



An Extended Guide · No. 1847

Covering the Cash Register — Faces, Hands & the Till

Place and set one camera
so the transaction holds up

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

BillsHomeTech.com · (330) 200-8042 · Atwater, Ohio

Free & printable — share it with someone who needs it



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

! Read this first — it's about people, not just pictures

Before the gear, a word that matters more than any camera: with a business you are recording other people — customers, staff, people walking by — so where you point a camera, and whether it picks up sound, is as important as the picture. As a rule, keep cameras on general work and public areas, never on restrooms, changing areas, or anywhere someone expects privacy, and be very careful about recording audio. This guide gives you plain-English general information, not legal advice. For your own situation — especially anything to do with employees, audio, or the law — check with an attorney who knows Ohio. A register camera watches both customers and the staff who work there, so be fair and open about it — a visible notice and cameras off the break room go a long way.

Let's cover the register so the footage actually holds up

The register is where the money moves, and so it's where disputes, refunds, and losses cluster. A camera here earns its keep faster than any other — but only if it's placed and set so it shows what happened: the customer's face, the clerk's hands, and the cash drawer, all in one frame.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. In 30-plus years of helping folks with their technology, I've seen plenty of register cameras that looked fine until the day they were needed — then showed the top of a hat, or a bright window, or everything except the one thing that mattered.

This guide is about getting that one camera right. We'll talk angle, light, what to keep in frame, and the clock — the small things that decide whether footage settles an argument or just raises more questions. It isn't hard; it's mostly about a few choices made on purpose.

★ The highest-value camera you own

If you can only get one camera exactly right, make it this one. A good register shot pays for itself the first time it settles a he-said-she-said over a refund. Want a hand aiming yours? Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 — I sell no cameras and earn no commission.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, your register camera will do its job when you need it.

- ❑ Keep three things in one frame: the customer's face, the clerk's hands, and the cash drawer.
- ❑ Aim from slightly in FRONT of and ABOVE the counter — not straight down.
- ❑ Avoid a pure overhead view; hats and caps hide faces from directly above.
- ❑ Don't shoot into the window or light behind the counter, or the customer becomes a silhouette.
- ❑ Use a tight view of just the transaction zone, not a wide sweep of the store.
- ❑ Get the time and date right, and check them now and then — footage with a wrong clock is worth far less.
- ❑ If the counter is busy, add a second overview camera for the whole service area.

✓ One rule to hold onto

Picture the dispute you're trying to settle — 'did that twenty go in the drawer?', 'who returned this?' — and place the camera so it answers that exact question. Everything else follows from there.

Three things that must share one frame

A register camera has one job: capture the transaction clearly enough to settle a dispute. That means three things, together, in the same view.

The customer's face

So you can tell who was there — for a disputed refund, a bad check, a card used that shouldn't have been. This is the part a bad angle ruins most often.

The clerk's hands

So you can see what they did — ring it up, make change, hand over the goods. Most register questions are really questions about hands, and a camera that can't see them can't answer.

The cash drawer

So you can see money go in and out, and whether the sale was rung at all. The drawer and the hands together tell the real story of a till.

! If any one is missing, the footage may not settle it

A face with no hands, or hands with no drawer, leaves a gap someone can argue through. The whole value of this camera is getting all three in one frame. Place it for that, not for a pretty shot of the counter.

The angle: slightly in front, and above

Where you put the camera decides everything else. The sweet spot is in front of the customer and a bit above head height, looking back toward the clerk.

Mount it so it looks at the customer's face from slightly above and in front — think of where a friendly greeter would stand, a little to the side, not nose-to-nose. From there it catches the face, sees down onto the counter and the hands, and takes in the drawer behind. One honest angle does all three jobs.

The height matters. Too low and the counter or a display blocks the drawer and hands; too high and you're back to the overhead problem. A little above head height, angled down just enough to see the counter surface, is the balance you're after.

★ Stand where the camera will go

Before you mount anything, stand roughly where the camera will sit and look at the counter. Can you see a face, the hands, and the drawer all at once? If you can, the camera will too. If you can't, move until you can — then mount there.

