

Your Schlage Encode Lock

THE QUICK VERSION

- 1 Install the free Schlage Home app and make an account.
- 2 Fit the lock and align the strike plate so the bolt moves freely.
- 3 Join your 2.4 gigahertz Wi-Fi through the app.
- 4 Program a code for each person, with schedules for helpers.
- 5 Turn on auto-lock, and set up Apple Home Key on the Plus.
- 6 Call Bill at (330) 200-8042 to install and set it all up.

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Your Schlage Encode Lock — A Plain-English Guide

Built-in Wi-Fi, a big lit keypad, and a deadbolt from a lockmaker since 1920.

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1874 · SMART LOCKS —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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What's Inside

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

The Schlage Encode is a full replacement deadbolt with a large, well-lit keypad and Wi-Fi built right in. You get in with a code, with the Schlage Home app, or with a key on the keyed versions. Because the Wi-Fi is inside the lock, there is no separate hub or bridge to buy or plug in.

- It replaces your deadbolt with a big, clearly lit keypad.
- Wi-Fi is built in, so there is no extra box to plug in anywhere.
- Everything is run from the free Schlage Home app.
- The Encode Plus adds Apple Home Key, so iPhones tap to open.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Encode is built like a serious lock first and a smart gadget second. Schlage is known for sturdy, high-security deadbolts, and the big lit keypad is one of the easiest to read, which is why I like it for older eyes.

I install and set these up for Portage County families all the time, and I am glad to do yours. If you would rather have it handled start to finish, call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

1. What the Schlage Encode is

A sturdy lock with Wi-Fi built in.

The Schlage Encode is a full replacement deadbolt, which means it takes the place of your old lock entirely, inside and out. On the outside you get a large, brightly lit keypad; on the inside, a thumb-turn and the battery compartment. What sets the Encode apart from many smart locks is that its Wi-Fi is built in, so it talks to the internet on its own.

- It replaces your whole deadbolt, outside and inside.
- The outside is a large, clearly lit number keypad.
- Wi-Fi is built in, with no separate hub, bridge, or box needed.
- Schlage is a trusted name for strong, high-security locks.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many smart locks need a separate hub plugged in across the house to reach the internet. The Encode does not; the Wi-Fi lives in the lock itself, which is one fewer thing to buy and fuss with.

This built-in Wi-Fi is a real convenience. From the moment it is set up, you can check and control the door from your recliner or from another state, with nothing else to plug in. For a family member keeping an eye on a parent's door from a distance, that simplicity is a genuine plus.

In this guide I will walk through the Encode in plain English, from the box on your table to a lock that greets you with a glowing keypad. I will explain each setting the way I would at your kitchen table, so you and your family can run it with real confidence.

2. Encode or Encode Plus

Which one is which.

Schlage offers the Encode and the Encode Plus, and they work in much the same way. The main difference is Apple. The Encode Plus adds Apple Home Key, which lets you tap an iPhone or Apple Watch against the lock to open it. If your household runs on iPhones, that one feature may decide it for you.

- Encode: the standard model with built-in Wi-Fi and a big keypad.
- Encode Plus: adds Apple Home Key for tap-to-open on iPhone and Apple Watch.
- The Plus works with Apple Home as well as the Schlage Home app.
- Both let you in by code, by app, and by key on keyed versions.

GOOD TO KNOW

Apple Home Key on the Plus is lovely for iPhone users, because the phone does not even need to be awake. A tap near the lock opens the door, about as simple as it gets.

If you are not an Apple household, the standard Encode gives you everything most families want: the big keypad, the built-in Wi-Fi, the app, and the codes. You lose nothing of the everyday experience. The Plus is really for folks who will use the Apple tap-to-open and want their lock in Apple Home alongside their other gear.

Both come in different finishes and in touchscreen or push-button styles, so you can match your door. Schlage refreshes its lineup and finishes over time, so the exact model on the shelf may shift, but the way you live with the lock stays the same. Everything in this guide applies to both the Encode and the Encode Plus.

