



An Extended Guide · No. 1869

Robot Vacuum Maps — Rooms, No-Go Zones & Keep-Out Lines

A calm, one-time
setup you can master

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Teaching your robot the lay of the land

Once a robot has a map of your home, it stops wandering and starts working with purpose — cleaning the kitchen on command, staying out of the nursery, and steering clear of the cords and rugs that used to snag it. This guide shows you how that map gets made, and how to shape it.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. For 30-plus years I've helped folks get comfortable with the gear in their homes, patiently and in plain language. Think of this as me at your kitchen table, walking you through it one calm step at a time.

Here's the reassuring part up front: the mapping is a **one-time setup**. You do it once, give the rooms names, draw a few lines, and after that the robot just knows your home. If the phone part gives you pause, it's exactly the kind of thing I can set up for you in one visit.

★ The app is the only fiddly bit, and it's a one-time job

I don't sell these machines — this is just honest advice. If you'd rather not wrestle the app yourself, I'll build the map, name the rooms, and fence off the trouble spots, then it just runs. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you'll have a map that makes your robot smarter and calmer.

- ❑ The first mapping run is a quiet lap of your home where the robot draws a floor plan — you don't have to do anything but let it roam.
- ❑ Save that map, then name each room so you can say 'clean the kitchen'.
- ❑ Draw no-go zones (boxes) around cords, pet bowls, and delicate rugs so the robot never enters.
- ❑ Draw keep-out lines across a doorway to fence off a whole room or a child's play area.
- ❑ A two-story home can hold a separate map per floor — carry the robot up and pick the right map.
- ❑ When furniture moves, a quick edit or a fresh mapping run keeps the map honest.
- ❑ It's a one-time setup — or a one-visit job I'm glad to do for you.

✓ One rule to hold onto

A map is just a drawing you control. You can always edit it, erase a line, or start a fresh run. Nothing you do in the app can break the robot — so feel free to experiment.

Why a map is worth the few minutes

A robot without a map wanders and bumps until the floor is covered. A robot with a map works like a thoughtful helper. The difference is real.

With a map, the robot cleans in tidy rows, finds its own way back to the dock, and lets you aim it — 'just the kitchen and hall tonight'. It also lets you draw the invisible fences that keep it away from the cord, the dog's water bowl, and the fringed rug it loves to chew.

In a larger or multi-room home, a map turns a robot from a blunt tool into a precise one. In a single open room, it matters less — a simpler robot does fine there. Our 'which robot fits' guide helps you decide if you even need a mapping robot.

✓ The map is where the 'smart' lives

Nearly every clever thing a robot does — room-by-room cleaning, no-go zones, schedules for just one area — rides on top of the map. Get the map right and the rest falls into place.

How the robot sees your home

A robot builds its map in one of two ways. You don't need to master this — a quick sense of it is plenty for now.

Laser mapping (LiDAR)

A little spinning sensor on top sweeps the room with a laser and measures the distance to every wall. It works in the dark and doesn't photograph anything — it just senses shapes. Maps tend to come out fast and tidy.

Camera mapping (vSLAM)

Other robots map with a small camera that watches the ceiling and walls as it drives. These need some light to see by and build the map a touch more slowly. Our 'which robot fits' guide goes deeper on the trade-offs — for mapping, both get the job done.

✓ Either way, the map works the same for you

Once the map exists, naming rooms and drawing no-go zones works just the same whether the robot used a laser or a camera. The sensing is the robot's business; the drawing is yours.

The first mapping run, step by step

The map starts with one special lap of your home. Here's how to give the robot the best possible first look.

Before you start, do a quick ten-minute tidy — pick up loose cords, socks, and toys, and open the interior doors to the rooms you want mapped. A clear, open path lets the robot trace clean walls instead of detouring around clutter. Our 'getting ready' guide covers this tidy in full.

Then start the mapping run from the app and let the robot roam. It drives the perimeter and crisscrosses each room, drawing the floor plan as it goes. Let it finish the whole lap and return to the dock — resist the urge to pick it up partway, which can leave the map half-drawn.

✓ Let it do a full, uninterrupted lap

The cleanest maps come from one unbroken run with the doors open. If a room was shut and got missed, no harm done — you just open the door and run it again to fill in the gap.

Saving the map so it sticks

A map you don't save is a map the robot may redraw from scratch every clean. Saving it is the step that makes everything else possible.

After the first run, the app asks whether to save the map. Say yes. A saved map is the one you'll name rooms on, draw zones on, and reuse every day. Without it, the robot can't offer room-by-room cleaning or remember your no-go zones.

