

Answering Machines & VoIP

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 Your old answering machine still works — plug it into the new phone box.
- 2 Most new phone services include free voicemail you don't have to set up a machine for.
- 3 Provider voicemail can email you the message or type it out to read.
- 4 A machine lets you hear and screen calls live; voicemail doesn't.
- 5 You can keep the machine, switch to voicemail, or run both for a while.

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Answering Machines in a VoIP World — Do You Still Need One?

Does your old answering machine still have a place on an internet phone?

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1734** —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole thing on one page. Your old standalone answering machine — the box with the blinking light — will almost always still work on a new internet phone. You just plug it into the telephone jack on the new phone box instead of the wall. So you don't have to throw it out. But the newer services come with free voicemail built in, and that voicemail can do things the old box can't: it keeps working when your power's out, and it can email you the message or even type it out so you can read it. Neither is better across the board — it comes down to how you like to catch your missed calls.

- Your old answering machine still works — plug it into the new phone box.
- Most new phone services include free voicemail you don't have to set up a machine for.
- Provider voicemail can email you the message or type it out to read.
- A machine lets you hear and screen calls live; voicemail doesn't.
- You can keep the machine, switch to voicemail, or run both for a while.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your answering machine plays a role you love — screening calls live, a greeting in your own voice, a button you press to hear messages — there's no reason to give it up. Keeping it is a perfectly good choice.

1. Don't Toss It Yet

Your old machine probably still works.

Let me set your mind at ease right off the bat, because I get asked this a lot. That answering machine you've had for years — the box with the blinking red light and the little tape or chip inside — does not automatically become junk when your phone goes digital. In almost every case, it keeps working just fine on the new service.

The reason is simple. An answering machine doesn't care how your call travels to the house — over copper, over fiber, or over the internet. All it needs is a telephone jack to plug into. On the new service, that jack is on the phone box the provider gives you, instead of on the wall. You move the machine's cord from the wall to the box, and it carries right on answering your calls.

So this guide isn't about whether you can keep your machine — you can. It's about whether you'd be happier using the free voicemail that comes with the new service instead,

because that voicemail can do a few clever things the old box never could. Let's weigh it calmly, with no pressure either way.

TIP

Before you decide anything, just move the machine's cord to the new phone box and confirm it still answers. Nine times out of ten it does, and that buys you all the time you want to decide.

2. How to Plug It Into the New Box

Moving the cord from the wall to the phone box.

Let's do the practical part first, since it's the thing most people actually want to know. On the old copper line, your answering machine plugged into a telephone jack in the wall. On the new service, the provider gives you a box — a modem or a small adapter — with one or two telephone jacks on the back. That's where your phone gear plugs in now.

- 1 Find the telephone jack on the back of your new phone box — it looks just like the old wall jack.
- 2 Unplug the answering machine's phone cord from the wall.
- 3 Plug that cord into the jack on the new box instead.
- 4 If your phone also plugs into the machine, leave that chain as it was.
- 5 Plug in the machine's power and let it start up.

That's really all there is to it. The machine doesn't know anything changed — it just sees a phone line and answers calls like always. If you've got a phone and a machine sharing one line, keep them connected the same way they were to each other; only the connection to the wall moves to the box.

GOOD TO KNOW

The jack on the new box is the same shape and size as the old wall jack, so your existing cords fit. You don't need to buy anything new to make the machine work.

3. What the Free Voicemail Offers

The service that comes with the new phone.

Here's the thing that makes this decision interesting. Nearly every new home phone service — cable phone, Ooma, the lot — comes with voicemail included, at no extra charge. It's a message box that lives in the phone network rather than on a box in your kitchen. Someone leaves a message, and you listen to it from your phone, a web page, or your email.

Because it lives in the network and not in a box on your counter, it does a couple of things your old machine can't. It keeps catching messages even when your power is out or your phone box is unplugged. And it can send you the message other ways — as an email, or even typed out as text you can read. We'll get into each of those.

GOOD TO KNOW

Since the free voicemail comes with the service whether you use it or not, there's no harm in trying it alongside your machine for a while to see which you prefer.

4. The Case for Keeping Your Machine

Why some folks never give theirs up.

