BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Bluetooth Pairing Anything to Anything

Earbuds, cars, TVs, hearing aids, keyboards and more — connected in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide to Bluetooth for every household

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For iPhone, Android, Windows, Mac, TVs and cars · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to Bluetooth, the short-range wireless connection that links your phone, tablet or computer to earbuds, speakers, cars, TVs, hearing aids, keyboards and more. Learn the one simple pattern in Part 1, then jump to the chapter for your device. Read it in any order and at your own pace. If a screen looks a little different on your device, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What Bluetooth is, the difference between pairing and connecting, and the one simple pattern that works for nearly every gadget you'll ever own.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. I'm Bill, and for more than 30 years I've helped people make technology behave. Here in Portage County, one of the most common things I'm asked is some version of "How do I get this thing to talk to my phone?" The "thing" changes: new earbuds, a car, a speaker from the grandkids, a keyboard for the tablet, hearing aids, TV headphones. The answer is almost always the same skill, called **Bluetooth pairing**.

That's the good news this guide is built on. Learn one skill, and you can hook up dozens of devices. Once you've paired a pair of headphones, pairing a speaker or a car feels familiar, because it really is the same steps wearing a different hat.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

It explains Bluetooth in plain English, then walks you slowly through pairing on every common device: iPhone and iPad, Android and Samsung Galaxy phones, Windows and Mac computers, Chromebooks, TVs and streaming boxes, cars, earbuds, hearing aids, keyboards and game controllers. When something won't pair, the troubleshooting ladder in Chapter 31, *When Pairing Fails: The Troubleshooting Ladder* fixes most problems in a few minutes.

Who this guide is for

- Anyone who just unwrapped something wireless and isn't sure where to start.
- Anyone whose earbuds, car or speaker "used to work" and suddenly won't.
- Family members who set up devices for a parent and want clear steps to leave behind.
- People with hearing aids who want calls and TV sound to go straight to their ears.

The big promise: you can't break it

Pairing is one of the safest things you can try. If it doesn't work, nothing is harmed; you just try again. "Forgetting" a device only erases the handshake between two gadgets, and you can pair them again in a minute. The one place to slow down is a full **network settings reset** on a phone, which also erases saved Wi-Fi passwords. This guide flags that step clearly, and it's the last rung of the ladder, not the first.

You're never stuck alone

Take this at your own pace and in any order. Jump straight to the chapter for your device. And if you get stuck, call or text me at **(330) 200-8042**. Sometimes ten minutes with someone beside you is all it takes.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Bluetooth Is (and Isn't)

Bluetooth is a short-range radio built into phones, tablets, computers, TVs, cars, earbuds and hundreds of other things. It lets two gadgets that are close together talk to each other without a cord. Your earbuds hear your music over Bluetooth. Your car hears your phone call over Bluetooth. Your keyboard sends its keystrokes to your tablet over Bluetooth.

What it does for you

- **No cords to trip on or tangle.** Headphones, speakers and keyboards work across the room.
- **Hands-free calls** in the car, so your phone stays in your pocket or purse.
- **Private listening** to the TV, so you can turn it up without bothering anyone.
- **Sound straight to hearing aids** from a phone, tablet or, in some cases, a TV.
- **It doesn't use the internet.** Bluetooth works in the car, at a campsite or in a basement with no Wi-Fi at all.

Bluetooth versus Wi-Fi

People mix these up all the time, and that's understandable, since both are invisible and wireless. The difference is simple: **Wi-Fi connects your device to the internet** through your router. **Bluetooth connects one device to another device** that's nearby. Your phone can use both at the same time, streaming music over Wi-Fi and sending it to your earbuds over Bluetooth.

Wireless kind	What it's for
Bluetooth	Device to device, short range, no internet needed. Earbuds, cars, speakers, keyboards.
Wi-Fi	Device to the internet through your router. Web, email, streaming, video calls.
Cellular	Your phone to the phone company's towers. Calls, texts and data away from home.