Why pure overhead is a trap

It feels natural to put the camera straight above the register, looking down. It's one of the most common register mistakes, and here's why.

From directly overhead you get a lovely view of the counter, the drawer, and the tops of people's heads — and that's the problem. A hat, a cap, a hood, even a tall hairstyle hides the face completely from above. The one time you most want to know who was there, you're looking at the brim of a ball cap.

Overhead also flattens hands against the counter so it's hard to tell what they're really doing. A camera set in front and above keeps the drawer and hands in view AND catches the face — all the upside of overhead, without the blind spot.

! The hat problem is real

I've seen more than one business learn this the hard way: a clean overhead shot of a theft or a dispute, and not one usable face because every person wore a cap. Angle from the front and the hat stops being a mask.

Light: keep it behind the camera, not the customer

The second big register mistake is light. A camera aimed into a bright window or doorway behind the counter turns your customer into a dark silhouette, and no amount of clever settings fully fixes it.

Counters often sit near a storefront window, so the camera looking toward the clerk ends up staring into daylight streaming in behind them. The camera sets its exposure for the bright glass and everything in front of it goes dark — the very faces you wanted. Where you can, place the camera so the window is behind IT, lighting the customer's face, not fighting it.

Where the layout won't allow that, a feature called WDR — wide dynamic range — helps the camera handle bright and dark in one scene. It helps, but it isn't magic; good placement beats relying on it. A little steady light on the customer's side of the counter does more than any setting.

✓ Check it at the brightest time of day

Stand at the counter when the sun is strongest through your windows and look at the live view. If the clerk is a shadow, the camera is fighting the light — move it, or add light in front, before you rely on it.

Frame the transaction, not the whole store

A register camera should be zoomed in on the transaction zone, not trying to watch half the shop. Tight framing is what gives you a usable face.

A camera recognizes a face only when the person fills enough of the frame. If you set this camera wide to also catch the aisle and the door, the face at the counter shrinks to a smudge. Let this one do its single job: frame the customer, the hands, and the drawer, and let the edges fall where they may.

If you have a point where every customer stands to pay — a tape line, a counter edge — frame for that exact spot. An adjustable (varifocal) lens makes it easy to dial the view in just right at the mount. Our camera-types guide explains wide-versus-tight lenses if you want the fuller picture.

✓ Tight beats wide at the till

The urge to 'see more' with one camera is strong, and it's exactly wrong here. A tight, clear transaction shot is worth far more than a wide, vague one. If you need the wider view too, that's a second camera's job.

Get the time and date right — and keep them right

This sounds too simple to matter. It matters enormously. Footage with the wrong time stamped on it loses much of its value as proof.

When something is disputed, the first thing anyone does is match the video to the moment — the receipt time, the shift, the 911 call. If your camera's clock is an hour off, or stuck on a default date from the factory, the footage suddenly looks sloppy and is far easier to argue against. Set the clock correctly when the system goes in.

Then check it now and then. Clocks drift, time changes twice a year, and a power loss can reset them. A quick glance at the time stamp every month or so, and after any outage, keeps your footage trustworthy. It's the cheapest insurance in the whole system.

★ I'll make the clock set itself

Most systems can keep their own time automatically once they're set up right, so it stays correct through time changes and reboots. If yours is showing the wrong time or a factory date, that's a quick fix — call (330) 200-8042 and I'll sort it, often right on your screen.

When one camera isn't enough

A single well-aimed camera handles a simple counter. A busy or wide service area often wants a second one for the bigger picture.

Your tight transaction camera is deliberately narrow — which means it can't show the line of waiting customers, a second register, or someone reaching over the counter from the side. For a busy counter, add a wider overview camera that takes in the whole service area, so the tight camera catches the 'who and what' and the wide one gives the context.

This is the same overview-plus-identify pairing we use all over a good system: one camera for the detail that settles the question, one for the story around it. Two modest cameras doing one job each beat one camera straining to do both.