There are genuinely good reasons to keep the machine, and I'd never talk anyone out of it. The biggest one is call screening — the thing a machine does that voicemail simply can't. When a call comes in and the machine picks up, you can hear the person leaving their message out loud, and decide in the moment whether to grab the phone and talk to them.

That live screening is a real comfort, especially for dodging junk calls: you let the machine answer, and if it's a robocall or a stranger, you just don't pick up. If it's your daughter, you grab it mid-message. Beyond that, a machine is dead simple — a button you press to hear messages, right there on the counter, with no PIN, no login, no email.

TIP

If screening calls live is something you rely on, that alone is a fine reason to keep the machine. It's the one trick provider voicemail genuinely can't match.

5. The Case for Switching to Voicemail

Why the free service wins for a lot of people.

On the other side, there's a strong case for letting the machine go and leaning on the free voicemail. The headline reason is reliability in an outage. A machine runs on house power, so when the lights go out, it stops catching messages. Provider voicemail lives in the network, so it keeps taking messages even when your home has no power at all.

The other reasons are about convenience. Voicemail can email you a message so it lands where you already look. It can type the message out so you can read it instead of straining to hear. You can check it from anywhere — handy when you travel. And there's one less box on the counter, one less thing to dust, and no little tape or chip to wear out.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you've ever come home from a trip to a machine that stopped working because the power blinked while you were gone, that's exactly the problem provider voicemail solves.

6. Voicemail That Comes to Your Email

The message lands where you already look.

One of the nicest tricks of provider voicemail is that it can email you your messages. When someone leaves a message, the service sends it to your email as a little sound file you can play right there. You never have to walk to a box and press a button — the message comes to you.

For anyone who checks email more than they check the phone, this changes everything. You see a new voicemail the same time you see your other mail, you can play it with a tap, and it's saved there as long as you want it. It's the sort of quiet convenience that, once people have it, they wonder how they managed without.

TIP

Voicemail-to-email is turned on in the provider's web account. If setting that up sounds like a chore, the provider can switch it on for you, or I can on a visit.

7. Voicemail Typed Out for You to Read

Transcription, and why it helps.

Beyond emailing you the sound, many services can type the message out into words — a feature called transcription. The message arrives as text you can read, usually right alongside the recording. Instead of listening, you simply read what the person said.

This is a godsend if hearing is a struggle. A mumbled message on a small speaker is hard work for a lot of folks; the same message in plain text, at whatever size your screen shows, is effortless. The typing is done by a computer, so it isn't perfect — names and numbers can come out a bit scrambled — but for catching the gist of a message, it's a real help, and the recording's always there to double-check.

GOOD TO KNOW

An old answering machine can't do this at all. If reading messages instead of hearing them would make your life easier, that's a point firmly in favor of switching.

8. The Power-Outage Difference

The quiet reason voicemail has an edge.

Let me spend a moment on the outage question, because it's the difference people overlook until it bites them. Your answering machine runs on a plug in the wall. When the power goes out — and around here, it does — the machine goes dark, and any call during the outage simply isn't caught. You come home to no record it even happened.

Provider voicemail doesn't have that weakness. Because the message box lives out in the phone network, it keeps answering and recording even when your whole house is dark. When the power comes back, your messages are waiting. For someone who wants to be sure they never miss an important call, that's a meaningful edge.

WATCH OUT

Remember that your phone itself still needs power to make and take live calls on most new services. Voicemail catching messages in an outage is separate from being able to call out — for that, you still want a battery backup or a charged cell phone.

9. Recording a Greeting Either Way

Short, friendly, and in your own voice.

Whichever you use, you'll want a greeting — the message callers hear before the beep. The good news is both the machine and provider voicemail let you record one in your own voice, and the advice is the same for both: keep it short and friendly. Say your name or number, that you can't come to the phone, and ask them to leave a message.

On the machine, you hold a record button and speak. On provider voicemail, you dial into the voicemail and follow the prompt to record a greeting. Either way, you can listen back and re-record until you're happy — nobody hears the practice runs. Speak a touch slower than feels natural and it'll come across clear and warm.

