



An Extended Guide · No. 1962

Sit-Stand Desks & Monitor Arms

What to buy, how to set up
— safely and comfortably

Tech Made Simple — Service Made Personal

BillsHomeTech.com · (330) 200-8042 · Atwater, Ohio

Free & printable — share it with someone who needs it



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

★ Read this first — you really can't break anything

Before we start, a promise: you cannot break anything just by reading, looking, or trying a setting. Screens, keyboards, and cables are made to be plugged and unplugged, and almost anything you change can be changed right back. Go at your own pace, skip to the page you need, and if you ever feel stuck, that is exactly what I am here for — there is no such thing as a silly question. A sit-stand desk and a monitor arm are really just ways to bring the screen to you, instead of folding yourself around the screen. That's the whole idea.

Let's raise the screen to meet you

A desk that rises and lowers, and an arm that floats your monitor wherever you want it, can turn a cramped, achy corner into a comfortable place to work. This guide helps you choose both and set them up safely.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the gear in their homes, patiently and in plain language. Think of this as me sitting at your kitchen table, helping you choose one thing at a time.

There's a little more to these than a plain desk and stand, mostly around weight and how they clamp on. Get those right and the rest is easy. We'll go slowly, and I'll flag the few places where safety really matters.

★ No rush, and nothing to sell you

I don't sell desks or arms and earn no commission, so this is just honest advice. If you'd like a second opinion before you spend a dollar, call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll talk it through — free.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you're already most of the way to a comfortable, safe setup.

- ❑ Check the weight rating first. The arm and the desk each have a limit printed on the label — your screen must weigh less than that.
- ❑ Measure your desk depth. You want to sit back far enough to take in the whole screen; a shallow desk fights you.
- ❑ Know how an arm attaches: a C-clamp grips the back edge, or a grommet mount drops through a hole in the desk. Your desk must suit one of them.
- ❑ A sit-stand desk should save your favorite sit height and stand height so one button brings each back.
- ❑ Mind the pinch points and tip-over risk when a desk moves. Keep hands, cords, and clutter clear of the path.
- ❑ Nothing here is permanent, but the weight limit is not a suggestion — respect it and everything stays safe.

✓ One idea to hold onto

The label is your friend. Every real number that matters here — weight limits, desk thickness a clamp fits — is printed by the maker. Read it, and you can't go far wrong.

A desk that moves, an arm that floats

These are two separate things that often work together. Let's be clear on what each one does before we choose.

A sit-stand desk (sometimes called a standing desk) raises and lowers the whole work surface, so you can sit for a while and then stand for a while without stopping what you're doing. Some rise with a hand crank; most nowadays rise with a quiet motor at the touch of a button.

A monitor arm is a jointed bracket that holds your screen out in the air, off its own stand, so you can swing it, raise it, lower it, and tilt it with a light touch. It frees up the desk underneath and lets you place the screen exactly where your eyes want it.

You can have either one on its own, or both together. A monitor arm is especially handy on a sit-stand desk, because it lets you fine-tune the screen height after the desk has gone up or down.

✓ Start with the problem, not the product

If your trouble is sitting too long, a sit-stand desk helps. If your trouble is a screen that sits too low or hogs the desk, a monitor arm helps. Many folks want a bit of both.

The most important number: weight

Before anything else, this is the one thing you must check. It's simple, and it keeps your screen — and you — safe.

Both a monitor arm and a sit-stand desk are rated to carry only so much weight. The arm has a range it can hold steadily; the desk has a total it can lift. Those numbers are printed on the label, the box, or the maker's spec page. Your job is simply to make sure your screen (and anything else you pile on) stays under the limit.

Your monitor's weight is on its own label or spec page too. If a screen is heavier than the arm is rated for, the arm won't hold it up — it'll slowly droop or sag, no matter how tight you crank it. That's not a defect; it's simply the wrong arm for that screen.

! Do not guess the weight — read it

An arm or desk loaded past its rating can sag, slip, or let a screen fall, and that can hurt someone or break the screen. Never eyeball it. Find your monitor's weight and the arm's and desk's limits on the labels, and leave yourself a comfortable margin. If the numbers are close, step up to a sturdier model.

