

Blocking Robocalls

THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 A call-blocking box plugs in and runs its own block lists or allow-lists.
- 2 Most cordless phones have a block button that stops a number with one press.
- 3 Your carrier likely offers a free spam filter that flags likely-junk calls.
- 4 An allow-list — only known numbers ring — is the most powerful setting there is.
- 5 No single tool stops everything; stacking a few works best.

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Call-Blocking Boxes vs. the Features Your Phone Already Has

Call-blocking boxes versus the features your phone already has.

————— **An Extended Guide · No. 1736** —————

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What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

The 60-Second Version	5
1. First, You're Not Imagining It	5
2. The Three Main Tools	6
3. How a Call-Blocking Box Works	6
4. What the Boxes Do Well — and Don't	7
5. Your Phone's Own Block Button	8
6. What the Block Button Does Well — and Don't	8
7. Some Phones Have an Allow-List Too	9
8. The Carrier's Free Spam Filter	9
9. What the Carrier Filter Does Well — and Don't	10
10. Block List vs Allow List — the Big Idea	10
11. When an Allow-List Is the Right Answer	11
12. The Limits of an Allow-List	11
13. Which Tool Suits Whom	12
14. Stacking Your Defenses	12
15. The Free Defenses You Already Have	13
16. A Word About Nomorobo and Apps	14
17. Anonymous Call Rejection	14
18. Setting Up a Blocking Box	15
19. Setting Up Your Phone's Block Feature	15
20. Turning On the Carrier Filter	16

21. Don't Engage — Just Hang Up	16
22. Protecting Someone Vulnerable	17
23. Common Mistakes I See	17
24. A Few Plain Words to Know	18
25. Questions I Get All the Time	18
26. Why Spoofing Makes This So Hard	19
27. Blocking on a Cell Phone vs the Home Phone	19
28. Keeping Your Allow-List Current	20
29. Giving It Time to Settle	20
30. When to Just Call Me	21
31. What I'd Tell My Own Neighbor	21
Everyday Cheat Sheet	22
A Picture to Follow Along	23
A Second Look	24
A Note From Bill	24
Your Visit — and My Promise	25

SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

In a hurry? Here's the whole thing on one page. There are three main ways to fight robocalls on a home phone, and they work differently. A dedicated call-blocking box, like a CPR or Sentry, plugs into your line and runs its own block lists or allow-lists. The block button built into most Panasonic, VTech, and AT&T cordless phones lets you block a number with one press. And your phone carrier usually offers a free spam filter that flags or blocks likely-junk calls automatically. None stops everything on its own, so most people stack a couple together. The single most powerful setting is an allow-list, where only numbers you've approved ring through at all.

- A call-blocking box plugs in and runs its own block lists or allow-lists.
- Most cordless phones have a block button that stops a number with one press.
- Your carrier likely offers a free spam filter that flags likely-junk calls.
- An allow-list — only known numbers ring — is the most powerful setting there is.
- No single tool stops everything; stacking a few works best.

GOOD TO KNOW

The simplest, free defense of all needs no gadget: if you don't recognize the number, let it go to voicemail. A real caller leaves a message; a robocaller almost never does. Everything else in this guide builds on that one habit.

1. First, You're Not Imagining It

Robocalls really are that bad — and you can fight back.

Let me start by saying what every one of my customers already knows: the robocalls and scam calls are relentless, and they're not a figure of your imagination. The fake warranty calls, the pretend grandchild in trouble, the robot voice about your 'account' — they come day and night, and they wear people down. You have every right to be fed up.

The good news is you're not helpless. There's a whole set of tools for fighting back, from gadgets you plug in, to features already built into your phone, to free services from your phone company. The trouble is that they all work a little differently, and the ads make big promises. This guide sorts them out plainly so you can pick what fits.

One honest truth up front, so no one's disappointed: there is no magic switch that stops every unwanted call forever. The scammers are clever and they adapt. But by understanding your options and stacking a few together, you really can turn a phone that

rings with junk all day back into a peaceful one. That's an achievable goal.

WATCH OUT

Don't fall for any product that promises to block one hundred percent of unwanted calls. Nothing does. The honest tools reduce the flood a great deal — which is a genuine relief — but be wary of anyone claiming perfection.

2. The Three Main Tools

A quick map before the details.

Before we go deep, here's the lay of the land. When people talk about blocking calls on a home phone, they're usually talking about one of three things, and it helps to keep them straight in your mind.

