

Alexa+ — Is the Paid Upgrade Worth It?

THE QUICK VERSION

- 1 Alexa+ is a smarter, more talkative version of the Alexa you already know.
- 2 It is free if you have Amazon Prime, which most families already pay for.
- 3 Without Prime, try the free typing version, or pay \$19.99 a month for the full one.
- 4 Your Echo and the basics keep working exactly as before.
- 5 Turn it on by saying, "Alexa, upgrade to Alexa+," and go back anytime.

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Alexa+ — What the Paid Upgrade Changes, and Is It Worth It

What the new, smarter Alexa changes — and whether to pay for it

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1916 —————

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here is the whole thing on one page.

- Alexa+ is a smarter, more talkative version of the Alexa you already know.
- It is free if you have Amazon Prime — most families already do.
- Without Prime, there is a free typing-only version, or \$19.99 a month for the full one.
- Your Echo and the basics keep working exactly as before, paid or not.
- You turn it on by saying "Alexa, upgrade to Alexa+," and you can go back anytime.
- If you have Prime, there is no new bill — try it and see if you like it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The simplest rule: if you pay for Amazon Prime, Alexa+ is already included. Turn it on, live with it a week, and decide. It costs you nothing to try.

1. What Alexa+ Actually Is

Alexa+ is Amazon's new, upgraded version of Alexa. It is the same helper that lives in your Echo speaker, but it has been rebuilt to understand you better and hold a real back-and-forth conversation.

Amazon built it on the newer kind of artificial intelligence you have been hearing about — the same sort of technology behind chat assistants. In plain terms, it listens more naturally, remembers what you were talking about, and can handle longer, fuller requests.

GOOD TO KNOW

The old Alexa is not going away. Alexa+ is an upgrade layered on top. If you do nothing, your Echo keeps working just as it does today.

2. The Three Ways to Get It

This is where folks get confused, so let me lay it out clearly. There are three doors into Alexa+, and which one you use depends on whether you have Amazon Prime.

- Free with Prime: if you already pay for Amazon Prime, Alexa+ is included at no extra cost — on your Echo, in the app, and at Alexa.com, for the whole household.
- Free chat, no Prime: anyone can try a typing-only version in the Alexa app or at Alexa.com. It is limited by how much you use it, but good for a taste.

- Paid, no Prime: for the full experience by voice without Prime, it is \$19.99 a month. Prime itself, for reference, is \$14.99 a month or \$139 for the year, and it includes free shipping, Prime Video, and more besides Alexa+.

WATCH OUT

Most families I visit already have Prime for the shipping and movies. If that is you, you do not need to pay a penny more for Alexa+.

3. What Changes Day to Day

The biggest change you will notice is that talking to Alexa feels more like talking to a person. You do not have to phrase things in a stiff, robot way.

- You can ask follow-up questions, and it remembers what you just said.
- You can ramble a little and it still understands what you mean.
- A conversation can even pick up where it left off a day or two later.
- Answers to everyday questions are fuller and more natural.

For most people, that is the heart of it: the same timers, weather, music, and lights you already use, but a helper that is easier and more pleasant to talk to.

4. The New Things It Can Do

Beyond better conversation, Alexa+ can carry out some bigger tasks on your behalf. These are the headline new abilities Amazon points to.

- Order takeout, find a restaurant, or make a reservation by voice.
- Book a ride, or arrange a service like a home repair.
- Keep track of a family calendar — you can even email it a schedule to add.
- With a Ring camera, it can flag unusual activity it notices.
- Help a grandchild with homework questions through the app or at Alexa.com.

WATCH OUT

Some of these extras, like certain Ring camera features, need their own separate subscription on top. Alexa+ being free with Prime does not make every connected service free.

5. What Stays Exactly the Same

I want to reassure you, because change can feel unsettling. The everyday things you rely on do not change one bit.

- Setting timers and alarms works the same way.
- Asking for the weather, the time, or a quick fact works the same.
- Playing music, the radio, and the news works the same.
- Turning smart lights and plugs on and off works the same.
- The wake word is still "Alexa," and the mute button still cuts the microphone.

GOOD TO KNOW

You do not have to learn anything new to keep using your Echo the way you always have. Alexa+ simply adds more on top when you want it.

