BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Talk to AI Instead of Typing

Skip the tiny keyboard — just speak your questions and let AI listen and answer

Plain-English tech help from:

Bill's Home Tech

Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

You can talk to today's AI helpers instead of typing — speak a question in plain words and it listens, understands, and usually reads the answer back. On a phone, tap the microphone on the keyboard to dictate, or hold the side or home button to ask an assistant out loud. On a computer, Windows dictates with the Windows + H keys and Copilot has a microphone; Macs have Dictation in Settings.

A smart speaker like an Echo or Nest is the most hands-free of all. There is no special phrasing — ask the way you'd ask a helpful neighbor, and just talk back to correct it. Don't speak passwords or card numbers aloud to any assistant.

- No special phrasing — speak at your normal pace.
- Correct it by talking: "No, I meant…" / "shorter, please."
- Review and delete your voice history in settings; never dictate secrets.

1 The Short Version

If typing on a phone or computer is slow, fiddly, or hard on your hands and eyes, here is good news: you can simply talk to today's AI helpers instead. You speak a question or a request out loud, in plain everyday words, and it listens, understands, and answers — often reading the answer back to you. For many people this is the single most comfortable way to use a computer they have ever had.

This guide shows you how to turn on voice and start talking, on a phone, a tablet, a computer, or a smart speaker. There is nothing to memorize and no special way of speaking. If you can ask a question the way you would ask a helpful neighbor, you already know how.

- You can talk to AI instead of typing — just speak normally and it listens.
- It works on phones, tablets, computers, and smart speakers.
- There is no special phrasing; ask the way you would ask a person.
- You stay in control: the microphone only listens when you choose to turn it on.

TIP

Start with something low-stakes and fun — "What's the weather tomorrow?" or "Tell me a joke." Getting one easy answer out loud builds the confidence to ask the things that actually matter to you.

2 Why Talking Is Often Easier Than Typing

Typing asks a lot of us: small keys, fiddly spelling, and holding a whole thought in mind while your fingers catch up. Speaking skips all of that. You think the question, you say the question, and it is done. For anyone with arthritis, shaky hands, tired eyes, or simply a dislike of tiny keyboards, voice turns a chore into a conversation.

GOOD TO KNOW

You also do not have to spell anything or punctuate anything. The AI figures out the words from the sound of your voice, so a long place name or an unfamiliar term that you would never spell correctly is no obstacle at all. You just say it.

3 What You Can Actually Ask Out Loud

Almost anything you might type, you can say instead. The point of this chapter is simply to loosen up your sense of what is fair game — it is a wide door, not a narrow one.

- Questions: "How do I get rust off a cast-iron pan?" "What's a good gift for a ten-year-old?"
- Everyday help: "Set a timer for twenty minutes." "Remind me to take my pill at eight."
- Writing for you: "Help me write a thank-you note to my neighbor."
- Explaining things: "Explain what Medicare Part D is in simple terms."
- Little tasks: "Convert nine ounces to cups." "What's thirty percent off forty dollars?"

WATCH OUT

If the first answer is not quite what you meant, just talk back to it: "Make that shorter," or "No, I meant the other kind." It remembers what you were just talking about, so you do not have to start over.

4 Talking to AI on an iPhone or iPad

Apple devices give you two easy ways to speak instead of type. The first is dictation, which turns your speech into text in any place you would normally type. The second is talking to an assistant that answers back.

1. To dictate anywhere you can type: tap the text box, then tap the small microphone on the on-screen keyboard and start speaking.
2. Watch your words appear; tap the microphone again or just stop talking when you are done.
3. To talk to the assistant, press and hold the side button, or say the wake phrase if you have turned it on, then ask your question.
4. To use the ChatGPT app by voice, open it and tap the microphone or the voice icon, then speak naturally.

GOOD TO KNOW

Dictation and the voice assistant are two different things. Dictation just types what you say — useful for writing a message. The assistant answers and does tasks. You can use whichever fits the moment, and you will quickly learn which you prefer.

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5 Talking to AI on an Android Phone or Tablet

Android phones have voice built in just as deeply. The Google Assistant and the newer Gemini assistant both listen and answer, and the keyboard microphone dictates into any text box.

1. To dictate: tap where you want to type, then tap the microphone on the keyboard and speak.
2. To ask the assistant: say the wake phrase or press and hold the home button or the side button, then ask.
3. To use a voice assistant app like Gemini or ChatGPT, open it and tap its microphone, then talk.
4. Let it finish answering; you can follow up by speaking again without pressing anything.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If you are not sure which assistant your phone uses, just press and hold the home button or say "Hey Google" and see who answers. Whichever comes up is the one to talk to — you do not need to install anything extra to start.

6 Talking to AI on a Windows or Mac Computer

Computers can listen too, which is a relief if a mouse and keyboard are the hard part for you. Both Windows and Mac have built-in voice typing, and the Copilot assistant on Windows can be spoken to.

- Windows voice typing: press the Windows key and the letter H together to start dictating into any text box.
- Windows Copilot: open Copilot and use its microphone to ask out loud.
- Mac dictation: turn on Dictation in System Settings, then press the key it assigns (often the microphone key) to start talking.
- On any computer, you can also open ChatGPT or Gemini in your web browser and use their voice buttons.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> On a computer a plug-in headset or the kind of microphone built into most webcams gives noticeably clearer results than the laptop's built-in mic in a noisy room. It is not required, but it helps if voice typing keeps mishearing you.

7 Talking to AI Through a Smart Speaker

If you have an Amazon Echo or a Google Nest speaker, you already own a hands-free way to talk to AI — no screen, no typing, nothing to hold. The newer, smarter versions can hold a real back-and-forth conversation, not just answer one-liners.

- Amazon Echo: say "Alexa," then your question. The 2026 smarter version is called Alexa+.
- Google Nest: say "Hey Google," then your question.
- Both can answer questions, set timers and reminders, and control lights and other smart devices by voice.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Smart speakers are the gentlest on-ramp of all, because there is no device to operate — you just speak into the room. If the keyboard is your real obstacle, a speaker on the kitchen counter may become your favorite helper.

8 How to Speak So It Understands You

You do not need to change how you talk, but a few small habits raise the odds it catches every word the first time. These are gentle tips, not rules.

- Speak at your normal pace — slowing down to a crawl actually confuses it more than it helps.
- Pause a beat after you start, so it has a moment to begin listening.
- In a noisy room, get a little closer to the microphone or speaker.

- If it mishears a name or a place, say the whole sentence again rather than just the one word.

> **TIP**
> If a word keeps coming out wrong, try saying it inside a short sentence rather than alone. "Spell the town Mantua" is easier for it than the single word floating by itself.

9 Fixing Mistakes By Voice

Voice is not perfect, and that is fine — correcting it is quick once you know how. The key is that you can keep talking to fix things instead of reaching for the keyboard.

1. If dictation types the wrong word, you can say "delete that" or simply tap the word and retype just that part.
2. If an assistant misunderstands your request, say "No, I meant ..." and restate it plainly.
3. If it gives too much, say "shorter, please"; if too little, say "tell me more."
4. When you are truly stuck, stop and type the one tricky word — mixing voice and typing is perfectly normal.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Nobody talks to these tools in perfect, polished sentences, and they are built to handle "um," false starts, and changes of mind mid-sentence. You can ramble and it will still find your meaning.

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10 Your Privacy When You Talk

It is natural to wonder what happens to the words you speak. The honest answer is that your voice is usually sent to the company's computers to be understood, and some companies keep recordings to improve their systems unless you tell them not to. You have more control than you might think.

- You can usually review and delete your voice history in the app's or device's settings.
- Amazon and Google both let you turn off saving voice recordings, or set them to delete automatically.
- The microphone only listens when you wake it with a button or wake phrase — it is not recording your whole day.

WATCH OUT

Just as you would not read your bank card number aloud across a crowded room, do not speak passwords, card numbers, or Social Security numbers to an AI assistant. Voice is for questions and everyday help, not for handing over secrets. There is a companion guide on exactly what never to share.

11 Great First Things to Try

The fastest way to get comfortable is to actually use it for something real today. Here is a little menu to pick from — say one out loud and see how it feels.

- "What's the weather this weekend?"
- "Set a timer for the bread, twenty-five minutes."
- "Help me write a short birthday message for my granddaughter."
- "Explain, simply, what a QR code is."
- "What's a good, easy recipe for two using chicken and rice?"

> **TIP**
> Keep a little list by your chair of questions you'd normally wonder about and let pass. Next time one comes up, just ask it out loud. Within a week talking to it will feel as ordinary as using the phone.

12 When the Microphone Won't Cooperate

Now and then voice simply refuses to work — you tap the microphone and nothing happens, or it never seems to hear you. Nearly always the cause is a permission that got switched off, not a broken device. These checks fix the great majority of cases.

1. Make sure the device is not on silent and the volume is up, so you can hear replies.
2. Check that the app has permission to use the microphone: in the phone's Settings, find the app and confirm Microphone is allowed.
3. Close the app fully and reopen it — a fresh start clears most temporary glitches.
4. Try speaking in a quieter room, a little closer to the device, to rule out background noise.
5. If it still won't hear you, restart the device; this quietly fixes more than people expect.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The first time you use voice in an app, it usually asks "Allow microphone access?" If you tapped "Don't allow" by reflex, that is the whole problem — and it is a two-tap fix in the phone's settings to turn it back on.

13 Making Voice Part of Your Day

Voice becomes genuinely life-easing once it is a habit rather than a party trick. The way to get there is to attach it to things you already do, so it slots naturally into your routine instead of being one more thing to remember.

- In the kitchen: set timers and convert measurements out loud while your hands are busy.
- At your chair: ask the questions you'd normally let pass, the moment they occur to you.
- Before appointments: "Remind me to leave for the doctor at two."
- When writing: dictate the first rough version of a message, then tidy it up.
- At night: whisper to a smart speaker so you don't have to turn on a light.

> **TIP**
>
> Pick just one of these to start, and use it for a week. One reliable habit — say, always setting kitchen timers by voice — is enough to make voice feel normal, and the rest follow on their own.

14 When to Call Bill

Getting voice turned on and working the way you like is often a five-minute job once someone shows you where the buttons are on your own device. But menus differ from phone to phone, the microphone permission sometimes needs flipping on, and a smart speaker occasionally needs a nudge to behave. None of that should be a barrier.

I come to you, switch on dictation and the assistant on your own phone, tablet, or computer, make sure the microphone is allowed and the privacy settings are where you want them, and sit with you while you ask a few real questions out loud. By the time I leave, talking to it feels natural — and I will leave you a simple card of good things to ask.

- Dictation or the voice assistant is not turning on, or the microphone seems blocked.
- You want the privacy and voice-history settings set up the safe way.
- A smart speaker is not hearing you or not answering the way you expect.
- You would simply like someone to practice with you until it feels easy.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Speak normally — there's no special way to talk to it.

I want to...	Do this...
Dictate on a phone	Tap the text box tap the microphone on the keyboard speak
Ask an iPhone out loud	Press and hold the side button, then ask your question
Ask an Android out loud	Say the wake phrase or hold the home button, then ask
Talk on a computer	Windows: press Windows + H to dictate; or open Copilot's microphone
Go fully hands-free	Use an Echo ("Alexa") or Nest ("Hey Google") speaker
Fix a mistake	Say "No, I meant..." or "shorter, please" — keep talking to correct it
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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