3. The big lit keypad

Why it suits older eyes.

One of the Encode's quiet strengths is its keypad. The numbers are large and clearly lit, so they are easy to read at night and for eyes that are not what they were. For an older user, that readability matters more than any fancy feature, because the keypad is the thing you touch every single day.

- Large, clearly lit numbers that are easy to read in the dark.
- Comes in a push-button style you can feel, or a smooth touchscreen.
- A firm, deliberate press reads reliably, even with gloves in winter.
- The light comes on when you approach or touch it, then fades.

TIP

The push-button style, with numbers you can feel, is often easier for older hands than a flat touchscreen, because you get a physical cue for each key. Both are offered, so choose the one that suits you.

In an Ohio winter, a readable, pressable keypad earns its keep. Standing at the door in the cold and dark with cold fingers, you want numbers you can see and feel without fumbling. The Encode's lit pad handles that well, and a firm press works even through a thin glove.

For a parent living alone, a code on a bright keypad can be far easier than managing a key with arthritic hands or a phone with cold fingers. You pick a number that is meaningful but not guessable, and getting in becomes a simple, familiar motion. That everyday ease is a big part of why I recommend the Encode for seniors.

4. What comes in the box

Opening it up.

The Encode comes as a complete replacement deadbolt, so the box holds both halves of the lock and the hardware to mount them. Before you start, lay everything out on a table so you can see what you have. On keyed models you will also find physical keys, which you should set aside somewhere safe from the very start.

- The outside keypad half of the lock.
- The inside half with the thumb-turn and battery compartment.
- The deadbolt mechanism and strike plate hardware.
- Physical keys on keyed models, and a printed setup guide.

TIP

Put the two physical keys somewhere you will remember, and give one to a trusted family member or neighbor. They are your backstop if the lock ever runs flat.

Take a moment with the printed guide, because Schlage prints a default programming code and a lock-specific code on it. You will want these during setup, and some folks tuck the sheet away safely afterward. Do not toss it with the packaging until you are sure you have what you need from it.

The strike plate and screws in the box matter more than they look. A well-fitted strike plate is what lets the bolt drop cleanly into the frame, and getting it right at install time prevents a sticky door later. Set the box aside until everything is mounted and working, in case you need any of the spare parts.

5. Getting the Schlage Home app

The lock's real control panel.

The Schlage Home app is the brain of the whole setup. It is free, it lives on your phone, and it is how you set up the lock, program codes, hand out guest access, set schedules, and change every setting. If you have ever installed any app, this will feel familiar. If you have not, it is a gentle one to learn.

- 1 On an iPhone, open the App Store; on an Android phone, open the Google Play Store.
- 2 Search for the Schlage Home app, made by Schlage.
- 3 Tap to install it, entering your account password or fingerprint if asked.
- 4 Open the app and create an account with your name, email, and a password.

GOOD TO KNOW

The app is free and there is no subscription to use your lock's everyday features. Your account is what ties the lock to you, so choose a strong password you will remember but others would not guess.

When you first open the app it will ask to use your phone's Bluetooth, and you should allow it. Bluetooth is how your phone first talks to the lock up close during setup, before it is on your Wi-Fi. Without that permission, the app cannot find your lock, so say yes when asked.

If you are setting the lock up for a parent, you can create and hold the main account yourself and add them as a user, or set it up in their name. Either way, the app on a phone is what runs the lock from here on, and whoever holds the main account is the one in

charge of codes, guests, and settings.

6. Installing the deadbolt

Off with the old, on with the new.

Because the Encode replaces your deadbolt, installation means taking the old one out and fitting the new one. On a standard door with a normal deadbolt bore, this is a manageable job with a screwdriver, and Schlage designs it to fit the holes most doors already have.

Getting the alignment right is the part that rewards care.

- 1 Unscrew and remove your existing deadbolt, inside and out.
- 2 Fit the new Schlage bolt into the edge of the door and secure it.
- 3 Place the outside keypad half, feeding its cable through the door.
- 4 Attach the inside half, connect the cable, and screw it snug, then fit the strike plate.