6. Will It Work on My Echo?

Alexa+ is not a new speaker you have to buy. It runs on the Echo devices and the Alexa app you already own, as well as on the web at Alexa.com.

If your Echo is more than a few years old, it still responds to Alexa+ for the everyday things. A few of the fanciest features shine most on a newer Echo with a screen, but you do not need to rush out and replace anything.

TIP

Before you buy any new device, turn Alexa+ on with the Echo you have. For most folks it is plenty, and you may decide you need nothing more.

7. Is It Worth Paying For?

Here is my honest opinion, with no sales pitch. The answer depends entirely on whether you already have Prime.

- If you have Prime: yes, turn it on. It is already paid for, and the better conversation is a real, everyday improvement.
- If you do not have Prime: start with the free typing version. See whether the smarter answers matter to you before you spend anything.
- Paying \$19.99 a month just for Alexa+, with no Prime, only makes sense if you truly lean on the voice conversation every day.

For the plain basics — timers, weather, music, lights — the old free Alexa is perfectly good. You are paying for the smarter conversation and the extra tasks, not for the basics.

8. If You Already Have Prime

This is most families, so it deserves its own page. If you pay for Prime, you are already entitled to the full Alexa+ experience at no additional charge.

- It works across every Echo in the house and for everyone in the household.
- It also helps you get more from Prime itself — your photos, Prime Video, and music.
- There is nothing extra to buy and no separate sign-up beyond turning it on.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not sure whether you have Prime? If you get free two-day shipping from Amazon or watch Prime Video, you have Prime — and Alexa+ comes with it.

9. The Fees and Fine Print to Watch

I always want you to go in with eyes open, so here are the money details that matter, stated plainly.

What	Cost
Alexa+ with Prime	Included — no extra charge
Alexa+ free chat (no Prime)	Free, typing only, limited use
Alexa+ full plan (no Prime)	\$19.99 a month
Amazon Prime itself	\$14.99 a month or \$139 a year

WATCH OUT

Watch for separate subscriptions for connected services, such as some Ring camera features. Those are billed on their own and are not part of Alexa+.

Prices and offers can change, so confirm the current figure on the screen before you agree to anything. Never give a credit card to a voice or a pop-up that calls you out of the blue.

10. Privacy with the Smarter Alexa

A smarter assistant naturally raises the question: is it listening more? The short answer is that the rules are the same as before.

- It still only pays attention after it hears the wake word, "Alexa."
- You can review and delete your voice history in the Alexa app anytime.
- You can say, "Alexa, delete what I just said."
- The mute button still switches the microphone off completely.

Because Alexa+ remembers context across a conversation, it keeps a little more of what you tell it so it can be helpful. You remain in control of that history in the app's privacy settings.

WATCH OUT

No real company will phone you out of the blue about your Alexa, ask for remote access, or demand payment in gift cards. Hang up — that is a scam. Call me instead.

11. How to Turn It On

Switching to Alexa+ is quick, and you do not need to be technical. Here is the calm order of steps.

- 1 Make sure your Echo and the Alexa app are updated — they usually update themselves.
- 2 Say, "Alexa, upgrade to Alexa+," or open the Alexa app and look for the Alexa+ notice.
- 3 If you have Prime, sign in with the same Amazon account you shop with.
- 4 Follow the short setup prompts; there is nothing to buy if you have Prime.
- 5 Try a real conversation — ask a question, then a follow-up — to feel the difference.

TIP

Do it on a calm afternoon, not when you are in a hurry. Give yourself ten minutes to play with it and you will quickly know whether you like it.

12. How to Go Back If You Don't Like It

You are never trapped. If Alexa+ is not for you, you can return to the familiar Alexa, and if you are paying the \$19.99 plan you can cancel it.

- In the Alexa app, open Settings and look for your Alexa+ or subscription options.
- Turn off or cancel from there; your Echo keeps working as plain Alexa.

- If you subscribed without Prime, cancel before the next monthly date to stop billing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Going back does not break your Echo or lose your settings. Your lights, routines, and lists stay exactly where they were.

13. Common Worries, Answered Honestly

The same handful of questions come up at kitchen tables all over the county. Here are straight answers.

Will it start charging me without asking?

