BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

AN EXTENDED GUIDE · NO. 2296

Updated November 2026

Set Up Hearing-Aid Mode & Audio Balance

Boost speech, balance the sound between your ears, and make voices clear again

Plain-English tech help from:
Bill's Home Tech
Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech
(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit · billshometech.com/book

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

First, Rule Out the Simple Things 4

Balance the Sound Between Your Ears: iPhone 4

Balance the Sound: Android, Windows, and Mac 5

Mono Audio: Never Miss Half the Sound 6

Tune Headphones to Your Hearing: iPhone 6

Make Phone Calls Louder and Clearer: iPhone 7

Boost and Clarify Calls: Android 7

Turn On Full Hearing-Aid Mode (AirPods Pro) 8

Connect Real Hearing Aids to Your Phone 9

Background Sounds for Comfort 9

Hear the Television More Clearly 10

Live With It, Then Fine-Tune 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

Phones and earbuds assume both ears hear equally; a few settings fix that. The biggest one is the left-right balance slider (Settings, Accessibility, Audio/Visual) — nudge it toward your weaker ear. Turn on Mono Audio so nothing is lost to a bad ear, and turn on call-clarity and noise-cancellation for clearer phone calls.

If you own AirPods Pro, their hearing-aid mode (set up with a hearing check in the Health app) is the strongest help of all, and real hearing aids can pair to the phone under Hearing Devices. First rule out earwax and a loose ear tip, and see a doctor about any new or one-sided hearing change.

1 The Short Version

Hearing is rarely equal between the two ears, and the way phones and earbuds are set up out of the box assumes it is. A handful of settings let you tilt the balance toward your weaker ear, raise speech above the background, and make everything a little brighter and clearer. On recent AirPods Pro there is also a full hearing-aid mode you can turn on.

None of this requires an audiologist to begin — though if your hearing has changed, it is well worth seeing one. These settings are for making the devices you already own kinder to the ears you have, and every one of them can be turned back the way it was.

- You can shift the sound balance toward a weaker ear in a single setting.
- A “mono audio” option sends both channels to both ears so you never miss half the sound.
- Phone-call audio can be boosted and tuned to be warmer and clearer.
- Recent AirPods Pro offer a true hearing-aid mode set to your own hearing test.

> **TIP**
> If you only do one thing, adjust the left-right balance so both ears get what they need. It is a single slider, it is instant, and for anyone with one weaker ear it is the biggest single improvement there is.

2 First, Rule Out the Simple Things

Before adjusting any settings, make sure the problem is not something physical and quick to fix, because those are common and easily mistaken for a device fault. A few seconds of checking can save a lot of fiddling.

- Earwax in an earbud's mesh tip dramatically cuts the volume — clean the tips gently.
- A loose or wrong-size ear tip lets sound leak out; a proper seal can double the apparent volume.
- A protective case flap can cover the phone's earpiece — check nothing is blocking it.
- Turn the phone's main volume up, and make sure it is not in a quiet or “do not disturb” mode.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Genuinely new or one-sided hearing loss, ringing, or muffling in one ear deserves a doctor's visit, not just a setting change. These controls are for comfort and balance, not for diagnosing a change in your hearing — if something feels different, get it checked.

3 Balance the Sound Between Your Ears: iPhone

The audio balance control shifts how much sound goes to the left versus the right. If your right ear is weaker, you nudge the slider toward the right so that ear gets more. It is one of the most useful and least-known settings on the whole phone.

1. Open Settings, tap Accessibility.
2. Scroll to the Hearing section and tap Audio/Visual.
3. Find the Balance slider (marked L on the left and R on the right).
4. Slide it gently toward your weaker ear until both sound even, with headphones or earbuds in to judge it.

> **TIP**
> Judge the balance while wearing your usual earbuds and playing something with voices, not music. Set it so a talking voice sounds centered in your head — that is the point where both ears are getting their fair share.

4 Balance the Sound: Android, Windows, and Mac

Every major device has the same balance control, just in a slightly different place. It is worth setting on whichever devices you use with headphones.