WATCH OUT

Spend the extra minute on the strike plate, the metal piece on the door frame. If the bolt does not drop cleanly into it, the lock will strain and may jam. A well-aligned strike is the secret to a lock that works smoothly for years.

Test the bolt by hand with the door open first; it should throw smoothly with no fight. Then close the door and make sure it still slides cleanly into the strike plate. If it binds only when the door is shut, the strike needs nudging, which we will cover in the troubleshooting chapters. Get this part right and you save yourself grief later.

If removing your lock and aligning a strike plate sounds like more than you want to take on, this is exactly the kind of job I handle in one visit. I make sure the bolt aligns, the door closes and locks cleanly, and nothing sticks on a cold morning. A lock installed square is a lock that behaves for years.

7. Connecting the built-in Wi-Fi

Getting the lock online, no hub needed.

Here is where the Encode shines: connecting to the internet needs nothing but your home Wi-Fi, because the Wi-Fi is built into the lock. During setup, the app walks you through joining your network. Once connected, you can check and control the door from anywhere, with no separate bridge or hub sitting in an outlet somewhere.

- 1 In the Schlage Home app, choose to add a new lock and follow the prompts.
- 2 Pair with the lock up close over Bluetooth when asked.
- 3 Pick your home Wi-Fi network from the list and type the password carefully.
- 4 Wait for the app to confirm the lock is online.

WATCH OUT

The Encode joins the common 2.4 gigahertz kind of Wi-Fi. If your home network has separate names for its faster and slower bands, pick the one that is not labeled 5G.

The lock sits on a metal door, often far from the router, so signal can matter. If it struggles to stay online, the fix is usually better Wi-Fi near the door. In a larger Stow or Hudson home, a mesh Wi-Fi point in the front hall often settles it. A mistyped password is the other common culprit, so double-check it.

Because there is no hub to keep powered, once the lock is on your Wi-Fi the remote features simply work. You do not have to remember that some little box across the house must stay plugged in. That built-in simplicity is one of the Encode's best qualities, and one I point out to families often.

8. Programming codes on the keypad

The hands-on way.

You can add and remove codes right on the lock itself, using the programming code printed in the box, without even touching the app. This is handy for a quick add at the door, or for someone who prefers not to fiddle with a phone. The keypad has a Schlage button that you press to step through the programming.

- 1 Have your programming code from the printed guide ready.
- 2 Press the Schlage button and enter the programming code when prompted.
- 3 Follow the keypad's beeps and lights to add a new access code.
- 4 Enter the new code twice to confirm, and test it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The programming code is the master that lets you change the lock from the keypad itself. Keep it private, because anyone with it can add their own code. Change it from the default if you like.

On-keypad programming is a nice fallback if the Wi-Fi or app is ever down, because the lock does not depend on the internet to add a code. That said, the app is usually the easier

way, because you see what you are doing on a screen rather than counting beeps. Many folks set up on the keypad once, then manage from the app after.

The lock holds many access codes, far more than a household needs, so there is no reason to share one. If you ever lose track of which codes exist, the app shows them all clearly, which is one reason I lean toward managing codes there. Keep the programming code and the printed guide somewhere safe either way.

9. Programming codes in the app

The easier way, on a screen.

Most of the time, the easiest way to manage codes is in the Schlage Home app, where you see everything on a screen. You add a code, name it for the person, and it is ready. The app can hold a good number of access codes, and it shows you the whole list at a glance, so nothing gets forgotten.

- 1 In the app, open your lock and find the access codes area.
- 2 Choose to add a new code and name it for the person who will use it.
- 3 Enter the numbers and save it.
- 4 Try the new code on the keypad to confirm it works.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Encode can hold up to around one hundred access codes, so there is no need to share a single number. Each person gets their own, and the log shows which one opened the door.

Naming each code for its person is the trick that keeps things tidy. When the activity log shows that the door was opened, you see the name, not just a faceless number, so you know at a glance that your daughter arrived or the aide came as scheduled. That clarity is a big part of the comfort these locks offer.

