BILL'S HOME TECH

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Alexa Says "Device Is Not Responding" — Step by Step

What the message really means, and the calm, in-order fixes that get it working again

Plain-English smart-home help from:

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Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

"Device is not responding" almost always means Alexa briefly lost touch with the gadget, not that it is broken. Try the device by hand to confirm it has power, then unplug it for ten seconds and plug it back in. Check its status in the Alexa app under Devices. If a whole brand went quiet, re-link that brand's skill; if everything stopped at once, suspect your Wi-Fi or a temporary outage and restart your router. A duplicate, leftover copy of a device is a common hidden cause worth clearing.

1 The Short Version

You ask Alexa to turn on a lamp, and instead of doing it she says "the device is not responding." It is one of the most common things that goes wrong in a smart home, and the good news is that it almost never means anything is broken. Nine times out of ten, Alexa has simply lost touch with the gadget over your home Wi-Fi, and a few calm steps put them back in contact.

This guide walks through the fixes in the order a professional would try them, starting with the ten-second ones that solve most cases. You do not need to understand the technical words to follow along — just go down the list until it works again.

- "Not responding" almost always means a lost connection, not a broken device.
- Start simple: check the device's own power and Wi-Fi, then restart it.
- A duplicate or stale copy of the device in the app causes a surprising share of these.
- If several devices all stop responding at once, suspect your Wi-Fi or an internet outage.

> **TIP**
>
> Before anything else, open the Alexa app, go to the Devices screen, and tap the device that is not responding. The status there — "Online" or "Offline" — tells you in one glance whether this is a connection problem (most likely) or something else.

2 What "Not Responding" Actually Means

When Alexa says a device is not responding, she is not telling you it is broken. She is telling you she reached out to it a moment ago and did not get an answer back in time. The lamp or plug may be perfectly fine; Alexa is simply saying "I called and nobody picked up."

Your smart devices and your Echo speakers all talk to each other through your home Wi-Fi and, usually, through the maker's service on the internet. If the device dozed off, dropped off Wi-Fi, or the internet hiccuped, the message you hear is the result. That is why waking things up and reconnecting them works so reliably.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Many smart plugs and bulbs reach Alexa the long way around — out to the maker's servers on the internet and back — not just across your living room. That is why an internet outage, or even a slow connection, can make a device that is sitting right next to the Echo suddenly "stop responding."

3 The 60-Second Fixes — Try These First

Most "not responding" messages clear up in under a minute. Do these in order and stop as soon as the device obeys again — there is no need to go further down the list.

1. Try the device by hand: flip the lamp's own switch or press the button on the plug. If it works manually, the device has power and the problem is the connection.
2. Say the command again, slowly and clearly, using the exact device name you set up ("turn on the living room lamp").
3. Open the Alexa app, go to Devices, tap the device, and check whether it says Online or Offline.
4. If it says Offline, unplug the device for ten seconds and plug it back in, then wait a minute for it to rejoin Wi-Fi.

5. Ask Alexa again. If it now works, you are done.

> **TIP**
>
> If the device is a plug-in gadget, the ten-second unplug-and-replug is the single most effective fix there is. It forces the device to wake up and find your Wi-Fi again, which clears the large majority of these messages.

4 Restart the Echo and Your Wi-Fi

If one quick fix did not do it, the next step is to restart the pieces that connect everything: your Echo speaker and your home internet box. The order matters, because your router hands out the connections everything else depends on.

1. Unplug your Echo (or Echo Show) from the wall.
2. Unplug your Wi-Fi router, and the modem if it is a separate box, and leave them off for 30 seconds.
3. Plug the router back in first and wait two to three full minutes until its lights settle.
4. Plug the Echo back in and give it a minute to start up and reconnect.
5. Ask Alexa to control the device again.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Restarting your router is not a sign anything is wrong — it is simply the smart-home equivalent of a fresh start, and it clears the small glitches that build up over weeks of being on all the time.