No. If you have Prime, it is included. The only paid option is the \$19.99 plan for people without Prime, and that takes a deliberate sign-up.

Do I have to use the fancy new features?

Not at all. Use it exactly like the old Alexa if you prefer. The extras sit there quietly until you want them.

Will it be harder to use?

If anything it is easier, because you can talk to it more naturally. There is nothing new you must memorize.

14. My Honest Take for Different Folks

People ask me to just tell them what to do. Here is what I actually suggest, depending on who you are.

- Already have Prime: turn Alexa+ on and enjoy it — it is paid for and genuinely nicer.
- No Prime, curious: try the free typing version before spending a dime.
- Just want timers and music: the old free Alexa is all you need; skip the upgrade.
- Love talking to your Echo all day: the full Alexa+ may be worth it even without Prime.
- Helping a parent from afar: Alexa+ reminders and calendar help can be a real comfort.

WATCH OUT

When in doubt, the free path — Prime if you have it, or the free chat if you do not — tells you everything before any money changes hands.

15. Alexa+ on Your Phone, On the Go

Alexa+ is not only in your Echo. The free Alexa app on your phone now carries the same smarter helper, so you can use it when you are out and about.

- Ask a question or jot a reminder while you are at the store.
- Add something to the family shopping list from the car.
- Pick up a conversation you started at home on the kitchen Echo.

WATCH OUT

If you already have the Alexa app on your phone to control your devices, you do not need to install anything new — the upgrade comes to the app you have.

16. Using Alexa+ on the Web

There is also a website, Alexa.com, where you can type to Alexa+ instead of speaking. Some folks find typing easier for longer questions or planning.

It is handy for research, planning a trip, or working through something step by step, where you want to read the answer rather than hear it spoken aloud.

GOOD TO KNOW

This is the same place non-Prime members can try the free version of Alexa+. It is a no-cost way to see whether the smarter answers appeal to you.

17. Letting It Help with the Family Calendar

One of the genuinely useful new tricks is keeping track of appointments. Alexa+ can hold a family calendar and remind you of what is coming up.

- Ask it to add an appointment, and it remembers the date and time.
- You can even email a schedule to Alexa+ and have the dates added for you.
- Ask "what's on my calendar today?" for a quick rundown.

TIP

For couples or a household sharing one Echo, a shared calendar you can ask about out loud saves a lot of "wait, when was that?" moments.

18. Alexa+ with a Ring Doorbell or Camera

If you have a Ring doorbell or camera, Alexa+ can work alongside it and even point out activity that looks unusual.

That can be reassuring — a gentle heads-up rather than you having to watch a screen. It is especially handy for keeping an eye on a package or the driveway.

WATCH OUT

Some Ring camera features require their own separate Ring subscription on top of Alexa+. The two are billed separately, so check before you expect a feature to be included.

19. Reminders and Medication Help

For many folks our age, the quiet, dependable value of a voice helper is being reminded of the things that matter, without fiddling with a phone.

- Set a daily reminder for medication at the same time each day.
- Ask for a reminder about an appointment and it will speak up when it is time.
- Spoken reminders are easier than a tiny alarm on a phone screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

A reminder that speaks aloud in the room you are in beats a notification buried in a phone you may not be holding. This is one of the kindest uses of an Echo.

20. Shopping and Reordering

Because Alexa comes from Amazon, it has always been handy for shopping lists and, if you use Amazon, reordering. Alexa+ keeps all of that and makes it smoother.

- Add items to a running shopping list by voice as you think of them.
- If you shop on Amazon, reorder a regular item with a simple spoken request.
- Ask about a past order or when something is arriving.

WATCH OUT

Alexa will sometimes nudge you toward buying on Amazon. You never have to act on those suggestions, and no purchase happens without your say-so.

21. Music, News, and Audiobooks

The everyday entertainment you already enjoy works just as well, and the smarter helper can take a looser request and still find what you mean.

- Ask for a kind of music or a specific station and it will play it.
- Ask for the news and it reads a short briefing aloud.
- If you enjoy audiobooks, it can read and pick up where you left off.

TIP

You can say things loosely now — "play something relaxing" — and Alexa+ is better than the old Alexa at understanding what you had in mind.