When you pick codes, avoid the obvious, like a street number or a birthday anyone could guess. The keypad lets you clear the numbers by pressing surrounding keys first, which foils a snoop trying to read smudges. A moment of thought on the codes keeps the convenience from ever becoming a weak spot.

10. Access schedules and guest codes

The right people, the right hours.

The Encode lets you set a code to work always, on a repeating schedule, or for a single window of time. This is one of the most useful things it does, especially for anyone being looked after at home. You decide exactly who gets in and when, and you can change it in seconds from your phone.

- Set a code to work always, for family who come and go.
- Set a schedule, like weekday mornings for a home-health aide.
- Set a temporary code for a one-time or short-term visitor.
- Remove any code the moment it is no longer needed.

GOOD TO KNOW

A scheduled code only works in its set hours. An aide's weekday-morning code simply will not open the door on a Sunday evening, which is both safer and tidier than a shared key.

Picture the common situation: a parent at home with help coming in. The weekday aide gets a code for mornings, a daughter in Kent gets a standing code, a cleaner gets Thursdays. Everyone has their own number, nothing is shared, and you can change any one of them from your phone, even from another town.

Temporary codes are perfect for a visiting relative, a contractor, or a dog walker over a holiday week. You set the code to expire on its own, so you never have to remember to take it away. For a fuller walk-through of codes for caregivers, I have a separate guide, and I am glad to set these up with you.

11. Alerts and activity

Knowing what happens at your door.

Because the Encode is always on your Wi-Fi, the app keeps a tidy log of everything the lock does and can nudge your phone when things happen. Every lock, unlock, and which code did it shows up in a running list. Notifications can tell you when the door opens, giving you a quiet awareness of your own front door.

- See a running list of every lock and unlock, with names and times.
- Turn on a phone notification when the door is unlocked.
- See which code a guest or aide used to get in.
- Get a nudge if someone tries a wrong code repeatedly, on supported settings.

TIP

If the notifications feel like too many, trim them to only the ones you care about. You are in full control of how chatty the lock is.

For a family keeping a caring eye on a parent, this is reassuring without being intrusive. A glance confirms that the aide came and went at the usual time, or that the door has stayed locked all afternoon. It is awareness, not surveillance, and only the people you invite can see it.

Schlage also builds in alarm sensing on many of its locks, which can alert you to activity like someone tampering with the door. Combined with the activity log and notifications, the Encode gives you a steady, gentle sense of security about the front door, without anyone having to sit and watch it.

12. Apple Home Key on the Encode Plus

Tap-to-open, explained.

If you have the Encode Plus and an iPhone, Apple Home Key becomes the way you open the door most often. You walk up, hold your phone near the lock, and it opens. The phone does not even need to be awake, which is what makes it feel so effortless once it is set up. The digital key lives in your Apple Wallet.

- 1 Start setup in the Schlage Home app, then use its Works With menu to add Apple Home.
- 2 Follow the guided steps to link the lock to your Apple Home app.
- 3 Let a digital home key be added to your Apple Wallet.
- 4 Hold your iPhone near the lock to open it, and add the key to family devices.

GOOD TO KNOW

Schlage recommends starting in the Schlage Home app and then adding Apple Home through its Works With menu, which gives the smoothest setup for the Plus.

To control the lock remotely through Apple Home you need an Apple home hub, such as a HomePod or an Apple TV left at home. Without it, the tap-to-open still works up close, but remote Apple Home control needs that hub. The Schlage app's own built-in Wi-Fi handles remote access regardless, so you are covered either way.

For family members who do not use an iPhone, nothing is lost. They use a keypad code or the Schlage app as normal, right alongside the Apple users tapping in. The lock happily serves a mixed household, so no one is left out because of which phone they carry. For an

Apple family, though, the tap becomes a daily delight.

13. Working with Alexa and Google

Voice control for the door.

