BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 20

Android Phones

One friendly manual for every Android brand —
Samsung, Motorola, Google and the rest — in plain English

Your phone, finally making sense

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For any Android phone · recent Android versions · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Android phone manual, written to work for *every* brand — Samsung, Motorola, Google Pixel, LG, and the rest — because they all run the same underlying system called Android. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test. Because each brand dresses up the screens a little differently, a menu on your phone may be named slightly differently or sit in a different spot — but the idea behind each step is always the same, and I'll tell you what to look for.

Part 1 — Getting to Know Your Android

1 A Note from Bill
2 What an Android Phone Is
3 Buttons, Ports & Charging
4 Unlocking & Your Screen Lock

Part 2 — Finding Your Way Around

5 The Home Screen & Getting Around
6 The Finger Moves & Searching
7 Notifications & Quick Settings

Part 3 — Typing, Talking & the Google Account

8 Typing Without a Keyboard
9 Your Voice Assistant
10 The Google Account — Your Phone's Key
11 Adding Apps from the Play Store

Part 4 — The Apps You'll Use Every Day

12 Calls & Contacts
13 Texting
14 Email with Gmail
15 Browsing the Web with Chrome
16 Your Camera & Photos
17 Directions with Maps

Part 5 — Making It Easier to See, Hear & Use

18 Bigger, Clearer Text & Display
19 Easy Mode & a Simpler Phone
20 Hearing It Better
21 Finding a Lost Phone

Part 6 — Staying Safe

22 Scams & How to Beat Them
23 App Permissions, Plainly

Part 7 — Backups & Everyday Fixes

24 Keeping Your Memories Safe
25 Updates & the Fixes That Cure Almost Anything

Part 8 — When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

26 When to Call Bill
27 Your Android Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting to Know Your Android

What an Android phone is, why yours looks a little different from a friend's, the buttons, charging, and unlocking. Start here — the rest of the book builds on it.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book — this is for **you**. Maybe you just got a new phone and the shiny screen full of little pictures feels like a foreign country. Maybe you've had it a while and have always suspected it could do more if someone would slow down and explain it. Either way, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped folks feel at home with their technology. I wrote this book the way I'd explain it sitting beside you at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, with no rushing and no fancy words. Any time I use a term you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then. You won't have to look anything up.

A book for every Android, not just one brand

Here's something that sets this book apart. "Android" isn't a single phone — it's the underlying system that powers phones from *many* makers: Samsung, Motorola, Google (the Pixel), LG, and more. They all work in the same basic way, but each brand decorates the screens a little differently and gives things slightly different names. So this book teaches the *ideas* that work on all of them, and points out where a brand might call something by another name. Your phone is covered, whatever badge is on the back.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll make calls and send texts with ease, add the apps you want, take and share photos, browse the web, make everything bigger and clearer, and keep yourself safe from scams. Most of all, you'll stop being nervous about the phone and start treating it as the handy tool it is.

The big promise: you truly can't break it

Here's the most important thing in the whole book. **You cannot break your phone by tapping on it and exploring.** You can't wear it out or delete something important just by looking around. Tapping and poking to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns — including me. And there's always one button that brings you straight back to the main screen when you feel lost, like a front porch you can always walk back to (Chapter 5). So relax your shoulders.

And you're never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment. There's no such thing as a silly question.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What an Android Phone Is

Before we touch a button, let's answer the simplest question: what *is* this thing?

A tiny computer that's also a phone

Your Android phone is a **small computer** that happens to also be a telephone and a very good camera, all in something that fits in a pocket. It makes calls, yes, but it also sends messages, takes photos, browses the internet, shows the weather, gives directions, and runs thousands of little programs called **apps**. The telephone part is just one of its many jobs now.

'Android' is the engine; the brand is the body

Think of it like cars. **Android** is the engine — made by Google — and it runs under the hood of phones from many makers. Each maker builds its own "body" around that engine: Samsung calls its version **One UI**, and it has its own look and a voice helper called Bixby; Google's own phone is the **Pixel**, with the plainest, most basic version of Android; Motorola, LG and others each add their own small touches. Underneath, they all share the same Android engine — which is why one book can cover them all.