22. Setting Up Voices for Each Person

If more than one person uses the Echo, you can teach it each voice so it gives personal answers — your calendar, not your spouse's.

- 1 Open the Alexa app and find the voice or profile settings.
- 2 Follow the short prompts to record your voice.
- 3 Have each household member do the same from their own account.
- 4 Now Alexa+ can tell who is asking and answer for the right person.

GOOD TO KNOW

This is optional. The Echo works fine without it, but voice profiles make reminders and calendars feel personal in a shared home.

23. Routines — Several Things at Once

A routine is a single phrase that triggers several actions. They are one of the most useful things an Echo can do, and Alexa+ makes them easier to set up.

- A "good morning" routine might read the weather and turn on a lamp.
- A "good night" routine might turn off the lights and set an alarm.
- You can describe what you want in plain words and let Alexa+ build it.

TIP

Start with one simple routine you will actually use every day. Once it feels natural, add another. There is no need to build a dozen at once.

24. When Alexa+ Misunderstands

No helper is perfect. Once in a while it will mishear you or give an answer that misses the mark. Here is the calm way to handle it.

- 1 Try again, a little more plainly — often that is all it takes.
- 2 If it did the wrong thing, say "Alexa, stop," and start over.
- 3 For a reminder or list item that went in wrong, just ask it to remove that one.
- 4 If it keeps mishearing a name, the app lets you teach it the correct pronunciation.

GOOD TO KNOW

You cannot break anything by trying. If a request goes sideways, undo it and ask again — the Echo does not mind, and neither should you.

25. Alexa+ vs. the Old Alexa

Here is the honest side-by-side, so you can see exactly what the upgrade adds and what stays the same.

What	Old Alexa	Alexa+
Timers, weather, music	Yes	Yes
Control lights & plugs	Yes	Yes
Natural conversation	Limited	Much better
Remembers context	No	Yes
Book, order, reserve	Little	Yes
Cost	Free	Free with Prime

Read down the Alexa+ column to see what you gain. For the top rows — the things most people use daily — both are equally good.

26. Helping a Parent Use It from Afar

Many of my customers are grown children setting up an Echo for a parent. Alexa+ can make that long-distance care a little easier.

- Set up reminders for medication and appointments they will hear spoken aloud.
- A shared calendar lets everyone stay on the same page.
- Hands-free calling means they can reach you by just asking.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you and your parent both use Alexa, you can help them from your own phone — and that shared setup is exactly the kind of visit I am glad to handle.

27. A Few Honest Limits

I would not be doing my job if I only told you the good parts. Here are the fair limits to keep in mind.

- It is still a computer; it will occasionally get something wrong, so don't rely on it blindly.
- The fanciest tasks, like booking services, work best in the app and newer devices.
- Some connected services it can reach have their own separate fees.
- An internet outage means the Echo cannot answer much at all.

WATCH OUT

Treat anything important — a medical dose, a financial figure, a travel booking — as a draft to double-check, not gospel. A smart helper is a convenience, not a professional.

28. Do My Old Skills and Settings Still Work?

If you have spent time setting up your Echo — your routines, your connected lights, the little add-ons called skills — you will be glad to hear none of that is thrown away when Alexa+ arrives.

- Your routines carry over and keep running as before.
- Connected lights, plugs, and thermostats stay connected.
- The skills you turned on are still there.
- Your lists, alarms, and reminders remain in place.

In other words, you are not starting from scratch. Alexa+ builds on top of the home you already set up, so the day it switches on, everything you rely on is right where you left it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because nothing is wiped, there is very little risk in trying Alexa+. If you do not care for it, going back leaves all your settings untouched.

29. Controlling Your Smart Home

Running the lights, plugs, and thermostat by voice is one of the most popular uses of an Echo, and Alexa+ handles it at least as well as before — often better, because it understands looser requests.

- "Turn off all the lights" works even across different rooms.
- "Make it warmer in here" can nudge a connected thermostat.
- You can group devices by room so one phrase handles several at once.

If you buy new smart gadgets, look for the word Matter on the box. Matter is a shared standard that helps a gadget work smoothly with Alexa and the others, so it is a safe thing to look for.