The Encode works with Alexa and Google Assistant, so it can join whatever voice setup you already use. You can ask a nearby speaker to lock the door or tell you whether it is locked, without getting up. For an older user settled in a chair, that simple spoken check on the front door is a genuine, everyday comfort.

- Ask Alexa or Google to lock the door or check its status.
- The built-in Wi-Fi is what makes voice control possible, with no extra hub.
- Unlocking by voice requires a spoken PIN for safety.
- It can join routines, like locking up when you say good night.

GOOD TO KNOW

For safety, unlocking by voice almost always requires a spoken code, while locking and checking status do not. That way a passerby cannot simply shout your door open.

Setting this up is a matter of linking Schlage to your Alexa or Google account in their app, which the setup walks you through. Once linked, the door becomes one more thing you can ask about by voice, alongside your lights and thermostat. It folds naturally into a home you may already be running by speaking.

The spoken-code requirement for unlocking is sensible, and I would not switch it off. Checking whether the door is locked from your armchair, and locking it with a word as you settle in for the night, are the handy parts, and they come with no risk. Set it up thoughtfully and the voice side is pure convenience.

14. Auto-lock and built-in sensing

Letting it secure itself.

Auto-lock ends the little worry of whether you locked up. You can set the Encode to bolt itself a chosen time after it was unlocked, so you are never halfway to Ravenna wondering. The app shows the door's current state at a glance, and Schlage's built-in sensing adds a layer of awareness about activity at the door.

- Set the lock to bolt itself a chosen number of seconds or minutes after unlocking.

- See the door's locked or unlocked state in the app at a glance.
- Lock it from anywhere thanks to the built-in Wi-Fi.
- Schlage's built-in alarm sensing can flag tampering at the door.

WATCH OUT

Pick an auto-lock delay that fits your routine: long enough to bring in the groceries, short enough that the door never sits unlocked for long. A short delay suits most homes.

For a family watching over a parent from afar, auto-lock is a steady comfort. The door reliably secures itself after every coming and going, which removes a task the person at home no longer has to remember. No more phone calls asking whether the front door got locked before bed.

If auto-lock ever bolts at an awkward moment, you can lengthen the delay or turn it off and lock with the keypad button instead. The lock bends to your routine, not the other way around. Set it however lets you feel settled about your front door, and change it any time as your habits shift.

15. Keeping the firmware updated

Small updates that keep it sharp.

Like any connected device, the Encode gets occasional updates to its internal software, called firmware. These updates fix small bugs, improve reliability, and sometimes add features. Because the lock is on your Wi-Fi, it can receive them through the app, and keeping up with them keeps your lock running at its best.

- The app will let you know when a firmware update is available.
- Updates arrive over your Wi-Fi, so the lock must be online.
- They fix small issues and sometimes add new abilities.
- Keep the batteries healthy before updating, as it uses some power.

GOOD TO KNOW

Firmware updates are a normal, healthy part of owning a smart lock. They are how a lock stays reliable and secure over the years, so it is worth letting them run when the app offers them.

An update usually takes only a few minutes, and the app guides you through it. It is a good idea to have fresh-ish batteries before you start one, since the process uses a little power, and you would not want it to run low partway through. Otherwise there is nothing to it; you

tap to begin and let it finish.

If you ever see a feature in a guide or a review that your lock does not seem to have, an available firmware update is sometimes the reason, because features roll out over time. Keeping the lock updated means you get those improvements as they come. If an update ever seems stuck, that is a quick one for me to sort.

16. Batteries and the Ohio cold

Keeping it powered.

The Encode runs on batteries held in the inside half of the lock, commonly four AA cells in a tray. How long they last depends on how much you use the lock and how busy the Wi-Fi is, but you are generally looking at months. The app shows the battery level and warns you well before they run down.

- The lock runs on AA batteries in a tray in the inside half.
- The app shows the battery level and warns you as it gets low.
- Keep a fresh set in a kitchen drawer so a swap is quick.
- Cold Ohio weather can make a tired battery fade faster.

