BILL'S HOME TECH

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Router Keeps Dropping — Heat & Placement

The on again, off again Wi Fi that usually has a physical cause — and the free fixes that end it

Plain-English home-network help from:

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What's Inside

Everything in this guide, with page numbers. Skip to whichever chapter answers your question right now.

The 60-Second Version 3
The Short Version 3
Why Heat Makes a Router Drop 4
Cool It Down: The Free Fix 5
Place It Where It Can Do Its Job 5
Drops at the Same Time Every Day? 6
Interference: The Invisible Culprit 6
When the Equipment Is Just Old 7
Too Much on One Old Router 8
A Clean Restart and Update 8
Build a Drop Proof Setup 9
Protect It From Power Problems 10
Is It the Router, or Just One Device? 10
When to Call Bill 11
Everyday Cheat Sheet 12
A Note From Bill 13
Your Visit — and My Promise 14

SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

A router that keeps dropping is most often too hot or badly placed — both free to fix. When it drops, feel it: if it's hot, that's your answer. Pull it out of any closed cabinet, give it open air on all sides, keep it out of sun and off heat vents, clear dust from the vents, and never stack anything on top.

Then place it central, open, and up high (not on the floor) for cool running and even coverage. Drops at the same time daily suggest heat in the afternoon or a hidden scheduled reboot; drops near the kitchen suggest microwave interference. If the free fixes don't hold, suspect an aging router (five years or more), a crowd of too many devices, or a failing power adapter — and restart with the power cord, never the reset pinhole.

1 The Short Version

Your Wi Fi works, then quits, then works again — maybe several times a day, maybe always at the same time. You restart the router, it's fine for a while, and then it drops again. This maddening on again off again pattern usually has a surprisingly physical cause: heat and placement. Routers run warm, and when they can't shed that heat, or when they're buried where they can't do their job, they get unstable and drop the connection.

The great news is that the two biggest causes — overheating and bad placement — are free to fix, and they solve a large share of "keeps dropping" complaints. This guide walks through cooling and positioning your router, then the other common culprits (old equipment, overload, interference), in the order a professional would check them.

- A router that keeps dropping is often too hot or badly placed — both free to fix.
- Give it open air, keep it cool, and get it out of cabinets and off the floor.
- Drops at the same time daily often mean heat (afternoon) or a scheduled conflict.

- If cooling and placement don't fix it, aging equipment or overload is the next suspect.

> **TIP**
> Here's a quick test: next time the Wi Fi drops, carefully feel the router. If it's hot to the touch, heat is very likely your answer — and simply giving it open air and space may end the dropouts without buying anything at all.

2 Why Heat Makes a Router Drop

Inside your router is a small computer working constantly, and like any computer it generates heat. It's designed to shed that heat through vents and open air. But when it's trapped in a closed cabinet, stacked under other equipment, sitting in direct sun, or clogged with dust, the heat builds up until the little computer gets unstable — and an unstable router drops its connection to cool down or reset itself.

This is why the problem so often comes and goes. The router works fine when cool, heats up under load or as the room warms, drops when it gets too hot, cools during the outage, and comes back — only to repeat. Recognizing that rhythm is half the diagnosis, because it points straight at heat rather than some mysterious internet fault.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> A router dropping from heat is not broken and not your fault — it's just smothered. The same box that fails every afternoon in a closed cabinet can run for months without a hiccup once it has open air around it. Heat is one of the most common and most overlooked causes of flaky Wi Fi.

3 Cool It Down: The Free Fix

Before anything else, make sure your router can breathe and stay cool. This alone ends a large share of dropping problems.

1. Take the router out of any closed cabinet, drawer, cupboard, or tight shelf.
2. Give it a few inches of open air on every side, and never stack it on or under other warm equipment.
3. Move it out of direct sunlight and away from heat vents, radiators, and the back of the TV.
4. Make sure its vents (the slots and holes) are unblocked and facing open air, not pressed against a wall.
5. Gently clear dust from the vents — a dusty router runs hotter.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Never set anything on top of a router or lay it flat under a stack of books or a cable box. Covering the vents traps heat fast and is one of the surest ways to make a router drop. It needs to sit in the open like a lamp, not be tucked away like a folder.