- A dedicated call-blocking box — a small gadget you buy and plug into your phone line, like a CPR Call Blocker or a Sentry.
- Your phone's own block button — a feature built into most modern cordless phones from Panasonic, VTech, and AT&T.
- Your carrier's spam filter — a free service from your phone company that labels or blocks likely-junk calls.

Each has strengths and limits, and each suits a different kind of person. The rest of this guide walks through all three, then shows how they fit together. By the end you'll know which to reach for, or which combination will finally quiet your phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to pick just one. Many people use the carrier's free filter and their phone's block button together, and add a box only if they want the extra power of an allow-list.

3. How a Call-Blocking Box Works

A small gadget between the line and your phone.

A call-blocking box is a small device you buy once and plug into your phone setup, usually between the phone line or box and your telephone. From there it screens your incoming calls according to lists you control, deciding what rings through and what gets stopped before your phone ever makes a sound.

The best-known names are CPR Call Blocker and Sentry. Depending on the model, they come pre-loaded with big databases of known robocall numbers, let you block a number by pressing a button when a junk call comes in, and — on some models — run in an allow-list mode where only your approved numbers ring at all. They're a standalone solution, meaning they don't depend on your phone brand or your carrier.

GOOD TO KNOW

A blocking box's big advantage is independence — it works with almost any phone and any service, and its allow-list mode is as strong as any protection going. Its cost is a one-time purchase of around a few tens of dollars; confirm current pricing.

4. What the Boxes Do Well — and Don't

An honest look at CPR and Sentry.

Let me be even-handed about the boxes, because the ads won't be. What they do well: a pre-loaded database stops many known robocallers out of the gate, a one-touch block button lets you add nuisance numbers as they come, and the allow-list models are genuinely powerful for someone who wants ironclad protection. For a badly harassed phone, a box can be a real relief.

The honest limits: blocking by number can't keep up with scammers who change or fake their numbers constantly, so a block-list approach always leaks some through. Some models only block after you press the button, so the first ring still gets through. And the allow-list models, powerful as they are, can accidentally stop a real call from an unexpected number. Reviewers also note some boxes are fiddly to set up. Know what you're getting.

WATCH OUT

A blocking box that works by block-list alone will never catch every scammer, because they spoof and rotate numbers endlessly. If you want a box for real power, it's the allow-list mode that delivers — not the block list.

5. Your Phone's Own Block Button

The feature you may already have.

Here's something a lot of people don't realize: the cordless phone already sitting on your counter probably has call blocking built right in. Most modern cordless phones from Panasonic, VTech, and AT&T-brand include a block feature — often a 'call block' button or a menu option — that lets you stop a nuisance number from ever ringing again.

The usual way it works: when a junk call comes in, or right after one, you press the block button, and that number goes onto the phone's own block list. Next time it calls, your phone stays silent or rejects it. Some models hold a few hundred blocked numbers, and better ones have a one-touch block you press during the call. It costs nothing extra — it's a feature you already paid for.

WATCH OUT

Dig out your cordless phone's manual, or look it up by model number, and find the call-block instructions. A lot of folks have this feature and never knew — it's free and already in your hand.

6. What the Block Button Does Well — and Don't

The honest limits of blocking by number.

The block button's great strength is that it's free, it's already there, and it's satisfying — a repeat nuisance caller gets one press and never bothers you again. For a particular number that keeps calling, nothing is simpler. If the same scammer or telemarketer hits you from the same number over and over, the block button ends it.

The limit is the same one the boxes face: it blocks by number, one at a time, and the worst scammers change their number with every call. So you can block all afternoon and still get junk tomorrow from a fresh number. Some phones also have a modest limit on how many numbers they'll hold. It's a fine tool for repeat offenders, but it's not a wall against the whole flood by itself.

GOOD TO KNOW

The block button shines against a specific repeat caller and struggles against the ever-changing robocall flood. That's exactly why it works best paired with a carrier filter or an allow-list, which handle the changing numbers.

7. Some Phones Have an Allow-List Too

The quiet power feature on certain handsets.

Beyond the simple block button, some cordless phones — certain Panasonic models are well known for this — go further and offer an allow-list style feature, sometimes called by names like a contacts-only or 'accept only' mode. It flips the whole thing around: instead of blocking bad numbers, it only rings for numbers you've approved.