How to find out which phone you have

You rarely need to know, but it helps when buying a case or asking for help. Open **Settings** (the gear icon), scroll to the bottom to **About phone**, and you'll see the model name and the Android version. Jot both on the card at the back of this book.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why your screen may not match a friend's

If a friend's Android looks different from yours, don't worry — you likely have different brands, or different versions of Android. The *pictures* differ; the *ideas* don't. When this book says "open Settings and look for Display," your phone has that, even if it's tucked in a slightly different spot. When in doubt, use the search box at the top of Settings (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 3

Buttons, Ports & Charging

An Android phone has very few physical buttons — most everything happens on the screen — so the few there are, are easy to learn.

The buttons around the edge

Button / port	What it does
Power / side button	A short press puts the screen to sleep or wakes it. A long press may bring up power options, or (on some phones) a voice assistant — if a long press does something unexpected, just tap the screen to cancel.
Volume buttons	Two buttons that raise and lower the sound. They also quiet a ringing phone in a pinch.
The charging port	A small socket on the bottom edge where the charging cable plugs in. Nearly all recent Androids use a USB-C port — the reversible kind that goes in either way up.

Charging, and the truth about the battery

Charging is simple: plug the cable into the phone and the other end into the wall adapter. A little lightning bolt on the battery symbol means it's charging. You don't need to wait until it's empty, and leaving it on the charger overnight won't harm it — modern phones manage their own batteries carefully.

- A full charge usually lasts a full day of normal use; charging each night on the nightstand is a fine habit.
- If the screen is black and won't wake, it may simply be flat — plug it in and wait ten or fifteen minutes before trying again.
- Many newer phones also charge by simply setting them on a wireless charging pad — handy, but the cable always works.

TIP

A wall outlet charges fastest

Charging from a wall adapter fills the phone faster than from a computer's USB port. If yours seems to charge slowly, make sure you're using a proper wall adapter and that the cable is firmly seated at both ends — a slightly loose cable is a common reason a phone "won't charge."

CHAPTER 4

Unlocking & Your Screen Lock

Your phone keeps a lock on the front door so that if it's lost or left out, no one can get into your private things. Let's make getting *yourself* in effortless.

The kinds of screen lock

- **A PIN** — a short secret number you tap in. Simple and reliable. Pick something you'll remember but that isn't obvious (not 1234, not your birth year).
- **A pattern** — tracing a shape across nine dots. Some find it easy; others prefer a PIN.
- **Your fingerprint** — rest a registered finger on the sensor (often on the side button or under the screen) and it unlocks instantly.
- **Your face** — on many phones, just looking at the screen unlocks it.

A fingerprint or face unlock is the nicest of both worlds — easy for you, locked tight against everyone else — but it's always backed up by your PIN or pattern, which the phone will ask for now and then (after a restart, for instance). That's normal and a good sign it's keeping you safe.

STAY SAFE

Write your PIN down somewhere safe at home

This matters more than folks expect. If you forget your screen-lock PIN or pattern entirely, there's no easy "reset" — in the worst case the phone must be wiped. So write it on the card at the back of this book, or in a notebook in a drawer only you know — never on a sticker on the phone itself. Keep your Google account password (Chapter 10) written there too; you'll need it if you ever reset the phone.

PART 2

Finding Your Way Around

The Home Screen, the apps, the all-important navigation buttons, notifications, the quick settings panel, and finding anything in a flash. The everyday skills that make the phone yours.

CHAPTER 5

The Home Screen & Getting Around

The **Home Screen** is your phone's front room — what you see when you unlock it. It's a grid of little pictures, each an **app** (a program that does one job — the Phone app makes calls, the Camera app takes pictures). Tapping an app opens it.

What's on the Home Screen

- **App icons** — the little pictures. Tap one to open it.
- **The favorites row** — a strip of your most-used apps along the bottom that stays put.
- **Several pages** — swipe left and right to move between screenfuls of apps.
- **The app drawer** — on most Androids, swiping up from the bottom reveals a full list of *every* app you have, tidily arranged. If an app isn't on your Home Screen, it's in here.

The navigation: getting back and home

This is the most important skill on the whole phone, so let's learn it carefully. Androids offer two styles of moving around, and yours uses one of them:

Your phone has either…	What each does
Three buttons at the bottom	Older or simpler setups show three on-screen buttons: a **triangle** (Back — undo your last step), a **circle** (Home — go to the main screen), and a **square** or lines (Recent apps — see what's open). Easy and clear.
Swipe gestures	Newer setups hide the buttons: **swipe up from the very bottom** to go Home, **swipe in from the left or right edge** to go Back, and **swipe up and hold** to see open apps.