4 Place It Where It Can Do Its Job

Placement fixes two problems at once: it keeps the router cool, and it spreads your Wi Fi evenly so devices don't drop from a weak signal. The ideal spot is central, open, and elevated.

1. Move the router toward the center of your home, as far as the internet cable allows.
2. Raise it up onto a shelf or desk — not on the floor, where the signal is smothered by furniture.
3. Keep it out in the open, not in a closet or behind the TV.
4. Point any antennas upward, and keep a few feet of clearance from large metal objects.

TIP

If the internet cable only reaches a bad corner, you're not stuck — a longer cable, or a small job to add a connection point in a better spot, lets you put the router where it belongs. That one move often fixes both the heat and the coverage at the same time.

5 Drops at the Same Time Every Day?

A drop that happens on a schedule is a strong clue, and the timing tells you a lot about the cause.

- Every afternoon in warm weather: almost certainly heat as the room warms up — improve airflow.
- The same clock time daily: possibly a scheduled reboot, an update window, or a timer set on the router.
- When a specific appliance runs (microwave, certain lights): interference on the 2.4GHz band.
- When the house gets busy each evening: overload rather than a true drop — see the bandwidth guide.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some routers have a built in "scheduled reboot" or a parental control timer that can look exactly like a daily drop. If your Wi Fi dies at, say, 3am or the same minute each day, it's worth checking the router's app for a schedule someone set and forgot.

6 Interference: The Invisible Culprit

Wi Fi shares its airspace with other devices, and when something nearby crowds that airspace, your connection can stutter or drop. This mostly affects the longer range 2.4GHz band.

- Microwaves use nearly the same airspace as 2.4GHz Wi Fi — video may stutter while one runs.

- Older cordless phones, baby monitors, and wireless cameras can crowd the band.
- Neighbors' Wi Fi in a dense area or apartment can congest the channel yours is on.
- Keeping the router a few feet from these devices, and away from big metal and mirrors, reduces the clashes.

TIP

If drops seem random but cluster around kitchen or phone use, interference is likely. Moving the router away from the microwave and cordless phone base, or having its channel changed to a less crowded one, often smooths things out — the channel change is a quick settings tweak.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

7 When the Equipment Is Just Old

If you've cooled the router, placed it well, and ruled out schedules and interference and it still drops, the box itself may simply be worn out. Electronics age, and an old router becomes unstable in exactly this way.

- A router more than about five years old is a fair suspect for chronic dropping.
- A box that's been through power surges or years in a hot spot wears out sooner.
- A failing power adapter can also cause drops — sometimes it's the cord, not the router.
- A rented box from your provider that keeps failing should be replaced by them at no charge.

WATCH OUT

There's a point where cooling and fiddling stop paying off and a tired old router is simply costing you daily aggravation. If yours is many years old and still drops after the free fixes, replacing it — with the right model for your home and speed — is often the thing that finally ends the problem. I'm glad to help you pick.

8 Too Much on One Old Router

Homes have quietly filled up with Wi Fi devices — phones, TVs, speakers, cameras, plugs, doorbells — and an older router that handled a handful of gadgets can buckle under dozens, dropping connections as it struggles to keep up.

- Count roughly how many things connect to your Wi Fi — most people are surprised how many.
- An older router can become overwhelmed by many devices and drop some to cope.
- A newer router or a mesh system handles large numbers of devices far more gracefully.
- Turning off or removing devices you no longer use lightens the load a little.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your Wi Fi started dropping around the time you added several smart home gadgets, the number of devices may have simply outgrown an older router. Modern routers are built for crowded homes; an old one may be doing its honest best and falling short.

9 A Clean Restart and Update

While you're at it, a proper restart and making sure the router is up to date clears software gremlins that can also cause drops. Do this after the physical fixes, not instead of them.

