matters more than any clever trick. Alexa can make calls, send voice messages, and — between Echo devices in different homes — let family "drop in" like an intercom, with your permission.

- "Alexa, call my daughter" (once the contact is set up in the app).
- Send a quick voice message to another Echo household.
- Announce something to every speaker in your own home at once: "Alexa, announce dinner's ready."

WATCH OUT

"Drop In" lets a trusted family member connect to your Echo without you answering — wonderful for a worried daughter checking on a parent, but only turn it on for people you trust completely, and you can switch it off any time in the app. Set it up deliberately, not by accident.

8 Asking the Bigger Questions

Because Alexa+ is built on newer AI, you can ask it the kind of open-ended, thinking questions you would once have had to type into a computer. It will give a real answer, not just a web snippet.

- "Explain, simply, how a reverse mortgage works."
- "Give me three easy stretches for a stiff lower back."
- "Help me plan a simple birthday lunch for eight people."
- "What questions should I ask my doctor about a new prescription?"

WATCH OUT

For anything about health, money, or legal matters, treat Alexa+'s answer as a helpful starting point, not the final word. It can be wrong or out of date. Use it to get oriented and to think of good questions, then confirm the important parts with your doctor, pharmacist, or a trusted professional.

9 When Alexa+ Gets It Wrong

The new Alexa is impressive, but it is still AI, and AI makes confident mistakes. It might give an old store hour, a wrong phone number, or a fact that sounds right but is not. Knowing this is not a reason to distrust it for everyday use — it is a reason to double-check the handful of things that would actually cost you if they were wrong.

- Confirm business hours and phone numbers before you rely on them.
- Double-check medication, dosage, and health advice with a professional.

- Be skeptical of any answer about money, deadlines, or legal rights.
- If an answer surprises you, ask it to "say that again" or "where did that come from?"

GOOD TO KNOW

A simple rule keeps you safe: Alexa+ is wonderful for convenience and ideas, and only a first step for anything consequential. The stakes decide how hard you check.

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10 Your Privacy With Alexa+

It is sensible to wonder what a listening speaker does with your voice. Here is the honest picture: the Echo only sends your words to Amazon after it hears its wake word, "Alexa." It is not recording your living room all day. But recordings can be saved, and you have controls over that.

1. In the Alexa app, open Settings and find Alexa Privacy.
2. There you can review your voice history and delete recordings.
3. You can set recordings to delete automatically after a set time, or not be saved at all.
4. You can also say, "Alexa, delete what I just said," or "Alexa, delete everything I said today."

WATCH OUT

Never say passwords, card numbers, or Social Security numbers to Alexa, and be careful about voice purchasing — the ability to buy things by voice can be turned off or protected with a spoken code in the app, which is wise if guests or grandchildren are around.

11 Little Tricks Worth Knowing

A few small things make living with Alexa+ nicer once you know them.

- You can change Alexa's voice and even its name (to "Echo" or "Computer") in the app, if "Alexa" gets said by accident too often.
- Say "Alexa, stop" to halt anything instantly — the most useful command of all.
- "Alexa, what can you do?" gives you fresh ideas when you are stuck.
- Whisper mode: if you whisper to it, it whispers back — handy at night.

TIP

If Alexa keeps waking up when it shouldn't — catching its name on the television, say — you can mute its microphone with the button on top of the Echo whenever you want true quiet, and press it again to wake it.

12 Entertainment and Everyday Comforts

Beyond chores, Alexa+ is a pleasant companion for the quieter parts of the day. If an Echo sits in the living room or by the bed, it is an easy way to fill the house with music, news, or a book without hunting for a remote or your reading glasses.

- "Play some relaxing piano music" — it understands moods, not just exact song titles.
- "Read my audiobook" — it picks up where you left off if your books are linked.
- "What's in the news today?" for a short spoken briefing you can stop any time.
- "Tell me a story," "what's a good movie from the 1950s," or a daily trivia question.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because Alexa+ understands natural requests, you no longer have to remember exact names. "Play that song about the river" or "something like Frank Sinatra" will usually land where the old Alexa would have given up.

13 Routines That Run Themselves

One of the nicest things you can set up is a "routine" — a single phrase that triggers several actions at once. It takes a few minutes in the app to create, and then one spoken sentence does the work of several.

1. In the Alexa app, open More, then Routines, and tap to add a new one.
2. Choose what starts it — a phrase like "Good morning" or a set time of day.
3. Add the actions: read the weather, turn on a lamp, start the news, announce the day's reminders.
4. Save it, then just say your phrase and watch it all happen.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Routines are a lovely thing to set up together on a visit — a "good morning" that lights the kitchen and reads the forecast, or a "goodnight" that turns everything off. I'll build one or two around your actual day so a single phrase does the fussing for you.

14 When to Call Bill

Talking to Alexa+ is easy once it is set up the way you like, but the setup is where people get stuck — connecting lights and thermostats, adding family contacts, getting the privacy and purchase settings right, or simply figuring out whether you have Alexa+ at all. There is no need to wrestle with the app alone.

I come to you, confirm your Echo is on the new Alexa+, connect any smart lights or devices so voice control actually works, set up calling and drop-in for the family members you trust, and put the privacy settings exactly where you want them. Then we practice a few real requests out loud so it feels natural, and I leave you a card of the best things to ask.

- You want smart lights, plugs, or a thermostat connected so you can control them by voice.
- Family calling or drop-in needs setting up safely.

- You want the privacy, voice-history, and voice-purchase settings handled properly.
- Alexa keeps mishearing you, or you are not sure if you have Alexa+.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by your Echo. Just say "Alexa," then talk naturally.

I want to...	Do this...
Check if you have it	Ask: "Alexa, are you Alexa Plus?"
Ask everyday questions	"What's the weather?" then follow up: "What about Sunday?"
Set reminders & timers	"Remind me to take my pill at eight," "Set a 20-minute timer"
Control the house	"Turn off the downstairs lights" (devices set up first)
Stop it instantly	Say "Alexa, stop" — the handiest command there is
Protect privacy	App Settings Alexa Privacy to review/delete recordings; never say passwords
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

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

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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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