If your phone has this, it's a hidden gem, because it gives you allow-list power without buying a separate box. You add your trusted numbers, switch the mode on, and the phone simply won't ring for anyone else. It's worth checking your phone's manual to see whether yours can do this — it's the single most effective setting a home phone can have against junk calls.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check whether your Panasonic, VTech, or AT&T phone has a contacts-only or 'accept only known callers' mode. If it does, you may not need a blocking box at all — the power feature's already built in.

8. The Carrier's Free Spam Filter

Your phone company is on your side here.

The third tool is one many people overlook: your phone company almost certainly offers a free spam-filtering service. The big carriers have them — AT&T Call Protect, Verizon Call Filter, and the cable companies have their own equivalents — and they work behind the scenes to label or block calls their systems recognize as likely spam.

Because the carrier sees the whole flood of calls across millions of lines, they can spot a robocall campaign and flag it for everyone at once — something no single box or phone can do. When a flagged call comes in, you might see 'Spam Likely' on your caller ID, or the call may be stopped before it rings. It's free, it's automatic, and it asks nothing of you once it's on.

GOOD TO KNOW

The carrier filter is the easiest win of all — free, automatic, and set-and-forget. Call your phone company and ask them to turn on their spam filter or call-protection service; many switch it on with one request.

9. What the Carrier Filter Does Well — and Don't

Strong and effortless, but not perfect.

The carrier filter's strengths are real: it's free, it runs itself, it needs no gadget, and it draws on the carrier's view of spam across huge numbers of calls, so it catches campaigns fast. For someone who wants protection without fiddling with anything, it's the obvious starting point, and it does a lot of quiet good.

The limits: it works by labeling and probability, so it can mislabel a real call as spam now and then, and it can miss a cleverly disguised scam. It also leans on caller-ID authentication technology that isn't universal yet and doesn't fully cover old copper lines. So it's a strong first layer, but like the others, it isn't a complete wall on its own.

WATCH OUT

Because the filter guesses, it can occasionally flag a call you wanted as 'Spam Likely.' If you're expecting an important call from an unfamiliar number — a doctor, a repairman — keep an eye out so a mislabel doesn't make you miss it.

10. Block List vs Allow List — the Big Idea

The one distinction that changes everything.

If you take one concept from this whole guide, make it this one, because it's the key to everything. There are two opposite ways to think about blocking calls: a block list and an allow list. Understanding the difference tells you why some approaches work so much better than others.

A block list blocks the bad numbers you add to it, and lets everything else ring. The problem is obvious once you see it: you're forever chasing new scam numbers, and the scammers change numbers faster than you can block them. An allow list does the reverse — it lets through only the numbers you've approved, and silences everyone else. You set it once, and the scammers, no matter how many numbers they try, simply never get in because they're not on your list.

GOOD TO KNOW

A block list is a bucket with a hole you keep patching. An allow list is a locked door that only opens for people with a key. For stopping the robocall flood, the locked door wins every time.

11. When an Allow-List Is the Right Answer

Especially powerful for memory loss.

The allow-list approach isn't for everyone, but when it fits, nothing beats it. It's the right answer for anyone who's overwhelmed by junk calls and only really needs to hear from a known handful of people — family, the doctor, a neighbor. You lose the ability to get a surprise call from a new number, but you gain total peace from the flood.

It's especially powerful for someone with memory loss, and I want to flag that clearly. A person who can't reliably tell a scammer from a real caller is terribly vulnerable, and you can't fix that by teaching them to be careful. An allow-list solves it at the root: the scam calls never ring the phone at all, so there's nothing to fall for. For a caregiver, it's one of the most protective things you can set up.

TIP

If you're setting up a phone for a parent with memory loss, the allow-list is the feature to reach for. There's a whole separate guide on simple, safe phones for memory loss — ask me for it.

12. The Limits of an Allow-List

The trade-off to go in with eyes open.

An allow-list is powerful, but fairness means naming its real downside so you choose with eyes open. Because only approved numbers ring, any call from a number not on the list is silenced — including ones you might have wanted. A new doctor's office, a delivery driver, a hospital calling from a line you don't recognize: all of those would be stopped.

For a lot of people that trade is well worth it, or doesn't come up much. But think it through for your own life. If you regularly get important calls from numbers you can't predict, a strict allow-list may be too much, and a carrier filter plus a block button might suit you better. The right tool depends on how you actually live and who needs to reach you.