✓ Pair tight with wide for a busy till

If your counter sees a steady line or has more than one register, plan for two cameras from the start: a tight transaction shot and a wide service-area overview. Together they leave very little to argue about.

Two kinds of businesses, two sets of needs

Where money changes hands looks different in a busy storefront than in a quiet office or back counter, and that shapes how you cover it.

If you run a customer-facing shop or storefront

Strangers come and go all day, refunds and disputes are routine, and the register is busy. You're covering transactions with people you don't know, often near a bright storefront window.

- A tight transaction camera at each register — face, hands, drawer.
- A wider overview of the service area for a busy, multi-register counter.
- Mind the window light behind the counter; keep light on the customer.
- A visible camera and a notice both reassure honest customers and deter the rest.

If you run an office, warehouse, or back-of-house

Fewer transactions, but money and valuables still move — a back counter, a petty-cash drawer, a parts window, a safe. The risk is quieter and more often about staff, so fairness and openness matter most.

- Cover any cash drawer, safe, or parts window the same way: face, hands, money.
- Be open with staff that the money point is on camera, and why.
- Keep the clock right — back-office disputes often hinge on exact times.
- Keep cameras on the money point, never on break rooms or private areas.

★ Not sure how to cover your money point?

Whether it's a busy front register or a quiet back drawer, the camera does the same job: show the face, the hands, and the money. Tell me your layout and I'll help you place it right. Call (330) 200-8042.

The refund dispute — what footage needs to show

Refunds are the single most common reason a small business pulls up register footage. Let's make sure yours answers the questions that come up.

A disputed refund usually turns on a few plain points: who asked for it, whether goods actually came back over the counter, whether cash left the drawer, and when it happened. Your transaction camera — face, hands, drawer, with the right time — answers every one of those at a glance.

The weak spot is usually the hand-off: the moment goods or cash cross the counter. Make sure your framing includes the counter surface where things change hands, not just the register and the clerk. That little strip of counter is where the truth of a refund lives.

✓ Keep the hand-off in frame

When you check your view, do a pretend transaction: hand something across the counter and make change. If the video clearly shows the goods and the cash crossing, you're covered. If they drift out of frame, widen or re-aim a touch.

Keeping it fair to your staff

A register camera watches your employees as much as your customers. Handle that openly and it builds trust; handle it in secret and it breeds resentment — and legal risk.

Tell your staff the money point is on camera and why: to protect them as much as the till. A good clerk is glad the camera can clear them when a customer claims they were short-changed. Framed that way, it's a shield for honest people, not a spy on them.

Keep the camera firmly on the transaction — the counter, the drawer, the customer — and off the break room, the back office where people take personal calls, and anywhere staff reasonably expect a little privacy. And be very careful about recording audio at the counter; sound carries its own rules. We give employees, notices, and audio their own guides.

! Audio is its own question

Pointing a camera at a register is on solid ground; recording the conversations at it is a separate matter with separate rules in Ohio, and many businesses leave the microphone off for exactly that reason. Treat the money and the picture as the job, and leave audio out unless you've checked it carefully. This is general information, not legal advice; rules change and every situation is different, so confirm the specifics with an attorney who knows Ohio before you rely on it.

When you need to hand the footage over

Sooner or later a register clip gets asked for — by the police, your card processor, or an insurer. A little foresight makes that painless.

Know, before you need it, how to find a moment by time and date and save just that clip off your system — not the whole day, just the minute that matters. That's exactly why the clock being right pays off: you search by the receipt time and the clip is right there.

Be thoughtful about what you share and with whom. Hand over the clip that answers the question, keep your own copy, and don't post customers' faces around. Our guide on giving video to police and insurers walks through doing this properly, so I'll keep it short here.

★ I'll show you how to pull a clip

Saving a short clip off a recorder trips a lot of owners up in the moment. Let me walk you through it once, calmly, before you ever need it under pressure — often right on your screen for \$49. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common register-camera mistakes

Nearly every disappointing register shot comes from one of these. Now you'll spot them before they cost you.