Many robots let you keep the map backed up in the app, so if the robot is reset or replaced you don't start over. Where that's offered, it's worth turning on — a saved, backed-up map is a small insurance policy against redoing the whole setup.

★ I'll make sure it's saved and backed up

A map that quietly fails to save is a common frustration I get called about. On a visit I'll confirm it's stored and backed up so your setup survives a reset or a new phone. Call (330) 200-8042.

Naming your rooms

Once the map is saved, you divide it into rooms and give each a name. This is what lets you aim the robot at one spot.

In the app, the map usually comes split into rooms automatically. You check the dividing lines — sometimes the robot merges two small rooms or splits one big one — and nudge them until they match your real walls. Then you tap each room and name it: Kitchen, Living Room, Hall, Bedroom.

With names in place, you can say 'clean the kitchen', set the bedroom to clean only on Tuesdays, or send the robot to the hall after dinner. The names are also how voice commands work, if you use a smart speaker.

✓ Name rooms the way you talk

Call a room what you'd naturally say out loud — 'the den', not 'Zone 3'. It makes voice commands feel natural and makes the app easy for anyone in the house to use.

No-go zones: fencing off trouble spots

A no-go zone is a box you draw on the map that the robot will never enter. It's the single most useful thing you can add to a map.

You draw a rectangle around a spot and the robot treats it like an invisible wall, steering around it every time. It's perfect for the little troublemakers that strand a robot or make a mess: a nest of cords behind the TV, the pet's food and water bowls, a cluster of floor plants.

The beauty is that you fix a recurring problem once. Instead of tidying the same cord before every clean, you box it off on the map and forget it. If the trouble spot moves, you just drag the box to follow it.

- A nest of charging cords and power strips behind the TV or desk.
- The pet's food and water bowls, so they never get bumped or soaked.
- A cluster of floor vases or plants that could topple.
- A low, dangly spot — long curtains, a tablecloth hem, a bootrack.

Keep-out lines, delicate rugs, and play areas

A keep-out line is like a no-go zone, but a single line instead of a box — handy for fencing off a whole room or guarding a rug's edge.

Draw a keep-out line across a doorway and the robot won't cross it, so you can seal off a whole room without closing a door — a child's play area strewn with small toys, a room with delicate things at floor level, or a home office you'd rather it skip.

Lines and small no-go boxes are also the kind way to protect a delicate or fringed rug. A robot's brush can chew a fringe or a tassel, and it can bunch up a lightweight rug. Fence the rug off, or fence just its fringed edges, and the robot leaves it in peace.

! Protect fringed and delicate rugs

Fringed, tasseled, antique, or very thin rugs are the ones a robot can damage or drag. Draw a no-go zone around them — or around just the fringe — rather than hoping the robot steers clear on its own.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

A map for a snug one-floor home is a quick, simple thing. A map for a big multi-floor house with pets and kids does more work. Picture your own home as you read.

A small, single-floor home

If you're in a ranch, a condo, or an apartment — mostly one level — your map is quick to make and easy to keep.

- One mapping run covers the whole home in a single lap.
- A handful of named rooms is usually all you need.
- A no-go zone or two — the cords, the pet bowls — and you're set.
- The map rarely changes, so you edit it almost never.

A big, multi-floor home with pets and kids

A larger house — several rooms, more than one floor, pets and little ones — is where a well-drawn map really earns its keep.

- A separate saved map for each floor, picked when you move the robot.
- More named rooms, so you can aim the robot at just the busy ones.
- Several no-go zones — bowls, cords, toys, delicate rugs.
- A keep-out line across the nursery or play-area doorway.

★ Not sure how to set yours up?

Tell me your floors, your pets, and the spots you want fenced off, and I'll build the map, name the rooms, and draw the zones in one visit. Call (330) 200-8042.

Maps for a two-story home

A robot can't climb stairs, but it can remember more than one floor. Here's how a multi-floor home works.

Most mapping robots can store several maps — commonly one per floor. You map the main level first, then carry the robot upstairs and run a fresh mapping lap there, saving it as a second map. The robot learns to tell the floors apart and loads the right map for wherever you set it down.

Remember, though, that a robot cleans only the floor it's on and won't come down the stairs. So in a two-story home you either carry the one robot between floors or keep a second robot upstairs. Our 'which robot fits' guide weighs that choice.

✓ Let it find its bearings when you move it

When you set the robot on a different floor, give it a moment to look around and recognize which map it's on before you start a clean. If it seems confused, start it near its dock, where it has the most landmarks.