TIP

Add smart-home gadgets one at a time, and only after the Echo itself feels comfortable. There is no need to wire up the whole house in a weekend.

30. Talking to It Naturally — Examples

The whole point of the upgrade is that you can speak plainly. Here are real examples of the kinds of things you can just say out loud.

You want to...	Just say...
Set a kitchen timer	"Alexa, set a timer for 15 minutes."
Hear the forecast	"Alexa, what's the weather tomorrow?"
Add to a list	"Alexa, add milk to my shopping list."
Get a reminder	"Alexa, remind me to take my pills at 8."
Play the radio	"Alexa, play WKSU."
Ask a follow-up	"...and what about the weekend?"

GOOD TO KNOW

Speak at your normal pace, in your normal words. You do not have to memorize exact phrases or talk like a robot — that is the part Alexa+ improved most.

31. Entertainment Beyond Music

Beyond playing songs, a smarter Alexa opens up a few pleasant ways to pass the time, especially if you have an Echo with a screen or a Fire TV.

- On a Fire TV, you can describe a scene and jump right to it.
- Ask for trivia, a joke, or help settling a dinner-table question.
- Have it read the news or an audiobook aloud.
- On a screen, follow a recipe step by step while you cook.

None of this costs extra beyond what you already have. It is simply the same device being a little more capable and a little more fun to talk to.

32. Keeping Your Costs Down

I never want a guide of mine to end up costing you money you did not mean to spend. So here is the plain truth about what is free and what is not.

- Alexa+ is free if you have Prime — and most families already do.
- The free typing version costs nothing, even without Prime.
- The only true monthly charge is the \$19.99 plan for people without Prime.
- Music services and some Ring camera features are billed on their own.

WATCH OUT

If a screen or a voice ever tells you that you must pay to keep using your Echo for timers, weather, and lights, that is wrong. The basics stay free. When in doubt, call me before you pay anything.

33. Sharing One Amazon Account at Home

Many households share a single Amazon account, and that works fine with Alexa+. A few small settings make it pleasant for everyone.

- The whole household gets the full Alexa+ experience under one Prime membership.
- Set up each person's voice so reminders and calendars stay personal.

- A shared shopping list means anyone can add to it as they think of things.

TIP

If a grown child manages the Amazon account for a parent, they can help with Alexa+ settings from afar — a real comfort for families spread across the map.

34. Your Privacy Settings, Step by Step

A smarter assistant keeps a bit more of what you tell it so it can be helpful, so it is worth a few minutes to see your controls and set them the way you like.

- 1 Open the Alexa app and go to Settings.
- 2 Find the privacy section — look for Alexa Privacy or Voice History.
- 3 Review what has been saved; you can listen and delete anything.
- 4 Choose how long recordings are kept, or turn off saving them.
- 5 Note the microphone button on the Echo itself, which cuts the mic entirely.

GOOD TO KNOW

You are always in control. Whatever Alexa+ remembers, you can see it and delete it, and the mute button is the final word any time you want privacy.

35. What's New vs. What's Hype

There is a lot of excited talk about AI, so let me separate what is genuinely useful about Alexa+ from what is mostly marketing.

Genuinely useful

- Natural conversation and follow-up questions.
- Spoken reminders and a shared family calendar.
- Being free for the millions of people who already have Prime.

More hype than help, for most folks

- Fancy agentic tasks you may rarely use, like booking a ride by voice.
- Extras that need their own separate subscriptions.
- Features that only shine on the newest hardware.

GOOD TO KNOW

Judge Alexa+ by the handful of things you will actually use every day. For most people that is timers, weather, music, reminders, and nicer conversation.

36. A Gentle Week to Try It

If you like to ease into new things, here is a calm, no-pressure way to give Alexa+ a fair trial over a single week.

- Day 1: turn it on and just ask it a few questions, then a follow-up.
- Day 2-3: set a daily reminder and a timer, and play some music.
- Day 4-5: try a shopping list and ask about your calendar.
- Day 6-7: decide honestly whether it feels more helpful than before.

GOOD TO KNOW

By the end of a week you will know. If it has earned a place in your day, keep it. If not, going back to the plain Alexa costs you nothing.

37. Questions Families Ask Me

Here are the questions I hear most often from folks and their grown children about this change, with my plain answers.