TIP

Home is your safety net

However your phone navigates, the **Home** move — the circle button, or a swipe up from the bottom — always takes you straight back to the main screen, no matter how lost you feel. Practice it a few times until it's second nature. If you'd rather have the clear three buttons than the swipes, you can switch to them in Settings (search "navigation"), and I'm glad to set that up for you.

CHAPTER 6

The Finger Moves & Searching

Beyond Home and Back, there's just a small handful of finger moves that run everything. Once they're in your hands, you'll use them without a thought.

Move	What it does
Tap	A single light touch — opens apps, presses buttons, follows links. Your most-used move.
Swipe	Slide a finger across the glass — to scroll a page up and down, or flip between photos.
Press and hold	Rest your finger a moment longer — brings up extra options, like a right-click on a computer.
Pinch and spread	Two fingers together to zoom out, apart to zoom in — wonderful for making small text or a photo bigger.

Searching: never hunt again

You never have to remember where an app or setting lives. There are two searches worth knowing:

- **Search your phone and the web:** most Home Screens have a search bar (often at the bottom or top). Tap it and type an app name, a contact, or a question — it finds apps on your phone and answers from the web.
- **Search within Settings:** open Settings and tap the **magnifying glass** at the top, then type what you want — "text size," "Wi-Fi," "ringtone." It takes you straight to that setting, wherever it's buried. This is the cure for every "where is that option?" moment.

TIP

When in doubt, search Settings

Because every brand hides settings in slightly different places, the search box inside Settings is your best friend. Any time this book says "find such-and-such a setting" and you can't spot it, open Settings, tap the magnifying glass, and type a word from it. Far faster than hunting through menus, and it never fails.

CHAPTER 7

Notifications & Quick Settings

The top edge of your screen is a busy, useful place. Little symbols appear there to tell you things, and pulling down from the top reveals two handy panels.

Notifications — your phone's messages to you

Notifications are little alerts — a new text, a missed call, a reminder. **Swipe down from the top** of the screen to see them all in a list. Tap one to open whatever it's about; swipe a single one sideways to dismiss it. If notifications pile up and overwhelm you, that's normal — and Chapter 24 shows how to quiet the chatty ones.

Quick Settings — the handy switches

Swipe down from the top (and, on many phones, swipe down a second time to expand it) and you'll find a panel of quick switches — the most useful shortcuts on the phone:

Switch	What it's for
Wi-Fi	Tap to connect to or disconnect from wireless networks.
Flashlight	Turns the phone's light on — surprisingly handy.
Brightness slider	Slide for a brighter or dimmer screen — the cure for a screen that's hard to read or too harsh at night.
Airplane mode	Switches off all wireless at once — for a flight, or to force a fresh connection.
Rotation lock	Stops the screen flipping sideways when you tilt the phone.
Sound / vibrate / silent	Quickly silence the ringer or turn it back on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The brightness and silent switches alone are worth it

Two of these earn their keep daily: the **brightness slider**, which makes a dim or glaring screen comfortable in a second, and the **silent/vibrate** switch for church, a meal, or a nap. Learning just the swipe-down panel gives you fast control over the things you'll adjust most.

PART 3

Typing, Talking & the Google Account

Typing without a keyboard, letting your voice do the work, and the one thing that unlocks your whole phone: your Google account.

CHAPTER 8

Typing Without a Keyboard

When you need to type — a text, a search, a web address — a keyboard slides up from the bottom of the screen on its own. It feels odd for a day, then becomes natural.

The on-screen keyboard

Tap any spot where you can type and the keyboard appears. Tap the letters with a fingertip. A few helpers:

- The **Shift** key (an up-arrow) makes a capital letter.
- The **?123** key switches to numbers and symbols; the **ABC** key switches back.
- The **backspace** key (an X-in-an-arrow) deletes the last letter.
- Suggested words appear in a row above the keys — tap one to drop it in without finishing it yourself.

Let your voice do the typing

If hunting for letters is a chore, here's a gift: tap the little **microphone** on the keyboard and simply *talk* — the phone types your words for you. Say "comma" or "period" for punctuation. For longer messages and searches, many folks find speaking far easier than typing. Give it a quick read before sending, as it occasionally mishears a name — but it's a real time-saver.

> **TIP**
>
> **Make the keys bigger if they're fiddly**
>
> If the keyboard keys feel too small, you can make them taller, and even turn on bigger text everywhere (Chapter 19). Some folks also prefer a simpler keyboard with larger keys — a quick thing I can set up with you. You don't have to squint or mis-tap; the phone can be made to fit your hands and eyes.