Editing the map when life changes

Homes don't stand still — furniture moves, a room gets rearranged. The map is easy to update when it does.

Small changes rarely bother a good map; the robot just finds the new couch and works around it. But if you rearrange a room heavily, move a wall of shelving, or finish a basement, the old map can go stale. Then you either edit it — drag a room line, move a no-go box — or run a fresh mapping lap to redraw that area.

Editing is all taps and drags on your phone, and nothing you do can harm the robot. If an edit goes sideways, you can undo it or simply start a new mapping run and begin clean. It's a drawing you're always free to change.

✓ Re-map after a big rearrange

If you move a lot of furniture or open up a space, a quick fresh mapping run gives the robot an accurate picture again. It's five quiet minutes that saves the robot a lot of confused bumping.

A quick word on the map and your privacy

A map of your home is personal, and it's fair to wonder where it lives and who can see it. Here's a calm, honest take.

A laser-mapping robot senses shapes, not pictures — it doesn't photograph your rooms, so its map is just an outline of walls. A camera-mapping robot does use a lens; most use it only to navigate, but it's worth knowing which kind you have and what its app settings offer.

The map itself usually lives in the maker's app and cloud so you can see it on your phone. That's convenient, and for most folks it's no worry — but if privacy matters to you, our privacy guide covers which robots offer local, offline control and how to read the settings.

! Know what your robot stores and shares

Before you lean on cloud features, take a minute to check what your robot's app stores and whether the map or any camera view leaves your home. It's your house — you're entitled to know. Our privacy guide walks through it.

When a map acts up

Maps go wrong in a few predictable ways, and all of them have calm fixes. None mean the robot is broken.

- **A room is missing:** its door was shut during the run. Open it and map again to fill in the gap.
- **The map looks scrambled:** the robot got lost or was picked up mid-run. Start a fresh mapping lap from the dock.
- **Rooms are merged or split oddly:** nudge the dividing lines in the app until they match your walls.
- **The robot ignores a no-go zone:** check the zone was saved to the right map, and that it's switched on.
- **It won't recognize a floor:** set it down near that floor's dock so it has familiar landmarks.

✓ A fresh run fixes most map trouble

When in doubt, a clean mapping lap from the dock, doors open, cures most map headaches. It costs five quiet minutes and no risk.

Putting the map to work with schedules

The real payoff of a map is that you can tell the robot not just when to clean, but exactly where. That's where it starts to feel like a helper.

With named rooms, you can build a routine: the kitchen and hall every day, the bedrooms twice a week, the dining room an hour before guests arrive. You can set each room to clean at its own time, so the robot works quietly through the week without you lifting a finger.

You can also fire off a quick one-room clean on demand — 'do the kitchen' after a spill of crumbs — without the robot wandering the whole house. A map turns a single button into a dozen useful commands.

★ I'll set a routine that suits your days

Scheduling room by room is the part folks most often ask me to set up. Tell me the rhythm of your week and I'll build a routine the robot runs on its own. Call (330) 200-8042.

A simple map-setup checklist

Keep this by your side the first time you set up a map. Tick each box and you'll have a map that serves you for years.

- ☐ I did a ten-minute tidy and opened the interior doors first.
- ☐ I let the robot finish one full mapping lap without picking it up.
- ☐ I saved the map — and backed it up in the app if that's offered.
- ☐ I checked the room dividing lines and named each room the way I talk.
- ☐ I drew no-go zones around cords, pet bowls, and delicate rugs.
- ☐ I drew keep-out lines across any doorway I want sealed off.
- ☐ If I have two floors, I saved a separate map for each.
- ☐ I set a cleaning schedule, room by room, to suit my week.

✓ Do it once, enjoy it for years

This is a one-evening job, and then it's done. The map quietly does its work every day afterward — you'll rarely open the app again.

Common mistakes people make

A few avoidable slip-ups cause most map frustration. Now you'll see them coming.

- **Mapping with doors shut** — then wondering why a room never gets cleaned.
- **Picking the robot up mid-run** — which can leave the map half-drawn and scrambled.
- **Forgetting to save the map** — so the robot redraws it every time and forgets your zones.
- **Not fencing off the obvious troublemakers** — cords and pet bowls that strand the robot again and again.
- **Leaving a fringed rug unprotected** — and finding the brush has chewed its tassels.
- **Never re-mapping after a big rearrange** — leaving the robot to bump around an out-of-date plan.