WATCH OUT

On a key-free model there is no keyhole, so do not ignore a low-battery warning. Change the batteries promptly, especially in winter, so you are never shut out by a flat lock. Keyed models have the key as a backup.

Because the batteries sit on the inside half, the warmth of the house helps them, unlike the fully exposed outdoor parts of some locks. Even so, cold weakens batteries, so when the app nudges you in January, change them rather than stretching them. Use good-quality alkaline cells for the longest, most reliable life.

Changing them is simple: the inside cover comes off, the tray slides out, and fresh cells go in the same way. The lock keeps all your codes and settings through the swap, so you lose nothing. If the lock ever does run completely flat, the next chapter explains the clever trick that still gets you in.

17. The 9-volt emergency jump

Getting in when the battery is dead.

Many Schlage keypad locks have a reassuring trick for the rare moment the batteries die completely: two small contacts, usually on the underside of the keypad, where you can hold a 9-volt battery to give the lock just enough power to work. It is a lifesaver if a key-free lock ever goes flat on you.

- 1 Find the two small metal contacts, typically under the outside keypad.
- 2 Hold the two terminals of a fresh 9-volt battery against them.
- 3 With the lock briefly powered, enter your code to wake it and unlock.
- 4 Open the door, then go inside and replace the main batteries.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check whether your exact model has these emergency contacts, as not every lock includes them. If yours does, keep a 9-volt battery handy at home so you always have the option.

This is mainly a comfort for key-free owners, who have no keyhole to fall back on. Knowing that a cheap 9-volt battery from a drawer can get you in means a dead lock is an inconvenience, not a crisis. It is the kind of thoughtful touch that makes these locks dependable in real life.

On keyed models, you have both options: the key and, if your model has them, the 9-volt contacts. Either way, the honest point stands: watch your battery level and change the cells when warned, and you will almost never need the emergency trick. But it is good to know it is there.

18. When the bolt sticks or jams

Strike plate and alignment fixes.

If the lock whirs but struggles to throw the bolt, or complains that it is jammed, the cause is nearly always the door, not the lock. A motorized deadbolt can only turn the bolt as freely as the bolt itself moves. So the fixes are the same ones any good handyman would reach for with a sticky deadbolt.

- With the door open, turn the bolt by hand; it should move freely.
- If it binds only when the door is shut, the strike plate needs aligning.
- Loosen the strike plate screws, nudge it so the bolt drops cleanly, and retighten.
- Make sure the lock halves are seated square and the batteries are fresh.

WATCH OUT

A door that has swollen or settled over the years can bind the bolt against the frame. If the bolt moves freely with the door open but fights when closed, the strike plate, not the lock, is the thing to adjust.

Start with the door open and feel the bolt by hand. If it glides, the lock has an easy job and any struggle points to the door being out of alignment when shut. Loosening the strike plate screws and shifting it so the bolt drops cleanly into its hole fixes a great many of these, and fresh batteries give the motor full strength.

If the door has sagged over a few Ohio winters, the fix may be tightening the hinge screws into the frame to lift the door back into place, or enlarging the strike hole slightly. These are small carpentry touches I am glad to handle on a visit, so the door closes and locks cleanly every time without a fight.

19. When a code or keypad misbehaves

Simple fixes for everyday snags.

If a code stops working or the keypad seems unresponsive, the cause is nearly always simple. Before you worry, run through the usual suspects. Most of the time it is a code that was changed, a touchscreen that needs a firmer touch, or batteries getting tired, all of which are quick to put right.

- Confirm the code in the app; it may have been changed or expired.
- On a touchscreen, press firmly to wake it before entering numbers.
- Try a different known-good code to see if it is one code or all of them.
- If all codes fail, suspect weak batteries and change them.

TIP

A scheduled code only works in its set hours. If a helper's code is not working, first check that you are trying it inside the window you set, not outside it.

If the whole keypad seems dead or sluggish, batteries are the first thing to check, because a weak set can leave just enough power for the lights but not a clean read. Fresh cells fix a surprising number of keypad complaints. After changing them, give the codes a test to confirm all is well.

