



An Extended Guide · No. 1689

Digital-Detox Settings on Android: Bedtime, Focus & Grayscale

Step-by-step settings to use your Android phone
less, with nothing to buy and everything easy to undo

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! Safe to try, easy to undo

Everything in this guide is a setting you can switch back off. Nothing here erases your photos, contacts, or messages.

Use your Android phone less, on purpose

If your phone pulls at you more than you'd like, Android has tools built in to quiet it down. This guide walks through them one step at a time, in plain English.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping people feel at home with their technology, patiently and without jargon. I don't sell phones and I earn no commission, so this is honest, practical help, the way I'd show you at your kitchen table. On an iPhone, see [Digital-Detox Settings on iPhone](#); for ideas that work on any phone, see [Making Any Phone Less Addictive](#).

Android phones come from many makers, so menus differ a little. The main tool is called Digital Wellbeing. We'll also cover grayscale, Bedtime mode, and the Modes feature on Pixel phones.

★ If your menu looks different, that's normal

Each maker tweaks Android, and menus move between versions. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll walk through your exact phone with you.

The whole guide, on one page

If you only do a few things, do these.

- Open Settings and look for Digital Wellbeing & parental controls. The Dashboard shows where your time goes.
- Set an App timer on the one or two apps that eat the most time.
- Use Focus mode to pause distracting apps when you need to concentrate.
- Turn on Bedtime mode so the screen fades to gray and Do Not Disturb starts on a schedule.
- Use Accessibility > Color correction for grayscale any time you want it.
- On a Pixel, look at Settings > Modes to bundle these into one tap.
- Turn off badges and extra notifications so the phone stops nagging.

Start with just one

Many folks get most of the calm from Bedtime mode and one app timer. Add more only if you want them.

The tools, and what each one does

Each tool does one job. Knowing the job makes it easy to choose.

Tool	Its job	Where to find it
Dashboard	Shows time spent in each app	Settings > Digital Wellbeing
App timers	Daily time allowance for an app	Inside the Dashboard
Focus mode	Pauses apps you pick until you end it	Digital Wellbeing
Bedtime mode	Gray screen plus Do Not Disturb	Digital Wellbeing or Modes
Color correction	Grayscale on demand	Settings > Accessibility

Think of the Dashboard as the mirror, timers as the daily allowance, Focus as the pause button, and Bedtime as lights-out. They are nudges, not locks, unless you choose to add a parental-control layer.

Use the Settings search box

If you can't find an item, type its name into the search box at the top of Settings. Menus are moved around between versions, so searching is more reliable than following a path from memory.

Step one: find Digital Wellbeing

Digital Wellbeing is Google's built-in set of tools. On most Android phones it's already there waiting.

Finding it

- Open **Settings**.
- Look for **Digital Wellbeing & parental controls**. If you can't see it, use the search box.
- Tap it and follow the first-time prompts if it asks you to set up.
- Give it a couple of days to gather information before you judge.

Samsung Galaxy phones have their own Digital Wellbeing in Settings too, with very similar tools. If your phone is a Galaxy, look for it by name. The steps in this guide will feel familiar.

Look before you limit

Let it collect information for a few days first. Then you can aim your limits at the apps that truly matter instead of guessing.

The Dashboard: where does the time go?

The Dashboard is a simple picture of your phone use. It's the starting point for everything else.

- Tap **Dashboard** inside Digital Wellbeing.
- You'll see a chart of screen time, notifications received, and how often you unlocked the phone.
- Tap a day to see which apps used the most time.
- Look for one or two apps that surprise you. Those are your targets.

There's no grade and no judgment here. The goal is only to notice. Plenty of people are surprised, and that surprise is usually what makes a change feel worthwhile.

★ I can read it with you

Looking at the chart together often makes the next step obvious. Call me at (330) 200-8042 if you'd like a second pair of eyes.

App timers: a daily allowance

An app timer gives one app a time budget for the day.

- In the Dashboard, find the app and tap the hourglass beside it (or tap the app, then Set timer).
- Choose how long you want to allow per day.
- Tap OK or Set.
- When time is up, the app pauses and its icon turns gray until the next day.

The timer resets at midnight. If you decide you need the app anyway, you can usually raise or remove the timer in the same place. It's a speed bump that makes you stop and decide.

Start generous

A limit you can live with works better than a strict one you'll switch off. Tighten it later if you'd like.

Focus mode: pause the distractions

Focus mode lets you pick apps to pause when you need to concentrate.

- In Digital Wellbeing, tap **Focus mode**.
- Tick the apps that distract you, such as social media, games, or news.
- Optionally set a schedule, such as certain hours or days.
- Tap **Turn on now** for a quick session, or let the schedule do it.

While Focus mode is on, the apps you chose are paused and don't send notifications.