WATCH OUT

Before you switch on a strict allow-list, picture the calls you'd hate to miss from unknown numbers — appointment confirmations, a hospital, a contractor. Make sure you're comfortable with those going quiet, or build in a way to catch them.

13. Which Tool Suits Whom

Matching the defense to the person.

There's no single best tool — only the one that fits your situation. Let me lay out which tends to suit whom, so you can see yourself in it. These aren't rules, just honest tendencies from years of setting these up.

- Want effortless, free, set-and-forget? Start with the carrier's spam filter.
- Plagued by a few specific repeat numbers? Use your phone's block button.
- Overwhelmed and only need a known handful of callers? An allow-list, by phone or box.
- Caring for someone with memory loss? An allow-list, firmly.
- Want the most protection and don't mind setup? Stack the filter, the block button, and an allow-list box.

Most people land on a combination rather than a single tool, and that's exactly right. The carrier filter and the block button cost nothing and work together nicely; add a box with an allow-list only if you want the heavy-duty protection. Fit the defense to the person, not the other way around.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you're not sure which fits, start free: turn on the carrier filter and learn your phone's block button. Live with that for a few weeks, and add a box only if the junk's still getting to you.

14. Stacking Your Defenses

Why a combination beats any one tool.

Here's the strategy I come back to again and again: no single tool stops everything, so stack a few and let them cover each other's gaps. The carrier filter catches broad robocall campaigns automatically. The block button handles specific repeat offenders. And an allow-list, if you want it, shuts out everything unknown. Together they're far more than the sum of their parts.

A common, effective stack for a harassed phone: turn on the carrier's free filter, use the block button on any repeat nuisance that slips through, and — if you're truly overwhelmed — add an allow-list on top. And under all of it, keep the simplest habit of all: let unknown numbers go to voicemail. That layered approach is what finally gives people their quiet phone back.

GOOD TO KNOW

Start with the free layers — carrier filter plus block button — since they cost nothing. Only spend on a box if those aren't enough. Many people find the free stack does the job.

15. The Free Defenses You Already Have

No gadget, no cost, real results.

Before anyone spends a dime, I want to make sure you're using the free defenses, because they do a surprising amount. Some of the best protection costs nothing at all and is available to everyone, whatever phone or service you have.

- Let unknown numbers go to voicemail — the single simplest, free defense.
- Turn on your carrier's free spam filter with one phone call.
- Learn and use the block button already on your cordless phone.
- Sign up for the free Do Not Call Registry to stop legitimate telemarketers.
- Never engage a robocall — don't press a key, don't say yes, just hang up.

Those five cost nothing and, used together, cut the flood down hard. A paid box or service is worth considering only if these aren't enough for you. Start free, see how far it gets you, and spend only if you still need more.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Do Not Call Registry, at donotcall.gov or by phone, is free and stops legitimate telemarketers — but not scammers, who ignore it. It's worth doing, just don't expect it to stop the crooks.

16. A Word About Nomorobo and Apps

What changed, and what's out there.

You may have heard of Nomorobo, a well-known call-blocking service. It's worth a note because it changed recently: as of the start of 2026, its free landline and internet-phone protection ended, and it moved to a paid subscription. If you used to rely on the free version, that's why it may have stopped — confirm the current terms before signing up again.

There are other apps and services in this space too, mostly aimed at cell phones, that screen or block spam calls for a monthly fee. For a traditional home phone, the carrier filter and a blocking box are usually the more natural fit. Whatever you consider, check what it actually covers and what it costs now, since this is an area where the offerings and prices shift often.

WATCH OUT

Call-blocking services and their prices change — Nomorobo's shift away from free landline protection is one example. Always confirm what a service covers and costs today before you count on it.

17. Anonymous Call Rejection

A free trick for callers who hide their number.

Here's a small, free tool many people have and don't know about: anonymous call rejection. On many phone services, dialing a short star-code — often star-seven-seven — switches on a feature that blocks callers who deliberately hide their number, so their call never rings through. A fair number of nuisance callers hide their number, so this can trim some of them.

It won't catch scammers who fake a real-looking number — and most of them do these days — but it costs nothing to try if your carrier supports it. Ask your phone company whether they offer anonymous call rejection and what the code is. It's one more small, free layer in the stack.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ask your carrier if they support anonymous call rejection and what the star-code is. It's free, it's a quick dial to turn on, and it quietly blocks the callers who hide behind 'no caller ID.'