I give exact weight figures a wide berth in this guide on purpose — they vary by model, and the only numbers you should trust are the ones printed on your actual screen and your actual arm or desk.

Choosing a sit-stand desk

Desks range from a simple riser that sits on top of your current desk to a full motorized desk. Here's how to think it through.

- **A desktop riser** sits on your existing desk and lifts just the screen and keyboard. Cheapest and no assembly of a whole desk, but it takes up surface and the motion can feel a bit tippy.
- **A hand-crank desk** raises with a crank handle. No motor to fail, but cranking up and down every time gets old, especially on tired arms.
- **A motorized desk** rises at the push of a button and can remember your heights. The easiest to live with, and what most folks end up happiest with.
- **A sturdy frame** matters more than a fancy top. A wobbly desk at standing height is unpleasant and feels unsafe; a solid one feels calm.

✓ Height range is personal

A desk only helps if it goes low enough for you to sit well and high enough for you to stand well. Check the lowest and highest heights on the label against your own comfortable sit and stand heights before you buy.

Desk depth and sitting distance

Depth is the measurement from the front edge back to the wall side. It quietly decides whether your screen can sit at a comfortable distance.

A screen is most restful when you can sit back about an arm's length from it and take it all in with a relaxed gaze. On a shallow desk, the screen ends up too close, and a big screen becomes a chore to look at. A deeper desk gives you room to breathe.

This is one reason a monitor arm pairs so well with a sit-stand desk: an arm can push the screen back toward the wall and reclaim the inches you need, even on a desk that isn't very deep. We'll come to arms shortly.

For how far back to sit and how high the screen should be for your eyes and your glasses, lean on our guide to screen height, distance, and glare — it covers the comfort side in depth so this one can stay on the gear.

✓ Measure before you shop

Jot down how deep your desk is, or how deep a spot you have for a new one. Two minutes with a tape measure saves a lot of guessing in the store.

What a monitor arm does for you

An arm is more than a tidy look. For older necks, shoulders, and eyes, it can be the difference between aching and comfortable.

- **Height:** lifts the screen so the top sits near eye level, so your neck stays relaxed instead of craning down.
- **Distance:** pushes the screen back to a comfortable arm's length, reclaiming desk depth.
- **Tilt and swivel:** angles the screen to your eyes and swings it aside when you need the desk for something else.
- **A clear desk:** the screen's own foot is gone, so you get the whole surface back underneath.

If your current monitor only tilts on a fixed stand and sits too low, an arm is often the simplest, kindest fix — no new screen needed. This pairs nicely with the advice in our guide on choosing a monitor for aging eyes, which explains why screen height matters so much.

✓ An arm is a comfort tool, not a gadget

The real payoff isn't the sleek look — it's getting the screen to meet your eyes so you stop leaning and craning. That's worth more than it costs.

Making sure the arm fits your screen

Two things decide whether an arm will hold your particular screen: its weight (which we covered) and how the screen mounts.

Most monitors have four small threaded holes in a square pattern on the back, a standard called VESA. A monitor arm bolts to those holes. Before buying an arm, check that your screen has this VESA pattern on the back — most do, but some slim or unusual ones don't, and a few need a small bracket the maker sells.

The arm's label will also list a screen-size range it suits and, again, a weight range. A screen that's within both the size range and the weight range will sit steady. One that's too big or too heavy will sag or wobble even if it physically bolts on.

✓ A quick check before you buy an arm

Look at the back of your screen for four holes in a square, note your screen's weight from its label, and note its size. With those three facts you can match an arm with confidence — or text them to me and I'll check.

C-clamp or grommet? How an arm grips your desk

An arm has to anchor to something solid. There are two common ways, and your desk decides which one suits.

A **C-clamp** is the usual choice. It's shaped like the letter C and squeezes onto the back edge of your desk — one jaw on top, one underneath — and tightens with a screw. No holes, nothing permanent, and you can move it later. It needs a bit of clear, flat, sturdy edge to grip, and the desktop has to fall within a thickness range the clamp is built for.