- Android: Settings, Accessibility, then an Audio or Hearing section with a left-right balance slider.
- Windows: Settings, System, Sound, open your device's properties to find a left-right balance.
- Mac: System Settings, Accessibility, Audio, then the balance slider.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The balance setting belongs to the device, not to a particular pair of headphones, so once you set it, it applies to whatever you plug in or connect. Set it once and it follows you from earbuds to headphones to the car.

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 Mono Audio: Never Miss Half the Sound

Stereo sound splits things between the two ears — some instruments or voices come only out of the left, others only the right. If one ear hears poorly, you simply miss whatever was sent to that side. Mono audio sends everything to both ears, so nothing is lost to the weaker one.

1. iPhone/iPad: Settings, Accessibility, Audio/Visual, turn on Mono Audio.
2. Android: Settings, Accessibility, then turn on Mono audio.
3. Windows: Settings, Accessibility, Audio, turn on Mono audio.
4. Mac: System Settings, Accessibility, Audio, turn on Play stereo audio as mono.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Mono audio pairs beautifully with the balance slider: everything plays in both ears, and the balance then makes sure your stronger ear is not drowning out the weaker one. Together they are the classic fix for one weak ear.

6 Tune Headphones to Your Hearing: iPhone

iPhones have a feature that can gently amplify soft sounds and sharpen certain frequencies through your headphones or AirPods, tuned to a quick questionnaire or an imported hearing test. It brings forward the quiet detail in voices and music.

1. Open Settings, tap Accessibility, then Audio/Visual, then Headphone Accommodations.
2. Turn it on and run the setup, choosing options like Balanced Tone or Vocal Range as you prefer.
3. If you have a hearing test (audiogram) from a clinic, you can have it applied here too.
4. Try a few settings while listening and keep the one that sounds clearest to you.

GOOD TO KNOW

This feature works with Apple and Beats headphones and AirPods. It is a gentler, everyday boost than the full hearing-aid mode, and a good option if you have headphones that are not AirPods Pro.

7 Make Phone Calls Louder and Clearer: iPhone

Call audio is its own thing, and iPhones have a couple of settings that warm up and clarify the sound of a call — helpful when voices sound thin or tinny through the little earpiece.

1. Open Settings, tap Accessibility, then Audio/Visual.
2. Make sure Phone Noise Cancellation is on to cut background hiss on calls.
3. On a call, raise the volume with the side buttons while the other person is talking.
4. Try the speakerphone in a quiet room; it is often louder and clearer than holding the phone to one ear.

TIP

On a call, press the volume-up button several times while the other person speaks. The phone remembers call volume separately from the ringtone and media volume, so turning it up here does not make your ringer blaring.

8 Boost and Clarify Calls: Android

Android phones offer similar help, and many add a feature that sharpens speech on calls or tunes the whole phone's sound to your hearing.

- In Settings, Accessibility, look for Hearing enhancements or Sound quality and effects.
- Turn on any “clear voice,” “voice clarity,” or “adapt sound” feature — these emphasize speech.
- Raise the in-call volume with the volume buttons while on an active call.

- On Samsung phones, run the “Adapt Sound” test to tune the sound to your ears.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Samsung's “Adapt Sound” plays tones and asks what you can hear, then tunes the phone's sound to match — a little hearing test built right into the phone. It is well worth running if you have a Samsung and takes only a couple of minutes.

9 Turn On Full Hearing-Aid Mode (AirPods Pro)

If you own AirPods Pro (second generation or newer), they can act as a genuine hearing aid for mild to moderate loss, tuned to a personal hearing test. This is the most powerful option here, and it is cleared by the United States Food and Drug Administration for that use.

1. Make sure your iPhone and AirPods are fully updated.
2. Open the Health app, search for Hearing, and take the five-minute hearing check in a quiet room.
3. Open Settings, tap your AirPods' name, and turn on the Hearing Assistance (hearing-aid) feature, using your saved results.
4. Wear them in daily life; they boost exactly the sounds your test showed you miss.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> There is a whole companion guide, “Turn Your AirPods Into Hearing Helpers,” devoted to this. If you have AirPods Pro, it is the single best thing in this whole category — ask me to set it up with you on a visit.

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 Connect Real Hearing Aids to Your Phone

If you wear actual hearing aids, many modern ones connect to your phone directly, so calls, music, and directions play straight into them, and you can adjust them from the phone. This is often called a “Made for iPhone” or Bluetooth hearing aid.

- iPhone: Settings, Accessibility, Hearing Devices — to pair and control compatible hearing aids.
- Android: Settings, Accessibility, Hearing devices — for Bluetooth hearing aids.
- Once paired, calls and media can play through the aids, and you can tweak the levels from the phone.
- Some hearing-aid brands also have their own app with extra controls.

WATCH OUT

Pairing medical hearing aids to a phone can be fiddly and varies by brand, and getting it wrong can leave you without sound for a while. This is a good one to do together — I will pair them and show you the controls so you are confident changing them yourself.

11 Background Sounds for Comfort

If quiet is actually the problem — a ringing in the ears, or trouble concentrating — iPhones can play gentle, steady background sounds like rain or a soft hum that many people find soothing and that can mask the ringing of tinnitus.

1. Open Settings, tap Accessibility, then Audio/Visual, then Background Sounds.
2. Turn it on and choose a sound — rain, ocean, stream, or a soft noise.
3. Set the volume, and choose whether it keeps playing when other audio plays.
4. Add it to Control Center so you can start it with one tap when you need calm.

GOOD TO KNOW

This is not a medical treatment, but many people with mild tinnitus find a soft background sound genuinely restful, especially at bedtime. It costs nothing to try and is easy to turn off if it is not for you.

12 Hear the Television More Clearly

The TV deserves its own attention, since it is where so much of the frustration lives. A few changes make dialogue far clearer without blasting the room.

- Turn on the TV's “clear voice,” “dialogue,” or “speech enhancement” sound mode if it has one.
- A small soundbar in front of the TV makes voices dramatically clearer than the TV's built-in speakers.
- Turn on subtitles as well — reading and hearing together is easier than either alone.
- Connect AirPods or a Bluetooth hearing aid to watch at your own volume while the room stays quiet.

TIP

If dialogue is the problem, a simple soundbar is often the best value upgrade in the house. Modern flat TVs have tiny, tinny speakers, and a soundbar's forward-facing speaker makes speech sound like speech again.

13 Live With It, Then Fine-Tune

Hearing comfort is personal, and it takes a few days of normal life to know whether the settings are right. Resist the urge to keep changing them hour by hour — give your ears a chance to adjust.

- Give any change a day or two before deciding — your ears and brain adjust to a new sound.
- If voices sound too sharp or hissy, ease the speech-boosting settings back a notch.

- If one ear still feels left out, nudge the balance slider a little further that way.
- Write down your settings, or let me note them, so an update cannot quietly undo your work.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> The goal is not maximum volume; it is clear, comfortable speech. Too much boost makes everything harsh and tiring. The right setting is the one you forget is even on — when you simply hear people and stop thinking about it.

14 When to Call Bill

Audio balance, mono audio, call clarity, and especially the AirPods hearing-aid mode are each simple on their own, but setting them all together to suit your particular hearing is where a visit pays off — I set them while you listen, and we tune them to what actually sounds right to you, not to a guess.

I will rule out earwax and bad ear tips first, set the left-right balance to your ears, turn on mono audio and call clarity, run the AirPods hearing check with you if you have them, and pair any real hearing aids to your phone. You will leave hearing your calls and shows clearly, with settings tuned to you and noted down.

- You want the balance, mono, and call-clarity settings tuned to your hearing in person.
- You have AirPods Pro and want the hearing-aid mode set up with the hearing check.
- You have real hearing aids to pair and control from your phone.
- Your hearing has changed and you would like help deciding whether to see a professional.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Start with the left-right balance — it is the biggest single fix for one weak ear.

I want to…	Do this…
Favor my weaker ear	Settings Accessibility Audio/Visual slide Balance toward that ear
Hear everything in both ears	Turn on Mono Audio in Accessibility Audio
Clearer phone calls (iPhone)	Accessibility Audio/Visual Phone Noise Cancellation on; raise call volume
Clearer calls (Android)	Accessibility Hearing enhancements / Adapt Sound voice clarity on
Hearing-aid mode (AirPods Pro)	Health app hearing check, then Settings AirPods Hearing Assistance
Connect real hearing aids	Accessibility Hearing Devices pair and control from the phone
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

Call or text (330) 200-8042 · 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.