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Copy-and-Paste Between Your Phone, Tablet & Computer

Copy something on one device and paste it on another — like magic

Plain-English tech 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

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

You can copy something on one device and paste it on another. Apple devices do it automatically when signed into the same Apple Account with Handoff on: copy on your iPhone, then paste on your Mac or iPad within seconds. Windows and Android share a clipboard through Microsoft's free Phone Link app, and Windows alone offers clipboard history with the Windows key plus V. When your devices do not match, the foolproof fallback is to text or email the item to yourself, or paste it into a syncing note like Apple Notes or Google Keep.

Keep Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on and devices close.

1 The Short Version

When your devices are set up to work together, whatever you copy on one — a word, a link, a photo, an address — can be pasted on another a moment later, as if they shared one clipboard. No email, no texting it to yourself, no retyping.

The feature works most seamlessly within one family: Apple devices with Apple devices, or Windows with Android through a companion app. When your devices do not match, there is a simple fallback — a quick send to yourself — that works between anything. We cover both.

- Copy on one device, paste on another, within seconds.
- Apple devices do this automatically when signed into the same account — it is called Universal Clipboard.
- Windows and Android can share through a free companion app.
- Mismatched devices? A quick send-to-yourself does the same job.

TIP

The most common use is copying a long web link or a password from your phone and pasting it on the big screen of your computer, where it is easier to work with. Once you try it, you will use it daily.

2 How This Works, in Plain Terms

Copying puts an invisible note on a kind of clipboard — a temporary holding spot. Normally that clipboard lives on just one device. When two devices are linked through the same account and nearby, they quietly share that clipboard, so a copy on one shows up ready to paste on the other.

GOOD TO KNOW

Nothing is stored permanently and nothing is posted anywhere public — the copied item simply passes between your own devices over Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, and it clears when you copy something new. It is private and temporary by design.

3 Apple: What You Need First

Universal Clipboard works between an iPhone, iPad, and Mac with almost no setup — you just need a few things switched on, which they usually already are.

- All the devices signed into the SAME Apple Account.
- Wi-Fi and Bluetooth turned on for each.
- Handoff turned on (Settings, General, AirPlay & Handoff on iPhone/iPad; System Settings, General, AirDrop & Handoff on a Mac).
- The devices near each other — within arm's reach works best.

TIP

If it is not working, the usual culprit is Handoff being off, or the devices being on different Apple Accounts. Check those two first and it almost always springs to life.

4 Apple: Copy on iPhone, Paste on Mac

Here is the everyday move — grab something on your phone and drop it onto your computer.

1. On the iPhone, press and hold the text, link, or photo, then tap Copy.
2. Go to your Mac within a few seconds.
3. Click where you want it — an email, a document, a search box.
4. Press Command-V to paste, or right-click and choose Paste.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> It goes both ways: copy on the Mac, paste on the iPhone. And it carries more than text — you can copy a photo on one and paste it into a message on the other.

5 Apple: Copy Between iPhone and iPad

The same magic works between an iPhone and an iPad, which is handy for moving a link or a note to the bigger screen.

1. Copy on the first device (press and hold, then Copy).
2. Pick up the other device within a few seconds.
3. Press and hold where you want it and tap Paste.

> **TIP**
>
> If the paste does not appear, wait a moment and try copying again — the hand-off takes a second or two, and copying something new restarts it.

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6 Windows and Android: Phone Link

If you have a Windows computer and an Android phone, Microsoft's free Phone Link app ties them together so you can share the clipboard, see texts, and more from the computer.

1. On the Windows computer, open the Phone Link app (it comes with Windows; search the Start menu for it).
2. On the Android phone, install the Link to Windows app if prompted, and sign in with the same Microsoft account.
3. Follow the pairing steps — usually scanning a code shown on the computer.
4. Once linked, enable the cross-device copy-and-paste option in Phone Link's settings.

GOOD TO KNOW

Phone Link also lets you send and receive texts and see your phone's photos from the computer, so the copy-paste link is just one of several conveniences it unlocks.

7 Windows' Own Cloud Clipboard

Windows by itself can remember a history of things you have copied and even sync them to your other Windows computers, which is useful if you have more than one.

1. On the computer, press the Windows key plus V to open Clipboard history.
2. Turn it on the first time you are asked.
3. Now Windows key plus V shows a list of recent copies you can paste any of.

4. Turn on syncing in Settings, under System then Clipboard, to share between your Windows PCs.

> **TIP**
> Clipboard history (Windows key + V) is a quiet gem even on one computer — it lets you paste something you copied a few items ago, instead of only the very last thing.

8 The Simple Fallback: Send It to Yourself

When your devices do not match — an iPhone and a Windows PC, say — the oldest trick still works perfectly and needs no setup at all: send the thing to yourself.

1. Copy or select the text, link, or photo on the first device.
2. Send it to yourself in a text message, or in an email to your own address.
3. Open that message on the other device.
4. Copy it from there and paste where you need it.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Texting yourself a link or address is foolproof, works between any two devices, and keeps a little record you can find later. It is not elegant, but it never fails.

9 A Note-to-Self That Syncs Everywhere

Another gentle approach is a notes app that syncs across your devices — type or paste into it on one, and it appears on the others automatically.

- Apple Notes syncs across iPhone, iPad, and Mac on the same account.
- Google Keep syncs across Android, the web, and more.
- Microsoft OneNote syncs across Windows, phones, and tablets.

TIP

Keep one note called "Scratchpad" for things you want to move between devices. Paste into it on the phone, open it on the computer — a reliable bridge even between different families of device.

10 Copying the Tricky Things

Some items are worth a special mention because they are exactly what people most want to move between devices.

- Long web links: copy on the phone, paste on the computer where typing is easier.
- Passwords: better handled by the built-in password manager, but can be copied in a pinch.
- Photos: copy and paste within Apple devices, or send to yourself otherwise.
- Addresses and phone numbers: copy from a message and paste into maps or contacts.

WATCH OUT

When you copy a password, it sits on the clipboard until you copy something else, where another app could read it. Paste it promptly, then copy something harmless afterward. Better still, let your password manager fill passwords in directly.

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11 When It Won't Work

If copy-and-paste between devices is not cooperating, the cause is usually one of a short list of things, all easy to check.

- Apple: Handoff is off, Bluetooth or Wi-Fi is off, or the devices are on different Apple Accounts.
- Windows/Android: Phone Link is not paired, or the cross-device copy setting is off.
- The devices are too far apart — bring them close.
- You waited too long — copy again and paste within a few seconds.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Restarting both devices clears most stubborn cases, just as it does with so many tech hiccups. If it still will not play along, the fallback of sending it to yourself always works while we sort the rest out.

12 A Word About Versions and Accounts

These features depend on your devices being signed into the right accounts and kept reasonably up to date. Apple occasionally renames a menu, and Microsoft updates Phone Link often, but the ideas stay the same.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> The two things that make or break it are accounts and updates: the same account across your Apple devices, or the same Microsoft account across Windows and your phone, plus recent software. Get those right and the rest falls into place.

13 Keeping It Reliable

A little housekeeping keeps the convenience working so you can trust it day to day.

- Keep Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on for the devices you want to share between.
- Install software updates so the features keep talking to each other.
- Know your fallback — send-to-yourself — so a hiccup never leaves you stuck.

> **TIP**
>
> Even once the fancy version works, keep the send-to-yourself trick in your back pocket. It is the one method that works between absolutely anything, anytime.

14 A Real Example: Booking From the Couch

Picture a common evening. You are browsing on your iPhone and find a hotel you like, but you would rather fill in the long booking form on the computer, where the keyboard is bigger and the screen is easier on your eyes. Without copy-and-paste between devices, you would be squinting back and forth, retyping the website address and the details by hand and probably making a typo or two along the way.

With it set up, the whole thing becomes effortless. On the iPhone you press and hold the web link, tap Copy, walk over to the computer, click in the address bar, and paste. The page opens on the big screen in a second. If you had jotted the dates or a confirmation number in a note on the phone, that is right there to paste in too. What used to be a frustrating shuffle becomes a calm, two-minute task.

This is the quiet value of the feature: it is not flashy, but it removes a dozen small frictions from ordinary days — moving a link, an address, a phone number, or a photo from the device where you found it to the device where you want to use it.

15 If You Only Remember One Thing

All the setup and the different names — Universal Clipboard, Phone Link, cloud clipboard — can feel like a lot. If you take away just one idea from this guide, let it be this: you never have to retype something that is already on one of your screens.

Within the Apple family, copy on one device and paste on another and it usually just works. Between a Windows computer and an Android phone, the Phone Link app bridges them. And between any two devices that will not cooperate, texting or emailing the item to yourself, or dropping it into a note that syncs, always does the job. One of those three will always get your words, links, and photos from here to there.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Keep the send-to-yourself trick as your reliable backstop. Even when the fancy version is set up and working, knowing you can always text yourself a link means you are never truly stuck, on any device, ever.

16 When to Call Bill

None of this is a test, and there is no prize for struggling. Most of these tricks take a minute once you know where to look, and this guide gets you there. But if a setting hides somewhere new on your version, or you would simply rather have someone set it up with you and show you once, that is exactly the kind of visit I make.

I come to you here in Portage County, sit down beside you, and set these up on your own phone or tablet so they work the way you want. I will show you each one slowly, write down the few steps that matter, and make sure you can do it yourself afterward. No rush, no jargon, and no question is too small.

- You want Universal Clipboard or Phone Link set up and tested between your devices.

- Copy-and-paste between devices stopped working and you cannot see why.
- You would like a simple, reliable way to move links and photos between your phone and computer.
- You would simply rather have it set up correctly the first time, with someone showing you how.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Copy on one device, paste on another.

I want to...	Do this...
Apple devices	Same Apple Account + Handoff on; copy on one, paste on the other
Paste on a Mac	Click where you want it, press Command-V
Windows + Android	Set up the free Phone Link app, turn on cross-device copy
Paste a recent copy (Windows)	Press Windows key + V for clipboard history
Mismatched devices	Text or email it to yourself, open on the other device
Bridge anything	Paste into a syncing note (Apple Notes, Google Keep)
If it won't work	Check accounts, Handoff/Bluetooth/Wi-Fi, bring devices close
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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