Everything else, including Phone and Messages, works as normal. Most versions let you take a short break from Focus if you need one.

! Don't pause what you depend on

Never add a medical alert, medication reminder, or a caregiver-contact app to a pause list. Choose only the apps that waste your time. Calls to emergency services always work.

Bedtime mode: lights-out for your phone

Bedtime mode quiets the phone at night and makes the screen dull and gray.

- In Digital Wellbeing, tap **Bedtime mode**.
- Choose to run it on a schedule, while charging, or both.
- Pick your bedtime and wake-up times if you chose a schedule.
- Turn on the options: Do Not Disturb and a grayscale screen.

When it's active, the screen fades to black-and-white and calls and notifications go quiet, apart from the exceptions you set. In the morning, everything returns on its own.

'While charging' is a nice shortcut

If you plug the phone in at night, the 'while charging' option means Bedtime mode starts without any schedule to remember.

Do Not Disturb: who can still reach you

Quiet is great, but you still want your family to get through.

Open **Settings > Notifications** and look for Do Not Disturb (the wording differs a little by phone). There you can choose which people, calls, and alarms are allowed to make noise during quiet hours.

- Allow calls from **Favorites** or specific contacts such as family.
- Keep alarms on so your wake-up alarm still rings.
- Leave most app notifications silenced.
- Consider allowing repeat callers, so an urgent second call goes through.

! Keep your safety net open

If you live alone, or someone checks on you, make sure their calls can always reach you. Quiet hours should never get between you and help.

Grayscale: take the color out of temptation

Bright colors help keep us tapping. Without them the phone gets much quieter.

Bedtime mode gives you grayscale at night. If you'd like it during the day too, Android has a second way, through color correction, which works as an on-demand switch.

Turning it on with color correction

- Open **Settings > Accessibility**.
- Find **Color correction** (on some phones it's under Color and motion or Text and display).
- Turn on Use color correction.
- Set the correction mode to **Grayscale**.

Colors can come back any time

Grayscale only changes how the screen looks. Your photos and files are untouched, and a flip of the same switch brings color back.

A quick toggle for grayscale

You shouldn't have to dig through menus each time. Android can put the switch under your thumb.

- In **Settings > Accessibility**, look for the section about shortcuts for Color correction.
- Turn the shortcut on and choose how you want to trigger it, such as an on-screen button or a button gesture.
- Try it a few times so it feels natural.
- Use it for photos or maps, then switch back to gray.

Not every phone offers the same shortcut styles, but nearly all let you reach color correction quickly. If yours doesn't, you can add it to the Quick Settings tiles by swiping down twice and tapping the pencil to edit.

Menus differ between makers

Samsung, Pixel, Motorola, and others word these items differently. Use the Settings search for 'color correction' or 'grayscale' to land in the right place.

Pixel phones: Modes in one tap

Google Pixel phones can bundle several of these settings into a single Mode.

Open **Settings > Modes**. You'll see ready-made modes such as Bedtime, plus ones you can create. A mode can silence notifications, set which people and apps can break through, and in some cases turn on a grayscale or dimmed display.

- Tap a mode to edit it, or add your own.
- Choose which apps and contacts are allowed through.
- Set a schedule, or switch it on from Quick Settings.
- Turn the mode off the same way you turned it on.

★ Not on a Pixel? That's fine

Other makers have similar features under different names. If you tell me your phone's make and model, I can show you the closest match. Call (330) 200-8042.

Using it for yourself, or for someone you love

People use these tools for different reasons, and that changes which ones matter most.

If you want to use your phone less

You feel pulled to the phone and want fewer hours on it. The goal is calm, focus, and getting time back for other things.

- Grayscale and one app timer often make the biggest difference.
- Bedtime mode keeps the phone from filling your evenings.
- Move social apps off your main Home screen.
- Glance at the Dashboard weekly and adjust gently.

If you're helping someone else

You're setting up an Android phone for a parent, grandparent, or child. Your goal is fewer interruptions and fewer risks.

- Digital Wellbeing & parental controls also offers supervised setup through Google Family Link.
- Focus mode with a short pause list reduces noise without locking anything.
- Ask the person first. These settings work best when they agree.
- Keep calls from family always allowed.

★ Setting it up for someone else?

I do this often, and the key is doing it with the person, not to them. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll set it up together.

Parental controls and supervised accounts

The same Digital Wellbeing area includes parental controls, which can also help families looking after a grandchild or a loved one.

Under **Settings > Digital Wellbeing & parental controls**, look for Parental controls. Setting this up usually involves Google Family Link, which lets one adult help manage another account's time limits, app approvals, and content settings.

- A supervised account is for a child or teen and needs the family adult to agree to it.
- For an adult, ordinary Digital Wellbeing tools are usually more respectful.
- Have the conversation first, then set it up together.
- Check Google's current Family Link page for what a supervised account can do.

