BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

AN EXTENDED GUIDE · NO. 2238

Updated November 2026

Secret Keyboard Tricks That Save Typing

The quiet shortcuts that turn slow, two-finger typing into a few quick taps

Plain-English tech help from:
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Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Your phone hides several shortcuts that cut down on typing. The biggest is dictation — tap the microphone on the keyboard and simply talk. Teach it Text Replacement codes so a few letters expand into your full email or address.

Press and hold the space bar to slide the cursor exactly where you want it, and double-tap the space bar to drop in a period. If autocorrect changes a word you meant, tap your original word above the keyboard to keep it. Let the phone fill in texted codes and saved passwords instead of retyping them.

1 The Short Version

This guide is a tour of small keyboard tricks that are already built into your phone. Each one saves a little time or a little frustration — a shortcut that types your whole email address, a way to talk instead of type, a gentle undo when autocorrect gets it wrong. You do not need to learn them all; pick the one or two that sound useful and ignore the rest.

- Everything here is free and already on your phone — nothing to buy or download.
- Each trick is just a few taps, and none of them can harm your phone or lose anything.
- The biggest time-savers are dictation (talking instead of typing) and text shortcuts.
- Try one, use it for a day, then come back for the next. There is no rush.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If you take just one thing from this guide, let it be dictation — tap the little microphone on the keyboard and simply talk. For most people it is three times faster than typing, and it has gotten remarkably good at getting the words right.

2 A Quick Word About Versions

Phones and tablets update their software every year, so a menu is occasionally renamed or moved a little. Everything in this guide works on recent iPhones, iPads, and Android phones, but if a setting is not exactly where it is described, do not worry — the words are almost always the same, just in a slightly different place.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The fastest way to find ANY setting is the search box at the top of the Settings app. Open Settings, swipe down a little to reveal the search bar, and type what you are looking for — "text size," "back tap," "do not disturb." This works no matter which version you are on, so it is the one trick that never goes out of date.

3 Talk Instead of Type (Dictation)

Your phone can turn your voice into typed words in almost any box where you would normally type — a text message, an email, a search, a note. It listens as you speak and writes it down, and on recent phones it even adds the punctuation for you.

1. Tap where you want to type so the keyboard appears.
2. Look for the small microphone icon — on an iPhone it sits near the space bar; on Android it is usually a microphone at the top or corner of the keyboard.
3. Tap it once and simply talk, in a normal voice, as if to a friend.
4. Say "period," "comma," or "question mark" out loud if it does not add them for you, then tap the keyboard icon to stop.

> **WATCH OUT**
> You can speak a little, read what it wrote, then tap the microphone again to add more. You do not have to say the whole message in one breath.

4 Teach It Shortcuts for Things You Type Often

This is the hidden gem almost nobody knows about. You can teach your phone that a short little code expands into a whole phrase — so typing "@@" could fill in your full email address, or "addr" could type your home address. It is called Text Replacement, and it saves the same keystrokes over and over.

1. On iPhone: open Settings, tap General, then Keyboard, then Text Replacement, and tap the plus (+).
2. In "Phrase" put the full thing you want (your email, address, or a greeting); in "Shortcut" put a short code you will remember.
3. On most Android phones: open Settings, search for "dictionary" or "personal dictionary," and add a word with a shortcut the same way.
4. Now, in any typing box, type your short code and the full phrase appears, ready to accept.

GOOD TO KNOW

Good shortcuts to set up first: your email address, your home address, your phone number, and maybe a friendly sign-off like "Talk soon, —". These are the phrases you retype most, so they save the most.

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.

5 Slide Your Finger Instead of Tapping

Instead of tapping one letter at a time, you can glide your finger from letter to letter without lifting it, and the phone figures out the word. It feels strange for about a day and then becomes second nature, especially for one-handed typing.

1. Make sure the feature is on — iPhone calls it "Slide to Type," Android (Gboard) calls it "Glide typing," both in the keyboard settings.
2. Put your finger on the first letter of a word and, without lifting, slide across the other letters in order.
3. Lift your finger at the last letter; the word appears. Then glide the next word.
4. If a word comes out wrong, just tap it and pick the right one from the suggestions above the keyboard.

> **TIP**
> Glide typing shines when you are holding the phone in one hand. Your thumb can swoop across the keys far faster than it can hunt and peck.

6 The Quick Ways to Add a Period and a Capital

A couple of tiny habits save a surprising amount of fiddling. Your phone already handles most capitals and periods for you if you let it.

- Double-tap the space bar at the end of a sentence to drop in a period and a space automatically.
- The first letter after a period is capitalized for you — you do not need the shift key.
- To type ONE capital letter, tap shift once then the letter; to type several, double-tap shift to lock it (the arrow turns solid).
- Press and hold a letter to reveal its accented cousins (hold "e" for é, hold "n" for ñ).

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Press and hold the period key, or the comma, to peek at other punctuation and symbols without switching to the numbers-and-symbols keyboard. The same trick on the "0" key often gives you a degree sign.

7 Fix a Typo Without Starting Over

When the cursor lands in the wrong spot and you are stabbing at the screen trying to place it between two letters, there is a far gentler way to move it exactly where you want.

1. Press and hold the space bar for a moment — the keyboard turns into a smooth trackpad.
2. Without lifting, slide your finger to drag the cursor precisely where you need it.
3. Lift your finger, then make your correction.
4. To select a word to replace it, double-tap the word; to select a sentence, tap it four times.

