BILL'S HOME TECH

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It Keeps Asking Me to "Update" — Is It Safe to Say Yes?

Updates feel risky but mostly keep you safe — here's when to say yes, and the fakes to refuse

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Real software updates mostly fix security holes and keep things working, so saying yes is almost always the safe, smart choice — and skipping them for too long is what actually leaves you vulnerable. The one firm rule: install updates only from the device's own Settings or the official app store, and refuse any 'update' that arrives as a web-page pop-up, an email, or a text.

Those are scams, especially the 'your browser is out of date, click here' trap. When updating, plug in, connect to Wi-Fi, and never interrupt a screen that says 'updating' or 'do not turn off.' Brief, deliberate delays are fine; avoiding updates for months is not. If a prompt's authenticity is ever unclear, close it and check Settings yourself.

1 The Short Version

Real software updates fix security holes, patch bugs, and keep your devices working with everything else. Saying yes to them — from the device's own settings or official app store — is almost always the safe, smart choice, and skipping them for too long is what actually leaves you vulnerable.

The catch is that scammers imitate update messages to trick you into installing harmful things. So the rule isn't "never update" — it's "update from the right place, and refuse update prompts that arrive by pop-up, email, or text." This guide shows you exactly how to tell real from fake.

- Real updates keep you safe and are almost always worth saying yes to.
- Install them only from the device's own Settings or the official app store.
- Refuse any 'update' that pops up on a web page or arrives by email or text.
- The real risk is skipping real updates or falling for fake ones — not updating itself.

TIP

The safest rule of thumb: say yes to updates you find yourself in Settings or the app store, and say no to updates that come looking for you in a pop-up, email, or text. Real updates wait quietly in the right place; fakes chase you.

2 What an Update Actually Does

An update is simply a newer, improved version of the software already on your device. The makers release them constantly to fix problems discovered since the last version — and most importantly, to close security gaps that criminals could otherwise exploit.

Think of it like a manufacturer's safety recall that's free and automatic: they found a weak spot, they've fixed it, and the update delivers that fix to you. Declining updates forever is like ignoring every recall notice — it leaves known weak spots open.

GOOD TO KNOW

Most updates are mainly about security — quietly patching holes that scammers and viruses look for. That's why keeping up to date is one of the best protections you have, far more than any paid 'security' product a pop-up tries to sell you.

3 The Real Danger: Fake Update Messages

Here's the part that matters most for staying safe. Scammers know the word 'update' makes people click without thinking, so they create fake update warnings — pop-ups while you browse, alarming emails, urgent texts — that install harmful software or steal your information if you obey them.

- A pop-up on a web page shouting that your browser, Flash, or device is 'out of date' and must be updated now.

- An email or text with an 'update' link, often warning of dire consequences if you don't act.
- A sudden full-screen warning with a phone number to call for 'update help.'
- Anything that creates urgency and fear, or asks for payment or a password to update.

WATCH OUT

A genuine update never arrives as a web-page pop-up, an email link, or a text, and never asks you to call a number or pay to install it. If an 'update' message does any of those things, it's a scam — close it without clicking, and don't call any number it shows.

4 Where Real Updates Come From

The single most useful thing to know is where genuine updates live. If you always go to these places yourself, you can ignore every update message that comes to you — because the real ones are already waiting here.

- Your device's own Settings, under 'Software Update' or 'System Update'.
- The official app store (the App Store on iPhone/iPad, the Play Store on Android) for apps.
- On a computer, the built-in update tool (Windows Update, or Software Update on a Mac).
- Occasionally, a reputable program's own 'Check for updates' menu inside the program itself.

TIP

Memorize this: updates come FROM Settings and the app store, not from pop-ups and messages. When in doubt, close whatever is prompting you, open Settings yourself, and check there. If a real update exists, it'll be waiting; if nothing's there, the prompt was fake.

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5 So — Should You Say Yes?

For updates you find in the right places, the answer is almost always a confident yes. Here's how to think about it without second-guessing every prompt.

- An update waiting in Settings or the app store: yes, install it — it's keeping you safe and working.
- A security update: yes, promptly — these close holes that are actively being exploited.
- An app update in the official store: yes, it fixes bugs and crashes.
- An 'update' from a pop-up, email, or text: no, always — go check Settings yourself instead.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need to understand what each update changes to safely say yes to it, as long as it's from the right place. The makers have tested it; your job is simply to make sure it's genuine, which the 'right place' rule handles.

6 Updating a Phone or Tablet

Phone and tablet updates are straightforward and well worth doing. They bring security fixes, new features, and smoother running.

1. Open Settings and look for 'Software Update' (often under General or System).
2. If an update is offered, read the short note, then choose Download and Install.
3. Plug the device in and connect to Wi-Fi first, so it doesn't run out of power or data.
4. Let it finish completely — it may restart once or twice and take a while.

WATCH OUT

Once an update is installing, don't turn the device off or let the battery die — a screen that says 'updating' or 'do not turn off' means exactly that. Interrupting a system update is one of the few things that can genuinely cause trouble, so plug in and let it run.

7 Updating a Computer

Computer updates are important for security and usually painless, though they can take longer than a phone's. A little timing makes them smooth.

1. On Windows, open Settings and go to Windows Update; on a Mac, open System Settings and choose General, then Software Update.
2. Let it check, then install what's offered — security updates especially.
3. Save your work and close programs first, since the computer will restart.
4. Start a big update when you don't need the computer for a while, as it can take time.

GOOD TO KNOW

Computers sometimes install updates when you shut down or start up, showing 'working on updates — don't turn off.' That's normal and safe — just let it finish. It's doing important housekeeping, not stalling.

8 Updating Apps

Apps update often, and keeping them current fixes crashes and closes security gaps. It's easy to do, and you can even set it to happen on its own.

1. Open the official app store (App Store or Play Store).
2. Find the updates area (often your profile or a menu) and see what's waiting.
3. Update all, or just the apps you use, and let them finish.
4. Consider turning on automatic app updates so they quietly keep current.

TIP

Letting apps update automatically from the official store is safe and saves you the chore. The store only installs genuine updates, so you get the security fixes without having to remember — a good set-and-forget choice.

9 The Fake 'Update Your Browser' Trap

One scam deserves special mention because it's so common: a web page that claims your browser or a plug-in is dangerously out of date and must be updated immediately, with a convenient button. It's a trap.

- Real browsers update themselves quietly in the background — they don't nag you from a web page.
- A page telling you to update your browser, Flash, or a 'video codec' to continue is almost always a scam.
- The button downloads harmful software, not an update.
- Just close the page; if you're unsure your browser is current, check its own menu, not the page.

WATCH OUT

If a website says you must download an update to watch a video or continue, leave that website — it's a classic trick. No legitimate site makes you install something to view it, and your browser is almost certainly already up to date.

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10 When It's Fine to Wait

Saying yes is usually right, but there are sensible moments to postpone a real update briefly. Waiting a short while is fine; refusing forever is not.

- If you're in the middle of something important, finish first — then update.
- If the battery is low and you can't plug in, wait until you can.
- Right before travel or an important task, it's reasonable to wait a day or two rather than risk a hiccup.
- If an update is brand-new that very day, waiting a few days lets any early issues get sorted — but don't put it off for weeks.

GOOD TO KNOW

Brief, deliberate delays are sensible; indefinite avoidance is what gets people in trouble. Snoozing an update until tonight or this weekend is fine. Clicking 'remind me later' for six months is how devices fall behind and become vulnerable.

11 How to Update Safely and Smoothly

A few simple habits make every update go smoothly, with no drama and no interruptions.

- Plug in to power before a big update, so it can't run out partway.
- Connect to Wi-Fi, so updates don't eat into a cellular data limit.
- Do it when you won't need the device for a bit, since it may restart.
- Don't interrupt it once it starts — let 'updating' screens finish.

WATCH OUT

The two best habits are 'plug in' and 'don't interrupt.' Nearly every update that goes wrong went wrong because the power died or someone turned it off mid-way. Give it power and a little patience and updates are a non-event.

12 If an Update Caused a Problem

Updates very rarely cause trouble, but now and then one changes how something looks or works, or an app misbehaves right after. These are usually minor and quickly sorted.

1. If something merely looks different, that's normal after an update — the feature's usually just moved.
2. If an app acts up right after its update, close and reopen it, or restart the device.
3. Check for a further update — makers often release a quick follow-up fix.
4. If a real problem persists, note exactly what changed and when, which helps anyone helping you.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A rough patch right after an update is often fixed by the very next update a day or two later, because the makers spot the issue and correct it fast. A restart and checking for that follow-up update clears most post-update hiccups.

13 When a Device Is 'Too Old' to Update

Eventually every device reaches an age where its maker stops offering updates — it has had its full life of support. This isn't a fault, and your device won't suddenly stop working, but it does change how you think about safety.

- When updates stop, no new security holes get patched, so the device slowly becomes less safe for sensitive things like banking.
- It'll keep working for everyday tasks, but newer apps may stop supporting it.
- This is a gradual change, not a cliff — there's no need to panic or rush.
- It's a reasonable moment to think about replacing a device used for important, private things.

If your phone or computer says there are 'no more updates available' because it's reached its age, that's worth knowing rather than ignoring. For casual use it's fine a good while longer; for banking, email, and anything private, an up-to-date device is

safer.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A device that can no longer update is still fine for reading the news or watching videos. The caution is only around sensitive accounts — and when you reach that point, it's worth a calm conversation about whether and when to replace it, not a hasty purchase.

14 When to Call Bill

Saying yes to genuine updates from the right place is safe, and you can do it yourself with confidence. But if you're ever unsure whether an update prompt is real or a scam, if an update seems to have caused a problem you can't undo, or if you've clicked something you now worry about, I'm glad to help — no judgment, ever.

I come to you, set your devices to update safely and automatically where it makes sense, show you the simple 'real versus fake' test so you can tell at a glance, and if a fake update was clicked, I'll check that nothing harmful got in and clean it up.

- You can't tell whether an update prompt is genuine or a scam.
- You clicked an 'update' from a pop-up, email, or text and now worry about it.
- An update seems to have broken something you can't fix.
- You'd like updates set up to happen safely and automatically.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Real updates keep you safe — say yes from the right place, and refuse the fakes.

The update is…	Do this…
Waiting in Settings / app store	Say yes — plug in, connect to Wi-Fi, let it finish
A security update	Say yes promptly — it closes holes scammers exploit
A web-page pop-up	Refuse — close the page; real updates don't pop up while browsing
An email or text 'update' link	Refuse — never click; go check Settings yourself instead
Asking you to call or pay	Refuse — that's always a scam
Currently installing	Don't turn off — let 'updating' / 'do not turn off' screens finish
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.

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