How far does it reach?

It depends on the gadget. Everyday things like headphones and earbuds are built for short distances, typically a room or two. Walls, your own body, and metal or concrete all weaken the signal. Apple's guidance is to keep an iPhone within about 33 feet (10 meters) of an

accessory when pairing. Chapter 32, *Battery, Range and Interference* has the practical details.

GOOD TO KNOW

The little logo

The Bluetooth symbol looks like a pointy, sideways letter B made of angles. When you see it lit up or highlighted at the top of a phone screen or in a settings panel, Bluetooth is on.

CHAPTER 3

Pairing vs. Connecting

These two words cause more confusion than anything else in the Bluetooth world, so let's clear them up once. They are not the same thing.

Pairing is the introduction

Pairing is the one-time handshake where two devices meet and agree to trust each other. You usually do it once per device. Your phone remembers the earbuds, and the earbuds remember the phone. Roku describes it well: the pairing information is kept even when the devices are turned off, so you typically pair only one time.

Connecting is the everyday hello

Connecting is what happens every time you use them after that. Turn on the earbuds near the phone, and they find each other and connect on their own, usually within a few seconds. No menus needed. If they don't connect by themselves, you tap the device's name in your Bluetooth list and it connects.

Word	What it means
Pair	First time only. The accessory has to be in pairing mode. You pick it from a list.
Connect	Every day after. Usually automatic when both are on and nearby.
Disconnect	Stop using it for now. It stays remembered, ready to reconnect.
Forget / Unpair / Remove	Erase the handshake. You'd have to pair again to use it.

TIP

Already paired? Don't pair again

If your earbuds show up in the "My Devices" or "Saved devices" list but say **Not Connected**, you don't need pairing mode. Just turn the earbuds on and tap their name. Pairing mode is only for introductions.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many names for the same lists

Different companies label these lists differently: **My Devices** and **Other Devices** on iPhone, **Saved devices** and **Pair new device** on Android, **Your devices** and **New devices** in Windows. They all mean "ones I already know" and "new ones nearby."

CHAPTER 4

Pairing Mode: Getting the Accessory Ready

Before your phone can see a new accessory, the accessory has to **announce itself**. That's called **pairing mode** (some makers say "discoverable" or "discovery mode"). It's like raising your hand in a room so someone can find you. Most failed pairings come down to this one step, so it's worth getting right.

How to tell it's in pairing mode

- A small light **flashes**, often blue, white, or alternating blue and red.
- You hear a voice say "pairing" or "ready to pair," or a rising tone.
- On a car or TV screen, a message says it's searching or discoverable.

The most common ways in

Kind of gadget	Usual way into pairing mode
Earbuds with a case	Open the case lid with the earbuds inside; some need a button on the case held down.
Over-ear headphones	Hold the power button a few seconds past "on," or press a separate Bluetooth button.
Speakers	Press the button with the Bluetooth symbol, or hold it until the light blinks.
Keyboards and mice	Turn on, then hold a Connect or Bluetooth key until the light blinks.
Car	On the car's screen, look for Phone, Bluetooth or Add Device.
Hearing aids	Often turn them off and on again (or open and close the battery door).

TIP

The instructions really do matter here

Every company does pairing mode a little differently. If the quick ways above don't work, search the web for the exact model name plus "pairing mode." Use the maker's own website, not a random video. Microsoft and Apple both say the same: the accessory's own documentation is the place to look.

HEADS UP

Pairing mode doesn't last forever

Many accessories quietly leave pairing mode after a few minutes if nothing finds them. If the light stops blinking, start pairing mode again right before you tap the name on your phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some need to be unpaired somewhere else first

Many accessories can only be in one conversation at a time. If your headphones are still connected to an old tablet in the next room, that tablet may grab them first. Turn off Bluetooth on the other device while you pair. Apple gives the same advice for hearing aids.