18. Setting Up a Blocking Box

What to expect if you buy one.

If you decide a call-blocking box is worth it, here's how setting one up generally goes, so it's not a mystery. The box plugs in between your phone line or box and your telephone, using the same kind of phone cords you already have. It needs to be in the chain so it sees your incoming calls before the phone rings.

- 1 Unplug your phone's cord from the line or box.
- 2 Plug that line into the blocking box's 'line in' jack.
- 3 Run a cord from the box's 'phone' jack to your telephone.
- 4 If using allow-list mode, add your trusted numbers per the box's instructions.
- 5 Test it: call from a trusted number and from a blocked or unknown one.

The physical hookup is simple; the fiddly part is programming the lists, which varies by model and is where some people get stuck. If the box's instructions leave you puzzled, especially setting up an allow-list, that's exactly the sort of thing I can set up and test for you in a few minutes.

GOOD TO KNOW

Confirm the box works with your kind of service before you buy. Most work with regular and internet phones alike, but it's worth checking, especially if you're on a cable or VoIP phone.

19. Setting Up Your Phone's Block Feature

Free, and already in your hand.

Since the block feature on your cordless phone costs nothing and you likely already own it, let's make sure you can use it. The exact steps vary by brand and model, but the idea is the same across Panasonic, VTech, and AT&T phones, and the manual spells out the specifics.

- Find your phone's model number — usually on the base or in the manual.
- Look up 'call block' for that model, in the manual or online.
- Learn how to block a number during or right after a junk call — often one button.
- Check whether it has a contacts-only or 'accept only' mode for allow-list power.
- Add any numbers you want blocked, and test with one of them.

It's genuinely worth ten minutes to learn this, because it's free and immediate. The next time a junk call comes in, instead of just fuming, you press a button and that number is gone for good. And if your phone has the allow-list mode, you may not need to buy anything else at all.

GOOD TO KNOW

Lost the manual? Nearly every phone's manual is free to look up online by its model number, or I can find it for you. The call-block steps are usually just a page or two.

20. Turning On the Carrier Filter

One phone call, usually free.

The carrier's spam filter is the easiest tool to switch on, so don't leave it sitting unused. In most cases it's a single phone call to your provider, or a toggle in their app or web account. You ask them to turn on their spam-blocking or call-protection feature, and they do it on their end.

Ask a couple of questions while you're at it: whether it's truly free or whether there's a paid upgrade, whether it merely labels spam or actually blocks it, and whether you can see and adjust what it's catching. Most offer a free basic tier that does the core job well. Once it's on, it runs itself, quietly thinning out the junk with no effort from you.

GOOD TO KNOW

If a carrier rep tries to upsell you to a paid call-protection plan, ask first what the free version does. For most people the free tier is plenty, and you can always upgrade later if it isn't.

21. Don't Engage — Just Hang Up

The habit that protects you most.

No gadget matters more than this one habit, so let me say it plainly: when you realize a call is a robocall or a scam, don't engage — just hang up. Don't press a key to 'be removed,' don't say 'yes,' don't argue or ask questions. Any response, even hanging up after pressing a key, tells them your number is live and answered, which brings more calls, not fewer.

The scammers are skilled at keeping you on the line and steering you — a frightening story about a grandchild, an urgent 'account problem,' a prize you've won. The safest move every time is to hang up without a word and, if it claimed to be someone real like your bank,

call them back on the number from your statement. Silence and a hang-up are your strongest protection.

WATCH OUT

Pressing a key to 'opt out' of a robocall usually confirms your number is real and brings more calls. Never press anything — just hang up. A real company won't mind you calling back on a number you trust.

22. Protecting Someone Vulnerable

When the calls are a real danger, not just a nuisance.

For most of us, robocalls are an annoyance. But for an older person who's isolated, confused, or simply too trusting, scam calls are a genuine danger — this is how life savings get stolen and how real harm is done. If you're worried about a parent or loved one in that situation, blocking calls isn't just about peace and quiet; it's protection.

For someone truly vulnerable, I'd skip straight to the strongest tool: an allow-list, so only trusted numbers ever ring. Pair it with a simple phone, and the scam calls simply never reach them. You can't rely on talking a vulnerable person out of falling for a clever scammer in the moment, so take the decision out of their hands by keeping the calls from arriving at all.

TIP

If you're protecting a vulnerable loved one, an allow-list plus a simple phone is the setup I'd steer you toward. Ask me for the guide on simple, safe phones for memory loss — it goes deeper on exactly this.