> **TIP**
> On an iPhone you can also just shake the phone gently to bring up "Undo Typing," which takes back the last thing you typed. Shake again for "Redo."

8 Make Autocorrect Behave

Autocorrect is trying to help, but it can be maddening when it keeps changing a name or a word you meant to type. You are not stuck with its guesses.

- When it changes a word you wanted, tap the little "x" on its suggestion, or tap your original word in the bar above the keyboard to keep it.
- If it keeps "correcting" a name or word, add that word to Text Replacement with no shortcut, and it will stop fighting you.
- You can turn autocorrect off entirely in the keyboard settings if it causes more trouble than it is worth.
- Swear words and odd spellings you use on purpose can be taught the same way — once the phone sees you choose them a few times, it learns.

WATCH OUT

Before you blame yourself for a garbled message, remember that autocorrect changed it, not you. A quick read-back before you hit send catches almost every one of its mischiefs.

9 Type the Emoji and Symbols You Want

Those little pictures and symbols are easier to reach than people think, and the newest keyboards can even find them by meaning.

1. Tap the smiley-face or globe icon at the bottom of the keyboard to switch to emoji.
2. Use the search box at the top of the emoji keyboard and type a word like "heart" or "coffee" to find one fast.
3. On many phones, if you type a word like "happy" on the normal keyboard, a matching emoji is suggested in the bar above.
4. Tap the "123" key for numbers and symbols, and "#+=" inside that for more.

GOOD TO KNOW

You do not have to scroll through hundreds of emoji. The search box is the quick way — type what you mean in plain words and it appears.

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.

10 Let the Phone Fill In Codes and Passwords

When a text message arrives with a verification code, or a website asks for a saved password, your phone can fill it in for you so you never have to squint and retype a string of characters.

- When a one-time code is texted to you, tap the suggestion that appears just above the keyboard — the phone read the code and offers to type it.
- For saved passwords, tap the key or password suggestion above the keyboard and confirm with your face or fingerprint.
- Addresses and card details you have saved can fill in the same way on checkout pages.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Only let the phone fill in a password on the real app or website, not from a link in an email or text. If anything looks off about the page, stop — that caution is worth more than the few seconds it saves.

11 Switch the Keyboard to One Hand

If your thumb cannot quite reach the far side of the keyboard, you can shove the whole keyboard to the left or right so it sits under your thumb.

1. Press and hold the emoji or globe icon at the bottom of the keyboard.
2. On iPhone, choose the left or right keyboard layout from the little pop-up.
3. On Android (Gboard), open the keyboard settings and turn on "One-handed mode," then pick a side.
4. To return to the full-width keyboard, tap the arrow on the empty edge.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Pair this with glide typing and a bigger text size, and a phone becomes genuinely comfortable to use with one hand — handy when the other hand is holding a cup of coffee.

12 Make the Keys Themselves Bigger and Clearer

If the keys feel cramped, a couple of settings make them easier to see and hit, which cuts down on typos at the source.

- Turn the phone sideways (landscape) in many apps and the keyboard widens, giving you larger keys.
- Turn on bigger system text (Settings, then Display, then Text Size) and the keyboard letters grow with it.
- On Android, Gboard's settings let you increase the keyboard height directly.
- Turn on key "popup" previews so each letter flashes bigger as you press it, confirming what you typed.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> A little haptic "tick" or a soft click as you type can help you feel when a key registered. Both are on/off options in the keyboard settings — use whichever helps you type with confidence.

13 Copy on One Device, Paste on Another

If you have more than one Apple device, or use Chrome on a computer and your phone, something you copy on one can be pasted on the other within moments. It saves retyping a long link or address between your devices.

- Apple: copy on your iPhone, and within a few seconds you can paste on your iPad or Mac (same Apple account, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi on).
- Google: Gboard's clipboard remembers recent things you copied — tap the clipboard icon on the keyboard to see them.
- Press and hold in any text box to reveal Paste, Select, and Select All.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The clipboard on Gboard can "pin" an item so it sticks around — handy for a confirmation number or address you will paste a few times today.

14 When to Call Bill

None of this is a test, and there is no prize for struggling through it alone. Most of these tricks take a minute once you know where to look, and this guide gets you there. But if a setting has moved on your version of the phone, or you would simply rather have someone set it up beside you and show you once, that is exactly the kind of visit I make.

I come to you here in Portage County, sit down beside you, and set these up on your own phone or tablet so they work the way you like. I show you each step slowly, write down the few that matter, and make sure you can do it yourself afterward. No rush, no jargon, and no question is too small.

- You set up a text shortcut and it is not appearing when you type the code.
- Dictation is not understanding you, or the microphone button has gone missing.
- Autocorrect keeps changing a name and you cannot make it stop.
- You want the keys larger and the whole keyboard set up for comfortable one-handed use.
- You would simply rather have it set up correctly the first time, with someone showing you how. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by your chair. Try one trick at a time — there is no rush.

I want to...	Do this...
Type by talking	Tap the microphone on the keyboard and speak normally
Stop retyping my address/email	Settings General/Keyboard Text Replacement add a short code
Move the cursor exactly	Press and hold the space bar, then slide your finger
Undo a bad autocorrect	Tap your original word above the keyboard, or shake to Undo (iPhone)
Add a period fast	Double-tap the space bar at the end of a sentence
Find an emoji	Tap the smiley/globe icon, then use the search box
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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