TIP

If you switch to voicemail but miss your machine's familiar greeting, just record the same words into the new voicemail. Callers won't know anything changed.

10. Message Storage — Tape, Chips, and the Cloud

How many messages each one holds.

Both ways of catching messages have limits on how much they'll hold, and it's worth knowing so you don't get caught out. An older answering machine with a tape holds only a few minutes of messages; a newer one with a chip holds more, but still a fixed amount. When it's full, new callers can't leave a message.

Provider voicemail also has a limit — a set number of messages — but it's usually generous, and if you turn on email delivery, your messages are safely copied to your inbox where you can keep them forever. Either way, the habit is the same: listen, deal with it, and delete it, so there's always room for the next caller.

WATCH OUT

A full message box — machine or voicemail — means callers hear it's full and hang up, and you never know they tried. Clear out old messages regularly so there's always room.

11. When Keeping the Machine Makes Sense

The situations where the old box wins.

Let me be specific about who's genuinely better off keeping their answering machine, because it's not just stubbornness — for some folks it really is the right call. If any of these sound like you, keep the machine with a clear conscience.

- You love screening calls live and picking up mid-message when it's family.
- You don't use email and don't want to, so email delivery means nothing to you.
- You want the dead-simple press-a-button-to-hear-it routine, no PIN or login.
- The machine's working fine and you see no reason to change what works.
- You like having your greeting and messages right there on the counter.

None of those are wrong. A tool that does its job and that you're comfortable with is worth keeping. The only thing I'd add is to make sure it's actually catching calls after the phone switch — plug it into the new box and test it — and to know it'll be dark in a power outage.

GOOD TO KNOW

Comfort counts. If the machine does exactly what you want and the new tricks don't tempt you, there's no prize for switching. Keep what works for you.

12. When Switching Makes Sense

The situations where voicemail wins.

And here's the flip side — the folks who'll likely be happier letting the machine go and using the free voicemail. If several of these ring true, it's worth making the switch.

- You check email regularly and would love messages to land there.
- Hearing is a struggle, and reading a typed-out message would help.
- You travel or spend winters away and want to check messages from anywhere.
- You've been caught out by the machine dying in a power outage.
- You'd happily clear one more box off the counter.

If that's you, the switch costs nothing — the voicemail comes free with your service — and it genuinely adds convenience. You can unplug the old machine, or leave it as a backup for a while until you're sure you prefer the voicemail. There's no rush and no commitment.

WATCH OUT

Not sure? Turn on the free voicemail and keep the machine unplugged in a drawer for a month. If you don't miss it, you have your answer. If you do, plug it back in.

13. Running Both for a While

There's no rule against a trial period.

Here's a middle path a lot of people take, and I think it's a sensible one: run both for a little while. You can leave your answering machine plugged into the new box and also have the free voicemail waiting in the background. Whichever one picks up a given call depends on the settings, but the point is you don't have to commit on day one.

Living with both for a few weeks tells you more than any amount of deciding in advance. You'll notice which one you naturally reach for, whether you love getting messages in email, or whether you'd miss screening calls live. Then you keep the one you prefer and let the other go.

WATCH OUT

If both are set to answer, they can occasionally trip over each other — one picking up before the other. If messages seem to go missing, that's usually why. Setting one to answer a ring or two later than the other sorts it out.

14. Setting the Rings Before Pickup

A small setting that avoids confusion.

Both answering machines and provider voicemail have a setting for how many times the phone rings before they pick up a missed call. It's a small thing, but getting it right keeps everything tidy, especially if you're running both or want a fair chance to reach the phone yourself before it's answered.

The usual advice is four or five rings — enough time to get to the phone from the next room, but not so many that callers give up. If you're running a machine and voicemail together, set them to different ring counts so they don't both grab the call at once. On provider voicemail, the ring count is set in the web account or by asking the provider.

TIP

If you can't reach the phone quickly, set more rings so you have time. If you'd rather missed calls get caught fast, set fewer. It's your preference, and easy to change.

15. What About the Old Tape or Chip?

Saving the messages you want to keep.

If your answering machine holds messages you treasure — a voice you want to keep, a greeting a loved one recorded — think about saving those before the old machine finally gives out, because tapes and chips don't last forever. Nothing's sadder than a cherished voice lost when a machine dies.