If a single code refuses to work while others are fine, that code is the issue, not the lock. Delete it in the app and add it fresh, picking clear numbers. For anything that persists past

these simple steps, that is a quick one for me, often sortable on a remote screen-share without a visit.

20. When the Wi-Fi acts up

Getting the lock back online.

If the lock stops responding from away, the trouble is almost always the connection, not the lock itself. The Encode's built-in Wi-Fi is reliable, but a metal door far from the router can be a tricky spot for signal. These are the most common hiccups, and the fixes are usually quick and dull.

- Check that your home internet is working, since the lock rides on it.
- Confirm the lock shows online in the Schlage Home app.
- Re-enter the Wi-Fi password; a mistyped one is a common cause.
- Make sure you chose the 2.4 gigahertz network, not a 5G-labeled one.

TIP

A weak signal at the front door is the usual reason a lock keeps dropping offline. A mesh Wi-Fi point in the front hall often settles it for good.

A good test is this: if the lock still works fine from the keypad and up close with your phone, but not from away, the lock is healthy and the internet side is the culprit. Check your Wi-Fi, confirm the lock shows online, and improve coverage near the door if it keeps dropping. That narrows it down fast.

If it still will not stay connected after these steps, that is familiar territory for me after thirty years of this work. Often I can sort it on a remote screen-share, working in the app with you, or with a small Wi-Fi improvement near the door on a visit. A metal door and good Wi-Fi can always be made to get along.

21. Keeping it secure and private

A little care goes a long way.

A smart lock holds the keys to your home in a new sense, so it is worth a few sensible habits. None of this is complicated, and most of it is the same good practice you would use for any account that matters. Keep the account tight, the codes sensible, and the programming code private, and the lock stays firmly in your control.

- Use a strong password on your Schlage account and do not reuse it elsewhere.
- Pick codes that are not a street number, birthday, or other easy guess.
- Keep the master programming code private and change it from the default.
- Give each person their own code, and remove codes no longer needed.

TIP

Clear the keypad with a couple of surrounding keys before and after entering your code. It smudges the numbers evenly so no one can read which keys you press.

On privacy, the lock does log who comes and goes, which is useful for a family keeping a caring eye out, but be thoughtful about who can see it. Only people you invite have access, and you decide what each is allowed to do. Share that access deliberately, with the person at home comfortable with it.

Keep the app and the lock's firmware updated so it has the latest fixes. And if you ever give up the lock or move, remove it from your account and reset it so it is fully no longer yours. These small steps keep the convenience of a smart lock from ever becoming a worry.

22. Is a Schlage Encode right for you?

My honest take.

Let me give you my honest read on where the Encode shines and where another lock might suit you better. I would rather you have the right lock than be sold the wrong one. For people who want a strong, simple, keypad-first lock with built-in Wi-Fi and no extra boxes, the Encode is an easy recommendation.

- Great fit: you want a big, readable keypad and built-in Wi-Fi with no hub.
- Great fit: you value a sturdy, high-security lock from a trusted name.
- Consider other options: you rent and cannot replace the landlord's deadbolt.
- Consider other options: you want to keep your exact existing key and lock.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Encode's strengths are a bright, readable keypad, strong build, and built-in Wi-Fi with nothing extra to plug in. Where it is not the answer is usually a rental, where a keep-your-key retrofit lock fits better.

If you rent, or you are set on keeping your current deadbolt and key untouched, a retrofit lock that clips on the inside may suit you better, and I will tell you so plainly. The Encode replaces the deadbolt, which is wonderful for a home you own but not for one where you

cannot change the hardware.

For a homeowner who wants a dependable, keypad-first front door with the simplicity of built-in Wi-Fi, the Encode is hard to beat, and the big lit keypad is a real kindness to older eyes. For an Apple family, the Encode Plus adds tap-to-open on top. I am glad to recommend it, and glad to install and set yours up.