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5 Check for a Duplicate or Stale Device

Here is a cause that catches almost everyone and is easy to miss. Over time, the Alexa app can end up with two copies of the same gadget — one that works and one left over from a setup you did months ago. When Alexa tries the dead copy, she reports "not responding" even though a working copy is sitting right beside it.

1. In the Alexa app, open Devices and look carefully for two items with the same or very similar names.
2. Tap the one that shows Offline, open its settings (often a gear icon), and choose to remove or forget it.
3. Keep the copy that shows Online, and rename it clearly if the names were confusing.
4. Try your command again using that clear name.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Removing a device from the Alexa app does not harm the device itself — it only clears Alexa's memory of it. If you remove the wrong one, you can simply add it back. So there is no risk in tidying up duplicates.

6 Re-Link the Maker's Skill

Many smart gadgets — plugs, bulbs, switches from brands like Kasa, Wyze, Govee, and others — connect to Alexa through a "skill," a little bridge you turned on when you set them up. Sometimes that bridge quietly logs out, and every device behind it starts reporting "not responding" at once.

1. First, open the gadget's OWN app (for example the Kasa app or the Wyze app) and confirm the device works there. If it does, the problem is the Alexa link, not the device.
2. In the Alexa app, go to More, then Skills & Games, and find the skill for that brand.
3. Open it and look for a "Disable Skill" option, then turn it back on and sign in again with your account for that brand.

4. Let Alexa re-discover the devices, then try your command.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If the gadget works in its own maker's app but not through Alexa, that is the tell-tale sign the link between them needs refreshing — the device is healthy, and re-linking the skill is the fix.

7 When the Device Simply Needs Re-Adding

If a single device stays stubbornly offline after all of the above, the cleanest fix is to remove it and add it back fresh. This clears whatever got tangled and is usually only a few minutes of work.

1. Remove the device from the Alexa app (Devices, tap the device, settings, remove).
2. If the device has its own maker's app, remove it there too so you start clean.
3. Put the device into its setup or pairing mode — usually by holding its button until a light blinks.
4. Add it again, either through the maker's app or by asking Alexa to "discover devices."
5. Give it a clear name and test it.

> **TIP**
>
> When you re-add a plug or bulb, name it the way you actually speak — "kitchen light," not "Kasa HS103" — so your natural command works the first time, every time.

8 When Many Devices Stop at Once

If it is not one gadget but several — or everything — reporting "not responding" at the same time, the problem is almost certainly upstream: your Wi-Fi, your internet connection, or a temporary outage at the maker's service. One device is a device problem; everything at once is a network problem.

- Check whether your phone can load a normal web page over Wi-Fi. If not, your internet is the issue.
- Restart your router and modem as described earlier and wait a few minutes.
- If your internet is fine but a whole brand's devices are down, the maker may be having a temporary outage — these usually fix themselves within an hour or two.
- If only Echo-brand features are down, Amazon's own service may be having a brief outage.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Outages at the big smart-home services happen a few times a year and are never your fault. The reassuring part is that you do not have to do anything — when the service comes back, your devices reconnect on their own.

9 Give the Device a Stronger Signal

A device that drops to "not responding" now and then, especially one far from the router or in a basement or garage, may simply be at the edge of your Wi-Fi's reach. A weak signal comes and goes, and so does the device.

- Notice which devices misbehave — if they are all far from the router, weak Wi-Fi is the likely cause.
- Moving the router to a more central, open spot helps every device in the house.
- For a far-off device, a Wi-Fi extender or a mesh Wi-Fi point nearby gives it a steady signal.
- Most smart plugs and bulbs need the 2.4GHz Wi-Fi band, which reaches farther than 5GHz — a point worth knowing when signal is the issue.

> **WATCH OUT**
> If the same far-off device keeps dropping and moving things around has not helped, a small mesh Wi-Fi point placed between the router and the device usually ends the problem for good. I am happy to work out the right spot for it on a visit.

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.

