BILL'S HOME TECH

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Clean Up Your Roku / Fire TV Home Screen

Tidy away the clutter, hide the ads, and put your favorite apps where you can find them

Plain-English TV help from:
Bill's Home Tech
Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech
(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit · billshometech.com/book

What's Inside

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

The 60-Second Version 3

The Short Version 3

Why the Home Screen Gets Cluttered 4

Remove Apps You Never Use (Roku) 4

Remove Apps You Never Use (Fire TV) 5

Put Your Favorites First 5

Quiet Down the Ads and Promotions 6

Reduce the Tracking and Ad Targeting 7

What the Rows Actually Mean 7

A Simpler Screen for Someone Else 8

Organize What's Left 9

The Same Idea on a Smart TV 9

Keep It Tidy 10

When to Call Bill 10

Everyday Cheat Sheet 12

A Note From Bill 13

Your Visit — and My Promise 14

SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

A cluttered streaming home screen is easy to tidy, for free. Remove apps you never use — on Roku, highlight one and press Star, then Remove channel; on Fire TV, use Settings, Applications, Manage Installed Applications, Uninstall. This does not cancel subscriptions.

Move your three or four favorites to the top so they are one click away. Quiet the screen by turning off the autoplay video previews, and limit ad tracking in the Privacy settings (Roku: Privacy, Advertising; Fire TV: Privacy Settings). Updates can switch the noisy previews back on, so re-check after one.

1 The Short Version

A cluttered streaming home screen is not something you have to live with. You can remove apps you never use, move your favorites to the front where you will find them instantly, and turn down the rows of recommendations and ads that crowd the screen. It is all free, it is all reversible, and it makes the TV far pleasanter to use every day.

This guide covers both Roku and Fire TV, since they are the most common, and the ideas apply to other devices too. A tidy home screen means less hunting and more watching.

- Remove apps you never open to clear the clutter and free up memory.
- Move your three or four favorites to the top so they are one click away.
- Turn down recommendation rows, ads, and autoplay previews where you can.
- Everything here is free and can be changed back any time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Start by deciding which three or four apps you actually use — for most people it is a short list. Everything else is clutter you can tuck away or remove, and naming your real favorites first makes the whole tidy-up quick and clear.

2 Why the Home Screen Gets Cluttered

Streaming home screens fill up for two reasons. First, apps accumulate — every service you ever tried, every one that came preloaded, sits there whether you use it or not. Second, the device makers earn money from promotions, so they fill rows with recommendations, sponsored apps, and previews designed to catch your eye rather than to help you find your shows.

The result is a busy screen where your three favorite apps are lost among dozens you never touch, framed by things you are being nudged to watch or buy. None of it is a fault, and none of it is permanent — you can clear away the clutter and quiet the promotions until the screen serves you rather than the other way around.

GOOD TO KNOW

It is worth knowing that some of the busiest parts of the screen are advertising, plain and simple — the device maker is paid to put them there. That is not a reason for alarm, but it does mean you are free to ignore and, where possible, turn them down without missing anything you actually wanted.

3 Remove Apps You Never Use (Roku)

On a Roku, clearing out unused apps — Roku calls them channels — is quick, and it both tidies the screen and frees up the device's limited memory, which can make it feel faster.

1. On the home screen, use the remote to highlight an app you never use.

2. Press the Star (asterisk) button on the remote to open its options.
3. Choose “Remove channel” and confirm.
4. Repeat for each app you want gone — keep only the ones you actually watch.
5. Removing an app does not cancel any subscription; you can re-add it any time.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Clearing out apps you never open genuinely helps a Roku run more smoothly, not just look tidier, because the device has little memory to spare. A lean home screen of just your real favorites is both calmer to look at and quicker to use.

4 Remove Apps You Never Use (Fire TV)

On a Fire TV, the same tidy-up removes unused apps from the screen and frees space on the device. The steps are slightly different but just as simple.

1. From the home screen, go to the Apps row or open Settings, then Applications, then Manage Installed Applications.
2. Choose an app you never use.
3. Select “Uninstall” and confirm.
4. Repeat for each unwanted app, keeping the ones you watch.
5. As on Roku, this does not cancel subscriptions and is fully reversible.

> **TIP**
>
> On a Fire TV you can also rearrange the app row directly: highlight an app, press the menu button (the three lines), and choose Move, then slide it where you want it. That lets you push your favorites to the front without removing anything.

5 Put Your Favorites First

The single biggest improvement is moving your most-used apps to the front of the line, so you reach them in one or two clicks instead of scrolling past a dozen you never open. Both Roku and Fire TV let you reorder your apps.

1. Roku: highlight an app, press the Star button, choose “Move channel,” then use the arrows to slide it up, and press OK.
2. Fire TV: highlight an app, press the menu (three-lines) button, choose Move, and position it.
3. Put your three or four everyday apps right at the top, in the order you use them.
4. Leave the rest below, or remove them entirely.

> *Your three favorite apps, right at the top in one click — that single change does more for everyday ease than any other tidy-up on the screen.*

6 Quiet Down the Ads and Promotions

You cannot remove every promotion, since the device makers rely on them, but you can turn several down and make the screen calmer. The options vary, but they are worth seeking out in the settings.

- Turn off autoplay previews so the big banner at the top stops playing video and sound at you.
- Look in settings for options to reduce featured, sponsored, or recommended content.
- On Fire TV, you can turn off the home-screen video and audio previews in the settings.
- Turn off “featured” notifications that pop up suggesting things to watch.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turning off the autoplay preview — the big banner that starts playing a trailer with sound the moment the home screen appears — is the most satisfying single change for most people. The screen becomes quiet and still instead of shouting a trailer every time you turn on the TV.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

7 Reduce the Tracking and Ad Targeting

Both Roku and Fire TV quietly collect information about what you watch to target the ads they show. You can limit this in the privacy settings, which many people prefer, and it can make the promotions less intrusive too.

1. Open Settings and look for a Privacy section.
2. Turn off or limit “ad tracking,” “interest-based ads,” or similar options.
3. On a Roku, look under Settings, Privacy, Advertising.
4. On a Fire TV, look under Settings, Preferences, Privacy Settings.

GOOD TO KNOW

Limiting ad tracking does not remove ads entirely, but it stops the device building a detailed picture of your viewing to target them. Many people turn it off simply on principle, and it has the pleasant side effect of making the recommendations feel a little less like someone is watching over your shoulder.

8 What the Rows Actually Mean

Streaming home screens are built from rows, and knowing what each row is for makes the whole screen less bewildering. Once you can tell your own apps from the service's promotions at a glance, the clutter bothers you far less, because you know which parts to ignore.

The top of the screen is usually a big featured banner — almost always a promotion. Below it sits your row of apps, which is the part that truly matters to you. Then come rows the service assembles: “continue watching,” which is genuinely useful, followed

by recommendations, trending titles, and sponsored suggestions, which are there to tempt you. The further down you scroll, the more it tends to be promotion rather than anything you asked for.

- The big top banner is a promotion — safe to ignore.
- Your app row is the part that matters; keep your favorites at its front.
- "Continue watching" is genuinely handy for picking up where you left off.
- Recommendation and "featured" rows are suggestions and advertising, not your choices.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Once you see that most of the screen below your apps is the service suggesting and advertising, it stops feeling like clutter you must manage and starts feeling like a shop window you can simply walk past. Your apps and your "continue watching" row are the parts that serve you; the rest you are free to scroll past.

9 A Simpler Screen for Someone Else

If you are setting up a TV for a parent, a grandparent, or anyone who finds the clutter confusing or gets lost among the apps, a pared-down home screen is one of the kindest things you can do. The aim is a screen with only the few apps they actually use, right at the front, and nothing else to puzzle over.

1. Remove every app they do not use, leaving only two or three they do.
2. Put those at the very front, in the order they use them most.
3. Turn off the autoplay previews so the screen is quiet and still.
4. Write a simple note: "press Home, then the first box is your shows."

> **TIP**
>
> For someone who finds technology stressful, a home screen with just three clearly-placed apps and no blaring trailers can transform the TV from a source of anxiety into something they use with confidence. Less really is more, and the tidy-up matters even more for them than for you.

10 Organize What's Left

With the clutter gone and favorites up front, a last pass of organizing makes the screen genuinely pleasant. A little order means you never hunt for anything.

- Group similar apps together — your main streaming apps in one stretch, free services in another.
- Keep the row short enough that your favorites fit on the first screen without scrolling.
- Remove any leftover preloaded apps for services you will never use.
- Add back, in a deliberate spot, any app you removed and later missed.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Aim to fit everything you actually use on the first screenful, so you never have to scroll to reach a show. If your real apps number only a handful — as they do for most people — this is easy, and it makes turning on the TV feel effortless.

11 The Same Idea on a Smart TV

If you watch through a smart TV's own home screen rather than a Roku or Fire TV, the same tidying ideas apply, even though the menus look different. Every smart-TV maker lets you remove or rearrange apps and quiet the promotions, once you find where they have hidden the settings.

- Look for an edit or rearrange mode on the app row — often a long-press or a nearby menu button.
- Remove the preloaded apps for services you will never use.
- Move your real favorites to the front of the row.
- Check the TV's settings for autoplay-preview and advertising options to turn down.

Smart TVs are often the worst offenders for a cluttered, ad-filled home screen, because the maker earns from those promotions just as the streaming-device makers do. The effort to tidy one is just as worthwhile, and the relief of a calm, pared-down screen is just as great — it is simply a matter of finding the maker's particular menus.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your smart TV's home screen is especially crowded and hard to tame, adding a simple streaming stick and using its tidier home screen instead is a perfectly good answer. You then ignore the TV's own cluttered screen entirely and live on the clean one you set up on the stick.

12 Keep It Tidy

A home screen, like any space, drifts back toward clutter over time as you try new apps and the device adds promotions. A quick tidy now and then keeps it pleasant with almost no effort.

- Every few months, remove any app you tried and did not keep using.
- Re-check the ad and preview settings after a big software update, which can reset them.
- Keep your favorites at the top as your watching habits change.
- A lean screen also keeps the device running at its best.

GOOD TO KNOW

Device updates occasionally switch the promotion and autoplay settings back on, so if the big noisy banner returns after an update, it is not your imagination — just dip back into the settings and turn it off again. A two-minute check after an update keeps the calm you set up.

13 When to Call Bill

Tidying a home screen is satisfying and well within reach, and this guide walks you through both Roku and Fire TV. But the settings for quieting ads and tracking are scattered and oddly named, and if you would simply like the whole thing cleaned up and set the way you like it, I am glad to do it.

I come to you, strip out the apps you never use, put your favorites right up front, quiet the ads and autoplay previews, and limit the tracking — leaving you a calm, quick home screen with just what you watch. I show you how to keep it tidy and re-quiet it after an update, so turning on the TV is a pleasure rather than a hunt.

- You want the home screen cleaned up and your favorites put front and center.
- The noisy autoplay banner and ad rows bother you and you cannot find the settings.
- You want the ad tracking limited for privacy.
- The clutter keeps creeping back after updates and you want it sorted properly.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the TV. A tidy home screen means less hunting, more watching.

I want to...	Do this...
Remove apps (Roku)	Highlight the app Star button Remove channel
Remove apps (Fire TV)	Settings Applications Manage Installed Uninstall
Favorites up front	Roku: Star Move channel. Fire TV: menu button Move
Quiet the banner	Turn off home-screen autoplay video/audio previews in settings
Limit tracking	Roku: Settings Privacy Advertising. Fire TV: Privacy Settings
Keep it tidy	Re-check ad/preview settings after updates, which can reset them
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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

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