Mom just wants timers and music. Should she bother?

If she has Prime, turning it on is free and the conversation is nicer. If not, there is no need — the plain Alexa does timers and music perfectly.

Will it suddenly start charging her card?

No. With Prime it is included. The paid plan takes a deliberate sign-up.

Can I set it up for her from my house?

If you share or manage her Amazon account, yes — and that is exactly the kind of thing I can help either of you do.

38. Getting Started on the Right Foot

Once you have decided, a calm first day makes all the difference. Here is the order I would follow.

- 1 Confirm whether you have Prime so you know it is free for you.
- 2 Turn Alexa+ on with the Echo and account you already use.
- 3 Spend a few minutes just chatting — ask, then ask again — to get the feel.

- 4 Try one new task, like setting a reminder or asking about your day.
- 5 Give it a week before you judge; the conversation grows on most people.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels fiddly, that is exactly the kind of visit I do every week. I will sit with you, turn it on, and make sure you are comfortable before I leave — at your pace, no jargon.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy while you decide.

I want to...	Do this
Get Alexa+ for free	Use it with the Prime you already have
Try it without Prime	Use the free typing chat at Alexa.com
Turn it on	Say, "Alexa, upgrade to Alexa+"
Pay the full plan without Prime	\$19.99 a month in the Alexa app
Go back to plain Alexa	Settings in the Alexa app
Delete what it heard	Say, "Alexa, delete what I just said"
Stop a scam call about Alexa	Hang up and call Bill
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

WORDS TO KNOW

Plain-English Word List

Alexa+ — Amazon's upgraded, more conversational version of Alexa, built on newer AI.

Amazon Prime — Amazon's paid membership for shipping, video, and music — it now includes Alexa+.

Wake word — The word that gets the assistant's attention — still "Alexa."

Subscription — A recurring monthly or yearly charge for a service.

Agentic — A fancy word for an assistant that can carry out tasks for you, like booking or ordering.

Voice history — The record of what you have said to Alexa, which you can review and delete in the app.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Three Ways to Get Alexa+

The same assistant, three different doors.

Free chat	With Prime	Paid plan
No Prime needed Type at Alexa.com or in the app Limited by use Good for a quick try	No extra charge Full experience By voice on Echo Whole household Prime is \$14.99 a month	\$19.99 a month No Prime needed Full experience Voice + app + web Whole household Cancel anytime

If you already pay for Prime, Alexa+ is included — no new bill.

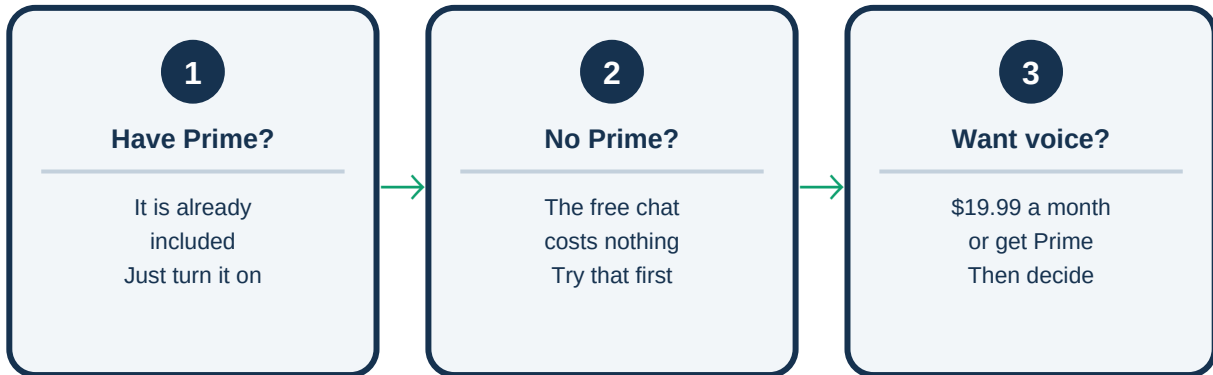
Illustration — layout and details vary by model. Check your own device.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Is the Upgrade Worth It?

Follow the box that matches you.



Try the free version before you pay for anything.

Illustration — layout and details vary by model. Check your own device.

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

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

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