The simplest way to save a message is to play it on the machine's speaker while recording it on a smartphone or a small voice recorder held nearby. It won't be studio quality, but it captures the voice safely as a file you can keep and copy. If that's beyond you, it's an easy thing I can help with — and worth doing sooner than later.

GOOD TO KNOW

Old answering machines, especially the tape kind, do eventually wear out. If there's a voice on there you'd grieve to lose, save it now rather than someday.

16. A Word on Fax and Other Gear

The machine isn't the only thing on that jack.

While we're talking about plugging things into the new phone box, it's worth a quick reminder that the answering machine may not be the only device that was sharing your old phone jack. A fax machine, a medical alert base, or an alarm panel might have been on there too, quietly relying on the copper line.

Most of those, like the answering machine, will simply plug into the new box and carry on. The two that need real care are a medical alert and an alarm — those can quietly fail on an internet phone, and you must check them with their companies before switching. A fax often does better moving to an internet fax service. Make a quick list of everything on a phone jack so nothing's forgotten.

WATCH OUT

Never assume a medical alert or alarm 'just works' on the new phone line like the answering machine does. Those are life-safety devices — call their companies and test them. There are separate guides on exactly that.

17. If Hearing Is the Real Issue

Why voicemail may serve you better.

If the honest reason you're thinking about this is that messages are getting hard to hear, let me point you gently toward the voicemail side. An answering machine plays through a small speaker, often not very loud, and there's no way to make the words clearer. If you're straining to catch messages, that frustration only grows.

Provider voicemail with transcription turns that around. The message comes to you as text you can read at whatever size suits you, and the recording is there if you want to play it on a louder device. For someone with hearing loss, reading a message is simply easier than straining to hear it, and it takes the stress out of a full mailbox.

GOOD TO KNOW

If hearing is a bigger challenge across the board, ask me about captioned phones that show live captions of the whole conversation as the caller speaks. That's a separate help worth knowing about.

18. Common Mistakes I See

The slip-ups around the switch.

After helping a lot of folks sort this out, the same few stumbles come up. None are serious, but knowing them ahead saves a little grief.

- Assuming the machine is dead after the phone switch without ever testing it.
- Running a machine and voicemail at once and wondering why messages seem to vanish.
- Letting the message box fill up, so callers can't leave anything.
- Losing a treasured recorded voice when an old machine finally quit.
- Thinking voicemail that catches messages in an outage also lets you call out — it doesn't.

WATCH OUT

The saddest mistake is losing a cherished voice on an old machine. If there's one on yours, save it before anything else — the rest of this can wait, that can't.

19. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

A couple of terms come up around this topic. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you.

- Answering machine — the box on your counter that records missed calls.
- Voicemail — a message box out in the phone network, reached by phone, web, or email.
- Greeting — the message callers hear before the beep.
- Transcription — a voicemail typed out into words you can read.
- Voicemail-to-email — having your messages sent to your email inbox.
- Phone box — the modem or adapter the new service plugs your phone into.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When the provider uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what they mean.

20. Questions I Get All the Time

Quick, plain answers.

Does my old answering machine still work on an internet phone? Yes, almost always — just plug it into the new phone box instead of the wall.

Is the free voicemail better? For many people, yes — it works in outages and can email or type out messages. But a machine lets you screen calls live, which voicemail can't.

Do I have to choose right away? No. Run both for a while and keep whichever you prefer.

Will I lose messages when I switch? Not the new ones. If you want to keep old ones from the machine, save them first — I can help with that.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your question isn't here, it's probably one I've answered many times — just call and ask. There's no charge to ask a question over the phone.

21. Helping a Parent From a Distance

What adult children often set up.

A lot of my calls on this come from adult children helping a parent. If you're helping from out of town, provider voicemail with email delivery can be a quiet comfort — because it means you can be in the loop too, if your parent's happy to share. A missed call that matters doesn't just sit on a box in an empty house.

That said, respect what your parent is comfortable with. If Mom loves her answering machine and screens her calls with it, pushing her onto voicemail she finds confusing helps no one. The kindest setup is the one she'll actually use. Sometimes that's the machine; sometimes it's voicemail; often it's starting with the machine and easing into voicemail.

