BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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The Shortcut That Silences Spam Calls Automatically

Stop the robocalls from ever ringing — without missing the calls you want

Plain-English tech help from:

Bill's Home Tech

Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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Book a visit · billshometech.com/book

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Your phone can send calls from unknown numbers quietly to voicemail so robocalls never ring, while your saved contacts come through normally. On iPhone, turn on Settings, then Phone, then Silence Unknown Callers. On Android with the Phone by Google app, turn on “Filter spam calls” under Caller ID & spam, and consider Call Screen.

Newer phones can screen callers — asking a stranger who they are before you pick up — which weeds out machines that cannot answer. First, save your important people in Contacts so they always ring. The one trade-off: a real call from a new number goes to voicemail, so check voicemail and missed calls once a day.

Never press a number to “be removed” — that invites more.

1 The Short Version

Your phone can automatically silence calls from numbers that are not in your contacts, sending them straight to voicemail without a single ring. Since nearly all spam comes from numbers you do not know, this hushes the robocalls while the people you have saved — family, friends, the pharmacy — still ring through as normal. It is one switch, and it is the single most effective thing most people can do about spam calls.

- Unknown numbers go quietly to voicemail; your saved contacts ring normally.
- Real callers can leave a message, so you never truly miss anyone.
- Newer phones can also screen calls — asking the caller who they are first.
- Your phone carrier may offer its own spam-labeling on top, for free.

TIP

Before you turn this on, take two minutes to make sure your important people — doctor, pharmacy, family, your bank — are saved in Contacts. Anyone saved always rings through; it is only strangers who get hushed.

2 Why Answering Makes It Worse

Spam callers use machines to dial thousands of numbers at once. When someone answers — even just to hang up — it tells the machine the number is real and worth calling again. That is why the calls seem to multiply once you start engaging with them. None of this is your fault; it is simply how the robocall business works.

The winning move is to not play their game at all: let your phone refuse to ring for strangers, so there is nothing to answer and no signal that your line is live. Over time, the calls to a quiet number tend to taper off.

WATCH OUT

Never press a number to “be removed from the list” or “speak to a representative” on a robocall — that only confirms your number is live and invites more. Just let it go to voicemail.

3 The Main Switch: Silence Unknown Callers (iPhone)

This is the big one on an iPhone. Turn it on and any number not in your contacts goes silently to voicemail — no ring, no interruption.

1. Open Settings and scroll to Phone (on newer versions, look under Apps, then Phone).
2. Tap "Silence Unknown Callers."
3. Switch it on.

4. That's it — unknown numbers now go straight to voicemail, while your contacts ring as usual.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Calls from numbers you have recently texted or have in your email can still ring through, not just saved contacts — the phone is sensible about who you actually know. Only true strangers get silenced.

4 Call Screening: Make Them Say Who They Are

Newer iPhones add a smarter option: instead of silencing unknown callers outright, the phone can answer for you and ask the caller to say their name and reason, showing you the answer so you decide whether to pick up.

1. In the same Phone settings, look for a call-screening option (on recent iOS it may be called Screen Unknown Callers, with choices like "Ask Reason for Calling").
2. Choose the screening option rather than plain silencing if you prefer to see who is calling.
3. When an unknown number calls, the phone asks them to state their business and shows it to you on screen.
4. Pick up if it is someone real, or let it go if it is a machine that says nothing.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Robocallers almost never respond to screening — a machine cannot say its name — so screening quietly weeds them out while letting a real person (a delivery driver, a new doctor's office) reach you.

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 The Android Version: Call Screening & Spam Filter

Many Android phones, especially those using the Phone by Google app, have excellent spam tools — some can even answer and screen a call for you automatically.

1. Open the Phone app, tap the three-dot menu, and open Settings.
2. Find "Caller ID & spam" and turn on "Filter spam calls" (or "See caller and spam ID").
3. Look for "Call Screen" to have the phone answer and ask unknown callers who they are.
4. Suspected spam is then labeled or silenced, and you see a transcript of what a caller says.

> **WATCH OUT**
> Turning on “Filter spam calls” is the Android equivalent of the iPhone's unknown-caller silencing. Known spam numbers simply never ring — they are filed in a spam folder you can check if you ever wish to.

6 Let Your Carrier Help, Too

Your phone company — the one you pay for service — also screens for spam, often for free, and it works alongside your phone's own settings.

- Most major carriers label likely spam as “Scam Likely” or “Spam Risk” right on the incoming call.
- Many offer a free app or setting to block the worst offenders automatically.
- This is separate from your phone's settings and adds a second layer of protection.
- Ask your carrier, or check their app, for their free spam-blocking option.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Between your phone's unknown-caller setting and your carrier's spam labeling, most people see the flood slow to a trickle. The two work together — you do not have to choose one.

7 Block a Specific Pest

When one particular number keeps getting through, you can block it directly so it can never ring or text you again.

1. Open the Phone app and go to Recents.
2. Tap the little “i” (info) next to the offending number.
3. Scroll down and choose “Block this Caller” (iPhone) or “Block / report spam” (Android).
4. Confirm — that number is now silenced for good.

WATCH OUT

Blocking is best for a specific repeat offender. For the endless stream of ever-changing spam numbers, the automatic unknown-caller setting does far more than blocking them one at a time ever could.

8 The One Trade-Off to Know About

Silencing unknown callers is powerful, but it is fair to know the one downside so it does not catch you out.

A legitimate call from a number you have never saved — a new doctor's office, a delivery driver, a return call from a company — will go to voicemail instead of ringing. You will not miss it, but you do need to glance at your voicemail and missed-calls list now and then. If you are expecting an important call from a new number, you can switch the setting off for the day.

TIP

Make a habit of checking your voicemail and missed calls once a day. Most days there will be nothing but silenced spam — but it is where a real new caller will have left word.

9 Check Your Voicemail the Easy Way

Since silenced callers can leave a message, it helps to know the simple way to see and read your voicemail.

- Open the Phone app and tap Voicemail to see a list of messages.
- On most phones, you can read a written version of each message right on screen — no dialing in.
- A missed call with no message is almost always spam you were right to ignore.
- Tap a message to play it, and swipe to delete the junk.

GOOD TO KNOW

Being able to read voicemail as text means you can glance through messages anywhere, quietly, and instantly tell the real ones from the robocalls.

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 What the "Scam Likely" Labels Mean

You may have seen a call come in labeled "Scam Likely," "Spam Risk," or "Potential Spam." These labels come from your phone company and your phone working together, and they are a helpful warning — not a certainty.

- "Scam Likely" / "Spam Risk" means the number matches known spam patterns; it is almost always safe to ignore.
- A plain unknown number with no name is just someone not in your contacts — could be spam, could be a new doctor's office.
- A green or named label usually means a recognized, legitimate caller.

- When in doubt, let it go to voicemail; a real caller leaves a message, a machine does not.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> These labels are educated guesses, not guarantees. They are right the great majority of the time, so a “Scam Likely” call is one you can comfortably decline — but a real caller can occasionally be mislabeled, which is why voicemail is your safety net.

11 Report a Scam So Others Are Protected

When a scam call does get through, you can report it, which helps your phone company block that number for everyone and tightens the net over time.

1. In the Phone app's Recents, tap the “i” (info) next to the number.
2. Choose “Block this Caller” and, where offered, “Report as Junk” or “Report spam.”
3. On Android's Phone by Google, “Block / report spam” does both at once.
4. You can also report fraud to the authorities at the FTC's reportfraud.ftc.gov if money or identity was involved.

> **WATCH OUT**
> If a caller claims to be your bank, the government, or a tech company and pressures you to act fast or pay, hang up. Then, if you are worried, call that company back on the real number from your statement or their website — never a number the caller gave you.

12 Spam Texts: You Can Stop Those Too

The same flood of junk arrives by text message, and the same calm approach works — do not reply, do not tap links, and report them.

1. Do not tap any link in a text from a number you do not know, and never reply “STOP” to an outright scam (it confirms your number is live).

2. On iPhone, open the message and look for “Report Junk” beneath it; on Android Messages, press and hold the message to block and report spam.
3. You can forward a spam text to the short code 7726 (which spells SPAM) to report it to your carrier.
4. Delete it, and move on — the sender gets nothing.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A text saying a package is “held,” a toll is “unpaid,” or an account is “locked,” with a link to tap, is almost always a scam. Real companies rarely text a bare link demanding urgent action. When unsure, go to the company's own app or website, not the link.

13 Teach Your Phone the Numbers You DO Want

Since silencing works by knowing who your people are, a few minutes keeping your contacts tidy makes the whole system reliable — the right calls ring, the wrong ones do not.

- Save new, legitimate numbers (a new doctor, a repair company) to Contacts so they ring next time.
- Add important people to your Favorites/Starred list so they ring even when the phone is quiet.
- When a real call you missed came from an unknown number, tap to add it to Contacts right then.
- Review your contacts now and again so the names you care about are all there.

> **TIP**
>
> The hour you spend making sure family, your doctor, the pharmacy, and your bank are all saved is what lets you silence strangers with complete confidence. Known callers always ring; it is only the unknown that gets hushed.

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 want Silence Unknown Callers or Android's spam filter turned on correctly.
- You are worried about missing a real call from a new number and want the settings balanced right.
- You want call screening set up so the phone asks strangers who they are.
- The spam calls are overwhelming and you simply want it handled in one visit.
- 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 the phone. Save your people first, then silence the rest.

I want to...	Do this...
Silence all strangers (iPhone)	Settings Phone Silence Unknown Callers On
Make callers say who they are	Phone settings call screening / “Ask Reason for Calling”
Filter spam (Android)	Phone app Settings Caller ID & spam Filter spam calls
Add carrier protection	Ask your carrier for their free spam-blocking app/setting
Block one pest	Phone Recents tap (i) Block this Caller
Catch real callers	Check Voicemail and Missed Calls once a day
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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