10 Keep a Simple Record

Smart homes are much easier to fix when you know what you have. A single sheet of paper listing your devices, which app each uses, and the name you gave it turns a frustrating guessing game into a two-minute check.

- Write down each smart device, the room it is in, and the name you say to Alexa.
- Note which app controls it (Alexa only, or Alexa plus a maker's app).
- Keep your Wi-Fi name and password on the same sheet.
- Tuck it somewhere easy to find — inside a kitchen cabinet door works well.

TIP

This one sheet is the thing I wish every smart home had. When something stops responding, it tells you in seconds which app to open and what the device is really called — and it makes any help call far quicker.

11 Read the Lights on the Device Itself

Most smart gadgets tell you what is wrong with a small light, if you know how to read it. A steady light usually means all is well; a slow blink often means it is trying to connect; a fast blink or a particular color frequently means it is waiting to be set up. These patterns are the device quietly explaining itself.

- A steady, calm light usually means the device is connected and happy.
- A slow, patient blink often means it is still trying to find or join your Wi-Fi.
- A fast blink, or an amber or red light, commonly means it needs setting up again.

- No light at all usually means no power — check the outlet, switch, or that it is plugged in fully.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The exact meaning of each blink is in the little leaflet that came with the device, and almost always on the maker's website too. You do not need to memorize them — just knowing the light is a message, not decoration, tells you whether to reconnect it or check its power.

12 Keep the Alexa App and Devices Updated

Now and then a device stops responding not because of Wi-Fi but because the Alexa app on your phone, or the device's own built-in software, has fallen behind and the two no longer speak the same language. Keeping both current quietly prevents a whole class of these problems.

1. Open your phone's app store and let the Alexa app update if an update is offered.
2. In the Alexa app, open the device's settings and look for a firmware or software version; many update themselves, but some show an "update available" note.
3. If a maker's app controls the device too, update that app as well.
4. Restart the device once after any update so it starts fresh.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Turning on automatic app updates in your phone's settings means you never have to think about this again — your apps quietly keep themselves current overnight while the phone charges.

13 Set It Up So It Rarely Happens Again

Once the device is responding, a little setup work makes "not responding" a rare event instead of a regular one. These are the same steps a professional takes at the end of a visit so you are not calling back next month.

- Give the device a fixed, reliable spot within good reach of your Wi-Fi.
- Name every device clearly and consistently, the way you naturally speak.
- Clear out any old duplicates so Alexa never reaches for a dead copy.
- If a device sits far from the router, add a mesh point or extender nearby.
- Keep that one-sheet record up to date as you add new gadgets.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A smart home that was set up carefully almost never needs troubleshooting. Most of the "not responding" trouble people live with comes from small setup shortcuts that are easy to put right once.

14 When to Call Bill

You should feel free to work down this list as far as you are comfortable, and most people clear the problem in the first few steps. But there is no prize for struggling, and some of these — re-linking a skill, untangling duplicates, or tracking down a weak-signal device — are quicker and calmer with a steady hand beside you.

I make house calls here in Portage County. I come to you, get the device responding again, tidy up any duplicates and weak spots, and leave you a simple note of what each thing is called and how to fix it if it acts up again. With 30+ years of professional experience, these are the visits I do every week.

- The same device keeps dropping off no matter what you try.
- Several devices stopped at once and restarting the router did not bring them back.
- You are not sure which copy of a device to remove, or which app controls what.
- You would simply rather have it handled correctly the first time.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Work down the list; stop as soon as it responds.

I want to...	Do this...
Fix it fast	Unplug the device 10 seconds, plug back in, wait a minute, ask again
See what's wrong	Alexa app Devices tap the device check Online or Offline
Fix after an internet blip	Restart the router first, wait 3 minutes, then the Echo
Clear a ghost copy	Remove the duplicate/Offline device in the app; keep the Online one
A whole brand is down	Re-link that brand's skill: More Skills & Games disable, re-enable, sign in
Everything stopped at once	Suspect Wi-Fi or an outage; restart the router and wait it out
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

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
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.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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