23. Common Mistakes I See

The slip-ups that let junk through.

After setting these up for a lot of people, the same few mistakes come up again and again. None are your fault — the whole subject's muddy — but knowing them saves frustration.

- Buying an expensive box before turning on the free carrier filter and block button.
- Relying on a block list against scammers who change numbers constantly.
- Pressing a key to 'opt out,' which confirms the number is live.
- Expecting any one tool to stop everything, then feeling it failed.

- Setting a strict allow-list without thinking through the real calls it'll block.

WATCH OUT

The costliest mistake isn't about a gadget — it's engaging with the scammer at all. The moment you respond, you've confirmed a live number and invited more. Hang up, every time.

24. A Few Plain Words to Know

The jargon, translated.

This topic has its own terms. Here's the short translation so nothing throws you.

- Robocall — an automated call that plays a recording or connects a scammer.
- Block list — a list of bad numbers you block, one at a time.
- Allow list / whitelist — a list where only approved numbers ring through.
- Spam filter — a carrier service that flags or blocks likely-junk calls.
- Spoofing — faking a real-looking number so blocking by number fails.
- Do Not Call Registry — a free list that stops legitimate telemarketers.

TIP

Keep this little list with your guide. When an ad or a help line uses one of these words, you'll know exactly what they mean — and whether the promise behind it holds up.

25. Questions I Get All the Time

Quick, plain answers.

What stops robocalls best? No single thing — stack the carrier's free filter, your phone's block button, and, if you're overwhelmed, an allow-list. The allow-list is the most powerful.

Do I need to buy a box? Not necessarily. Many phones have a block button and some have an allow-list mode built in, and the carrier filter is free. Try those first.

Will the Do Not Call Registry stop the scammers? No — it stops legitimate telemarketers, but crooks ignore it. It's still worth signing up for, free.

Why do I still get junk after blocking numbers? Because scammers fake and change their numbers constantly. That's why an allow-list or a carrier filter works better than blocking one number at a time.

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.

26. Why Spoofing Makes This So Hard

The trick that defeats blocking by number.

It's worth understanding the one trick that makes all this so frustrating, because it explains why no simple fix exists. It's called spoofing. Scammers use computers to fake the number that shows on your caller ID, so the call looks like it's coming from a local number, a real business, or even your own number. The number you see is often completely made up.

That's why blocking by number is a losing game against the worst callers — the number you block today is one they invented and won't use again, and tomorrow they'll fake a different one. It's also why you sometimes get a call that appears to come from your own phone number, which is unsettling but is just spoofing at work. Understanding this helps you see why an allow-list, which ignores the faked number and simply only rings for your approved ones, is so much more effective.

GOOD TO KNOW

A call that appears to come from your own number, or from a neighbor's, is almost always a spoofed scam. Don't answer it, and don't be alarmed — the scammer isn't really using your line, just faking the display.

27. Blocking on a Cell Phone vs the Home Phone

The tools differ a little.

This guide is mostly about the home phone, but many of us juggle both, so a quick word on the difference. On a cell phone, blocking a number is built right into the phone — you tap a recent call and choose to block it — and the carrier spam filters often work even better there, labeling suspected spam clearly on the screen.

The ideas are the same across both: block lists, carrier filters, and the don't-engage habit all apply. The main difference is that a home phone may need a separate box or rely on the handset's block button, while a cell phone has the tools built into the device. If junk calls plague both your phones, it's worth setting up protection on each — the steps differ, but the

goal is identical.

TIP

If robocalls hit your cell phone too, turn on your mobile carrier's spam-labeling feature and learn the one-tap block in your phone's recent-calls list. It's the same strategy, just built into the handset.

28. Keeping Your Allow-List Current

The small upkeep that keeps it working.

If you go with an allow-list, there's a little ongoing upkeep worth knowing about, though it's light. Because only approved numbers ring through, you need to add a new trusted number whenever someone's circumstances change — a family member gets a new cell, a new doctor comes into the picture, a service you use changes its number.

It's not a burden, just an occasional five-minute task. Keep your list of trusted numbers somewhere handy so adding one is quick. And review the list now and then to make sure everyone who should reach you still can. A well-kept allow-list stays powerful for years; a neglected one can start quietly blocking people you've since needed to hear from.