1. Restart the router properly: unplug it (and the modem, if separate), wait 30 seconds, plug the modem back first, then the router.
2. Open the router's app or settings and check for a firmware update; install it if offered.
3. Make sure the router is set to keep itself updated so it stays patched.
4. Watch for a day or two to see whether the drops have stopped.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Use the power cord for the restart, never the recessed reset pinhole — the pinhole wipes your Wi Fi name and password. And if you update firmware, leave the router completely alone until it finishes; interrupting an update partway can genuinely harm the box.

10 Build a Drop Proof Setup

Once the drops stop, a few lasting habits keep your Wi Fi steady for the long haul.

- Keep the router in the open, cool, elevated, and dust free — revisit this if you rearrange a room.
- Leave it powered on and set to update itself.
- Protect it with a surge protector so a power spike doesn't shorten its life.
- Replace a router that's many years old before it fails rather than after.

> **TIP**
>
> A quick note of when any future drops happen — time of day, what was running — turns a vague 'it keeps dropping' into a clear pattern. That little log is the fastest route to the real cause if the problem ever returns.

11 Protect It From Power Problems

Power trouble is a quiet enemy of networking gear. Flickers, surges, and brownouts can lock up a router, corrupt its settings, and shorten its life — and they often show up as drops that seem to come out of nowhere, especially during storms or when big appliances kick on.

- Plug the router and modem into a surge protector, not straight into the wall — cheap insurance against spikes.
- If your power flickers often, a small battery backup keeps the equipment up through brief dips.
- After a storm or an outage, give the equipment a proper in order restart to let it settle cleanly.
- A surge protector more than a few years old may be worn out — they do wear down and should be replaced.

> **TIP**
>
> If your Wi Fi tends to act up right after the lights flicker or a big appliance starts, power is the likely trigger. A surge protector, and a battery backup if flickers are frequent, often ends those drops and protects your gear at the same time.

12 Is It the Router, or Just One Device?

Before blaming the router at all, make sure the whole house is really dropping and not just one gadget. The fix is completely different, and this quick check saves you from treating the wrong thing.

1. When the Wi Fi "drops," check a second device — is it offline too, or still working?
2. If only one device drops while others stay connected, the problem is that device, not the router.
3. For a single dropping device, forget and rejoin the Wi Fi on it, and move it closer or onto the longer reaching 2.4GHz band if it's far away.

4. If every device drops together, it's the router or the connection — continue with the heat and placement fixes.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A single device that keeps dropping — especially a far away one — is usually a coverage or band problem for that device, not a sick router. If the whole house goes dark at once, that's when heat, placement, or the box itself is the real suspect.

13 When to Call Bill

Cooling your router and placing it well are easy, free, and fix a great many dropping problems — well worth trying first. But if the drops survive the free fixes, if you suspect the box is simply old, or if you'd rather not hunt through settings for a hidden schedule or a crowded channel, a steady hand makes short work of it.

I come to you, find out exactly why your router keeps dropping — heat, placement, interference, a hidden schedule, overload, or an old box — and fix the real cause. If it's time for new equipment, I'll help you pick the right size for your home and set it up so your Wi Fi simply stays on.

- The drops continue after you've cooled and repositioned the router.
- The router is hot, old, or has been through power surges.
- Your Wi Fi dies at the same time daily and you can't find why.
- You've added lots of devices and the old router can't keep up.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the router. Most dropping is heat or placement — both free to fix.

I want to…	Do this…
Test for heat	Feel the router when it drops — hot to the touch points to heat
Cool it down	Open air on all sides, out of cabinets, off heat, vents clear of dust
Place it right	Central, open, up high, off the floor, antennas up
Explain a daily drop	Afternoon = heat; same clock time = a hidden schedule; kitchen = interference
Rule out interference	Keep it clear of the microwave and cordless phone; change the channel
Suspect old gear	5+ years old and still dropping after the free fixes = time to replace
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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