CHAPTER 5

The Four-Step Pattern That Works Everywhere

Here's the secret: nearly every Bluetooth pairing, on every brand, follows the same four steps. The menus have different names, but the dance is always the same. Learn this, and the device chapters that follow will feel like old friends.

1. **Turn Bluetooth on** on your phone, tablet, computer or TV.
2. **Put the accessory in pairing mode** (see Chapter 4, *Pairing Mode: Getting the Accessory Ready*) and keep it close, within a few feet.
3. **Open the list of new devices** and wait a few seconds for its name to appear.
4. **Tap or select its name**, then accept any message that pops up.

About codes and matching numbers

Sometimes a message appears during pairing. There are three common kinds:

- **"Pair?" or "Connect?"** Just tap Pair or Allow.
- **Matching numbers.** Your phone and the car or computer both show a six-digit number. If they match, tap Pair on both. If they don't match, tap Cancel.
- **Type a PIN.** Older headphones and car kits may ask for a code. Google suggests trying the common ones, **0000** or **1234**, if you don't have it; the accessory's instructions will list the right one.

STAY SAFE

Only accept what you started

A pairing message should appear only when *you* just started pairing something. If a "Pair with...?" request pops up out of the blue, or the numbers don't match, tap **Cancel**. Nothing bad happens when you decline. More on this in Chapter 33, *Bluetooth Security and Scams*.

TIP

Give it a quiet moment

Pairing works best without a crowd. Turn off other nearby Bluetooth gadgets you aren't pairing, and stand close. You can move as far away as you like once it's paired.

GOOD TO KNOW

After pairing, check the sound or function

For headphones and speakers, play something to confirm the sound comes out where you expect. For a keyboard, type a few letters. If pairing worked but sound still comes from the phone, see Chapter 18, *Choosing Where the Sound Plays*.

PART 2

Phones, Tablets & Computers

Step-by-step pairing on iPhone and iPad, Android and Samsung Galaxy phones, Windows PCs, Macs and Chromebooks — including the pop-up shortcuts that do most of the work for you.

CHAPTER 6

iPhone and iPad

On an iPhone or iPad, everything Bluetooth lives in one place: **Settings > Bluetooth**. These steps are for iOS 26 and iPadOS 26 and later. If your screens look slightly different, the idea is the same.

Pair a new accessory

1. Put your accessory in pairing mode (see Chapter 4, *Pairing Mode: Getting the Accessory Ready*).
2. Open **Settings**, then tap **Bluetooth**. Make sure the **Bluetooth** switch is on (green).
3. Look for your accessory's name in the list. If you don't see it, check the accessory's instructions for how to make it discoverable.
4. Tap the accessory's name when it appears. If asked, enter a PIN or tap **Pair**.
5. When it shows **Connected** under **My Devices**, you're done.

Reconnect something you've paired before

Turn the accessory on near your iPhone and it usually connects by itself. If not, open **Settings > Bluetooth** and tap its name under **My Devices**.

Unpair (forget) an accessory

1. Open **Settings**, then tap **Bluetooth**.
2. Tap the **More Info** button (the small letter "i" in a circle) next to the device.
3. Tap **Forget This Device** and confirm.

GOOD TO KNOW

Forgetting on one, forgets on all

Apple notes that when you unpair an accessory on an iPhone, it unpairs on all your devices signed in to the same Apple Account. That's handy for cleanup, but don't be surprised if your iPad forgets it too.

TIP

Apple accessories are even easier

AirPods, Beats and many Apple accessories skip the menus entirely: you open the case near your iPhone and tap **Connect**. See Chapter 13, *AirPods*.

HEADS UP

An app may need Bluetooth permission too

Some accessories (hearing aids, fitness trackers, some speakers) come with an app. Apple's advice: go to **Settings > Privacy & Security > Bluetooth** and make sure that app is allowed to use Bluetooth.