- **Mounted straight overhead**, so hats and caps hide every face.
- **Aimed into the window light**, turning customers into dark silhouettes.
- **Set too wide**, trying to watch the whole store, so faces shrink to smudges.
- **The drawer or hand-off out of frame**, leaving a gap to argue through.
- **A wrong or factory clock**, making good footage look sloppy and easy to dispute.
- **Hidden from staff**, breeding resentment instead of the trust an open camera builds.

! The one that undoes all the rest

You can place the camera perfectly and still be let down by a wrong clock. A great shot stamped with the wrong time invites doubt about everything else. Set it right, and check it now and then — it takes a minute.

A simple register-camera checklist

Walk through this at your counter and you'll have a register camera that holds up when it's needed.

- ☐ The customer's face, the clerk's hands, and the drawer are all in one frame.
- ☐ The camera looks from slightly in FRONT and ABOVE — not straight down.
- ☐ No bright window or light sits behind the customer in the shot.
- ☐ The view is tight on the transaction zone, not the whole store.
- ☐ A pretend transaction shows goods and cash crossing the counter clearly.
- ☐ The time and date are correct, and I know how to check them.
- ☐ For a busy counter, a second wider overview covers the service area.
- ☐ Staff know the money point is on camera, and the camera avoids private areas.

✓ Do a dry run before you trust it

Ring up a pretend sale, make change, hand something across, and then watch it back. The playback tells you in ten seconds whether your camera is ready for the day you really need it.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from owners setting up a register camera, answered plainly.

Q: Where exactly should the register camera go?

Slightly in front of the customer and a bit above head height, looking back toward the clerk, so it catches the face, the hands, and the drawer in one frame. Stand there first and check you can see all three.

Q: Why not just mount it on the ceiling over the register?

A pure overhead view hides faces under hats and caps and flattens the hands. You get a nice shot of the drawer and nobody you can identify. Angle from the front instead and you keep the drawer AND get faces.

Q: My counter is by a window and everyone looks dark. What do I do?

The camera is fighting the window light behind your customers. Move it so the window is behind the camera, add a little light on the customer side, and lean on a WDR camera if needed — but placement matters most.

Q: Do I need one camera or two at the register?

One tight transaction camera covers a simple counter. A busy or multi-register counter wants a second, wider overview for context, so the tight one catches the detail and the wide one tells the story around it.

★ Want yours checked over?

A register camera is the one I most often get called to fix after the fact — and the one it's easiest to get right up front. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make sure yours shows the face, the hands, and the till when it counts.

The camera is only part of protecting the till

A good register shot is powerful, but it works best as one layer among a few sensible habits. Here's where it fits.

The camera documents what happened; your routines prevent much of it. Counting the drawer at shift change, matching the register tape to the cash, and keeping large bills out of the drawer all reduce the disputes you ever need the camera for. When one does come up, the footage settles it.

Think of it as belt and suspenders: good habits cut down the incidents, and the camera closes out the ones that slip through. Neither replaces the other, and together they make the register a place where honest mistakes get sorted out quickly and the rest get caught.

✓ Pair the camera with a counting routine

The businesses that get the most from a register camera also count the drawer on a schedule. The routine flags a problem; the footage tells you what it was. Set up both and the till mostly takes care of itself.

How long to keep the footage

Register disputes don't always surface the same day. How many days your system keeps video decides whether the clip is still there when you go looking.

A refund gets questioned a week later; a card chargeback can land weeks after the sale. If your system only holds a few days, the moment is gone before anyone asks. Think about how far back your real disputes tend to reach, and make sure you keep at least that long.

How many days you can hold depends on the number of cameras and your storage — we size that in its own guide. For the register in particular, it's worth erring on the longer side, because this is the footage people come back for most.

★ Keep the till footage longer than you think

Of all your cameras, the register is the one whose footage gets asked for latest — sometimes weeks on. If your system is tight on storage, this is the camera to prioritize keeping longer. Happy to help you work out the right number of days. Call (330) 200-8042.