! The fix list starts with the floor

If the robot keeps getting stuck even with a good map, the real culprit is usually something on the floor the map can't see. Our 'getting ready' and 'fix list' guides walk through the ten-minute tidy that prevents it.

The app part is easier than it looks

If the thought of drawing on a phone map worries you, let me set your mind at ease. This is squarely within reach.

Everything here is taps and drags on a big, clear picture of your floor plan. You tap a room to name it, drag a box over the cords, drag a line across a doorway. There's an undo button, nothing is permanent, and nothing you tap can harm the robot. It's much closer to doodling than to programming.

And it's a one-time job. Once the map is built and the zones are drawn, you're done — the robot carries the map in its memory and just runs. If you'd still rather someone else handle the first setup, that's exactly what a visit is for.

★ Let me do the first setup with you

The very first map is the only fiddly part, and I'm glad to sit down and do it with you — building the map, naming rooms, drawing the zones — so you watch it come together and never have to dread the app. Call (330) 200-8042.

Keeping the map working over the years

A good map mostly looks after itself, but a couple of small habits keep it accurate and safe for the long haul.

Keep the app updated, since updates often improve mapping and add features. Where the app lets you back up the map, keep that backup current so a reset or a new phone doesn't cost you the whole setup. And after any big rearrange, give the robot a fresh mapping lap.

The robot-vacuum world has seen some big shake-ups in ownership lately, so it's wise to note your exact model and keep its manual. If an app ever changes hands or goes quiet, you'll be glad you saved your map and know the on-robot buttons. Our maker-shutdown guide covers protecting yourself.

✓ Save a backup while it's easy

If your app offers a map backup or export, turn it on now, while everything works. It's a two-minute insurance policy against ever redoing this setup from scratch.

Questions worth asking about mapping

Whether you're shopping for a robot or setting one up, these questions get you to a map that works the way you want.

Q: Does this robot save a map, or redraw it every time?

A saved map is what makes rooms, zones, and schedules possible. A robot that redraws every run can't offer those — worth checking before you buy.

Q: Can it store more than one floor?

If you have two stories, make sure it keeps multiple maps so you can carry it upstairs and have it load the right floor.

Q: How do I fence off a cord, a bowl, or a rug?

You draw a no-go box over the spot or a keep-out line across a doorway. Ask to see this in the app before you commit.

Q: Where is my map stored, and can I back it up?

Most maps live in the app and cloud. Favor one that lets you back up or export the map, so a reset doesn't cost you the whole setup.

✓ There's no silly question

If an app or a salesperson makes mapping sound complicated, ask them to show you the no-go zone being drawn. If they can't make it simple, that tells you something.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks setting up a robot's map, answered plainly.

Q: Do I have to make the map myself?

You let the robot do a mapping lap — that part is automatic. Then you name rooms and draw a few zones, which is taps and drags on your phone. Or I'll do the whole first setup for you on a visit.

Q: What's the difference between a no-go zone and a keep-out line?

A no-go zone is a box the robot won't enter — good for a cord nest or a rug. A keep-out line is a single line, good for sealing off a whole room across a doorway.

Q: Can I stop the robot from damaging my fringed rug?

Yes. Draw a no-go zone around the rug, or just around its fringed edges, and the robot steers clear. It's the kind way to protect delicate or antique rugs.

Q: How does it handle a two-story house?

Most mapping robots store a separate map per floor. You carry the robot upstairs, run a fresh mapping lap, and save it — then the robot loads the right map wherever you set it down.

Q: The map got messed up — did I break something?

Not at all. Maps scramble if a door was shut or the robot was lifted mid-run. Just start a fresh mapping lap from the dock with the doors open, and it redraws clean. Nothing is harmed.

★ Want a hand with the first map?

Setting up the map, naming rooms, and drawing the zones is exactly the kind of thing I love to do with folks. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll build it together.

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 robot vacuum maps and no-go zones 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.