CHAPTER 9

Your Voice Assistant

Your phone has a built-in helper you can talk to — the **Google Assistant** on most Androids, or **Bixby** on some Samsungs. It can do a surprising amount hands-free, which is a real help when your hands are busy or your eyes are tired.

What it can do

- **Call or text someone:** "Call my daughter," "Text Bob I'm on my way."
- **Set reminders and timers:** "Remind me to take my pills at eight," "Set a timer for twenty minutes."
- **Answer questions:** "What's the weather tomorrow?", "How tall is the Eiffel Tower?"
- **Open apps and give directions:** "Open the camera," "Directions to the pharmacy."

How to summon it

Usually you say "Hey Google" out loud, or press and hold the Home button or side button. The first time, it may walk you through a quick setup so it recognizes your voice. If talking to your phone feels strange at first, that's alright — try it with something simple like asking the weather, and it quickly starts to feel natural.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's optional — and you're in charge

If you'd rather not use a voice assistant at all, you can simply ignore it, or turn it off in Settings. And if it ever pipes up when you didn't mean to call it, just tap away — you've done nothing wrong. Use it for the things you find handy and leave the rest.

CHAPTER 10

The Google Account — Your Phone's Key

Here's the single most important thing to understand about an Android phone: it runs on a **Google account**. Getting this clear now prevents a world of confusion later.

What a Google account is

A **Google account** is a free membership with Google — an email address (ending in *@gmail.com*) and a password. It's the key that unlocks your phone's abilities: it lets you install apps, keeps your contacts and photos safely backed up, runs your Gmail, and remembers your settings. Nearly everyone sets one up when they first turn on the phone — so you very likely already have one, even if you've forgotten the details.

Why it matters so much

- **It backs up your treasures.** With it, your contacts and photos are copied safely to Google, so a lost or broken phone doesn't mean losing them.
- **It's how you get apps** — the Play Store (next chapter) uses it.
- **It moves you to a new phone painlessly.** Sign in on a new Android and your contacts, photos and apps flow back as if by magic.

STAY SAFE

Know your Google account email and password

Because so much hangs on this one account, it's vital to know its email address and password — and to keep them written safely at home (the card at the back of this book is perfect). If you ever reset your phone or get a new one, you'll need them. If you're not sure what yours are, that's a very common and very fixable situation — call me and we'll track it down and write it down together.

FROM BILL

Don't let the account step stress you

Setting up or recovering a Google account is the single most common spot I see folks get stuck — all those password rules and verification steps. If it's giving you grief, please don't struggle alone or risk locking yourself out. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort it calmly in one short visit.

CHAPTER 11

Adding Apps from the Play Store

The real power of your phone is that you can add apps for almost anything — your bank, your pharmacy, a card game, your library, the weather, a favorite shop. You get them from one safe place: the **Google Play Store**.

Getting an app

1. Open the **Play Store** (a colorful triangle icon).
2. Tap the **search** bar at the top and type what you want — the name of your bank, "solitaire," "weather," whatever it is.
3. Find the right one in the results. Tap **Install** for a free app (most are free), or the price for a paid one.
4. It downloads and appears in your app drawer (and often on your Home Screen), ready to open.

Staying safe in the Play Store

- **The Play Store is checked by Google,** so it's a far safer place to get apps than random corners of the web. Stick to it and you avoid most trouble.
- **"Install" means free; a price means paid.** You'll always confirm before any money changes hands — you can't be charged by a stray tap.
- **Watch for look-alikes.** For something important like your bank, check that the maker's name matches the real company; when unsure, your bank's website links to its genuine app.

HEADS UP

Mind the 'in-app purchases'

Some free apps, especially games, constantly nudge you to buy things inside them. That's not a scam, but it's easy to spend without meaning to — and visiting grandchildren can rack up charges. If this worries you, I can help you set the Play Store to require your password for *every* purchase, so nothing is ever bought without your say-so.

PART 4

The Apps You'll Use Every Day

Calls and contacts, texting, email, the web, your camera and photos, and directions — the handful of apps that will fill most of your days. Each one, slowly and plainly.

CHAPTER 12

Calls & Contacts

It's still a telephone, after all. Making calls and keeping your people's numbers handy is at the heart of it.

Making a call

1. Open the **Phone** app (usually a green handset icon).
2. To dial a number, tap the keypad (a grid of numbers), type it, and tap the green **call** button.
3. To call someone you know, tap **Contacts** or **Recents**, find their name, and tap it.
4. Tap the red button to hang up.

Saving someone to your Contacts

Contacts is your phone's address book — save a person once and you can call or text them by name forever after. After a call from a new number, you'll often see an option to **Add to Contacts**; tap it, type their name, and save. Or open the Contacts app, tap the **+**, and fill in their details. The more people you save, the easier everything gets — you'll never dial a memorized number again.

> TIP
>
> **Set up your favorites and emergency info**
>
> You can mark the people you call most as **favorites** for one-tap calling, and set up **emergency information** and an emergency contact that's reachable even from the lock screen. These are wonderful to have in place, and a lovely thing to set up together on a call — especially the emergency details, for real peace of mind.

CHAPTER 13

Texting

Texting is how a lot of families stay in little daily touch. On most Androids the app is **Google Messages** (a blue-and-white speech bubble); some Samsungs use **Samsung Messages**. Both work the same way.

Sending a text

1. Open the **Messages** app.
2. Tap the **compose** button (often says "Start chat" or shows a pencil).
3. Type the person's name (if saved) or number, write your note in the box, and tap the **send** arrow.

Replies appear as bubbles in the same conversation, so it reads like a back-and-forth chat. Tap the **+** or camera to send a photo along with your words.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Green bubbles and blue bubbles**
>
> You may notice your texts to iPhone friends show up green on their end. That just means you're on an Android and they're on an Apple phone — both work perfectly, and your message arrives just the same. The color is about the kinds of phones, nothing more. Our companion *Texting & Messaging* manual explains it fully if you're curious.

CHAPTER 14

Email with Gmail

Your Google account comes with free email called **Gmail**, and the Gmail app is already on your phone (a white envelope with a colorful M). If you use a different email service, there's an app for that too; the ideas are the same.

Reading and writing

- Open Gmail to see your **inbox** — a list of messages, newest at top. Tap one to read it; tap the back arrow to return.
- To write a new message, tap the **compose** button (a pencil), type the person's address in **To**, add a subject and your message, and tap **send** (an arrow).
- To reply, open a message and tap the **reply** arrow — the address fills in for you.
- Swipe a message sideways in the list to archive or delete it.

HEADS UP

Junk and scam email — open with care

Your inbox will collect junk, some of it scams dressed up as prizes, bills, or urgent warnings. Don't tap links or open attachments in messages you didn't expect, especially from strangers or companies you weren't dealing with. When in doubt, delete it — real businesses don't rush you. Chapter 23 covers scams in full.

CHAPTER 15

Browsing the Web with Chrome

Chrome (a colorful circle icon) is your window to the whole internet — news, recipes, shopping, looking anything up. Most Androids come with it.

The two ways to begin

- **If you know the website,** type its address — like **billshometech.com** — in the bar at the top and tap Go.
- **If you don't,** just type what you're looking for in plain words — "apple crumble recipe" — and it searches the web and shows results to tap.

Either way it's the same bar. When in doubt, type plain words and search.

Getting around a page

- **Swipe up and down** to scroll.
- **Tap a link** (often blue or a picture) to follow it.
- **Tap the back arrow** to return to the previous page.
- **Pinch to zoom** if the text is small.

SCAM ALERT

A web safety word

If a web page suddenly fills your screen warning your phone is "infected" with a number to call, **it is always a scam** — Google and Android don't work this way. Don't call, don't tap its buttons; just close the tab or go Home. Your phone is fine.

CHAPTER 16

Your Camera & Photos

Android phones take lovely pictures, and keeping and sharing them is easy.

Taking a photo

Open the **Camera** app, point it at what you want, and tap the big round button. That's it. Tap the screen to focus on a face; pinch to zoom; and look for a button with two circling arrows to flip to the front camera for a selfie or a video call.

Looking at and sharing pictures

Your photos land in the **Google Photos** app (a colorful pinwheel). Open it to see them all, tap one to view it full-screen, and swipe to flip through. To share one, open it, tap the **share** button (often three dots joined, or an arrow), choose how to send it — a text, an email — pick the person, and send.

TIP

Google Photos backs up your memories

When it's switched on, **Google Photos** quietly copies your pictures to your Google account online, so even if your phone is lost or broken, your photos are safe — and you can see them on any device by signing in. If you ever see a "storage full" message, don't delete precious photos in a panic; it usually just means it's time to tidy up or add a little storage. A perfect thing to sort out together before anything is lost.

CHAPTER 17

Directions with Maps

Google Maps (a little map-pin icon) is a genuine marvel: it shows you any place, gives spoken turn-by-turn directions as you drive or walk, and looks up businesses, hours and phone numbers.

Getting directions

1. Open **Maps** and tap the search bar.
2. Type where you want to go — an address, or a business name like "Giant Eagle."
3. Tap **Directions**, then the **Start** button, and Maps speaks each turn aloud as you go.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never feel lost on the road again

For many folks, Maps is the app that brings back the confidence to drive somewhere new — it tells you every turn in a calm voice, reroutes if you miss one, and even warns of traffic. You can also look up a place before you leave to check its hours or give it a call. A real freedom-giver.

PART 5

Making It Easier to See, Hear & Use

The settings that make your phone bigger, clearer, louder and simpler — including the 'Easy' and 'Simple' modes — plus finding a lost phone. The chapter nobody shows you.

CHAPTER 18

Bigger, Clearer Text & Display

If anything on your phone is hard to read, that is **not something you have to put up with.** Android has generous tools to make everything larger and clearer. This may be the most valuable chapter in the book for you.

Make everything bigger

1. Open **Settings** and go to **Display** (or search "text size").
2. Find **Font size** (or "Text size") and drag the slider up until it's comfortable.
3. Find **Display size** (sometimes "Screen zoom") and increase it to enlarge buttons and icons too, not just text.

Bolder text and more contrast

In **Settings > Accessibility** you'll usually find **Bold text** (or "High contrast text"), which thickens letters so they stand out. Try it — it makes a real difference for many eyes, and you can switch it off just as easily.

Brightness and night comfort

- Adjust **brightness** anytime from the swipe-down Quick Settings panel.
- **Dark mode** and a **night/eye-comfort** setting warm and soften the screen in the evening, which many find easier on the eyes. Look in Display.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Magnify anything, anytime

Beyond text size, Android can magnify *everything* on screen like a magnifying glass. In Settings > Accessibility > **Magnification**, switch it on, and a quick triple-tap or a shortcut button enlarges whatever you're looking at. There's also a Magnifier that uses the camera to enlarge the real world — a medicine bottle, a menu in a dim restaurant. Pure gift for tired eyes.

CHAPTER 19

Easy Mode & a Simpler Phone

Here's a wonderful secret many Android owners never discover: most phones have a built-in **simplified mode** that makes the whole phone easier — bigger icons, larger text, a cleaner layout, and the most-used features front and center.

What it's called on your phone

- **Samsung** calls it **Easy mode** (in Settings > Display > Easy mode).
- **Google Pixel and some others** offer a **Simple** or simplified layout, or you can achieve much the same with larger text and display size.
- Other brands have their own versions — search Settings for "easy" or "simple."

What it does for you

Turning it on gives you a less cluttered Home Screen with large, clearly-labeled buttons for the things you use most — calling, texting, the camera. For many folks, this single switch transforms a phone from intimidating to welcoming. And if you don't care for it, you simply switch it back; nothing is lost.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **Let me set up a phone that fits you**
>
> Tuning a phone to be easy on your eyes and hands — the right text size, Easy mode, a tidy Home Screen with just your important apps, big clear contacts — is one of my favorite things to do with folks, because it changes how the whole phone *feels*. If you'd like yours set up to truly suit you, call (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 20

Hearing It Better

Your phone can play louder and clearer, show words on screen, and work hand-in-hand with hearing aids — a blessing whether your hearing has changed or a room is just noisy.

- Raise the **volume** with the side buttons; a call has its own volume you adjust during the call.
- Pair **wireless earbuds or a Bluetooth speaker** for clearer, more private sound — especially for calls and videos. Our *Soundbars & Home Audio* manual covers pairing.
- Many modern **hearing aids connect directly** to Android phones so sound goes straight to your ears — look in Settings > Accessibility > **Hearing**.
- Turn on **captions** so spoken words appear as text on videos — a setting in Accessibility, and a feature called Live Caption can even caption almost anything playing on the phone.

TIP

Have your phone read to you

In Settings > Accessibility you can turn on **Select to Speak** or a screen reader so the phone reads text aloud — handy for resting your eyes while still "reading" an article or a message. Set the voice and speed to your liking.

CHAPTER 21

Finding a Lost Phone

A misplaced phone is a universal worry, and Android has a free, reassuring answer built in: **Find My Device**.

How it works

As long as it's switched on (it usually is by default), you can — from any computer or another phone — go to Google's Find My Device, sign in with your Google account, and see your phone on a map, make it **ring loudly** even if it's on silent (perfect for the couch-cushion hunt), and, if it's truly lost, lock it or erase it so no one can get into your things.

Set it up for peace of mind

1. Check it's on: Settings > **Security** (or search "Find My Device") and make sure it's enabled.
2. Make sure you know your Google account details (Chapter 10) — that's how you'll sign in to find it.
3. Practice once: from a computer, search "Find My Device," sign in, and make your phone ring, so you know how before you ever need it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A small setup, a big comfort

Knowing you can make a lost phone ring across the house — or across town — takes a real weight off. It's a five-minute thing to confirm it's on and practice once, and it's exactly the kind of small, reassuring setup I'm glad to do with you.

PART 6

Staying Safe

The scams that target phone owners, what app 'permissions' mean, and keeping your phone updated. The part that protects you and your money.

CHAPTER 22

Scams & How to Beat Them

I have to include this chapter, and I'd ask you to read it twice, because the people who cook up these tricks specifically target those who'd rather not fuss with technology. Knowing the *shape* of a scam is the best protection there is.

The pop-up that says you're 'infected'

A frightening message fills the screen — "Your phone is infected!", "Security warning!" — with a number to call or a button to tap. **It is always a scam.** Google and Android don't warn you this way. Don't call, don't tap; just close the tab or go Home. Your phone is fine.

SCAM ALERT

The one rule that defeats most scams

Never call a number in a pop-up, and **never let anyone who contacted you first control your phone or screen.** If a message or caller creates fear and urgency, then asks for money, gift cards, passwords, or remote access, it is a scam — full stop. Hang up or close the screen, and if you're shaken, call me or someone you trust. You'll never be in trouble for hanging up on a scammer.

Other common tricks

- **Scam texts** — fake delivery problems, unpaid tolls, bank alerts, prizes — all with a link. Don't tap; go to the company yourself. Our *Texting & Messaging* manual covers these.
- **The "Google / Amazon / your bank" call** about a problem, fishing for your login, a card, or a code they just texted. Real companies don't call this way. Hang up and call back on a real number.
- **The "grandchild in trouble" call** begging for money fast and in secret. Hang up and call that family member directly on their real number. It's almost always a cruel fake.

Good habits that keep you safe

- Get apps only from the Play Store; don't install things a website or text pushes on you.
- Never give a password, a texted code, or payment to someone who contacted *you*.
- Keep your phone updated (Chapter 25) and your screen locked.
- When anything makes your stomach tighten, **stop and ask someone you trust before acting.**

FROM BILL

I'd rather hear from you than not

If a call, pop-up, or text makes you uneasy, please ring me at (330) 200-8042 before you do what it's pushing you toward. I'd far rather spend two minutes telling you it's nothing than hear later that someone got the better of you. There's no embarrassment in asking — these scams are clever by design.

CHAPTER 23

App Permissions, Plainly

Now and then an app asks for "permission" to use something — your location, your camera, your contacts. These little pop-ups confuse people, so here's the plain version.

What permissions are

A **permission** is the app asking, "may I use this part of your phone?" A maps app genuinely needs your **location**; a camera app needs the **camera**; a messaging app may ask for your **contacts**. When the request makes sense for what the app does, it's fine to allow it. When it *doesn't* — a flashlight app asking for your contacts, say — that's a reason to say no, or to distrust the app.

You can always change your mind

Permissions aren't permanent. In Settings > **Apps**, you can tap any app and review or change what it's allowed to use — turning off a location permission you'd rather not grant, for instance. You're always in charge.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **When in doubt, you can say 'only this time'**
>
> Modern Androids often let you grant a permission **"only this time"** or "while using the app" rather than forever. Those are sensible, cautious choices. And if you're ever unsure whether an app should be asking for something, it's a perfectly good question to bring to me — better to ask than to grant something you're uneasy about.

PART 7

Backups & Everyday Fixes

Keeping your contacts and photos safe, updates, and the short list of fixes that cure almost any hiccup your phone will ever give you.

CHAPTER 24

Keeping Your Memories Safe

Here's a real comfort: with your Google account doing its quiet work, a lost or broken phone doesn't have to mean losing anything precious.

What gets backed up

When backup is switched on, your **contacts**, **photos** (through Google Photos), calendar, and app list are copied safely to your Google account online. Get a new Android, sign in, and it all flows back as if nothing happened. It's the single best protection against heartbreak.

Checking it's on

1. Open **Settings** and search for **Backup** (often under Google, or System).
2. Make sure **Back up to Google** is turned on.
3. Open **Google Photos**, tap your picture in the corner, and confirm **Backup** is on so your photos are saved too.

GOOD TO KNOW

A little storage may be worth a small fee

Google gives everyone some free online storage, but photos fill it over time, and you may be offered a modest monthly plan for more room. That small fee is, honestly, some of the best-spent money in technology — it means a lifetime of pictures is safe no matter what happens to the phone. If you're unsure what you need, it's a two-minute question for a call.

CHAPTER 25

Updates & the Fixes That Cure Almost Anything

Your phone asks little upkeep, but one habit keeps it safe, and a short list of fixes handles nearly every hiccup you'll meet.

Keeping it updated

Updates add features and, importantly, patch security holes. In Settings > **System** > **Software update** (or search "update"), you can check for one and let them install — often overnight by themselves. An up-to-date phone is a safer phone. Apps also update themselves quietly through the Play Store, which is exactly what you want.

The fixes, in order

1. **Close and reopen the app.** Use the Recent-apps view (the square button, or swipe up and hold) and swipe the troublesome app away, then reopen it.
2. **Restart the phone.** Hold the power button, tap **Restart** (or turn off and on). This alone fixes most trouble, and loses nothing.
3. **Check your Wi-Fi or signal.** Many "broken" phones are simply offline — see our *Home Wi-Fi* manual, or check the Quick Settings panel.
4. **Make sure there's room and charge.** A very full or very flat phone can act oddly; charging it or turning on photo backup (Chapter 24) often helps.
5. **Update it,** as above — some glitches are simply fixed in a newer version.

> **TIP**
>
> **Restarting is safe and loses nothing**
>
> Turning your phone off and on changes none of your settings, photos, or apps — it just lets it clear its head. It's the first thing I try, and it's astonishing how often it's the whole cure. When something's acting strange, reach for the restart before you worry.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep with your phone.

CHAPTER 26

When to Call Bill

I've written this book so you can handle an awful lot on your own, and I hope it leaves you feeling capable. But part of being truly helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time or worry — here's my straight advice, no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Setting up a new phone** — signing in, moving your contacts and photos over, and leaving it tidy and ready. A lovely thing to do together.
- **Your Google account** — setting one up, or recovering one you've lost access to. The most common sticking point, and easily sorted.
- **Making the phone easy for you** — Easy mode, big clear text, a simple Home Screen, favorites and emergency contacts.
- **Find My Device and backups** — so a lost or broken phone is never a disaster.
- **Anything that smelled like a scam** — call me *before* you act, never after.
- **You're simply stuck or uneasy** and would rather have a patient person sort it with you.

What working with me is like

I come to your home, here in Portage County, and I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down, no leaving you more confused. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something doesn't need buying or changing. That's been my way for more than 30 years, and it's how I'd want someone to treat my own parents.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit at **billshometech.com/book**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. No question is too small — if it's bothering you, it's worth a call.

Thank you for letting me help you get comfortable with your phone. Take your time with all of it. You truly can't break it, and you're doing just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 27

Your Android Cheat-Sheet

Fold the corner and keep it with your phone. The whole book, boiled down.

The moves that matter

To do this	Do this
Go Home (escape anything)	Press the circle button, or swipe up from the very bottom.
Go Back one step	Press the triangle button, or swipe in from the side edge.
See / close open apps	Press the square button (or swipe up and hold); swipe an app away to close it.
Notifications & Quick Settings	Swipe down from the top of the screen.
Find any setting	Open Settings, tap the magnifying glass, type a word.
Make things bigger	Settings > Display > Font size & Display size; or pinch to zoom.

Fill this in once

Write it here	
My screen-lock PIN (keep at home, not on the phone)	_____
My Google account email	_____
My Google account password	_____
My Wi-Fi name & password	_____
My phone brand & model (Settings > About phone)	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Close and reopen the app that's misbehaving.
2. Restart the phone — off and back on. (Fixes most things, loses nothing.)
3. Check your Wi-Fi or signal (swipe down from the top).
4. Check for an update (Settings > System > Software update).
5. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042 — that's what I'm here for.

The safety rules, always

- Pop-ups saying you're "infected" are always fake — never call the number, just close them.
- Never let someone who contacted *you* control your phone.
- Google, Amazon, and your bank won't call demanding payment, gift cards, or a texted code.
- When anything creates fear and urgency and asks for money or access, stop and call someone you trust.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You can now call, text, email, browse, photograph, find your way, and protect yourself — and you know how to make it all bigger, clearer and simpler. That's more than most people ever learn about their phone. Keep this book handy, explore without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.