Questions to ask before you mount it

Whether you're talking to an installer or setting it up yourself, these questions keep the register camera honest.

Q: Can I see the face, the hands, and the drawer all in one frame?

This is the whole test. If any one is missing or out of frame, the position is wrong — move the camera until all three share the view before you mount it for good.

Q: Is anything bright behind the customer in this shot?

A window or doorway behind the customer will silhouette them. Re-aim so the light is behind the camera, or add light on the customer side, before settling the position.

Q: Is the clock correct, and will it stay correct on its own?

The time stamp must be right and should keep itself right through time changes and reboots. A factory date or a drifting clock quietly weakens every clip.

Q: Can I quickly find and save a clip by time and date?

You'll need this the day something is disputed. Make sure you know how to jump to a moment and export just that clip — long before you're doing it under pressure.

✓ Test against a real dispute in your head

Pick the dispute you'd most dread — a disputed big-bill refund, say — and ask whether this camera would settle it. If the honest answer is 'maybe not,' adjust until it's a clear yes.

Extra tips for a busy counter

A high-traffic register has a few wrinkles a quiet one doesn't. A little planning keeps the footage clean when the line is long.

- **Add a wide overview** so you can see the whole line and anyone reaching over the counter from the side.
- **Keep the pay spot consistent** — a counter edge or a floor line — so faces land in the same framed zone every time.
- **Watch for clutter creep**; a tall display or a new sign can slide into frame and block the drawer. Re-check the view now and then.
- **Mind reflections** from glossy counters and screens that can wash out a face under bright light.
- **Keep the lens clean**; grease and dust near a food or paint counter fog the view faster than you'd expect.

! Clutter is the slow killer of a good shot

The most common way a perfect register shot goes bad is drift: a display, a sign, or a stack of bags creeps into the corner and hides the drawer. Glance at the live view every so often and move whatever's crept in.

Putting it all together

Covering the register well comes down to a short, sensible routine you can run through in a few minutes.

Place the camera slightly in front and above, framed tight on the transaction so the face, hands, and drawer share one clear view. Keep the light behind the camera, set the clock and keep it right, and — if the counter is busy — add a wide overview for context. That's the whole job.

Then do a dry run, watch it back, and fix anything that's off before you rely on it. A register camera set up on purpose like this will quietly earn its keep for years, settling the small disputes that would otherwise cost you money and goodwill. Our camera-types and giving-video guides go deeper where you need them.

★ One camera, done right, pays for itself

If you take one thing from this guide, let it be that the register camera rewards a little care more than any other. Get it right once. And if you'd rather I set it up with you, call or text (330) 200-8042 — I'll make sure it holds up when it matters.

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 covering your cash register feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it with your other business papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything — that's what the guide is for.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your place of business, 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. I'm a tech helper, not a licensed electrician or low-voltage contractor — for in-wall wiring or panel work I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro and make sure it all works together.

★ 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

Three Things in One Frame

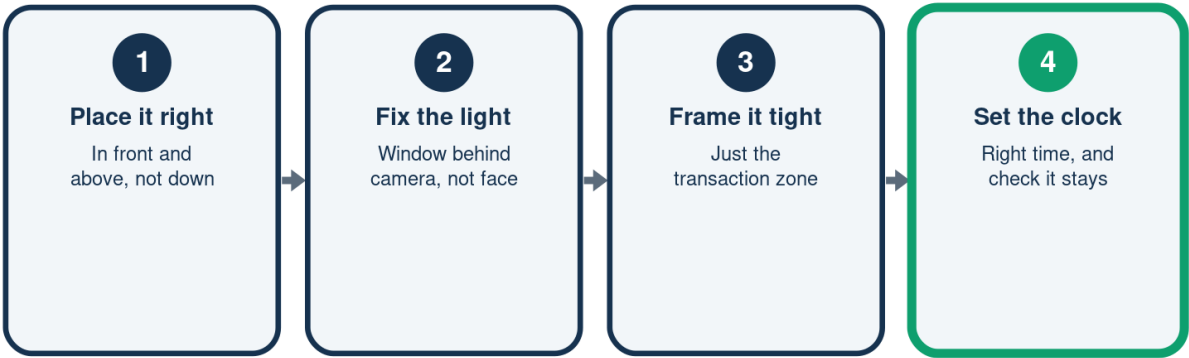
A register camera has to show all three, together