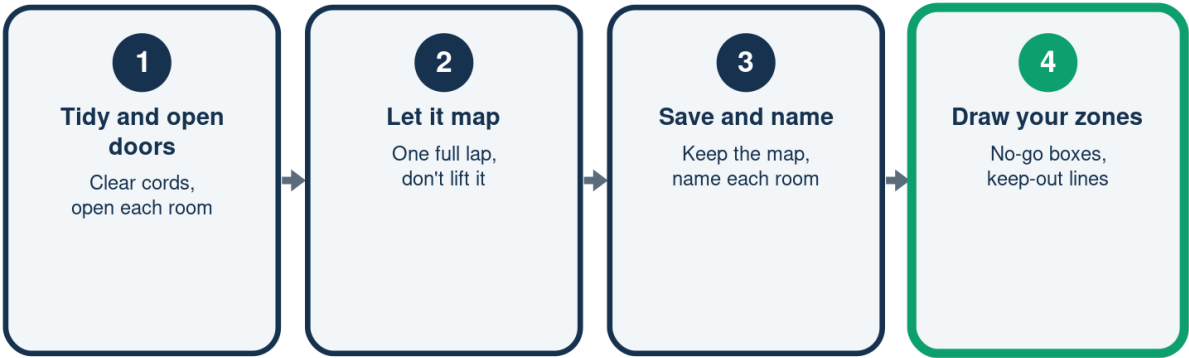
When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. I'll help you choose the right machine, get it set up and mapped, connect it to your Wi-Fi and your phone, and show you how to run it. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site — app settings, schedules, a quick question — I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. For anything that calls for a ladder, wiring, or digging, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro rather than risk it.

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Building Your Map in Four Steps

A one-time setup you do once and enjoy for years



Do these in order and the map almost makes itself.

No-Go Zones vs Keep-Out Lines

Two ways to fence the robot out of trouble

	Tool	Best for
No-go box	Cords, bowls,	a single rug
Keep-out line	A doorway,	a whole room
Around a rug	Fringed or	delicate rugs
Across a door	Child's play	area

Fix a recurring snag once -- draw it on the map and forget it.

What to Fence Off on Your Map

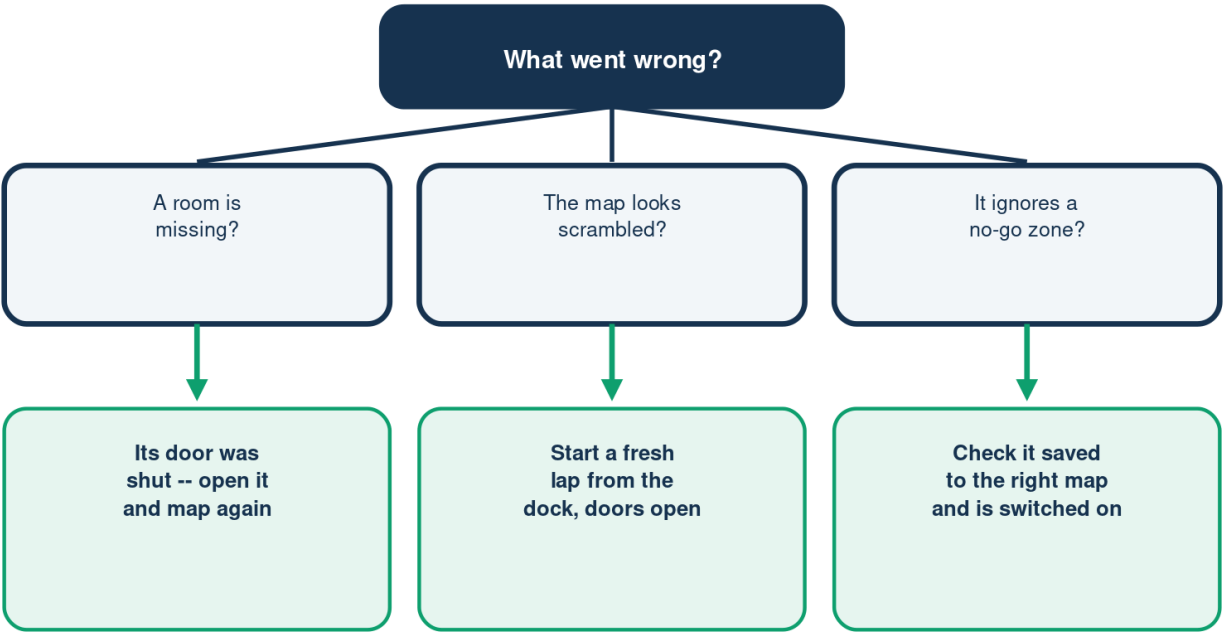
The usual troublemakers worth a no-go zone

	Trouble spot	Why fence it
Cord nest	Stops the robot	getting tangled
Pet bowls	No bumps	or spills
Fringed rug	Saves the	tassels
Play area	Small toys	jam brushes
Floor plants	No toppled	vases

A few zones prevent most stuck-robot headaches.

Map Acting Up? Start Here

Most map trouble has a calm, quick fix



Nothing you do in the app can harm the robot -- feel free to redo it.

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



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

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