CHAPTER 7

Android Phones: Pixel and Others

Android phones come from many companies, so menus vary a bit. Google's own Pixel phones, running Android 16, follow the path below, and most other Android phones are close. Samsung Galaxy phones use their own wording, so they have their own chapter next: Chapter 8, *Samsung Galaxy Phones*.

Pair a new accessory on a Pixel

1. Put your accessory in pairing mode.
2. Open the **Settings** app.
3. Tap **Connected devices**, then **Connection preferences**, then **Bluetooth**. Make sure Bluetooth is on.
4. Tap **Pair new device**.
5. Tap the name of your accessory, then follow any on-screen steps, such as tapping **Pair**.

The quick way to turn Bluetooth on or off

Swipe down from the top of the screen to open **Quick Settings**. Tap the **Bluetooth** tile to see your most recent devices and the on/off switch, or touch and hold it to jump straight to the Connected devices page.

Reconnect, rename or forget

1. Open **Settings > Connected devices > Connection preferences > Bluetooth**.
2. To reconnect, tap a paired device that isn't connected.
3. For more options, tap the **Settings** gear next to the device name (tap **See all** first if needed).
4. Tap **Edit** to rename it, **Disconnect** to stop using it for now, or **Forget** to remove it completely.

> **TIP**
>
> **Look for the pop-up first**
>
> Many newer headphones and speakers support **Fast Pair**, which shows a pop-up on your Android phone the moment the accessory is in pairing mode. Tap **Connect** and you're finished. See Chapter 9, *Fast Pair: The Pop-Up Shortcut on Android*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Other Android brands

On Motorola, OnePlus and others, look for **Connected devices** or **Bluetooth** near the top of Settings. Google's own help pages warn that steps can vary by device, so if a word is different, look for the closest match.

CHAPTER 8

Samsung Galaxy Phones

Samsung Galaxy phones run Android with Samsung's own One UI on top (One UI 8 on current models). The Bluetooth menu lives under **Connections**.

Pair a new accessory

1. Put your accessory in pairing mode.
2. Swipe down from the top of the screen and tap the **Settings** gear, or open the **Settings** app.
3. Tap **Connections**, then tap **Bluetooth**.
4. Turn the switch on if it isn't already. The phone scans for nearby devices.
5. Tap your accessory's name under the available devices, then confirm the pairing.

Unpair or rename

1. Open **Settings > Connections > Bluetooth**.
2. Tap the **gear** icon next to the device's name.
3. Choose **Rename** to give it a friendlier name, or **Unpair** to remove it, then confirm.

TIP

Galaxy Buds pop right up

With Galaxy Buds and a Galaxy phone, you usually don't need any menus: open the earbud case near the phone and a pop-up offers to **Connect**. See Chapter 14, *Samsung Galaxy Buds*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Menus can differ by model

Samsung itself notes that menu names and layouts can vary depending on the model and software version. A Galaxy tablet works the same way as a Galaxy phone.

HEADS UP

If nothing shows up

Samsung's own first fix is to unpair the device and pair it again. If that fails, Chapter 31, *When Pairing Fails: The Troubleshooting Ladder* walks through the rest, including Samsung's **Reset Wi-Fi and Bluetooth settings**.

CHAPTER 9

Fast Pair: The Pop-Up Shortcut on Android

Google's **Fast Pair** is the friendliest thing to happen to Bluetooth in years. When a compatible accessory is put in pairing mode near your Android phone, a card pops up at the bottom of the screen with a picture of the device and a **Connect** button. No menus, no lists.

What it does for you

- Shows you *exactly* which device you're connecting, with its picture.
- Links the accessory to your Google Account, so it's easier to use on your other Android devices and Chromebook.
- On many earbuds, shows battery levels, and on supported models helps you find them if they're lost with Google's Find Hub.

Pair with Fast Pair

1. Make sure your phone has **Bluetooth** and **Location** turned on.
2. Turn on your accessory and put it in pairing mode, close to the phone.
3. When the notification appears, tap **Connect**.
4. Wait for "Device connected" or "Pairing complete." If it offers **Set up**, tap it to finish.