! Supervision needs consent for adults

Setting limits on another adult without their knowledge can damage trust and may not be appropriate. Do it together, or stick with the person's own settings. For kids, see our Kids' First Phone guide.

Quiet the notifications that nag

Most of the phone's pull comes from little alerts. Turn down the volume on them.

- Open **Settings > Notifications** and go through the apps that send the most.
- For apps you don't need alerts from, switch notifications off.
- Turn off notification dots and badges on app icons where you can.
- Keep alerts for calls, texts from people you love, and appointments.

You can also long-press a notification when it appears and choose to turn that app's alerts off or make them silent. It's a quick way to prune as you go.

! Scam alerts exist too

A pop-up that says your phone is infected or your account is locked is a scam. Fewer notifications means fewer chances for a fake alert to grab you. When in doubt, don't tap, and call me.

A calmer Home screen

What you see when you wake the phone shapes what you reach for.

Press and hold an empty spot on the Home screen to move things. Keep only the essentials on your first page: Phone, Messages, Camera, Maps, and maybe a weather or health app. Move the rest to a second page or into a folder.

Apps stay in the app drawer (swipe up) even if you remove their icons from the Home screen, so hiding is not deleting. If you want a cleaner look, our [Turn Your Smartphone Into a Simpler Phone](#) guide goes further.

Hide, don't delete

Moving an icon is a gentle experiment you can undo in seconds. Deleting an app is more work to reverse, so try hiding first.

Samsung Galaxy phones

Galaxy phones from Samsung have their own version of these tools.

- **Digital Wellbeing:** in Settings, with a similar dashboard, timers, and Focus mode.
- **Bedtime mode and grayscale:** available as part of the same area.
- **Easy mode:** a simpler layout with bigger icons and text, in Settings under Display.
- **Color adjustments:** in Accessibility, for grayscale on demand.

Easy mode is not about limiting time. It makes the phone easier to see and use, with larger text and a plainer Home screen. Many folks find it calming by itself.

Find it by name

Samsung moves menus between versions, so search Settings for 'Digital Wellbeing,' 'Easy mode,' or 'color' and it should lead you there.

Let the phone go to sleep too

A phone that is quiet at night helps you stay off of it.

Pair Bedtime mode with a simple habit: charge the phone across the room or in another room, and use an ordinary alarm clock to wake up. If you need the phone nearby for safety, keep it out of reach of your pillow.

Because 'while charging' can start Bedtime mode on its own, the ritual is just plugging in. Do it in the same spot each evening and the habit builds itself.

★ A medical alert still comes first

If you rely on the phone for safety at night, keep it within reach and make sure family and emergency calls are allowed through. Quiet should never cost you safety.

Questions? Call (330) 200-8042.

A weekly check-in that keeps it working

Settings help only if they fit your life. A short look each week keeps them honest.

- Open the Dashboard and glance at the weekly picture.
- Notice which app still takes the most time and decide if that's okay.
- Adjust one timer, up or down. Only one at a time.
- Ask yourself whether Focus or Bedtime is helping or just annoying you.
- Make sure family can still reach you quickly.

Small changes win

Folks do best when they change one thing, live with it, and then change the next. Big overhauls tend to get switched off.

How to undo anything

Knowing you can reverse a setting is what makes it safe to try.

To undo this	Go to
An app timer	Digital Wellbeing > Dashboard, then remove the timer
Focus mode	Digital Wellbeing > Focus mode, then turn it off
Bedtime mode	Digital Wellbeing > Bedtime mode, then turn it off
Grayscale	Settings > Accessibility > Color correction, then off
A Pixel Mode	Settings > Modes, then turn it off or delete it

None of these touch your data. They only change what the screen shows and which alerts reach you.

Nothing here erases anything

Your photos, contacts, and messages stay exactly where they were, whatever you switch on or off.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks calming down an Android phone.

Q: I can't find Digital Wellbeing on my phone.

Search Settings for 'Digital Wellbeing.' Most Android phones have it, but it may be named a little differently. If it's missing, I can help you find the closest equivalent.

Q: Will Bedtime mode stop my alarm?

No. Alarms are normally allowed through. Check the Do Not Disturb settings to confirm, and keep the people you want to hear from on your allowed list.

Q: Is grayscale permanent?

No. It only changes how the screen looks and can be switched off in the same place you turned it on. Many folks add a quick shortcut so they can flip back to color for photos.

Q: What if my Galaxy looks different?

Samsung has its own Digital Wellbeing and an Easy mode. The ideas are the same even when the menus differ. Use the search box in Settings, or call me and we'll find it together.

★ Prefer to be shown?