GOOD TO KNOW

Set a reminder to glance over your allow-list once or twice a year, and add new numbers as soon as someone trusted changes theirs. A little upkeep keeps the right people always getting through.

29. Giving It Time to Settle

Protection improves as it learns your calls.

Whatever mix you set up, give it a little time before you judge it. Blocking tools often work better after a few weeks, as you block the repeat offenders that slip through, as the carrier filter catches the campaigns aimed at your area, and as your allow-list gets rounded out with the numbers you actually need. The first week is the noisiest; it quiets from there.

Don't be discouraged if a junk call or two still gets through early on. That's normal, not a sign the setup failed. Block it, adjust, and carry on. Within a month, most people find the flood has slowed to a trickle, and the phone feels like their own again. Patience in the first few weeks pays off in a lasting calm.

TIP

Judge your setup after a month, not a day. The tools get more effective as you tune them to your actual calls, and the early stragglers thin out quickly once you've blocked the regulars.

30. When to Just Call Me

Sorting out the right mix is what I do.

I wrote this guide so the options wouldn't feel like a maze. But figuring out which mix fits your phone and your life, turning on the carrier filter, learning your phone's block feature, setting up and testing a blocking box, and building an allow-list is exactly the kind of visit I do. You don't have to wade through manuals and ads on your own.

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 with exactly this kind of headache, here's the plain advice I'd give over the fence. Start free: turn on your carrier's spam filter, learn the block button on your cordless phone, and let unknown numbers go to voicemail. For most people, that trio quiets the phone a great deal and costs nothing.

If you're still overwhelmed, or you're protecting someone vulnerable, go to the allow-list — only known numbers ring through — whether that's a mode on your phone or a dedicated box. And whatever you do, never engage a robocall; just hang up. No single tool stops everything, but stack a few sensibly and you really can turn a phone that rings with junk all day back into a peaceful one. That's a goal worth reaching for.

GOOD TO KNOW

If any of this feels like a lot, that's normal — it's a muddy subject by design. You can hand the whole thing to me, and I'll set up the right mix for your home and show you how to use it.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the phone. I want to... Do this. Start free — call your carrier and turn on their spam filter, learn your cordless phone's block button, and let unknown numbers go to voicemail. Block a repeat nuisance number — press the block button on your phone during or after the call. Stop almost all junk — set up an allow-list (whitelist) so only approved numbers ring, on a phone that has the mode or a blocking box like CPR or Sentry. Protect a vulnerable loved one — use an allow-list plus a simple phone. Stop legitimate telemarketers — sign up free at donotcall.gov. Never do — don't press a key or respond to a robocall; just hang up. Get help — call Bill: (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Three Ways to Block Calls

Each works differently — none is the single best

	How it works	Good for
Call-blocking box	Plugs in; its own lists	Allow-list power users
Phone's block button	Built in; block by number	Blocking repeat offenders
Carrier spam filter	Flags likely spam for you	Set-and-forget, free

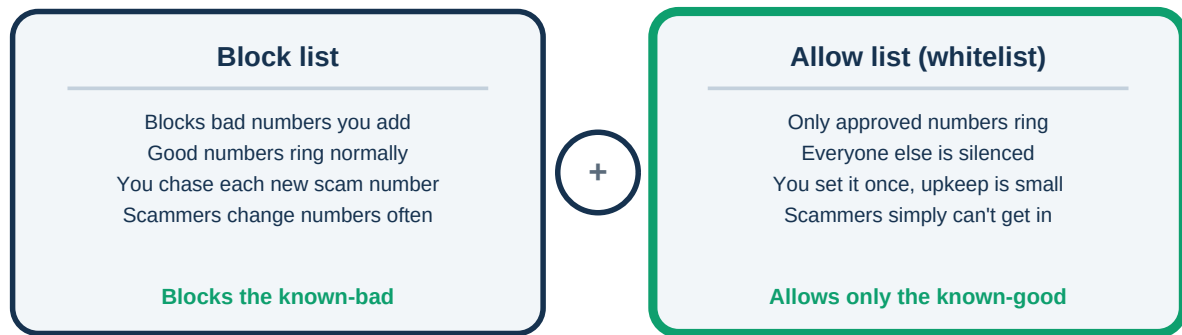
Most people stack two or three; confirm what your phone and carrier offer.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Block List vs Allow List

Two opposite ways to think about it



A block list is easier to start; an allow list is far more powerful.

An allow list can miss an unexpected real call — weigh that for your home.

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.