A **grommet mount** drops a bolt down through a hole in the desktop and tightens from underneath. Many desks come with a round cutout (a grommet hole) for cables; a grommet mount uses that, or you drill a hole. It's rock-solid and great when the back edge is blocked, but it does mean a hole in the desk.

✓ Most people use the C-clamp

If your desk has a clear, sturdy back edge of the right thickness, the C-clamp is the easy, no-holes choice. Save the grommet mount for when the edge won't work or you want the sturdiest possible anchor.

Two ways people come to this

A sit-stand desk or a monitor arm gets set up two ways: by the person who'll use it, and by an adult child or helper putting it together for a parent. The gear is the same; the worries are different.

If you're setting this up for yourself

You know what aches and what feels good — trust that. Your job is to pick a desk and arm rated for your screen, set your heights, and not overload anything.

- Check the weight limits against your screen's weight before you buy.
- Measure your desk depth and edge so the arm's clamp will fit.
- Set and save a sit height and a stand height that feel right to you.
- Keep the moving path clear so nothing gets pinched or knocked.

If you're setting it up for a parent or loved one

You're assembling it and want it safe and foolproof for Mom or Dad, maybe on a quick visit. Aim for 'sturdy and simple' over 'lots of buttons.'

- Confirm the screen is well under the arm's and desk's weight limits.
- Tighten the clamp or grommet firmly and double-check it before loading the screen.
- Program the sit and stand presets, and label the buttons if there are several.
- Route and tidy the cords so they can't catch as the desk moves (see the cord page).

★ Putting one together for a parent?

I'm glad to help you choose gear that's rated for their screen and set the heights so it's comfortable and safe from the first day. Tell me the screen and the desk and I'll walk you through it. Call (330) 200-8042.

Setting — and saving — your heights

The magic of a motorized desk is one-touch presets. Spend five minutes dialing them in and you'll never fuss with height again.

Your sit height

Sit in your chair with your feet flat and your forearms about level with the desktop, wrists straight. Raise or lower the desk until it meets your forearms there. That's your sit height. Our guide to the right chair and desk height walks through this in more detail.

Your stand height

Stand comfortably and raise the desk until, again, your forearms are about level and your wrists straight, with the screen top near eye level. That's your stand height.

Most motorized desks let you save each of these to a numbered button, so one press brings sit back and another brings stand back. Check the little manual for how to store a preset — it's usually holding a button until it beeps.

✓ Stand in doses, not marathons

You don't have to stand for hours. Many folks feel best alternating — sit a while, stand a while. Saved presets make switching effortless, which is the whole point.

Moving safely: pinch points and tip-over

A desk that moves is wonderful, but it moves with real force. A few habits keep everyone and everything safe.

- **Keep the path clear.** Before you raise or lower, glance under and around the desk. A drawer unit, a filing cabinet, or a window sill in the way can be crushed or can jam the desk.
- **Mind fingers and pets.** The gap under a descending desk is a pinch point. Keep hands, cords, and curious pets clear as it moves.
- **Watch what's on top.** A tall lamp or shelf above can hit the ceiling or an overhead cabinet as the desk rises.
- **Don't overload it.** Piling on more than the rated weight strains the motor and can make a tall desk feel tippy.

! Treat the moving desk with respect

A powered desk has enough force to pinch a hand or crush what's below it. Raise and lower it deliberately, never with a child or pet underneath, and stop the moment something resists. If it jams, lower it and clear the obstruction before trying again.

Cords that move with the desk

A rising desk tugs on every cord plugged into it. A little planning stops a cord from pulling tight, unplugging, or getting yanked out.

When the desk is at its lowest, gather the cords with some slack and clip them into a loose bundle that can pay out as the desk rises. Leave enough slack that at full height nothing is pulled drum-tight. Many desks have a tray or channel underneath to hold a power strip and the slack.

Raise the desk all the way as a test and watch the cords. If any pulls tight or lifts a device off the floor, give it more slack. Then lower it fully and check nothing drags or snags underneath.

✓ The cord guide has the full story

Routing, labeling, and keeping power bricks safe is a topic all its own. Our guide to taming the cords under the desk covers it — including why you shouldn't overload or daisy-chain power strips.

Putting it together, step by step

Assembly looks daunting in the box but goes smoothly in a calm order. Take your time and don't fully tighten anything until it all lines up.

- **1. Lay out the parts** on the floor and find the little manual. Count the bolts against the list before you start.
- **2. Build the frame** first, upside down, then turn the whole desk over with a helper — these are heavy and awkward alone.
- **3. Mount the arm** to the desk edge (C-clamp) or through the hole (grommet). Snug it firmly before you hang the screen.
- **4. Hang the screen last**, onto the arm's VESA plate, and only then do a final tighten. Give it a gentle test wiggle.

★ Heavy, awkward, and better with two

A sit-stand desk is genuinely heavy, and flipping it over alone can strain a back or drop a corner. If you'd rather not wrestle it, assembly and a safe setup is exactly the kind of thing I do on a visit. Call (330) 200-8042.

A simple shopping checklist

Keep this handy while you shop. Check each box before you buy.

- ☐ My screen's weight is comfortably under the arm's rated limit.
- ☐ My gear's total weight is under the desk's rated lift.
- ☐ The desk's low and high heights suit my sit and stand heights.
- ☐ My desk is deep enough — or I'll use an arm to push the screen back.
- ☐ My desk edge or grommet hole suits the arm's clamp, and the top is in the clamp's thickness range.
- ☐ My screen has the four VESA holes (or I'll get the maker's bracket).
- ☐ A motorized desk saves presets, so one button recalls each height.

✓ Photograph the labels

Snap a photo of your monitor's weight label, your desk edge, and any arm or desk box you're considering, and text them to me if you like. A quick second opinion can save a return trip.

Common mistakes people make

A few avoidable slip-ups cause most of the regret. Now you'll know them in advance.

- **Ignoring the weight limit** and wondering why the arm slowly droops — the screen is simply too heavy for it.
- **A desk edge too thick or too thin** for the C-clamp, so it won't grip properly. Check the clamp's range first.
- **No slack in the cords**, so raising the desk yanks a plug out or drags a device.
- **Clutter under the desk** that gets crushed or jams the motion.
- **Buying a wobbly, flimsy frame** that feels unsafe at standing height — sturdiness beats looks.

! The sag that looks like a defect

If a new arm slowly sags under your screen no matter how you tighten it, the arm is almost certainly under-rated for that screen's weight — not broken. Check the numbers before you return it; you likely need a sturdier arm, not a replacement of the same one.

Making standing a comfortable habit

A sit-stand desk only helps if you actually use the stand. A few comforts make standing something you'll want to do.

Stand in gentle doses at first — a little while, then sit again — and build up as it feels natural. Standing all day is no better than sitting all day; the good comes from changing position through the day.

A cushioned anti-fatigue mat under your feet makes standing far kinder, and supportive shoes or slippers help too. Keep the screen at eye level in both positions; that's where a monitor arm earns its keep, since the screen can stay put as the desk rises.

✓ Let a timer nudge you

Many folks set a gentle reminder to switch between sitting and standing every so often. The desk makes the switch a one-button affair, so the habit sticks.

Just an arm on your current desk

You don't need a new desk to get most of the comfort. An arm alone, on the desk you already have, solves the height problem for many people.

If your desk is a sturdy, solid-topped one with a clear back edge, a C-clamp arm will likely bolt right on and lift your screen to eye level — a big comfort gain for a modest outlay and no new furniture.

Take care with thin, hollow, or particle-board desks: a clamp can dent or crack a flimsy top, and a hollow top may not hold a grommet bolt well. If your desk is delicate, a padded clamp, a backing plate, or a solid riser underneath can spread the load — or it may be a sign the desk itself is due for an upgrade.

! Check the desk can take the clamp

Before clamping an arm to an older or lightweight desk, press on the edge and make sure it's solid. A clamp bearing down on a weak or hollow top can crack it and let the screen fall. When in doubt, use a backing plate or choose a sturdier anchor.

Questions to ask before you buy

Whether you're talking to a salesperson or to me, these questions get you to gear that fits your screen and your desk.

Q: What weight is this arm (or desk) rated for?

Match it against your screen's weight from its label, and leave a margin. If the numbers are close, step up to a sturdier model.

Q: Does it use a C-clamp, a grommet mount, or both?

Pick the one your desk suits. A clear, sturdy back edge of the right thickness favors a C-clamp; a blocked edge favors a grommet.

Q: What desk thickness does the clamp fit?

Measure your desktop's thickness and make sure it falls in the clamp's range, or the clamp won't grip properly.

Q: Does the desk save height presets?

A motorized desk that remembers your sit and stand heights is far nicer to live with than one you nudge by hand each time.

✓ There's no silly question

If a salesperson rushes you or can't answer plainly, that's a reason to pause, not to buy. The weight rating and the clamp fit are fair, simple questions that deserve clear answers.

Caring for it over time

A good desk and arm last for years with a little attention. A few easy habits keep them steady and safe.

- **Re-check the clamp** now and then; clamps can loosen slightly over months. A gentle snug-up keeps the screen rock-steady.
- **Keep the moving path clear** as the room changes — a new box or cabinet below can quietly become an obstruction.
- **Mind the weight** if you add a second screen or a heavy shelf; you may push past the rating you were safely under before.
- **Wipe gently** and keep drinks away from the motor controls and the joints.

✓ Revisit your heights

Your comfortable sit and stand heights can drift as your chair or your body changes. There's no harm in re-saving a preset a little higher or lower whenever your neck or wrists start to grumble.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most from folks adding a sit-stand desk or a monitor arm, answered plainly.

Q: How do I know if my screen is too heavy for an arm?

Find your monitor's weight on its label or spec page and compare it with the arm's rated range. If the screen is heavier, or right at the top of the range, choose a sturdier arm. Never just hope it holds.

Q: Will a clamp damage my desk?

On a sturdy, solid desk, no. On a thin, hollow, or particle-board top it can dent or crack. Use a backing plate or a padded clamp, or pick a grommet mount, if your desk is delicate.

Q: Do I have to drill a hole for a monitor arm?

Usually not. A C-clamp grips the back edge with no holes at all. A grommet mount needs a hole, but many desks already have one for cables, or you can use the C-clamp instead.

Q: Is standing all day better than sitting all day?

No — the benefit comes from changing position. Sit a while, stand a while. That's exactly what a sit-stand desk with saved presets makes easy.

★ Still weighing it up?

Choosing a desk and arm that fit your screen and your space is just the kind of thing I love to help with — no sales pitch, since I sell none of it. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

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 sit-stand desks and monitor arms 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. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site 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 licensed electrical work, I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

A Moving Desk vs. a Floating Arm

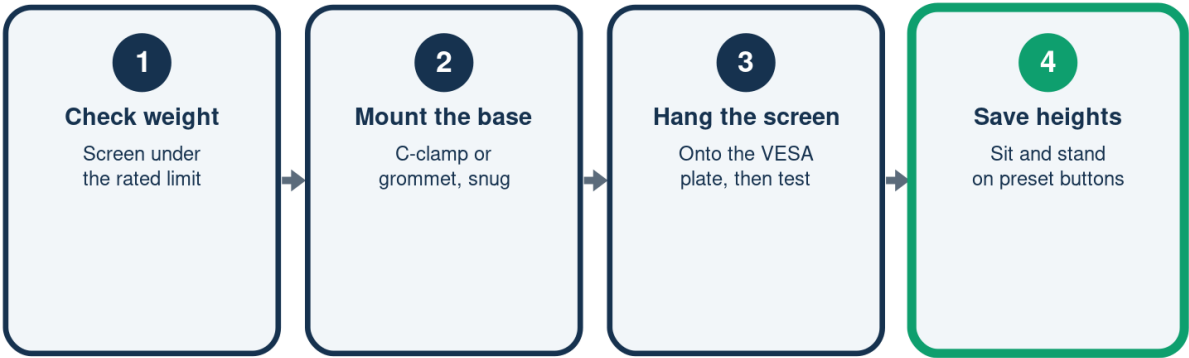
Two tools that often work together

	What it moves	Best when
Sit-stand desk	Whole surface	You sit too long
Desktop riser	Screen & keys	You keep your desk
Monitor arm	Just the screen	Screen sits too low
Both together	Desk and screen	You want it all

Start with the problem you have, then pick the tool that solves it.

Setting It Up Safely

The calm order that avoids drops and strains



Never load a mount past its rating -- read the label first.

C-Clamp or Grommet?

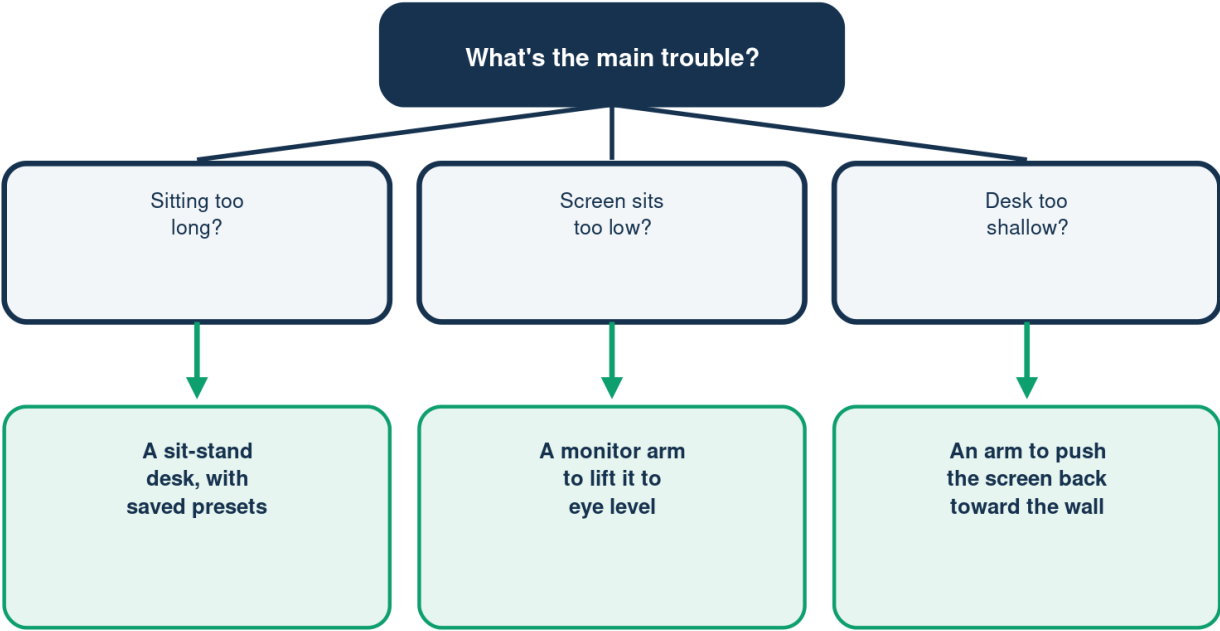
How an arm grips your desk

	How it holds	Needs
C-clamp	Grips back edge	Clear sturdy edge
Grommet	Bolt through top	A hole in desk
Either way	Must be solid	Check thickness

Most desks with a clear, sturdy edge use the no-holes C-clamp.

Which Setup Fits You?

Let your trouble and your desk point the way



Whatever you pick, confirm your screen's weight is under the rating.

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



Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.
You just have to remember you can call.
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will
make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness,
no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

— Bill

Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



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 comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



Book a visit —
billshometech.com/book

Use of these guides is subject to our Terms of Use (billshometech.com/terms-of-use).

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Bill@BillsHomeTech.com · Mon–Sat 9:00 AM – 7:30 PM

For general information only — not professional advice. Use at your own risk. For electrical, gas, water, or ladder work, please call a licensed professional. — Bill's Home Tech