TIP

No pop-up? It's still there

If the card doesn't appear, open **Settings > Connected devices** and look under **Nearby devices**. Tap your accessory there.

Turn the pop-ups on or off

If you never want these cards, or you've turned them off by accident, Google's Android Help gives this path: open **Settings**, tap **Google**, then **Devices & sharing**, then **Devices**, and switch **Scan for nearby devices** on or off. You can still pair things the normal way with it off.

GOOD TO KNOW

How to know if a gadget supports it

Google says accessories that work with Fast Pair say so on the box, and many say "Made for Google". Galaxy phones have Samsung's own version of the pop-up for Galaxy Buds.

CHAPTER 10

Windows 11 PCs (and Swift Pair)

Most Windows laptops and many desktops have Bluetooth built in. If yours doesn't, Microsoft notes that a small USB Bluetooth adapter can add it. These steps are for Windows 11.

Pair from Quick Settings (fastest)

1. Turn on the accessory and put it in pairing mode.
2. On the taskbar, select the **Network**, **Sound** or **Battery** icon next to the time and date.
3. Make sure the **Bluetooth** tile is on (highlighted).
4. Select the small arrow on the Bluetooth tile (**Manage Bluetooth devices**).
5. Select your accessory under **New devices**. You may need to scroll past **Your devices** to see it.
6. Follow any instructions, then select **Done**.

Or pair from the Settings app

1. Select **Start**, then **Settings > Bluetooth & devices**.
2. Make sure **Bluetooth** is switched **On**.
3. Select **Add device**, then choose **Bluetooth**.
4. Pick your accessory from the list and follow the prompts.

Swift Pair: the Windows pop-up

Windows has its own pop-up shortcut called **Swift Pair**. When an accessory that supports it is nearby and in pairing mode, a notification appears. The first time, Windows asks if you want to use Swift Pair; select **Yes**. After that, just select **Connect** on the notification.

TIP

Turning Swift Pair notifications on or off

The switch is in **Settings > Bluetooth & devices > Devices**, labeled **Show notifications to connect using Swift Pair**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Device not in the list?

Microsoft's tip: if your accessory never shows up, the **Bluetooth devices discovery** setting may need to be set to **Advanced**. Microsoft's "Fix Bluetooth problems in Windows" page shows where.

GOOD TO KNOW

Printers are different

Bluetooth printers are added under **Settings > Bluetooth & devices > Printers & scanners > Add device**, not the regular Bluetooth list.

CHAPTER 11

Mac (macOS Tahoe)

On a Mac, Bluetooth lives in System Settings. These steps are for macOS Tahoe (macOS 26) and work the same on recent versions.

Pair a new accessory

1. Make sure the accessory is turned on and in pairing (discoverable) mode.
2. Choose **Apple menu > System Settings**, then click **Bluetooth** in the sidebar. You may need to scroll down.
3. Hold the pointer over your device in the list and click **Connect**.
4. If asked, click **Accept**, or type the numbers shown and press Return.

Shortcut: Control Center

Click **Control Center** in the menu bar (the two little sliders), then **Bluetooth**, and pick a device you've paired before to connect it.

Apple keyboards, mice and trackpads

Apple's Magic Keyboard, Magic Mouse and Magic Trackpad pair the easy way: connect it to your Mac with its USB-C or Lightning cable, turn it on, and it pairs automatically. Then unplug it and use it wirelessly.

Forget a device

In **System Settings > Bluetooth**, Control-click (or right-click) the device's name and choose **Forget**. It won't reconnect on its own until you pair it again.

TIP

Headphones connected but the sound still comes from the speakers?

Go to **System Settings > Sound** and choose your headphones under **Output**. For a headset with a microphone, also choose it under **Input**.

GOOD TO KNOW

AirPods switch for you

If your AirPods are set up with your iPhone and your Mac uses the same Apple Account, they're already known to the Mac. See Chapter 29, *Switching a Device Between Phones*.

CHAPTER 12

Chromebook

Chromebooks pair headphones, speakers, mice and keyboards over Bluetooth with just a few clicks, all from the corner of the screen.

Pair a new accessory

1. On the accessory, turn on pairing mode.
2. On your Chromebook, select the time in the bottom-right corner to open Quick Settings.
3. Select **Bluetooth** and make sure it's switched **On**.
4. Select **Pair new device**.
5. Select the device you want, then follow the on-screen instructions.
6. To check, reopen the Bluetooth menu and look for it under **Currently connected**.

Reconnect a device you've used before

Open the same Bluetooth menu and look under **Previously connected**. Select the device to reconnect, with no need to pair again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Phones are a special case

Google says you can't pair a phone to a Chromebook through the Bluetooth menu. Android phones connect through a separate **Connected devices** setup in the Chromebook's Settings instead, rather than the Bluetooth list.

TIP

Fast Pair works here too

Many Fast Pair headphones that you've linked to your Google Account will offer to connect to your Chromebook with a pop-up. If the pop-up doesn't appear, use the steps above.

GOOD TO KNOW

School or work Chromebook?

If Bluetooth is grayed out on a Chromebook from a school or employer, the organization may have turned it off. That's their call; ask their help desk.

PART 3

Headphones, Earbuds & Speakers

AirPods, Galaxy Buds, Pixel Buds and every other brand, plus speakers — and how to make sure the sound actually comes out where you want it.

CHAPTER 13

AirPods

AirPods are made to pair with an iPhone or iPad almost by themselves. The first time takes about a minute, and after that they connect whenever you take them out of the case.

Pair AirPods with your iPhone

1. On your iPhone, go to the Home Screen and make sure **Bluetooth** is on.
2. Open the AirPods case, with the AirPods inside, and hold it right next to your iPhone.
3. A setup card appears on the iPhone screen. Tap **Connect**.
4. Follow the prompts, then tap **Done**.

If the setup card doesn't appear

1. Put the AirPods in the case and open the lid.
2. **AirPods 4 and AirPods Pro 3:** double-tap the front of the case until the status light flashes white. **Other models:** press and hold the small setup button on the back of the case until the light flashes white.
3. On the iPhone, go to **Settings > Bluetooth** and tap your AirPods in the list.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Set up once, ready everywhere

If you're signed in to iCloud, Apple says your AirPods are set up automatically with your other supported devices signed in with the same Apple Account, such as your iPad or Mac.

Using AirPods with Android or Windows

AirPods are ordinary Bluetooth headphones to any other phone or computer. Put them in pairing mode with the case button or double-tap (as above), then pair them like any other accessory: see Chapter 7, *Android Phones: Pixel and Others*, Chapter 10, *Windows 11 PCs (and Swift Pair)* or Chapter 12, *Chromebook*. Some Apple-only extras won't be available.

Rename your AirPods

With the AirPods connected, open **Settings** and tap your AirPods' name near the top of the screen. Tap the name field, type a new one, and tap Done. A name like "Mom's AirPods" helps when the whole family has a pair.

GOOD TO KNOW

Newer AirPods need newer software

Each AirPods model lists a minimum iOS version. The newest models need iOS 26 or later. If a brand-new pair won't set up, check for an iPhone update first in **Settings > General > Software Update**.

CHAPTER 14

Samsung Galaxy Buds

Galaxy Buds are made to pair with Galaxy phones in a single tap, and they also work with other Android phones and with iPhones as regular Bluetooth earbuds.

With a Samsung Galaxy phone

1. Make sure Bluetooth is on and the phone is unlocked.
2. Open the earbud case near the phone, with the earbuds inside.
3. A pop-up appears on the phone. Tap **Connect**.
4. Follow any setup screens. If you missed the pop-up, add the earbuds from **Settings > Connections > Bluetooth**.

With another Android phone

Install the free **Galaxy Wearable** app from the Google Play Store. Open the earbud case, then open the app and follow its steps to find and connect the earbuds. The app also gives you the earbud settings.

With an iPhone or a computer

Put the earbuds into pairing mode by hand, then pick them in the Bluetooth list on the iPhone or computer. How you start pairing mode depends on the model:

Galaxy Buds model	How to start pairing mode
Buds3 and Buds3 Pro	With the earbuds in the case, press and hold the button on the case for three seconds or more.
Older Buds (Buds, Buds+, Buds Live, Buds Pro)	Wear the earbuds and hold both touchpads until you hear the pairing sound.
Other models	Check Samsung's support page for your exact model.

TIP

Auto switch between Galaxy devices

Galaxy Buds can follow you from your Galaxy phone to your Galaxy tablet. See Chapter 29, *Switching a Device Between Phones* for Samsung's **Auto switch** setting.

CHAPTER 15

Pixel Buds and Other Fast Pair Earbuds

Google's Pixel Buds, and many other brands that support Fast Pair, connect to an Android phone with a single tap on a pop-up.

With an Android phone

1. Make sure your phone's **Bluetooth** and **Location** are on.
2. Open the Pixel Buds case near the unlocked phone, with the earbuds inside.
3. When the pop-up appears, tap **Connect**.
4. If prompted, tap **Set up** to finish, which may install or open the Pixel Buds app.

With an iPhone, or adding another phone

1. Keep the earbuds in the open case, next to the iPhone or other device.
2. Press and hold the button on the back of the case until the earbud status light pulses (about three seconds).
3. On the iPhone, open **Settings > Bluetooth** and tap the Pixel Buds in the list.

GOOD TO KNOW

They remember several devices

Google says Pixel Buds can keep pairings for up to eight devices. Pair a ninth, and the oldest one is forgotten.

HEADS UP

Resetting is a last resort

Google's troubleshooting pages describe holding the case button much longer (around 30 seconds, lid open) to reset Pixel Buds. Forget them in your phone's Bluetooth settings first. Try the easier fixes in Chapter 31, *When Pairing Fails: The Troubleshooting Ladder* before you reset.

CHAPTER 16

Other Headphones and Earbuds

Bose, Sony, JBL, Beats, Jabra, Skullcandy, store brands and the rest all pair the same basic way. The only real difference is how you get them into pairing mode.

1. Charge them first. Low battery is the number-one cause of strange behavior.
2. Put them in pairing mode: usually hold the power or Bluetooth button until a light flashes, or open the case.
3. On your phone or computer, open the Bluetooth list for new devices.
4. Tap the headphones' name. If two similar names appear, pick the one that matches the model on the box.
5. Play something to check the sound.

The maker's app: helpful, usually optional

Many brands offer a free companion app for equalizer settings, noise-canceling levels and firmware updates. You don't need the app to pair, but it's worth installing once to get updates, which often fix connection problems.

Connecting to two things at once

Some headphones support **multipoint**, meaning they stay connected to, say, your phone and your laptop at the same time. If yours do, the box or app will say so. If they don't, they connect to one device at a time, and you may need to disconnect from one before the other can use them.

TIP

Two names for one pair of headphones?

Some headphones show two entries during pairing, such as one ending in "LE." Pick the plain one first, or follow the maker's instructions. If you picked the wrong one, forget it and try again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wired is still fine

If a pair of Bluetooth headphones came with a cable, you can usually plug it in when the battery is dead. Nothing wrong with keeping a wired pair in the drawer as a backup.

CHAPTER 17

Bluetooth Speakers

A portable speaker is a simple way to make music, audiobooks or phone calls easier to hear. Pairing is the same four steps as everything else.

1. Turn the speaker on. Many say "Bluetooth" or play a tone.
2. Press the button with the **Bluetooth** symbol (or hold it) until the light flashes.
3. On your phone or tablet, open the Bluetooth list and tap the speaker's name.
4. Play something and set the volume. Start low; some speakers are loud.

Speakers versus smart speakers

A plain Bluetooth speaker just plays what your phone sends it. A **smart speaker** (Amazon Echo, Google Nest, Apple HomePod) has its own Wi-Fi connection and voice assistant. Some smart speakers can also act as Bluetooth speakers, usually by asking the assistant to pair, or through the speaker's app.

TIP

Party mode and stereo pairs

Many brands let two of their own speakers play together, louder or as left and right. That's done in the maker's app or with a special button, not your phone's Bluetooth menu.

HEADS UP

Mind the neighbors' speakers

In an apartment building or a busy family gathering, you may see other people's speakers in your list. Only tap the one whose name matches yours. Renaming your speaker in its app helps.

GOOD TO KNOW

Calls on a speaker

Some speakers have a microphone and can be used for hands-free calls. If callers say they can't hear you, the speaker may not have a microphone; switch the call back to the phone.

CHAPTER 18

Choosing Where the Sound Plays

Sometimes everything pairs perfectly, but the sound still comes out of the wrong place: the phone's own speaker, the TV instead of the headphones, or the laptop speakers. That's not a pairing problem. It's just a matter of choosing the **output**.

Device	How to choose the output
iPhone or iPad	Open Control Center (swipe down from the top-right corner), touch and hold the music controls, tap the AirPlay icon (a triangle with circles), and choose your headphones or speaker.
Pixel and Android	Swipe down for Quick Settings. Below the music player, or by tapping the small output button on it, choose where the sound plays.
Samsung Galaxy	Swipe down for the Quick panel and use the media output button in the player to pick a device.
Windows 11	Select the Sound icon on the taskbar, then the arrow next to the volume slider, and pick the output.
Mac	System Settings > Sound > Output, then choose your headphones or speaker.

TIP

During a phone call

On a call, tap the **Audio** or **speaker** button on the call screen to choose between the phone, the speakerphone, your earbuds or your car.

GOOD TO KNOW

Names change, the idea doesn't

These buttons move around a little with each update. If you can't find the output button, simply turning off the device you *don't* want to hear also sends the sound back where it belongs.

HEADS UP

Too quiet even at full volume?

Headphones have their own volume. Turn up both the phone and the headphones (if they have buttons). Some apps and TVs also have their own volume setting, so check those too.

PART 4

TVs, Cars & Hearing Aids

Headphones for private TV listening on Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV and Google TV; your phone in the car; and getting calls and sound straight to your hearing aids.

CHAPTER 19

TV Headphones: Private Listening

Wireless headphones on the TV are one of the kindest gadgets in a household. You can turn the sound up as loud as you need, hear every word of the dialogue, and nobody else in the room has to listen to it. A spouse can sleep, and the grandkids can do homework.

Three ways to do it

Method	How it works
Pair headphones to the streaming box or TV	Works on Fire TV, Apple TV, Google TV and Bluetooth-capable Roku devices. The simplest setup.
Use your phone as the go-between	Roku's mobile app plays the TV's sound through headphones paired to your phone.
A dedicated TV headphone set	A base plugs into the TV and talks only to its own headphones. Often the easiest for a TV without Bluetooth.

What to expect

- Most TVs and streaming boxes connect **one Bluetooth audio device at a time**. Google and Amazon both say so for their devices.
- There can be a **slight delay** between lips and sound with some headphones. Amazon notes this for Fire TV.
- When the headphones are connected, the TV's own speakers usually go quiet.

TIP

Which box do you have?

Look at the remote. A purple-buttoned remote is usually Roku; a remote with an Alexa button is Fire TV; a small silver or black remote with a touch surface is Apple TV; a Google TV remote has a Google button. Then turn to the matching chapter: Chapter 20, *Roku*, