BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Backing Up Everything

Protecting your photos, files, and memories
on your phone and computer — in plain English

A plain-English guide to never losing what matters

Peace of mind, one simple step at a time

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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What's Inside

This is your backup manual — the one that protects everything else. In plain English, it shows you how to keep a safe spare copy of your photos, files, and memories, so a lost phone, a dead computer, or a simple slip of the finger can never take them from you. We'll cover phones, computers, the cloud, and external drives, one gentle step at a time. Read it in any order; there's no test, and every bit of it buys you peace of mind.

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PART 1

Why Backing Up Matters

The one habit that protects everything else you own on a screen. What a backup is, what it saves you from, and the simple rule that keeps your memories safe forever.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book — this is for **you**. I'll be honest about why I wanted to write it: of all the house calls I make, the saddest are the ones where someone has lost every photo of a late spouse, or a grandchild's whole babyhood, because a phone was dropped in a sink or a computer simply died — and there was no spare copy anywhere. Almost every one of those heartbreaks was preventable. This book is how you prevent them.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this the way I'd sit beside you at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, with nothing taken for granted. Backing up sounds technical and dull, but it's really just one idea — **keep a spare copy of what you can't bear to lose** — and I'll show you how, slowly and simply.

The good news, right up front

Here's the most reassuring thing: for most people, backing up can be set up **once** and then it happens **automatically**, quietly, forever after — no remembering, no fuss. You plug in a setting or two, and from then on your phone and computer keep their own safe copies while you sleep. The hard part is just understanding it well enough to set it up with confidence, and that's exactly what we'll do together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

This is the book that protects all the others

Every photo you treasure, every document that matters, every contact and memory on your devices — a good backup is the quiet guardian of all of it. Spend an afternoon on this one topic and you buy yourself years of peace of mind. There is no more worthwhile thing in this whole series to get right.

And I'm only a phone call away

If any of this feels daunting, remember you're not doing it alone. Setting up backups is one of the most common and most satisfying things I help folks with — we get it switched on properly, confirm it's really working, and you walk away able to stop worrying. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** any time. There's no such thing as a silly question here.

So let's protect what matters. You're going to do just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Backup Actually Is

Let's start with the plainest possible definition. A **backup** is simply a *second copy* of your important things — photos, documents, contacts — kept somewhere *separate* from the original, so that if something happens to the first copy, you still have the second.

Think of it like a spare key

You keep a spare house key at a neighbor's or in a safe spot, not because you expect to lose your keys, but so that *if* you do, you're not locked out. A backup is exactly that for your photos and files: a spare copy you'll probably never need — but that turns a catastrophe into a mild inconvenience on the day you do. The whole point is that the spare lives somewhere the original's troubles can't reach it.

Where backups live

A second copy has to live somewhere separate. There are two main homes for it, and this whole book is really about these two:

- **The cloud** — storage out on the internet, run by a big company (Apple, Google, Microsoft). Your copy sits safely on their computers, far from your house. If your home flooded, this copy would be untouched.
- **A local drive** — a physical gadget you own, like an **external hard drive** (a small box you plug in). Your copy sits right there in your home, fully under your control, no internet needed.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **“The cloud” just means “someone else's computers, online”**
>
> Don't let the word “cloud” mystify you. It isn't up in the sky and it isn't magic — it's simply big, secure computers in a company's building, which your device reaches over the internet. When your photos “back up to the cloud,” a copy travels over your internet to those computers and is kept safe there. That's all it means.

CHAPTER 3

What Can Go Wrong (and Why We Bother)

It helps to know exactly what a backup protects you from, because the threats are more ordinary — and more common — than people think. It's rarely anything dramatic. It's usually just life.

The everyday disasters

What happens	What it costs you without a backup
A lost or stolen phone	Gone in an instant, with every photo and contact on it — unless they were backed up.
A dropped or wet device	A cracked screen or a dunk in water can kill a phone or its memory for good.
A dead computer	Hard drives simply wear out and fail, often with no warning at all.
A slip of the finger	Deleting the wrong folder, or "tidying up" and erasing treasures by mistake.
A scam or virus	Some scams lock or destroy your files; a backup lets you shrug and restore.
Simply upgrading	Getting a new phone or computer — a backup makes moving everything over painless.

HEADS UP

Devices don't warn you before they fail

The cruel thing about a hard drive or a phone failing is that it usually gives no warning — it works perfectly right up until the morning it doesn't. That's precisely why you back up *before* trouble, not after. By the time something's wrong, it's too late to make a copy of what's already gone. A backup is only ever useful if it's already there.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Turn disasters into minor annoyances

With a good backup in place, every one of those disasters shrinks from a heartbreak to a shrug. Lost phone? Buy a new one and your photos pour right back in. Dead computer? Your files are safe in the cloud. That's the quiet confidence this book gives you — the freedom to stop dreading the day something breaks.

CHAPTER 4

Sync Is Not the Same as Backup

This is a subtle but genuinely important point, and getting it clear now will save you grief later. Many people think their photos are “backed up” because they “sync,” but syncing and backing up are not the same thing.

The difference, plainly

- **Syncing** keeps the *same* set of files matching across your devices. Delete a photo on your phone, and sync dutifully deletes it everywhere else too — because its job is to keep everything identical.
- **Backing up** keeps a *separate, protected* copy. If you delete something by mistake, a true backup still has it, because its job is to preserve, not to match.

The danger is relying on sync as if it were a backup. If a virus, a thief, or a slip of your own finger deletes your photos, a sync-only setup faithfully erases them from every device at once — leaving you nothing. A real backup would still be holding your copy safe.

GOOD TO KNOW

The good news: the big services do both

Happily, the main cloud services (iCloud, Google) do keep deleted items in a **“Recently Deleted”** folder for a while — usually 30 days — so a mistaken deletion can often be undone within that window. That's a real safety net. But it's a short one, which is why a proper, separate backup — especially an external drive — matters for things you truly cannot replace.

TIP

For true safety, don't rely on one copy in one place

The soundest approach is to not put all your eggs in one basket: have your photos in the cloud *and* a copy on a drive at home. Then no single mishap — not a deletion, not a company glitch, not a house fire — can take everything. The next chapter gives you a simple rule for exactly this.

CHAPTER 5

The Simple Rule: Three Copies

There's a tidy little rule that professionals use to keep data safe, and it's easy enough for anyone to follow. It's called the **3-2-1 rule**, and once you hear it, it just makes sense.

3-2-1, in plain words

- **3 copies** of anything you can't bear to lose — the original, plus two backups.
- **2 different places** in your home or on different kinds of storage — say, on your device and on an external drive.
- **1 copy kept somewhere else entirely** — "offsite" — which for most folks simply means the cloud.

For a regular person, this usually works out beautifully simple: your photos live on your **phone** (copy one), back up automatically to the **cloud** (copy two, and it's offsite), and now and then you also copy them to an **external drive** at home (copy three). That's it — you've met the rule the professionals use, and almost nothing could wipe out all three at once.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One rule, and your memories are nearly indestructible

The beauty of 3-2-1 is that it protects against *every* kind of mishap at once. A deletion can't touch the drive; a house fire can't touch the cloud; a company outage can't touch your home copies. Spread across three places, your treasures become about as safe as anything in this world can be. The rest of this book just shows you how to set each copy up.

FROM BILL

You don't have to do all three on day one

Don't feel you must build the whole 3-2-1 fortress this afternoon. Even *one* good automatic backup — your phone to the cloud — puts you miles ahead of where most folks are. Start there, get comfortable, and add a drive later. Every copy you add is more safety. And if you'd like a hand setting any of it up, that's exactly what I'm here for: (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 5a

Myths That Keep People from Backing Up

A handful of mistaken beliefs stop good people from protecting their memories. Let's clear them away one by one, because once they're gone, there's nothing left to hold you back.

The common myths, answered

The myth	The truth
“It's too complicated for me.”	It's one or two switches, set once. If you can send a text, you can do this.
“My photos are fine on my phone.”	Until the day they aren't — one drop or theft and they're gone. A backup is the only sure protection.
“Backing up might delete something.”	Turning backup ON never deletes anything — it only makes copies.
“I'll do it later.”	Later often arrives after the loss. Five minutes today protects years of memories.
“It costs too much.”	The basics are free; even paid storage is a dollar or two a month — cheap insurance.

GOOD TO KNOW

The only real mistake is doing nothing

There's no wrong way to back up and no harm in trying — the one genuinely costly choice is leaving your memories in a single, fragile place. Whatever method you pick, however imperfectly you start, you'll be far safer than doing nothing. Perfect is not required; *something* is.

Start small, and build from there

You don't have to do everything in this book at once. If all you ever do is turn on your phone's cloud backup, you've protected the thing most likely to be lost — and you can add a drive, a computer backup, and the rest whenever you're ready. Progress beats perfection every single time.

FROM BILL

Nervous? That's the most normal thing in the world

If backing up feels intimidating, you're in excellent company — nearly everyone I help felt exactly the same before we sat down together. Ten minutes later they're protected and wondering why they waited. There's no judgment and no rush. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll take that first easy step together.

CHAPTER 5b

What to Back Up First

If the thought of backing up “everything” feels overwhelming, here's a calming truth: you don't have to protect it all at once, and some things matter far more than others. Start with what's irreplaceable and work outward.

Bill's priority order

1. **Photos and videos** — first, always. They cannot be remade. Turn on phone photo backup today.
2. **Contacts** — agony to rebuild. Make sure they're saved to your account.
3. **Important documents** — tax records, scanned paperwork, letters you'd miss.
4. **Everything else** — apps, settings, messages. These ride along with a full device backup, but they're lower stakes.

TIP

Protect the irreplaceable first; the rest can wait

Sort your worries by one simple test: *can this be replaced?* A downloaded app can be re-downloaded; a photo of your late mother cannot. Put the truly irreplaceable things first, get those safe, and the rest will follow in good time. Prioritizing this way turns a big job into a small, clear first step.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One good first step changes everything

The moment your photos are backing up to the cloud, the worst-case disaster — losing a lifetime of pictures — is off the table. That single step delivers most of the peace of mind in this whole book. Everything after it is just adding extra layers of safety on top of an already-solid foundation.

PART 2

Backing Up Your Phone

Your phone holds your photos, contacts, and messages — and it's the device most likely to be lost or dropped. Here's how to set it to back itself up automatically, on both iPhone and Android.

CHAPTER 6

What's On Your Phone Worth Saving

Your phone is probably the single most precious object you own in terms of memories, even if it's not the most expensive. Before we back it up, let's appreciate what's actually on there, so you understand what you're protecting.

The treasures in your pocket

- **Photos and videos** — usually the crown jewels: years of family, trips, and everyday moments.
- **Contacts** — everyone's phone numbers and addresses, which would be agony to rebuild.
- **Messages** — texts and conversations, some of which you'd hate to lose.
- **Notes, reminders, and calendars** — the little records of your days.
- **Apps and their settings** — so a new phone can be set up just like the old one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One setting protects all of it at once

The wonderful thing about phone backup is that a single switch protects this entire list in one go. You don't back up photos, then contacts, then messages separately — you turn on *phone backup* and the whole pocketful of treasures is copied safely to the cloud together, automatically, from then on.

CHAPTER 7

Backing Up an iPhone (iCloud)

If you have an iPhone, Apple's built-in backup is called **iCloud Backup**, and it's beautifully simple: once switched on, your iPhone backs itself up every night while it charges, all on its own. Let's turn it on and check it's working.

Turning on iCloud Backup

1. Open **Settings** (the grey gear icon).
2. Tap your **name** at the very top of the screen.
3. Tap **iCloud**.
4. Tap **iCloud Backup** (you may need to scroll, or tap “Backups” first).
5. Turn the switch for **Back Up This iPhone** to green (on).
6. Tap **Back Up Now** once, over Wi-Fi, to make your first backup right away.

How it works from then on

Once it's on, your iPhone backs itself up **automatically** whenever it's charging, locked, and connected to Wi-Fi — which, for most people, means every night on the nightstand. You never have to think about it again. The only thing to keep an eye on is whether you have enough iCloud space, which we cover in Part 6.

TIP

Plug in on Wi-Fi overnight — that's the whole routine

The entire maintenance of an iPhone backup is this: charge your phone overnight on Wi-Fi. That's when it quietly backs itself up. If you do that most nights, you're protected, full stop. No app to open, no button to press. The best backup is the one that happens without you lifting a finger.

GOOD TO KNOW

iCloud gives you 5 GB free — which fills up fast

Apple includes **5 gigabytes** of iCloud storage free, and a lifetime of photos sails past that quickly. So you'll likely see a “not enough iCloud storage” message at some point. That's normal, and it's not a crisis — Part 6 explains your options, which range from a dollar a month for more space to backing up photos a different way. For now, just switch backup on.

CHAPTER 8

Backing Up an Android Phone (Google)

If you have an Android phone — a Samsung, a Google Pixel, a Motorola, and so on — your backup runs through your **Google Account**, and it works much the same gentle way: set it once, and it keeps itself backed up.

Turning on Google backup

1. Open **Settings** on your phone.
2. Scroll to **Google** (or search “backup” in Settings' search box).
3. Tap **Backup** (sometimes under “Google” then “Backup,” or “System → Backup”).
4. Make sure **Back up to Google One / Google Drive** is turned on.
5. Tap **Back up now** for the first one, over Wi-Fi.

Photos get their own app: Google Photos

On Android, your **photos** are usually backed up by a separate, excellent app called **Google Photos**. Open it, tap your picture in the top corner, and make sure **Backup** is turned **on**. From then on, every photo you take is copied to your Google account automatically. We give photos their own part next, because they matter most.

GOOD TO KNOW

Google gives you 15 GB free — shared across everything

Google includes **15 gigabytes** free, which is more than Apple — but it's shared between your Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos all together, so it too fills up over time. Same story as iCloud: it's normal, it's not urgent, and Part 6 lays out your choices. Switch backup on now and sort the space later.

TIP

Samsung phones have their own backup too — you can use both

Samsung phones offer their own **Samsung Cloud** / Smart Switch backup in addition to Google's. You don't have to choose — using Google's backup (and Google Photos for pictures) is the most universal approach and the one I'd steer most folks toward, since it carries over even if your next phone is a different brand.

CHAPTER 9

Backing Up Your Contacts and Messages

Photos get the glory, but losing your **contacts** — everyone's phone numbers — is its own special misery. The good news is that your contacts are almost certainly already being protected, as long as they're saved in the right place.

Where your contacts should live

Contacts are safest when they're stored in your **account** (your Apple/iCloud account or your Google account) rather than only on the phone's own chip or an old SIM card. Account-stored contacts ride along with your backup and reappear automatically on any new phone you sign into.

- **On iPhone:** Settings → your name → iCloud → make sure **Contacts** is turned on. Now they're kept safe in iCloud.
- **On Android:** contacts saved to your **Google account** are automatically backed up and synced. In the Contacts app settings you can confirm they're saving to Google.

GOOD TO KNOW

Messages can be backed up too — with a small catch

Text messages are included in your iPhone's iCloud backup and your Android's Google backup. One thing to know: certain chat apps, like **WhatsApp**, keep their *own* separate backup you turn on inside that app (WhatsApp → Settings → Chats → Chat Backup). If your important conversations are in such an app, switch on its own backup too. See the WhatsApp manual in this series for the details.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never rebuild your address book from scratch again

With contacts saved to your account, getting a new phone becomes a joy instead of a chore: you sign in, and everyone's numbers simply appear, exactly as they were. No borrowing the family's phones to collect numbers, no lost connections. Your whole address book rides safely along with you, for life.