WATCH OUT

If you set up voicemail-to-email for a parent, make sure they know how to find the messages in their email — or it's no better than a box they never check. A quick lesson makes it stick.

22. Keeping the Machine as a Backup

Belt and suspenders, if you like.

Here's a thought for the cautious among us, and I count myself in that group. Even if you switch to provider voicemail, there's no harm in keeping the answering machine around, unplugged in a closet, as a backup. Technology changes, services get dropped, and it's nice to know the old reliable box is there if you ever want it back.

It costs nothing to keep, takes up little room, and gives you options. If you ever change providers, drop a service, or simply decide the voicemail isn't for you, the machine is ready to plug back in. There's wisdom in not throwing out something that still works, even when you're not using it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keeping a working machine in reserve is sensible, not silly. It's one more way to make sure you can always catch a message, whatever happens with the new service.

23. A Quick Setup Checklist

Whichever way you go.

Once you've decided, a short checklist makes sure nothing slips through. Run through it whichever path you choose, and you'll know your missed calls are being caught.

- 1 If keeping the machine: plug it into the new phone box and test it by calling the house.
 - 2 If switching: dial into voicemail, set a PIN, and record your greeting.
 - 3 Turn on voicemail-to-email if you want messages in your inbox.
 - 4 Turn on transcription if reading messages would help.
 - 5 Leave yourself a test message and check you can retrieve it every way you set up.
- Ten minutes of testing beats discovering weeks later that nothing was catching your calls. Do it once, calmly, and you can forget about it knowing it works.

TIP

The test call is the step people skip and regret. Call your own house, leave a message, and make sure you can hear it back. That one minute is worth the peace of mind.

24. Retrieving Messages From Afar

Checking your calls when you're away from home.

One place the two really differ is checking messages when you're not home. An older answering machine either can't be checked remotely at all, or does it through a fiddly routine — call your own number, punch in a code during the greeting, and hope it works. A lot of folks have a machine that technically does this but never bother.

Provider voicemail makes it simple. Call your own home number from any phone, press the key for the owner when your greeting starts, and enter your PIN — your messages play right there. Better still, with email delivery, you don't call anything; the messages are already in your inbox wherever you are. For anyone who travels or spends part of the year away, that's a real convenience the old box can't match.

TIP

If you spend winters away and want to keep up with home calls, provider voicemail with email delivery is the easy answer — the messages simply follow you south.

25. Caller ID Working With Your Setup

Knowing who called, before you call back.

Caller ID and your message-catcher work together, and it's worth a word. Whether you use a machine or voicemail, the number of the person who left a message is usually recorded alongside it, so you can see who called even if they didn't say their name clearly. That's a help when you're deciding whether to call back.

Many answering machines show the caller's number on a little display next to the message, and provider voicemail lists it right beside each message on screen or in the email. Either way, pair that with the simplest junk-call defense there is: if you don't recognize the number that left a message, you're under no obligation to call it back — and a robocaller usually won't leave a real message at all.

GOOD TO KNOW

A message from an unknown number with no actual words is almost always junk. Let caller ID and an empty or garbled message be your clue to simply delete it.

26. A Temporary Greeting for Trips

Letting callers know you're away — or not.

When you go away for a stretch, you might be tempted to record a greeting that says so — 'We're away until the 15th.' I'd gently steer you away from that. Telling every caller, including strangers and robocallers, that your house is empty isn't the safest thing to broadcast.

A better approach is a greeting that simply asks callers to leave a message, same as always, while you quietly check your messages from afar — easy with provider voicemail and email delivery. That way you stay on top of important calls without advertising that nobody's home. Both a machine and voicemail let you set a greeting; just keep it neutral.

WATCH OUT

Don't record a greeting announcing that you're away from home. It tells the wrong people your house is empty. Keep the greeting ordinary and check your messages remotely instead.

27. Where to Keep the Machine

Placement, volume, and screening.

If you keep an answering machine, where it sits matters more than you'd think, because screening calls live only works if you can actually hear the machine from where you spend your time. A machine tucked in a back room where you'll never hear it defeats half its purpose.

Put it somewhere central — the kitchen, the living room, wherever you are most — and set its speaker volume loud enough that you can hear a caller leaving a message from your usual chair. That's the whole trick to screening: hear the machine pick up, listen to who it is, and decide whether to grab the phone. Keep it in the same familiar spot so you always know where to glance for that blinking light.

TIP

Set the machine's speaker loud enough to hear from your favorite chair. If you can't hear it there, screening calls — the machine's best trick — won't work for you, and voicemail may suit you better.

28. If You Change Providers Later

How your message setup travels.

Phone providers change over the years — you might switch from one to another, or move house. It's worth knowing how your message setup travels when that happens. Your answering machine is the easy one: it's your box, so it goes wherever you go and plugs into whatever new phone box you end up with.

Provider voicemail is different — it belongs to the service, so when you leave a provider, that voicemail and its stored messages generally go away with it. If you've got messages there you want to keep, save them first, which is another good reason to use email delivery — those copies are yours to keep no matter who provides your phone. Your greeting you'd

simply re-record on the new service.

GOOD TO KNOW

An answering machine is yours forever; provider voicemail is tied to the service. If you lean on voicemail, email delivery is the way to keep any message you'd hate to lose in a switch.

29. Simple Beats Fancy

The best setup is the one you'll actually use.

If there's one principle I'd hang this whole decision on, it's this: the best way to catch your messages is whichever one you'll actually use with confidence. A fancy voicemail with email and transcription does nothing for you if it confuses you and you stop checking it. A simple machine you press one button to hear is worth more to you than clever features you don't touch.

So be honest with yourself about what fits your habits. There's no prize for the most modern setup, and no shame in the simplest one. Whether that's a machine on the counter, free voicemail in your email, or a bit of both, the right answer is the one that reliably catches your calls and that you're comfortable reaching for.

GOOD TO KNOW

Comfort and habit matter as much as features. Pick the setup that fits how you actually live, and you'll catch your messages for years without a second thought.

30. When to Just Call Me

You don't have to sort this out alone.

I wrote this guide so you'd feel clear about your options. But if plugging the machine into the new box, setting up the free voicemail, turning on email delivery, or saving a treasured old message feels like more than you want to tackle, that's exactly the sort of quick visit I do all the time.

I come to you, here in Portage County and the nearby towns. The first in-home visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and if something can be handled without a trip, I offer remote help too. If you're not completely happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's the whole deal — no fine print.

TIP

When you call, my assistant Sophie may answer and take down the details so I can call you back — she's there so you always reach a friendly voice, not a dead end.

31. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor

The short, honest version.

After 30+ years of professional experience helping folks through exactly this kind of change, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence. Don't toss the answering machine — plug it into the new box and it'll very likely work. Then take a look at the free voicemail that comes with your service, because it catches messages even in a power outage and can email them to you or type them out to read.

If you love screening your calls live, keep the machine and don't look back. If getting messages in your email or reading them would make life easier — especially if hearing is hard — give the voicemail a try. There's no single right answer, no rush, and no reason you can't run both while you make up your mind. Keep whatever catches your calls the way you like.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal. You can hand the whole thing to me — testing the machine, setting up voicemail, saving old messages — and I'll make sure your missed calls are always caught.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

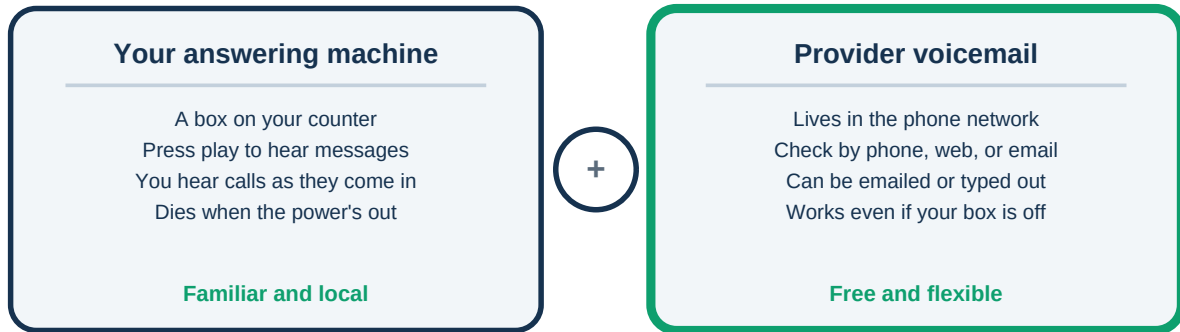
Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Keep my old answering machine — unplug its cord from the wall and plug it into the telephone jack on the new phone box; call the house to test it. Use the free voicemail instead — dial into voicemail, set a PIN, and record a greeting. Get messages in email — turn on voicemail-to-email in the provider's web account. Read messages instead of hearing them — turn on transcription. Decide between them — run both for a month and keep the one you reach for. Save a treasured voice — record it off the machine onto a phone before the old box wears out. Not sure a message got caught — leave yourself a test message and check it. Get help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Answering Machine vs Provider Voicemail

Two ways to catch the calls you miss

**Both catch missed calls well — the difference is how you reach them.**

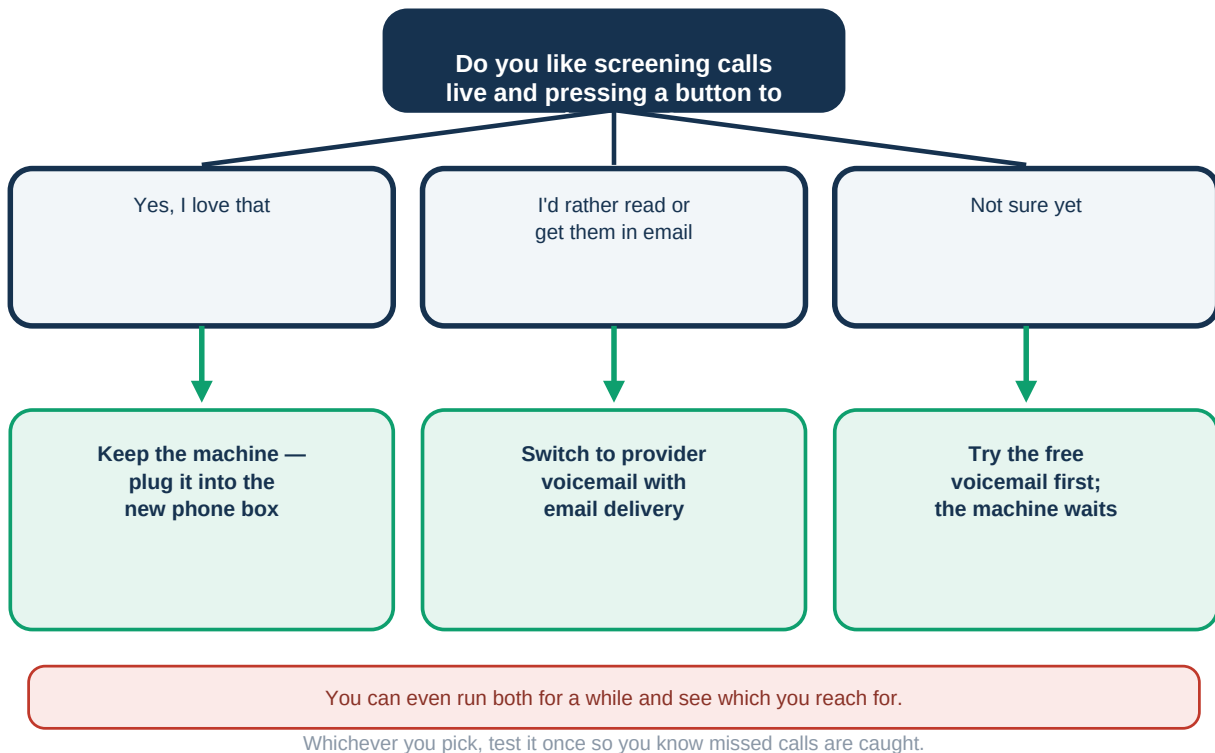
There's no wrong choice; it comes down to what feels comfortable.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Keep the Machine or Switch?

A quick way to decide



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

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.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.