



An Extended Guide · No. 1942

# Choosing a Monitor for Aging Eyes

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Size, sharpness, and readable  
text — in plain English

**Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal**

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**★ Read this first — you really can't break anything**

Before we start, a promise: you cannot break anything just by reading, looking, or trying a setting. Screens, keyboards, and cables are made to be plugged and unplugged, and almost anything you change can be changed right back. Go at your own pace, skip to the page you need, and if you ever feel stuck, that is exactly what I am here for — there is no such thing as a silly question. With a monitor, the goal is simple: words and pictures that are easy and comfortable to see. Everything in here serves that one goal.

## Let's find a screen that's kind to your eyes

The right monitor can turn squinting and leaning in close into sitting back comfortably and reading with ease. This guide helps you pick one for older eyes — without the jargon and without overspending.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the gear in their homes, patiently and in plain language. Think of this as me sitting at your kitchen table, helping you choose one thing at a time.

Here's the good news up front: the thing most people get wrong is easy to get right once you understand it. A bigger screen does not automatically mean bigger words — but with the right screen and two simple settings, you can have text that's both large and crisp. We'll walk through exactly how.

**★ You don't have to get this perfect**

A monitor is a comfortable, low-risk purchase, and most can be returned if they don't suit you. If you'd like a second opinion before you spend a dollar, call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll talk it through with you — free, and with nothing to sell you.

## The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you're already most of the way to a screen that's easy on your eyes.

- ❑ A bigger screen helps, but size alone is not the answer — how sharp the screen is, and how the computer is set, matter just as much.
- ❑ A sharper screen (more dots packed in) lets you make text larger and keep it crisp instead of blurry.
- ❑ After it's plugged in, you'll set two things: the resolution and the text size (scaling). We cover both, in plain steps.
- ❑ Choose a matte, anti-glare screen if your room has windows or lamps — it cuts the reflections that tire your eyes.
- ❑ Pick a stand that raises, lowers, and tilts so the screen meets your eyes, not the other way around.
- ❑ You can almost always try it and change it back. Nothing here is permanent.

### ✓ One idea to hold onto

Comfort comes from three things working together: a large-enough screen, a sharp-enough screen, and the right settings. Get all three and reading stops being work.

## Why a bigger screen isn't always bigger text

This is the one idea that clears up all the confusion, so let's take it slowly.

Think of a screen as a window made of tiny dots. A computer decides how many dots to use to draw everything. If it uses a lot of dots, pictures look smooth and sharp — but each letter can end up small, because the computer is trying to fit more on the glass.

So a brand-new, very sharp screen can actually make text look tinier than your old one did, right out of the box. That surprises people and sends a few perfectly good monitors back to the store. Don't let it. The sharpness is a gift — it means you can enlarge the text and it will stay clean and clear instead of turning fuzzy and jagged.

The trick is to buy a screen that's both big enough to sit back from and sharp enough to enlarge, and then spend two minutes setting it up. We'll do that setup together in this guide, and in much more depth in the guide on resolution and scaling.

### ✓ The plain-English rule

Buy for comfort, not for bragging rights. A screen you can sit back from and still read easily beats the biggest or the sharpest on the shelf.

## How big a screen should you get?

There's no single right answer — it depends on your desk, your distance, and your eyes. Here's how to think about it without a tape measure full of numbers.

Monitors are measured corner to corner, like televisions. A mid-size screen suits most desks and most people beautifully: big enough to sit back from, not so big you're swinging your head to read the corners. Larger screens are wonderful if your desk is deep enough to put some distance between you and the glass.

Here's the part people forget: a screen that's too big, too close, is no kinder to your eyes than one that's too small. You want to sit back far enough to take in the whole screen with a comfortable, relaxed gaze. If your desk is shallow, a moderate size is the friendlier choice.

### A simple test before you buy

Sit at your desk and reach your arm straight out. Your fingertips are about where a comfortable screen distance begins. If a screen is so large you'd have to push it past the wall to see it all, it's too big for that desk.

#### ★ Bring me your desk, not just the box

The right size is really about your desk and your chair as much as the screen. Tell me how deep your desk is and how far you like to sit, and I'll help you land on a size that feels roomy without crowding you. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Sharpness, in words instead of numbers

You'll see resolution written as pairs of numbers and names like 'Full HD' or '4K.' Here's what actually matters to your eyes.

Resolution is just how many of those tiny dots the screen has. More dots on the same size glass means a sharper, smoother picture — letters with clean edges instead of a faint staircase look. For reading, sharpness is a real comfort: crisp text is easier to take in and less tiring.

The reason sharpness matters so much for older eyes is this: on a sharp screen you can turn the text size up good and large, and it stays clean. On a low-resolution screen, enlarging the text makes it blocky and blurry. So sharpness is really what buys you the freedom to go big.

You don't need to memorize the numbers. When you shop, favor a screen described as sharp or 'high resolution' for its size, and know that once it's home, the real comfort comes from setting the text size to suit you. The resolution-and-scaling guide walks through that setup step by step.

### ✓ Don't buy sharpness you'll never set up

A very sharp screen only helps if someone turns the text size up to match. Out of the box it may look tiny. If you (or a helper) will do the two-minute setup, go sharp. If not, a moderate screen set up well can serve you just as happily.

## Matte or glossy? The glare question

This one small choice makes a surprising difference to tired eyes, and it's easy to get right.

Screens come with two kinds of surface. A glossy screen looks vivid in a dim room but acts like a mirror under lamps and windows, bouncing bright reflections back at you. A matte, or anti-glare, screen has a gently textured surface that scatters those reflections so they don't glare in your eyes.

For most homes — especially a bright room, a sunny window, or a lamp behind you — a matte screen is the easier, more restful choice. You stop fighting reflections and squinting past bright spots, and that alone can cut a lot of eye fatigue.

### ✓ A quick way to tell in the store

Look at a screen that's turned off. If it's a dark mirror showing your reflection clearly, it's glossy. If your reflection looks soft and hazy, it's matte. For a bright room, reach for the hazy one.

## The stand matters more than you'd think

A screen you can move to meet your eyes is a screen you'll sit at comfortably for hours. A screen stuck too low is a sore neck waiting to happen.

The top of the screen should sit at about eye level, so your gaze falls slightly downward and your neck stays relaxed. Many cheaper monitors come on a fixed stand that only tilts a little, which often leaves the screen too low — and you end up tipping your head back, especially with bifocals or progressive lenses.

Look for a stand that adjusts for height as well as tilt. If you fall in love with a screen on a fixed stand, don't worry — a simple riser or an inexpensive monitor arm can lift it. We cover arms and risers in the sit-stand and monitor-arm guide.

### ✓ Bifocals change the math

If you wear bifocals or progressives, you likely read through the bottom of your lenses — which means the screen often wants to sit a little lower, not higher, so you're not craning your chin up. Set it where your eyes relax, and tell your eye doctor you use a computer; there are lenses made just for screen distance.

## Features that genuinely help older eyes

Skip the gaming extras and flashy numbers. These are the features worth caring about for comfortable, everyday reading.

- **An adjustable stand:** height and tilt, so the screen meets your eyes. The single most useful feature on this list.
- **A matte, anti-glare surface:** fewer reflections, less squinting.
- **Easy brightness controls:** buttons you can find and understand, so you can dim a too-bright screen without a manual.
- **A built-in 'low blue light' or 'reading' mode:** warms the colors a touch in the evening, which many find restful.
- **A sharp screen for its size:** so enlarged text stays crisp.
- **A matte-finish, non-flickering screen:** most modern screens are flicker-free, but it's worth confirming for long reading sessions.

### ✓ Ignore the refresh-rate race

You'll see big numbers about how fast a screen refreshes, aimed at video gamers. For reading, email, photos, and video calls, they make no difference to your comfort. Don't pay extra for them.

## The two settings that do the real work

Buying the screen is half the job. These two quick settings are what actually make the text large and clear. Don't skip them.

### First: the resolution

When you plug in a new screen, the computer usually picks the best (sharpest) resolution on its own, and you should leave it there. It can be tempting to lower it to make things bigger — but that makes everything fuzzy. Leave the sharpness alone and change the text size instead, which is the next step.

### Second: the text size (scaling)

Both Windows and Mac have a simple slider or menu that makes everything — text, buttons, icons — larger while keeping it crisp. This is the setting that finally makes a sharp screen comfortable. Turn it up until reading feels easy; there's no prize for leaving it small.

#### ★ I'll set it up so it's easy from day one

This two-minute setup is exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to do on a visit — or often right on your screen for \$49 without coming over. We'll get the text to a size that feels good to you and make sure it's crisp. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Two ways people come to this

A monitor for aging eyes gets chosen two ways: by the person who'll use it, and by an adult child picking one out for a parent. The screen is the same; the worries are different.

### If you're setting this up for yourself

You know what feels comfortable and what strains — trust that. Your job is to buy for your own eyes and your own desk, and to make sure the text size gets turned up once it's home.

- Favor a matte screen and an adjustable stand — comfort over specs.
- Buy a screen sharp enough that you can enlarge text and keep it crisp.
- Plan the two-minute setup (resolution left alone, text size turned up).
- If a return is easy, it's fine to try one and see how it feels.

### If you're setting it up for a parent or loved one

You want Mom or Dad to sit back and read without squinting, and you may be setting it up from a distance or on a quick visit. Aim for 'comfortable and foolproof' over 'impressive.'

- Set the text size up generously before you hand it over — bigger than you'd choose for yourself.
- Pick a matte screen; older eyes are more bothered by glare.
- Choose a stand that's already at a good height, or add a simple riser.
- Write down the one or two buttons for brightness on a sticky note.

#### ★ Setting one up for a parent far away?

This is one of the most common calls I get from adult kids. Tell me the computer your parent has and I'll help you choose a screen that'll work with it and set up the text size so it's comfortable from the first moment. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Beyond the screen: a few reading comforts

The monitor is the big piece, but a handful of free or cheap habits make any screen kinder to your eyes.

- **Dim a too-bright screen** to roughly match the room. A screen glowing far brighter than its surroundings tires the eyes.
- **Use the computer's text-size and zoom tools** on top of the screen setting — web pages and documents can be enlarged further with a keystroke.
- **Try a warmer, 'night' color in the evening** to take the harsh blue edge off the light.
- **Take short breaks** — look at something far away now and then to let your eyes relax.

None of this requires buying anything. We go deeper into lighting, breaks, and night settings in the guide on eye strain at the computer.

### ✓ Bigger is allowed

Some folks feel they 'should' keep text small to fit more on screen. There's no rule that says so. Make it as large as you like — your comfort is the whole point.

## Will it plug into my computer?

A quick word so there are no surprises at the checkout. A screen is only useful if it connects to the computer you already have.

Computers and monitors connect with one of a few cable types — you may have heard names like HDMI, DisplayPort, or USB-C. The important thing is simply that the screen and the computer share a matching connection, or that a simple adapter bridges them. Most new monitors come with at least one common cable in the box.

Before you buy, look at the side or back of your computer and note the shapes of the slots, or snap a photo. That's all it takes to be sure. We devote a whole guide to reading those ports and picking the one cable you need, so you don't have to become an expert.

### ✓ When in doubt, photograph the ports

A quick photo of your computer's sockets — and the back of any screen you're considering — is the surest way to avoid a return trip. Text it to me if you'd like a second pair of eyes.

## A simple shopping checklist

Bring this to the store or keep it open while you shop online. Check each box before you buy.

- ☐ It's a comfortable size for my desk and how far back I sit.
- ☐ It's described as sharp or high-resolution for its size.
- ☐ It has a matte, anti-glare surface (for a bright room).
- ☐ Its stand adjusts for height and tilt — or I'll add a riser or arm.
- ☐ It has easy-to-find brightness buttons.
- ☐ It connects to my computer (I checked the ports or brought a photo).
- ☐ It can be returned if it doesn't suit my eyes.

### ✓ Photograph the label and the ports

Before you decide, snap a photo of the box's details and your computer's sockets, and text them to me if you like. Two minutes of a second opinion can save a return trip and a lot of second-guessing.

## Common mistakes people make

A few avoidable slip-ups account for most monitor regret. Now you'll know them in advance.

- **Buying a sharp screen and never turning up the text size**, then deciding the screen is 'too small' and returning it.
- **Lowering the resolution to enlarge text**, which makes everything blurry instead of bigger-and-crisp.
- **Choosing glossy for a bright room** and fighting reflections every day.
- **A screen stuck too low** on a fixed stand, leading to a sore neck.
- **Buying the very biggest screen** for a shallow desk, so it's too close to see comfortably.

### **! The fixable one that fools everyone**

If a new screen looks like it made the text smaller, nothing is wrong with it. The fix is the text-size (scaling) setting, not a return. Turn that up before you give up on a perfectly good screen.

## How to try one without regret

A monitor is one of the easier purchases to test at home. A little planning makes it risk-free.

Keep the box and packing material until you're sure, and note the store's return window. Set the screen up, spend a few real evenings reading and emailing on it, and pay attention to how your eyes and neck feel at the end — not just how it looks in the first five minutes.

Give yourself permission to adjust before you judge. Turn the text size up, dim the brightness to match the room, raise the screen to eye level. Many a 'bad' monitor is simply an unadjusted one.

### ★ Let's set it up right the first night

If you'd rather not fuss with settings, that's what I'm here for. I'll get a new screen comfortable for your eyes on a visit, or often right on your screen for \$49. Then you can judge it fairly. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Spending wisely, not the most

You do not need the priciest screen to be comfortable. Here's where your money actually helps your eyes.

The features that matter for comfortable reading — a matte surface, a sharp-enough picture, and an adjustable stand — are found on plenty of sensibly priced screens. The expensive extras are usually aimed at gamers and designers, not at someone who wants to read email and see the grandchildren clearly on a video call.

If a budget is tight, put it toward the adjustable stand and the matte finish before anything else. Those two do the most for everyday comfort. A riser or arm can always be added later to lift a screen to the right height.

### ★ I don't sell screens — so this is just advice

I earn no commission on anything, so my only interest is your comfort. Tell me your budget and your eyes, and I'll help you spend it where it actually counts. Call (330) 200-8042.

## What about curved and extra-wide screens?

You'll see curved screens and very wide ones on the shelf. Here's the honest word on whether they help older eyes.

A gentle curve on a large screen can be pleasant — it keeps the far edges a touch closer to the same distance as the middle, which some people find a little more comfortable. On a smaller screen the curve makes almost no difference.

Extra-wide screens give you room to put two things side by side, which is handy for some. But they're a lot of screen to take in, and on a shallow desk they can force you too close. For straightforward reading and everyday use, a good ordinary screen is often the kinder, simpler choice.

### ✓ Don't buy a shape to solve a size problem

If what you really want is bigger, clearer text, a curve or extra width won't deliver it — the text-size setting will. Choose the shape you like the look of, then set the text up to suit you.

## Keeping it comfortable over time

A few easy habits keep a good screen comfortable for years, not just the first week.

- **Wipe it gently** with a dry or barely damp soft cloth — never a paper towel or household cleaner, which can harm the surface.
- **Revisit the brightness** as the seasons change; a setting that suits a bright summer room may be too bright on a dark winter evening.
- **Nudge the height and tilt** if your neck or eyes start to complain — your comfortable spot can drift over time.
- **Keep the text size where it serves you**, and turn it up further whenever reading starts to feel like work.

### ✓ Your comfort can change — let the screen change with it

Eyes change over the years, and so can the right setup. There's no harm in making the text bigger or the screen dimmer a year from now. The settings are there to serve you, not the other way around.

## Screens and your glasses

Your eyewear and your monitor work as a team. A little coordination makes both more comfortable.

If you wear bifocals or progressive lenses, you probably read through the lower part of the lens. That often means tipping your head back to see a screen through the reading zone — which is hard on the neck. Lowering the screen a bit, or asking your eye doctor about glasses made for computer distance, can make a real difference.

Single-vision reading glasses are set for a closer distance than a monitor usually sits, so a screen can look a touch soft through them. Mention to your eye doctor that you spend time at a computer — there are lenses tuned for exactly that middle distance.

### ✓ Tell your eye doctor how you really use screens

The single most helpful thing you can do is tell your eye doctor how far you sit from your screen and how long you're at it. The right lenses for that distance can make an ordinary monitor feel wonderful.

## Questions to ask before you buy

Whether you're talking to a salesperson or to me, these questions get you to a screen that's kind to your eyes.

### **Q: Is this screen matte or glossy?**

For most rooms, matte (anti-glare) is the more restful choice. If they don't know, look at the turned-off screen: a clear mirror is glossy.

### **Q: Does the stand adjust for height, or just tilt?**

Height adjustment lets you bring the screen to eye level. If it only tilts, plan on a riser or a monitor arm to lift it.

### **Q: Is it sharp enough that I can enlarge the text and keep it crisp?**

Favor a screen described as sharp or high-resolution for its size — that's what lets you go big without going blurry.

### **Q: Will it connect to my computer?**

Match the connections, or ask which simple adapter you'd need. Bring a photo of your computer's ports to be sure.

#### **✓ There's no silly question**

If a salesperson makes you feel rushed or foolish for asking, that's a reason to walk away, not to buy. A plain answer to a plain question is the least you should expect.

## Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks choosing a screen for tired eyes, answered plainly.

**Q: The new screen made my text smaller. Did I buy the wrong one?**

Almost certainly not. A sharper screen draws text smaller until you turn up the text-size (scaling) setting. Do that and it'll be large and crisp. This fools nearly everyone.

**Q: Should I just buy the biggest screen I can find?**

Not necessarily. A screen that's too big for a shallow desk sits too close to see comfortably. Match the size to your desk and how far back you sit, then enlarge the text.

**Q: Is a curved screen better for my eyes?**

On a large screen a gentle curve can feel a little more comfortable, but it won't make text bigger. For that, use the text-size setting. Choose the shape you like and set it up well.

**Q: Do I need an expensive screen to be comfortable?**

No. A matte surface, a sharp-enough picture, and an adjustable stand are found on many sensibly priced screens. The costly extras are mostly for gamers and designers.

**★ Still weighing it up?**

Choosing a screen for your eyes is exactly the kind of thing I love to help with. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and let's find one that's comfortable from the first evening.

## You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made choosing a monitor for your eyes feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for licensed electrical work, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

### ★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

# What Makes a Screen Easy to Read

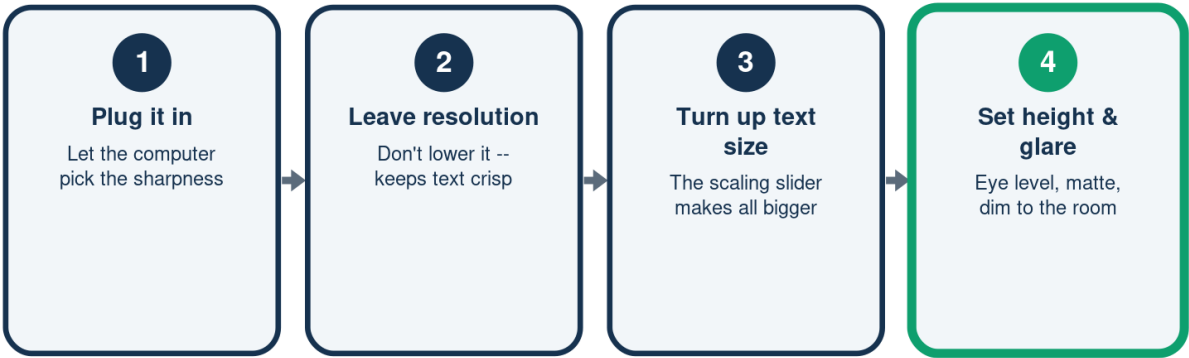
Three things working together, not just size

|                | What it does    | Why it helps your eyes |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Big enough     | Sit back, relax | Takes in at a glance   |
| Sharp enough   | Clean letters   | Enlarge and stay crisp |
| Matte finish   | Scatters glare  | Less squinting         |
| Right settings | Text turned up  | Large and clear        |

Comfort comes from all four together -- not from size alone.

# Setting Up a New Screen

The calm order that makes text large and clear



Do these in order and reading stops being work.

## Matte or Glossy?

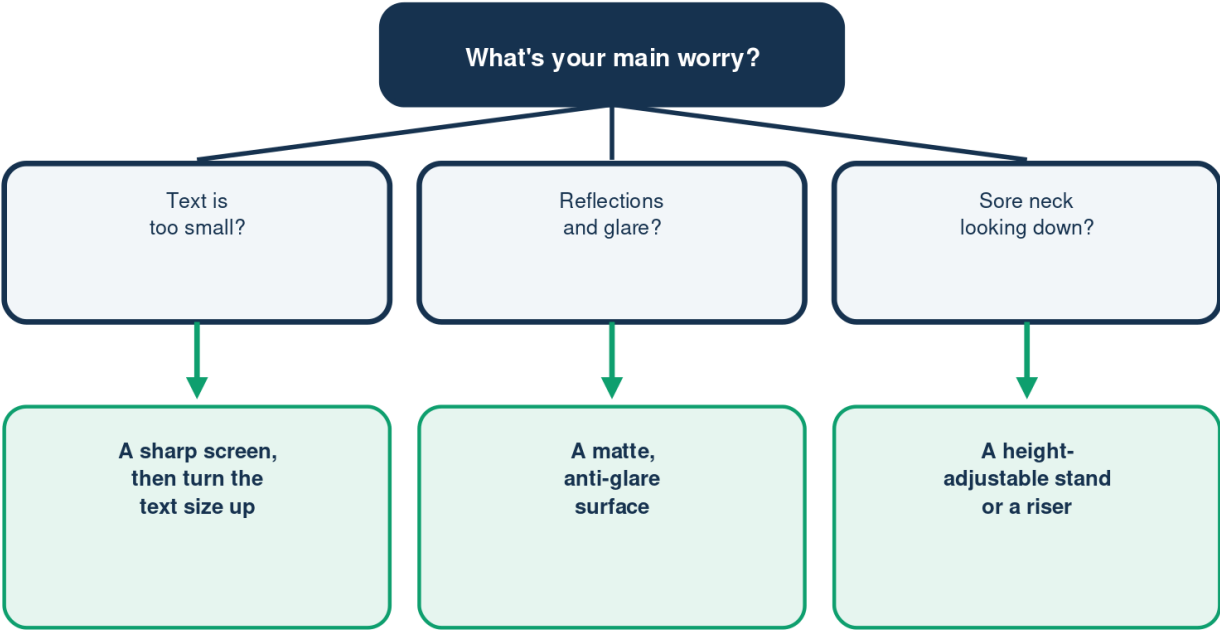
The glare question, settled simply

|          | Looks like        | Best for              |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Glossy   | A clear mirror    | Dim rooms only        |
| Matte    | A hazy reflection | Bright rooms, windows |
| The test | Screen turned off | Hazy = matte          |

For most homes with lamps or windows, matte is the kinder choice.

# Which Screen Fits You?

Let your desk and your eyes point the way



A new screen looking 'too small' is almost always just the text-size setting.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



## Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.  
You just have to remember you can call.  
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

### BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will  
make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness,  
no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

**(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com**

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

— Bill

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### Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



## 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 comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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