CHAPTER 9a

How Long Backups Take, and Wi-Fi vs Data

Two practical questions come up the moment you turn backup on: how long will it take, and will it use up my internet or cost me money? Let's answer both so there are no surprises.

The first backup is the slow one

Your *very first* backup copies everything you've ever accumulated, so it can take hours — sometimes overnight — especially for a big photo collection. That's normal and only happens once. After that, each backup copies just what's *new* since last time, so it's quick and quiet. Be patient with the first one; plug in, connect to Wi-Fi, and let it run overnight.

Use Wi-Fi, not cellular data

Backups should run over **Wi-Fi** — your home internet — not your phone's **cellular data**, which is usually limited and can cost money if you go over. By default, both iPhone and Android back up over Wi-Fi only, so you're generally safe. If you have unlimited home internet (most folks do), backing up costs you nothing extra.

TIP

Overnight on Wi-Fi is the magic combination

The simple rule that handles both concerns: let backups happen **overnight, on Wi-Fi, while charging**. The phone has all night to finish, it's not using cellular data, and the battery drain doesn't matter because it's plugged in. Set it up this way once and you'll never think about speed or data again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Backups won't slow down your phone

A common worry is that backing up will make the phone sluggish. It won't — backups run quietly in the background, usually while you're asleep, and pause themselves if you pick up the phone to use it. You'll barely know it's happening. There's no performance price for being protected.

CHAPTER 9b

If You Don't Have Home Internet

Cloud backup needs internet, and not everyone has Wi-Fi at home. If that's you, don't worry — you can still protect your memories; you just lean on different methods.

Backing up without home Wi-Fi

- **An external drive** becomes your main backup — copy photos from your phone or computer to a drive (no internet needed). For a phone, this usually means connecting it to a computer, or using a special drive made to plug into a phone.
- **Free Wi-Fi spots** — a library, a family member's house, a coffee shop — let you run a cloud backup now and then. Connect, let it back up, and you're protected up to that point.
- **Ask family** — a child or grandchild can help copy your photos to a drive or run a backup when they visit.

GOOD TO KNOW

No internet is no excuse to go unprotected

Even entirely offline, a simple external-drive copy of your photos keeps them safe from the most common disaster — a lost or broken phone. The cloud is convenient, but it isn't the only path. If home internet isn't in the cards, a drive and an occasional visit to free Wi-Fi will still keep your memories secure.

FROM BILL

Let's find the right plan for your situation

Everyone's setup is different — some folks have fast Wi-Fi, some have none, some have a computer and some just a phone. There's a sensible backup plan for every one of those, and I'm happy to help you find yours. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll tailor something that fits your home and your devices.

PART 3

Your Photos — the Crown Jewels

Of everything a backup protects, photos are what people grieve most to lose. This part is devoted entirely to keeping your lifetime of pictures safe, and to sharing them with family.

CHAPTER 10

Why Photos Deserve Special Care

Let's be honest about what's really at stake. A lost document can be re-typed; a lost photo of a wedding, a late loved one, or a grandchild's first steps cannot be made again, ever. Photos are irreplaceable in a way nothing else on your device is, which is why they get their own part of this book.

The quiet risk sitting in your pocket

Most people's entire photo collection — sometimes tens of thousands of pictures spanning decades — exists in exactly *one* place: on their phone. One drop, one theft, one dead battery of a phone that won't turn back on, and all of it is gone. It's the single most common irreplaceable loss I see, and the single most preventable. By the end of this part, yours will be safe.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A lifetime of memories, made safe for good

Picture never having to fear losing your photos again — knowing that whatever happens to your phone, every picture is safe and will flow right onto the next one. That peace is entirely achievable, usually with one setting, and it's the most valuable thing this whole series can give you.

CHAPTER 11

iCloud Photos (for iPhone)

On an iPhone, the feature that keeps your photos safe is **iCloud Photos**. When it's on, every picture you take is copied up to iCloud automatically, within moments, and stays safe there even if your phone is lost.

Turning on iCloud Photos

1. Open **Settings** and tap your **name** at the top.
2. Tap **iCloud**, then **Photos**.
3. Turn on **Sync this iPhone** (older phones may say “iCloud Photos”).
4. That's it — from now on, new photos copy themselves to iCloud automatically.

GOOD TO KNOW

“Optimize storage” keeps room on your phone

On that same Photos screen you'll see **Optimize iPhone Storage**. Turn it on and your iPhone keeps smaller versions on the phone to save space, with the full-quality originals safe in iCloud — downloaded on demand when you open one. It's a clever way to carry a huge library on a phone with limited room. Your originals are never lost; they're just kept in the cloud.

HEADS UP

iCloud Photos syncs deletions — mind the Recently Deleted album

Remember the sync-versus-backup lesson: if you delete a photo on your phone with iCloud Photos on, it's removed from iCloud too. The safety net is the **Recently Deleted** album (in the Photos app, under Albums), which holds deleted pictures for **30 days** before they're gone for good. Check there first if a photo vanishes — and for true safety, keep an external-drive copy too (Part 5).

CHAPTER 12

Google Photos (for Android and iPhone)

Google Photos is a free, excellent photo-backup app — and here's a handy secret: it works on *both* Android phones and iPhones. Many people use it as their main photo safety net because it's generous, simple, and brand-independent.

Turning on backup in Google Photos

1. Install and open the **Google Photos** app (it's built in on most Android phones; download it from the App Store on an iPhone).
2. Sign in with your **Google account** (the same as your Gmail, if you have one).
3. Tap your **picture** in the top-right corner.
4. Make sure **Backup** is turned **on**. You can choose to back up only on Wi-Fi to save data.

From then on, every photo you take is safely copied to your Google account, viewable from any device by signing in at **photos.google.com**. It even groups your pictures by date, place, and the people in them, which makes finding an old photo wonderfully easy.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See your photos on any screen, anywhere

Once your photos are in Google Photos (or iCloud), they're no longer trapped on one phone. Sign in on your tablet, your computer, a new phone — and there they all are. Show the grandkids a slideshow on the big computer screen, or pull up a photo from ten years ago in seconds. Backed-up photos aren't just safe; they're far more enjoyable to use.

CHAPTER 13

Sharing Photos with Family

Backing up your photos opens a lovely door: sharing them easily with the people you love. Both iCloud and Google Photos let you create **shared albums** — a collection the whole family can see and add to.

Shared albums, in brief

- **On iPhone (Shared Albums):** in Photos, create a **Shared Album**, add the pictures you want, and invite family by their email or phone number. They can view and add their own.
- **In Google Photos:** select photos and tap **Share**, or make a shared album others can join by a link. Everyone's pictures gather in one place.
- You can even set up a shared album that *automatically* collects new photos of certain people — lovely for grandchildren.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everyone's photos, gathered in one happy place

A shared family album is one of technology's genuine joys: your daughter adds the grandkids' soccer pictures, you add the ones from Sunday dinner, and everyone sees them all without a single email. The memories pool together, and far-flung family feels a little closer. It all starts with having your photos backed up in the first place.

TIP

Sharing an album doesn't give away your whole library

A common worry: “if I share, can they see *all* my photos?” No. A shared album shows only the specific pictures you deliberately put in it — the rest of your collection stays completely private. You're handing over a chosen handful, not the keys to everything. Share freely; your privacy is intact.

CHAPTER 14

Old Printed Photos and Other Keepsakes

Backing up isn't only for digital pictures. Those shoeboxes of old printed photographs — the truly irreplaceable ones from before everything was digital — deserve protection too, and it's easier than you'd think to give them a safe digital copy.

Getting old photos into safe digital form

- **Snap them with your phone.** The simplest way: photograph your old prints in good light. They then back up with the rest of your photos automatically.
- **Use a scanning app.** Free apps (like Google's **PhotoScan**) are made for this — they straighten the picture and cut glare for a cleaner copy.
- **For big collections,** a scanning service can digitize boxes of prints and slides for you — worth it for a lifetime's worth.

FROM BILL

Digitizing old photos is a lovely afternoon project

Of all the technology tasks I help with, scanning a box of old family photographs is among the most rewarding — you end the day with decades of irreplaceable memories made safe forever and easy to share with the whole family. If you've got a shoebox you've been meaning to protect, it's a wonderful thing to tackle together. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll make a start.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Rescue the memories that exist in only one copy

Those old prints are the ultimate “one copy in one place” — a single fire or flood could erase them entirely. A digital copy, safely backed up, means they survive anything and can be shared with children and grandchildren who've never seen them. It's giving your family's history a second, safer life.

CHAPTER 14a

Finding and Organizing Your Photos

Once your photos are safely backed up, they become far easier to *enjoy* — because the same services that protect them also organize them cleverly. A little know-how turns a giant jumble of pictures into something you can actually find your way around.

Clever ways to find a photo

- **Search by what's in them.** Type “dog,” “beach,” or “birthday cake” in Google Photos or Apple Photos and it finds matching pictures — no labeling needed.
- **Browse by date or place.** Both apps group photos by when and where they were taken, so you can jump to “last Christmas” or “that trip.”
- **Find people.** The apps can gather all photos of a particular person together — lovely for pulling up every picture of a grandchild.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Backed-up photos are findable photos

The jump from “thousands of pictures I can never find in” to “type a word and there it is” is one of technology's real delights — and it comes free with having your photos in the cloud. Protecting them and enjoying them turn out to be the same act.

A gentle word on tidying

You can delete blurry shots and duplicates to save space, but do it gently — and remember deletions sync to the cloud. When in doubt, keep it; storage is cheap and a photo you delete today you can't get back after the 30-day grace period. Tidy if it brings you pleasure, but never feel you must.

TIP

Make an album of your very favorites

Amid thousands of photos, it's worth gathering your few dozen absolute treasures into one **Favorites** album (tap the heart on a photo, or create an album). Then your best memories are one tap away to show a visitor or enjoy yourself — and you know at a glance which ones matter most if you ever need to prioritize.

CHAPTER 14b

Videos: the Space-Hungry Memories

Videos deserve a special mention, because they're both precious and **enormous** — a single few-minute video can take as much room as hundreds of photos. That makes them the main reason cloud storage fills up, and worth a little thought.

Handling videos wisely

- **They back up the same way** as photos — if your photo backup is on, your videos are included automatically.
- **They eat storage fast,** so they're the first thing to move to an external drive if your cloud fills up.
- **The truly precious ones** — a wedding video, a grandchild's first words — deserve a spot on your home drive *as well as* the cloud, given how irreplaceable they are.

HEADS UP

Long videos are why “storage full” arrives

If your cloud fills up surprisingly fast, videos are almost always the culprit. Before deleting precious ones, copy them to an external drive where space is cheap and plentiful — then you can safely remove them from the cloud to free up room. Never delete an irreplaceable video just to make space without first tucking a copy somewhere safe.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Moving memories, kept forever

A video captures something a photo can't — a voice, a laugh, a way of moving. Those are among the most precious things you can own, and worth the extra care of a drive copy. Protect them well, and years from now you'll be grateful beyond measure to hear a loved one's voice again, exactly as it was.

PART 4

Backing Up Your Computer

If you have a Windows PC or a Mac, it holds documents, photos, and files worth protecting too. Here's how to set each kind of computer to keep itself safely backed up.

CHAPTER 15

What's On Your Computer Worth Saving

Phones get the attention, but a computer often holds things a phone doesn't: tax records, letters and documents, scanned paperwork, a lifetime of downloaded photos, and files you'd truly miss. If you use a computer at all, it deserves a backup too.

The usual treasures on a computer

- **Documents** — letters, forms, tax returns, records.
- **Photos** — often the master copy of a whole collection downloaded over the years.
- **Downloads** — receipts, statements, and things you've saved from email and the web.
- **Anything in your personal folders** — Desktop, Documents, Pictures.

HEADS UP

A computer's hard drive will eventually fail — all of them do

Every computer stores its files on a drive, and every drive has a lifespan. One day, often without warning, it stops working — and everything on it is gone unless it was backed up. This isn't bad luck; it's simple wear. The question isn't whether a drive will fail, but whether you'll have a backup when it does. Let's make sure you do.

CHAPTER 16

Backing Up a Windows PC

A Windows computer gives you a couple of friendly ways to keep a safe copy of your files. You can use the cloud (**OneDrive**, which is built in), an external drive (**File History**), or — best of all — both.

OneDrive: your files, safe in the cloud

OneDrive is Microsoft's cloud storage, built into Windows. When it's on, the files in your Desktop, Documents, and Pictures folders are copied to the cloud automatically and kept in step. Lose the computer, and they're waiting safe online.

1. Click the **OneDrive cloud icon** in the bottom-right corner of the screen (near the clock). If you don't see it, search “OneDrive” in the Start menu.
2. Sign in with your Microsoft account (or create one — it's free).
3. Choose **Back up these folders** and select Desktop, Documents, and Pictures.
4. Let it work. A green check on a file means it's safely backed up.

File History: a copy on an external drive

File History copies your files to an **external drive** you plug in, keeping older versions too. Plug in a drive, then search **“File History”** in the Start menu, choose your drive, and turn it on. From then on it backs up automatically whenever that drive is connected.

GOOD TO KNOW

OneDrive gives you 5 GB free; more comes with Microsoft 365

OneDrive includes **5 gigabytes** free. If you have a **Microsoft 365** subscription (the one that includes Word and Excel), that jumps to a full terabyte — plenty for most people. Either way, pairing OneDrive (cloud) with File History (a drive at home) gives you two separate copies, which is exactly the safety you want.

TIP

The green check is your reassurance

In OneDrive, a little **green check mark** beside a file or folder means “this is safely backed up to the cloud.” A pair of blue circling arrows means it's busy copying. Glancing for those green checks is a quick, comforting way to confirm your files are protected — no guesswork required.

CHAPTER 17

Backing Up a Mac

If you have an Apple computer (a Mac), you have two lovely built-in options: **Time Machine** for an external drive, and **iCloud** for the cloud. As always, using both is best.

Time Machine: the one-click drive backup

Time Machine is Apple's wonderfully simple backup to an external drive. Plug a drive in, and the Mac usually asks right away if you'd like to use it for Time Machine — say yes. From then on it backs up automatically every hour the drive is connected, keeping older versions so you can even recover a file as it was last week.

1. Plug an external drive into the Mac.
2. If asked “Use as a Time Machine backup disk?” click **Use as Backup Disk**.
3. If not asked, open **System Settings** → **General** → **Time Machine** → **Add Backup Disk** and choose your drive.
4. Leave the drive connected (or plug it in regularly) and it does the rest itself.

iCloud: your Mac's files in the cloud

A Mac can also keep its **Desktop and Documents** folders in iCloud, so they're safe online and appear on your other Apple devices. Turn it on in **System Settings** → your name → **iCloud** → and enable iCloud Drive's Desktop & Documents option.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Time Machine can turn back the clock on a mistake

Time Machine's name is apt: it doesn't just hold today's copy, it holds yesterday's and last week's too. Accidentally changed or deleted something and want it back as it was? You can “go back in time” and recover the earlier version. It's a backup *and* an undo button for your whole computer — genuinely reassuring to have running.

FROM BILL

Setting up computer backup is a great first visit

If your computer has never been backed up — and honestly, most I meet haven't been — this is one of the most valuable hours we can spend. We'll pick the right approach for your machine, get it running, and confirm it's truly working. You'll sleep better knowing your documents and photos are safe. Call (330) 200-8042 whenever you're ready.

CHAPTER 18

Chromebooks and Tablets

Not everyone has a traditional PC or Mac. If your “computer” is a **Chromebook** or you mainly use a **tablet**, the good news is that these are backed up more automatically than anything else — because they're built around the cloud from the start.

Chromebooks

A **Chromebook** saves most of your work straight to **Google Drive** in the cloud by design, so your documents are generally safe automatically. Just make sure you're signed in to your Google account and that files you care about are saved to Google Drive rather than only the device.

Tablets (iPad and Android tablets)

A tablet backs up exactly like a phone of the same family: an **iPad** uses iCloud Backup and iCloud Photos (Part 2 and 3 apply word-for-word); an **Android tablet** uses Google backup and Google Photos. Turn those on, and your tablet protects itself just like a phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

The simpler the device, the more automatic the backup

There's a happy pattern here: the newer and simpler a device is — a Chromebook, a tablet, a phone — the more it backs itself up to the cloud without you doing much at all. It's mainly traditional computers that need a deliberate setup. So if your main device is a tablet or Chromebook, you may be most of the way to safe already — just confirm the switches are on.

CHAPTER 18a

What's Already Safe (and What Isn't)

Before you worry about backing up every last thing, it helps to know that a good deal of your digital life is *already* safe without any effort — and to know the few things that genuinely aren't. This saves you fretting over what's covered and focusing on what matters.

Already protected (if you're signed in)

- **Your email** — lives on the provider's computers (Gmail, Outlook, iCloud), not on your device, so it's safe even if your device is lost. Sign in on a new one and it's all there.
- **Contacts saved to your account** — ride along automatically.
- **Anything in Google Drive, iCloud Drive, or OneDrive** — already in the cloud by definition.
- **Things you bought** — e-books, music, apps — can be re-downloaded from the store any time.

NOT automatically safe

- **Photos and videos stored only on the device** — the big one, unless photo backup is on.
- **Files saved only to your computer's own folders** — unless a computer backup is running.
- **Documents and scans kept only in one place.**

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You're probably safer than you feared — and now you know the gaps

Here's a comfort: much of your life — email, purchases, cloud files — is already protected just by being signed into your accounts. The job this book really tackles is the handful of things that aren't: the photos and files living in only one place. Close those gaps, and you're fully covered.

CHAPTER 18b

Don't Forget Your Passwords and Key Logins

One kind of “backup” people overlook entirely: a record of how to get *into* your accounts. If a backup restores your photos but you can't remember the password to the account they're stored in, you're still stuck. Let's protect your keys, too.

Keeping your logins safe

- **Write your most important logins down on paper** — email, your cloud account, your bank — and keep that paper somewhere safe at home (not a sticky note on the computer).
- **Consider a password manager** — your phone and computer can securely remember and fill passwords for you, locked behind your device's own passcode or fingerprint.
- **Make sure a trusted person knows** where your key information is kept, in case of emergency.

STAY SAFE

Your email and cloud passwords are the master keys

Of all your logins, the two that matter most are your **email** and your **cloud/backup account** — because almost everything else can be reset through them, and your backups live inside them. Guard those two especially well, keep a written record somewhere safe, and turn on two-step verification. Lose everything else and you can recover; lose these and it gets much harder.

FROM BILL

A “what if something happens to me” plan is a kindness to your family

It's not a cheerful subject, but it's an important one: making sure a trusted loved one can find your key passwords and access your photos if you're ever unable to. A simple sealed envelope of essentials, kept safe, spares your family real difficulty. If you'd like help putting together a sensible, secure plan, I'm glad to — call (330) 200-8042.

PART 5

External Drives & Keeping a Copy at Home

The physical backup you hold in your own hand: choosing an external drive, copying your treasures onto it, and why a home copy completes your safety net.

CHAPTER 19

Why Keep a Copy You Can Hold

The cloud is wonderful, but there's real peace of mind in a backup you can hold in your hand — a copy that's entirely yours, needs no internet, and no company can ever lose, change, or charge you a monthly fee for. That's what an **external drive** gives you, and it's the third leg of the 3-2-1 rule.

What an external drive is

An **external hard drive** is a small box — often no bigger than a deck of cards or a paperback — that stores files. You plug it into your computer with a cable, copy your treasures onto it, and then it holds them safely. Unplug it, and your backup sits quietly in a drawer, immune to anything that might happen online.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A backup no outage or fee can touch

A drive in your drawer answers to no one but you. No monthly subscription, no “storage full” messages, no reliance on the internet or on a company staying in business. For your most precious, irreplaceable things, there's a deep comfort in a copy that's wholly in your own hands. The cloud and a home drive together cover each other's weak spots perfectly.

CHAPTER 20

Choosing an External Drive

You don't need to be technical to pick a good drive. A few plain pointers will get you exactly the right thing without overspending or getting lost in jargon.

What to look for

Consider	In plain terms
Size (capacity)	Measured in “TB” (terabytes). A 1TB or 2TB drive holds a huge amount — plenty for photos and files.
Type	An “SSD” is smaller, faster, sturdier (no moving parts); a plain “hard drive” is cheaper per gigabyte. Either works.
Connection	Match your computer's socket — most modern ones use “USB-C”; older ones use the flat “USB-A.” When unsure, ask.
Brand	Stick to well-known names (Western Digital, Seagate, Samsung, SanDisk, Crucial) for reliability.

TIP

A 1TB drive from a known brand is plenty for most folks

If you'd like a simple recommendation to avoid overthinking it: a **1 or 2 terabyte** drive from a familiar brand, costing somewhere in the range of a nice dinner out, is more than enough for a lifetime of photos and documents for most people. Bring it home, and the next chapter shows you how to use it. If you'd like help choosing, I'm glad to point you to the right one.

HEADS UP

Match the plug to your computer

The one thing people get wrong is buying a drive whose cable doesn't fit their computer. Before you buy, check whether your computer has the small oval **USB-C** ports or the older flat rectangular **USB-A** ones — or snap a photo of your computer's sockets to show the store. Many drives come with adapters, but it's worth a moment's check so it simply plugs in when you get home.

CHAPTER 21

Copying Your Treasures to a Drive

Here's the hands-on part: actually putting a copy of your files onto the drive. It's simpler than it sounds — at heart, you're just dragging folders from one place to another.

The basic copy, step by step

1. **Plug the drive in.** A new icon for it appears — in **File Explorer** on Windows ("This PC"), or on the **Desktop** / in Finder on a Mac.
2. **Open your files.** Find the folders you want to protect — Pictures, Documents, and so on.
3. **Drag them onto the drive's icon,** or copy (right-click → Copy) and paste them onto the drive. A progress bar shows the copying.
4. **Wait for it to finish,** then eject the drive safely (right-click its icon → Eject) before unplugging. Done — your copy is made.

Make it a habit, or make it automatic

A copy is only as current as the last time you made it. You can either repeat this now and then (say, the first of each month — a good calendar reminder), or let the automatic tools do it: **File History** on Windows or **Time Machine** on a Mac (Part 4) will keep the drive updated by themselves whenever it's plugged in. Automatic is better, because it never forgets.

TIP

Set a monthly reminder if you copy by hand

If you prefer copying files yourself rather than using the automatic tools, put a recurring reminder in your phone or calendar — "Back up to the drive" on the first of the month. A backup you make faithfully once a month is worlds better than one you keep meaning to make. See the Calendars & Reminders manual for setting that up.

FROM BILL

First time with a drive? Let's do it together

Copying files to a drive and ejecting it safely is one of those things that's easy once you've done it once with someone watching over your shoulder. If you've bought a drive and aren't quite sure where to start, call (330) 200-8042 — we'll copy your photos across together, and you'll have it for good.

CHAPTER 22

Keeping Your Home Backup Safe

A home drive is a wonderful thing, but it shares your home's risks — so a little thought about where it lives makes it even safer.

Good habits for a home backup

- **Store it apart from the computer** when not in use — a different room, a drawer, a fire-resistant box — so one accident doesn't claim both.
- **Consider a second drive kept elsewhere** — at a child's house, say — for truly irreplaceable things. That's your “offsite” copy if you'd rather not use the cloud.
- **Label it** so you know what's on it and when you last updated it.
- **Replace it every few years** — drives don't last forever, so refresh an aging one.

GOOD TO KNOW

Cloud and drive together is the ideal

You may be wondering: cloud or drive — which is better? The honest answer is **both**. The cloud protects you from anything that happens at home (fire, flood, theft); the drive protects you from anything that happens online (an account lockout, a company glitch, a monthly fee you'd rather not pay). Together they cover every angle. You don't have to choose; the two make a perfect pair.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The complete safety net, in your own hands

With your photos backing up to the cloud *and* a copy on a drive in your drawer, you've built the full 3-2-1 safety net — the same standard the professionals use. Short of a truly extraordinary run of bad luck, nothing can now take your memories from you. That's as safe as it gets, and you did it yourself.

CHAPTER 22a

Flash Drives, Hard Drives, and the Differences

“External drive” covers a few different gadgets, and folks sometimes aren't sure which they need. Here's a plain comparison so you can buy with confidence.

The main kinds

Gadget	What it's best for
USB flash drive (“thumb drive”)	Tiny, keychain-sized. Great for a handful of files; smaller capacity.
Portable hard drive	Pocket-sized box; big capacity, affordable. The usual choice for backing up photos.
Portable SSD	Like a hard drive but faster and sturdier (no moving parts); costs a bit more.
Desktop hard drive	Larger, needs its own power plug; most capacity for the money, stays on a desk.

TIP

For backing up memories, a portable hard drive or SSD is ideal

For most people protecting a lifetime of photos, a **portable hard drive or SSD** of 1 to 2 terabytes hits the sweet spot — roomy, affordable, and small enough to tuck in a drawer. A tiny flash drive is fine for moving a few files but too small for a whole collection. When in doubt, the pocket-sized portable drive is the safe pick.

HEADS UP

A flash drive is for carrying, not long-term keeping

Little USB flash drives (thumb drives) are handy for moving files between devices, but they're easy to lose and not the most reliable for *long-term* storage — don't rely on one as your only copy of something precious. For a real backup you'll keep for years, a proper hard drive or SSD is the sounder choice.

CHAPTER 22b

Plugging In and Ejecting Safely

Using a drive safely comes down to two small habits: plugging it in the right way, and "ejecting" it before you yank the cable out. Both are easy once you know them.

Plugging in

Connect the drive's cable to a **USB port** on your computer — a small rectangular or oval socket, often on the side or back. The drive then appears on your screen: in **File Explorer** under "This PC" on Windows, or on the **Desktop** / in Finder on a Mac. Now you can copy files to and from it.

Ejecting before you unplug

1. When you're done, don't just pull the cable — tell the computer first.
2. **On Windows:** click the little USB icon near the clock and choose **Eject**, or right-click the drive in File Explorer → **Eject**.
3. **On a Mac:** drag the drive's icon to the Trash (it turns into an Eject symbol), or click the little eject arrow beside its name.
4. Wait for "safe to remove," then unplug. Done.

HEADS UP

Ejecting prevents a corrupted file

Why bother ejecting? Because the computer may still be finishing a write to the drive, and yanking the cable mid-write can damage a file — occasionally the very backup you just made. Ejecting first tells the computer to finish up and let go cleanly. It takes two seconds and spares you a nasty surprise. Make it a habit.

TIP

No eject option? It's usually safe after copying finishes

If you can't find the eject button, the practical rule is: wait until any copying progress bar has fully finished and the drive's light (if it has one) stops blinking, then unplug. But do learn the proper eject step — it's the sure way, and once you've done it a couple of times it's second nature.

PART 6

The Cloud & Storage Space

Understanding cloud storage plainly, what the plans cost, which to choose, and — the question everyone asks — what to do when it says you're out of space.

CHAPTER 23

The Cloud, Demystified

The word “cloud” gets thrown around until it sounds like something only a technician could understand. Let's put it to rest for good, because it's genuinely simple.

What the cloud really is

“The cloud” is just a friendly name for **big, secure computers run by a company, which your device reaches over the internet.** When your photos “go to the cloud,” a copy travels over your home internet to Apple's, Google's, or Microsoft's computers, where it's kept safe in a guarded building. Your things aren't floating in the sky — they're sitting on a hard drive in a company's data center, looked after far better than most of us could look after them at home.

GOOD TO KNOW

Is the cloud safe and private?

For the big, reputable providers, yes — your data is encrypted (scrambled so others can't read it) and heavily protected. The real risks to your cloud account aren't the company's security; they're a weak password or falling for a scam. So protect your account with a strong password and two-step verification (we'll touch on this), and you can trust the cloud with your memories.

Why the cloud is such a good backup

The cloud's great virtue is that it's **offsite** — somewhere else entirely. Whatever befalls your home or your devices, that copy is untouched, and it's reachable from any new device the moment you sign in. For most people, turning on cloud backup is the single most protective thing they can do, which is why this book keeps coming back to it.

CHAPTER 24

The Storage Plans and What They Cost

Each service gives you some storage free, and sells more for a small monthly fee when you fill it. Here's the honest lay of the land. (Prices change, so treat these as rough guides and check the current figure before you pay.)

The free allowances

Service	Free storage
Apple iCloud	5 GB free — modest; a photo library fills it fast.
Google (One)	15 GB free — shared across Gmail, Drive, and Photos.
Microsoft OneDrive	5 GB free — or 1 TB with a Microsoft 365 subscription.

Paid plans, roughly

When you need more, the upgrades are inexpensive — often around **a dollar or two a month** for enough space to cover a phone, and a few dollars more for a large amount that covers everything. As a rough picture: Apple's iCloud+ starts near $1 a month for 50 GB and about $3 for 200 GB; Google's plans start near $2 a month for 100 GB; both offer a large 2 TB tier for around $10 a month. For most folks, the smallest paid tier is plenty.

TIP

A dollar a month is cheap insurance for your memories

When the free space runs out, the small monthly fee for more is genuinely one of the best values in technology — a cup of coffee's worth, once a month, to keep a lifetime of irreplaceable photos safe. If the choice is between paying a dollar or two and risking your memories, the dollar is money very well spent. Don't let a “storage full” message scare you off backing up.

GOOD TO KNOW

Family sharing can split the cost

Both Apple and Google let a family **share** a larger storage plan — so one 2 TB plan, split among the household, can cover everyone for a few dollars a month each. If your children or grandchildren use the same service, ask them about family sharing; it often works out cheaper for all of you.

CHAPTER 25

“Storage Full” — What to Do

This is the message that worries people most, so let's handle it calmly. “Storage full” or “not enough iCloud storage” is **not** an emergency and **not** something you did wrong — it simply means your free space has filled up, as it does for nearly everyone. You have three good options.

Your three choices

1. **Buy a little more space** — the simplest fix. A dollar or two a month and the message goes away, your backups resume, and you stop worrying. For most people, this is the right answer.
2. **Free up space** — delete things you don't need: old videos (which are huge), screenshots, duplicate photos, and emptied-out apps. This can reclaim a surprising amount.
3. **Move photos to a drive and off the cloud** — copy your photos to an external drive (Part 5), then it's safe to remove the oldest from the cloud to make room.

HEADS UP

Don't ignore it — a full cloud stops backing up

Here's why “storage full” matters: once the cloud is full, **your phone quietly stops backing up**, and new photos aren't protected until you make room. So don't just dismiss the message and forget it — pick one of the three fixes. The danger isn't the message; it's the unprotected weeks that follow if you leave it unaddressed.

FROM BILL

Sorting out “storage full” is a common, easy call

A “storage full” message is one of the most frequent reasons folks call me, and it's nearly always a quick, calm fix — we decide together whether to buy a little space or clear some out, and get your backups flowing again. Don't let it nag at you. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll settle it in a few minutes.

CHAPTER 25a

Reading a Storage Breakdown

When space runs low, both Apple and Google show you a helpful **breakdown** — a little chart of what's using your storage. Learning to read it tells you exactly where to trim, so you clear the right things instead of guessing.

Finding the breakdown

- **iPhone:** Settings → your name → iCloud → **Manage Account Storage** (or “Manage Storage”). You'll see Photos, Backups, and so on, largest first.
- **Android/Google:** open the **Google One** app or go to one.google.com → **Storage** to see how Gmail, Drive, and Photos each use space.

Almost always, **Photos** (and especially videos) top the list, with device **Backups** second. That tells you where the space is going — and where a little clearing, or a move to an external drive, frees the most room.

TIP

Target the biggest items first

When trimming storage, go after the **largest** items — long videos, old device backups you no longer need, huge email attachments. Deleting a hundred tiny screenshots barely moves the needle; removing a few big videos (safely copied to a drive first) can free gigabytes at once. The breakdown shows you exactly which items are the giants.

GOOD TO KNOW

Old device backups can often be cleared

If you've had several phones, iCloud or Google may still hold **backups of old devices** you no longer use — quietly taking up space. In the storage breakdown you can safely delete the backup of a phone you've long since retired, reclaiming room without losing anything you still use. Just be sure it really is an old device before removing it.

CHAPTER 25b

Deciding: Pay, Clear, or Move

When the cloud fills, you face the same friendly fork in the road each time: pay a little for more space, clear some out, or move things to a drive. Here's how to decide without agonizing.

A simple way to choose

If this is you…	Lean toward…
You shop/photograph a lot and value ease	**Pay** — a dollar or two a month ends the problem for good.
You have time and like tidying	**Clear** — remove big videos and old backups you've saved elsewhere.
You want to avoid monthly fees	**Move** — copy photos to an external drive, then free the cloud.
You want maximum safety	**Pay AND move** — keep the cloud copy and add a drive. Belt and braces.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

There's no wrong answer — only an unprotected one

Whichever you choose, the goal is the same: keep your backups flowing so your memories stay safe. Paying is simplest, moving avoids fees, clearing costs nothing — all are fine. The only poor choice is to dismiss the “storage full” message and leave your recent photos unprotected. Pick any path that keeps the safety net intact.

FROM BILL

Talk it through with me if you're torn

Deciding whether to pay for storage or clear it out is a small but real decision, and it's one I help folks weigh all the time — it comes down to your habits and what you've already got saved where. If you're unsure which path fits you, call (330) 200-8042 and we'll think it through together and get your backups humming again.

PART 7

Getting It All Back

The payoff: using your backup to restore a lost file, set up a new device, and — crucially — checking that your backups are actually working before you ever need them.

CHAPTER 26

Restoring a Single Lost File or Photo

A backup earns its keep the day you reach for it. Most of the time that's not a grand disaster — it's just one photo or file you deleted by mistake and want back. Here's how to recover one, calmly.

Getting back a recently deleted photo

- **On iPhone/iPad:** open **Photos** → **Albums** → scroll to **Recently Deleted**. Tap the photo, then **Recover**. (Items wait here 30 days.)
- **In Google Photos:** tap the menu → **Trash** (or “Bin”), find the photo, and tap **Restore**. (Also about 30 days.)
- **On a computer:** deleted files sit in the **Recycle Bin** (Windows) or **Trash** (Mac) until emptied — open it, right-click the file, and choose **Restore** / **Put Back**.

TIP

Check the “deleted” folder first — it's the usual rescue

Before you fear the worst about a missing photo or file, always check the Recently Deleted / Trash / Recycle Bin folder. The great majority of “lost” items are sitting right there, perfectly fine, waiting to be put back with one tap. It's the first place to look, and usually the last place you need to.

Recovering an older version with Time Machine or File History

If a file was deleted long ago, or you want it as it was *last week*, the external-drive backups come into their own. **Time Machine** (Mac) and **File History** (Windows) let you browse back through time and restore an earlier version — open the tool, find the date you want, select the file, and restore. It's like having a time machine for your documents, which is exactly what Apple named it.

CHAPTER 27

Setting Up a New Phone from a Backup

Here's the moment all your backing up pays off most visibly: getting a new phone, and watching your entire life — photos, contacts, apps, settings — pour onto it automatically. What used to be a dreaded chore becomes almost magical.

The restore, in brief

1. Turn on the new phone and follow the setup prompts.
2. When asked, choose to **restore from a backup** — **iCloud** on an iPhone, your **Google account** on Android.
3. Sign in with the **same account** you used on your old phone (this is why that account's password matters).
4. Choose your most recent backup, connect to Wi-Fi, and let it work — it may take a while, so keep it charging.
5. When it finishes, your photos, contacts, apps, and settings are all there, just as they were.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A new phone that already feels like your old one

This is the quiet reward for every backup you ever set up: you unbox a brand-new phone, sign in, and within an hour it's *your* phone — same photos, same contacts, same apps in the same places. No frantic collecting of numbers, no mourning lost pictures. Upgrading becomes something to look forward to instead of dread.

FROM BILL

New-device day is my favorite kind of visit

Moving everything to a new phone or computer is one of the most common and most rewarding things I help with — we make sure the backup is current, restore it onto the new device, and check everything came across. If you've got a new phone in a box and feel unsure, don't let it sit there. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll bring it to life together, with nothing lost.

CHAPTER 28

Checking Your Backup Actually Works

This is the most overlooked step in the whole business, and the most important: a backup you *think* is running but isn't is worse than none, because it gives false comfort. So let's learn to confirm, with your own eyes, that it's genuinely working.

Simple checks you can do yourself

- **Phone backup:** on iPhone, Settings → your name → iCloud → iCloud Backup → look for "Last successful backup" with a *recent* date. On Android, check the Google backup screen for a recent date.
- **Photos:** open the photo app and look for "Backup complete" or a recent backup time — not a spinning "backing up…" that never finishes.
- **Computer (OneDrive):** look for the green check marks on your files.
- **Drive backups:** open Time Machine or File History and confirm the *last backup date* is recent.

HEADS UP

A "last backup" date weeks old is a warning

If you check and find the last successful backup was *weeks or months* ago, something has stalled — usually a full cloud (Part 6), a phone that isn't getting onto Wi-Fi overnight, or a switch quietly turned off. Don't ignore it; a stale backup won't have your recent photos. Fix the cause, or call me, and make a fresh backup. The date is your proof; trust it over assumptions.

TIP

Test a restore once, so you know it works

The surest confidence comes from actually recovering something. Try restoring one deleted photo from the cloud, or opening a file from your drive backup. When you see it come back, you *know* your safety net is real — not just hopefully there. It's worth doing once so you never have to wonder.

CHAPTER 29

Backups and Staying Safe

Your backups protect your memories — so it's worth a moment to protect the *backups*, and to know how a good backup is itself a shield against certain scams.

Protecting your backup account

- **Guard the account password** — your iCloud, Google, or Microsoft account holds your whole backup, so give it a strong, unique password.
- **Turn on two-step verification** — a texted code at sign-in, the single best lock. Even a thief with your password can't reach your backup without your phone.
- **Never share account codes** — no real company asks you to read back a login code. Anyone who does is trying to break in.

STAY SAFE

A good backup takes the teeth out of “ransom” scams

Some of the nastiest scams threaten to lock or destroy your files unless you pay. Here's the beautiful thing: if you have a solid backup, that threat is almost toothless — you can wipe the trouble away and restore your files from your safe copy, owing the crook nothing. Backing up isn't just insurance against accidents; it's genuine protection against criminals. One more reason it's the most valuable habit in this series.

FROM BILL

Let's lock down your backup account together

Setting a strong password and switching on two-step verification for your backup account is quick, painless with company, and deeply worthwhile — it's the lock on the vault where all your memories live. If you'd like that peace of mind, call (330) 200-8042 and we'll set it up in a few minutes.

CHAPTER 29a

A Backup Routine You'll Actually Keep

The best backup is the one that keeps happening without you having to remember. Let's turn everything in this book into a simple, lasting routine — mostly automatic, with just a couple of small habits for you.

The set-and-forget core

- **Phone to cloud:** turned on once, happens every night on Wi-Fi. Nothing for you to do.
- **Photos to cloud:** turned on once, every new photo saved automatically.
- **Computer:** OneDrive or Time Machine/File History running on their own.

The two small habits

- **Once a month,** glance at your phone's "last backup" date to confirm it's recent. Thirty seconds.
- **Once a month or so,** plug in your external drive to let it update (or copy your newest photos across by hand).

TIP

Pin your monthly check to something you already do

Habits stick when you attach them to an existing one. Tie your monthly backup check to something you already do on a schedule — paying a bill, the first of the month, a standing phone call. "When I pay the electric bill, I glance at my backup date." That little anchor makes the habit effortless and lasting.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Mostly automatic, entirely reassuring

This is the whole point: a routine that runs itself, with just a quick monthly glance to confirm all is well. You get the deep peace of mind of knowing your memories are safe, without it becoming a chore. Set the automatic pieces up once, add the small monthly habit, and you're protected for years to come.

CHAPTER 29b

Restoring a Whole Computer

We've covered getting back a single file and setting up a new phone. The last piece is the big one: recovering an *entire computer* after it's died or been replaced. It sounds daunting, but with a backup in place it's methodical, not frightening.

The general idea

- **On a Mac with Time Machine:** set up the new (or repaired) Mac and, when offered, choose to restore from your Time Machine drive. It rebuilds your whole computer — files, apps, settings — as it was.
- **On Windows with File History / OneDrive:** sign into OneDrive on the new PC and your backed-up files flow down; use File History to restore anything kept on your drive.
- **Either way,** having the backup is what makes it possible — without it, there's nothing to restore from.

FROM BILL

A full restore is a job worth doing together

Rebuilding a whole computer from a backup is very doable, but it's also exactly the kind of task where a guiding hand saves time and worry — making sure the right backup is chosen, the restore goes smoothly, and everything comes across. If you're facing a dead or replaced computer, don't go it alone. Call (330) 200-8042 and we'll bring it back together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Even total loss becomes recoverable

Here's the ultimate reassurance of a good backup: even if a computer is stolen, destroyed, or simply dies, you lose *nothing that mattered* — a new machine, your backup, and an afternoon, and you're whole again. That's the difference between a catastrophe and an inconvenience, and it's entirely within your reach.

CHAPTER 29c

Passing Memories On to Family

A backup doesn't just protect your memories for you — it makes them easy to share with, and eventually pass on to, the people you love. A little thought here turns your photo collection into a gift for generations.

Sharing your collection

- **A copy on a drive** for a child or grandchild — hand them a drive with your photos, and they have their own safe copy of the family history.
- **A shared album** (Part 3) lets family enjoy your pictures now, and keeps a copy in their accounts too.
- **Legacy settings** — both Apple and Google let you name a trusted person who can access your account if something happens to you, so your memories are never locked away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your photos become a family treasure, not a mystery

The saddest thing isn't just losing photos — it's a family unable to reach a loved one's pictures because no one knew the password. A little planning — a shared drive, a legacy contact, a note of where things are kept — means your memories flow down to those who will treasure them, exactly as you'd want. That's backing up at its most meaningful.

FROM BILL

Setting up a legacy plan is a loving, quiet thing to do

Arranging for your photos and accounts to pass safely to family isn't morbid — it's one of the kindest, most practical gifts you can leave. It takes very little time to set up a legacy contact and jot down where the essentials are kept. If you'd like help putting it in place, I'd be honored to — call (330) 200-8042 and we'll handle it gently and well.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it — and a one-page plan to keep by your chair.

CHAPTER 30

When to Call Bill

This book is here so you can protect your own memories with confidence. But part of being truly helpful is being honest about when a hand from someone who does this all day will save you time and worry — and backups are one area where it's genuinely worth getting right the first time, because the stakes are your irreplaceable photos.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like to **set up backups for the first time** and want them done properly, so you can truly stop worrying.
- You **checked and your last backup is old** — something's stalled and you'd like help finding why.
- You're facing a **"storage full"** message and aren't sure whether to buy space or clear some out.
- You've got a **new phone or computer** to set up from a backup.
- You want to **digitize old printed photos** or copy everything to a new external drive.
- You fear you've **lost something precious** — call quickly; the sooner we look, the more we can often recover.

Things you can handle yourself

Turning on iCloud or Google backup, switching on photo backup, checking a "last backup" date, recovering a recently deleted photo, and copying files to a drive — these are all yours now. Use this book as your guide, go at your own pace, and remember that you can't break anything by turning backups *on*.

FROM BILL

How I like to help

I'm Bill, and I've spent 30+ years helping folks feel at home with their technology, right here in Portage County, Ohio. I don't rush, I don't talk down to anyone, and there's no such thing as a silly question at my table. Whether it's a quick phone answer or sitting down together to protect a lifetime of photos, we'll get it done. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**.

STAY SAFE

If you've just lost a device, act quickly

If a phone or computer has just been lost, stolen, or died, reach out sooner rather than later — and if it was backed up, breathe easy, because your memories are safe and waiting. If you're not sure whether it was backed up, let's check together right away; sometimes there's still a window to recover things. Prompt action gives us the most options.

Thank you for taking the time to protect what matters most. Of everything in this series, the afternoon you spend on backups may be the one that saves you real heartache someday. Keep this book handy, check your backups now and then, and don't be a stranger.

— Bill

CHAPTER 31

Your Backup Cheat-Sheet

Fold the corner and keep this by your chair. Your whole backup plan, on one page.

The simple plan (3-2-1)

The three copies	Where
Copy 1 — your device	The originals on your phone and computer.
Copy 2 — the cloud	iCloud (Apple), Google (Android), or OneDrive (Windows). Turn backup ON.
Copy 3 — a drive at home	An external drive, updated monthly or automatically.

Turn these ON (do it once)

- **iPhone:** Settings → [your name] → iCloud → iCloud Backup **on**, and Photos **on**.
- **Android:** Settings → Google → Backup **on**; and Google Photos backup **on**.
- **Windows:** OneDrive **on** (back up Desktop, Documents, Pictures); File History to a drive.
- **Mac:** Time Machine to a drive **on**; iCloud Desktop & Documents **on**.

Check it's working (now and then)

- Look for a **recent** “last backup” date on your phone.
- Look for **green checks** (OneDrive) or “Backup complete” (Photos).
- A date weeks old means something stalled — fix it or call Bill.

Keep these handy

My details	
My cloud service	iCloud / Google / OneDrive (circle one)
My account email	_____
Where my password is kept	_____
My external drive is kept	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your memories are safe now — rest easy

Look what you've done: your photos, files, and memories now live in more than one place, beyond the reach of a dropped phone, a dead computer, or a slip of the finger. That's not a small accomplishment — it's genuine peace of mind, the kind that lets you stop worrying and simply enjoy your devices. Be proud, keep this plan close, and sleep easy.

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