23. When to Call Bill

Installed, explained, and running smoothly.

You can install a Schlage Encode yourself, and the app makes the setup about as friendly as these things get. Where I help is getting it right the first time: the old lock out cleanly, the bolt and strike plate aligned so the door never sticks, the Wi-Fi solid on a metal door, the codes and schedules set up, and the whole thing explained in plain words. I have been doing hands-on tech work for more than thirty years.

- Want it installed and aligned so the door closes and locks cleanly: I handle it.
- Bolt sticks or jams when the door is shut: a quick strike-plate fix.
- Lock will not stay online, or a code will not work: often a quick remote fix.
- Want Apple Home Key set up on the Plus: I will walk your whole family through it.

GOOD TO KNOW

My first visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars. A remote screen-share to set up or fix a lock is forty-nine dollars. My Support Plan is thirty-nine dollars a month, and it includes keeping your lock online and your codes working all year.

I serve Atwater, Ravenna, Kent, Streetsboro, Aurora, Hudson, Stow, Mogadore, Tallmadge, and the rest of Portage County. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or email bill@billshometech.com. If I am on a job, my booking assistant Sophie can get you scheduled.

If I have helped make your front door easier and safer, a quick review means the world to a local one-man shop. You can leave one at g.page/r/CSFv0jbCfFINEAE/review. Thank you, and take care.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

The quick reference for your Schlage Encode. Keep it handy.

- It replaces your deadbolt with a big, lit keypad and built-in Wi-Fi.
 - Everything is run from the free Schlage Home app; no extra hub needed.
 - Add codes on the keypad with the programming code, or in the app.
 - Give each person their own code; set schedules for helpers.
 - If a key-free lock dies, a 9-volt battery held to the contacts gets you in.
- 1 Install the app and make an account.
 - 2 Fit the lock, align the strike plate, and test the bolt.
 - 3 Join your 2.4 gigahertz Wi-Fi through the app.
 - 4 Program a code for each person, with schedules for helpers.
 - 5 Turn on auto-lock and set up Apple Home Key on the Plus.

TIP

If the lock works at the door but not from away, the Wi-Fi is the issue, not the lock. Check your internet and the lock's online status in the app.

WORDS TO KNOW

Plain-English Word List

Schlage Encode — Schlage's replacement deadbolt with a lit keypad and Wi-Fi built in, run from the Schlage Home app.

Encode Plus — The version that adds Apple Home Key for tap-to-open on iPhone and Apple Watch.

Built-in Wi-Fi — The lock's own internet connection, so no separate hub or bridge is needed.

Schlage Home app — The free phone app that runs setup, codes, schedules, alerts, and every setting.

Programming code — The master code, printed in the box, that lets you change the lock from the keypad itself.

Access code — A numeric code a person enters on the keypad to get in; each person can have their own.

Access schedule — Hours you set for a code, so it only works at certain times, like weekday mornings.

Auto-lock — The setting that bolts the door for you a chosen time after it was unlocked.

Strike plate — The metal piece on the door frame the bolt drops into; alignment keeps the lock from jamming.

9-volt jump — Holding a 9-volt battery to the lock's contacts to power it enough to open when the batteries die.

Firmware — The lock's internal software, updated over Wi-Fi to fix bugs and add features.

Apple Home Key — A feature on the Plus that lets an iPhone or Apple Watch tap the lock to open it.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

Setting up an Encode

From box to a smart door

**Built-in Wi-Fi means no extra hub to buy or plug in.**

Illustration — a schematic; details vary by device and setup.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Encode or Encode Plus

The main difference is Apple

Both models	Plus adds
• Big, lit keypad • Built-in Wi-Fi, no hub • Schlage Home app and codes • Alexa and Google voice	• Apple Home Key tap-to-open • Works with Apple Home • Digital key in Apple Wallet • Great for iPhone homes

Choose the Plus if your household runs on iPhones.

Illustration — a schematic; details vary by device and setup.

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

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

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.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: **billshometech.com/book** · **bill@billshometech.com**

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.