Sitting beside someone and setting this up together is one of my favorite visits. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

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 calming down your Android phone 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. I'm a tech helper, not a counselor or a doctor. If constant phone use is affecting your sleep, mood, or relationships, a doctor or counselor is the right person to talk to. What I can do is set up the tools in this guide with you, and help you line up the right professional.

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Android Calm-Down Tools

What each one does and where it lives

	What it does	Where to find it
Dashboard	Shows your time	Digital Wellbeing
App timers	Daily allowance	Inside Dashboard
Focus mode	Pauses apps	Digital Wellbeing
Bedtime mode	Gray + quiet	Wellbeing or Modes
Grayscale	Any time	Accessibility

Start with one tool. Add the others when you want them.

A Gentle Setup Order

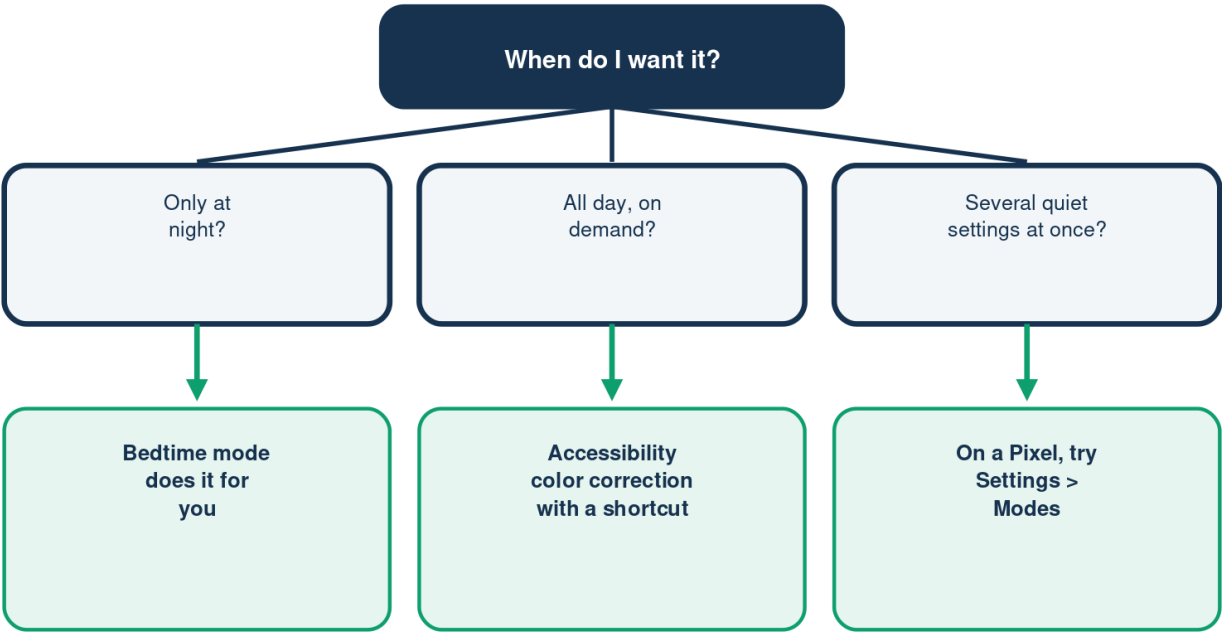
One small step at a time



Every step can be undone in Settings.

Which Grayscale Should I Use?

Two ways to get a black-and-white screen

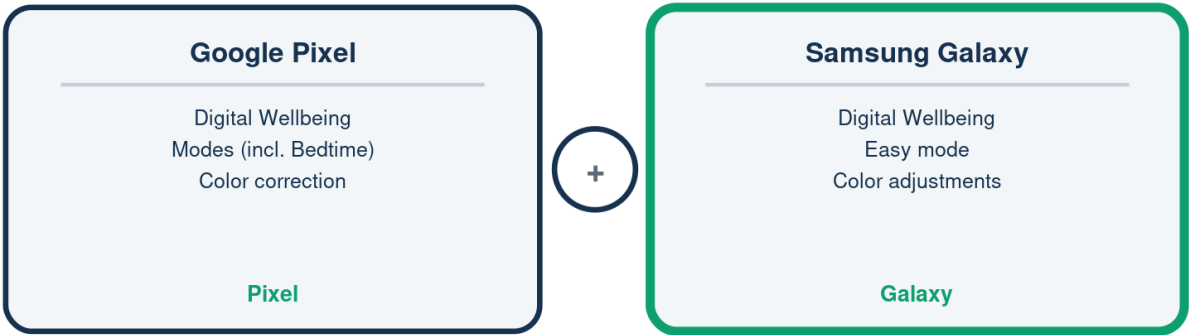


Both are easy to turn off. Use whichever feels natural.

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

Your Android: Which Path?

Pixel and Samsung have slightly different menus



Use the Settings search box if a name differs on your phone.

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



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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.

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