	Why it matters	What ruins it
The face	Who was there	Overhead hats
The hands	What they did	Flat top view
The drawer	Money in/out	Blocked by clutter
The hand-off	Goods + cash	Out of frame

Miss any one and the footage may not settle the dispute.

Setting Up the Register Camera

A few choices made on purpose, in order



Then do a dry run and watch it back before you rely on it.

Why Angle and Light Matter

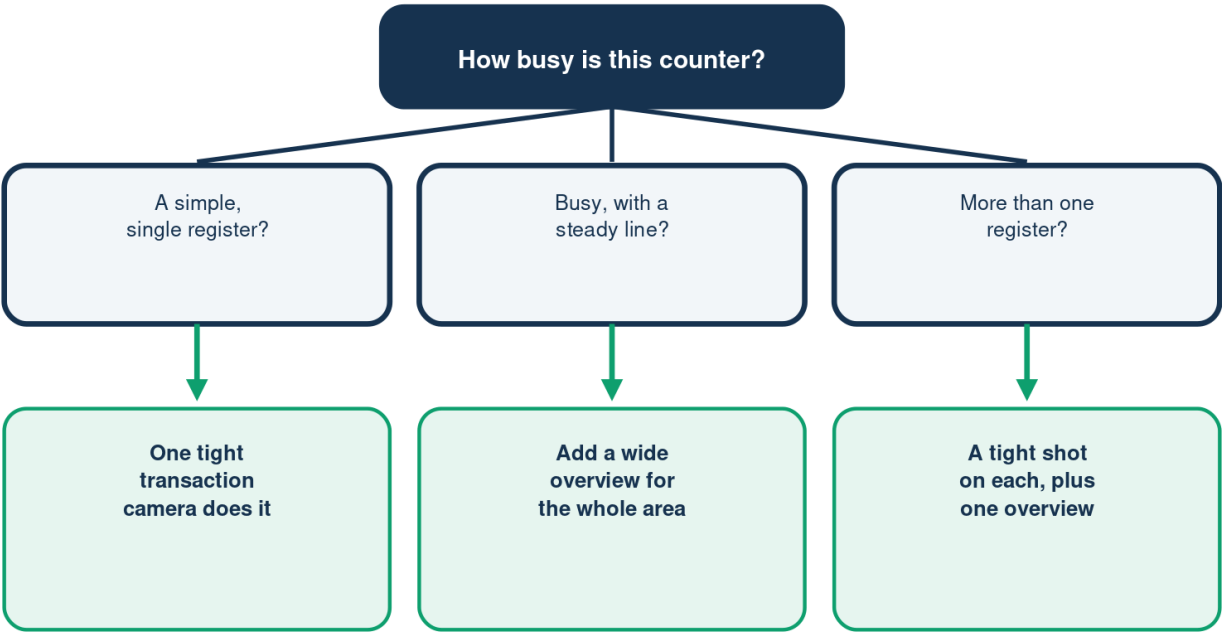
The two mistakes that waste a register camera

	The problem	The fix
Straight overhead	Hats hide faces	Aim from front
Into the window	Dark silhouette	Light behind cam
Set too wide	Faces too small	Frame it tight
Wrong clock	Footage doubted	Set and check it

Fix these four and the shot holds up when you need it.

One Camera or Two at the Till?

How busy the counter is decides the answer



Tight catches the who and what; wide gives the story around it.

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



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to figure this out alone.

You just have to remember you can call.

Friendly, plain-English 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

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*



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

Use of these guides is subject to our Terms of Use (billshometech.com/terms-of-use).

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech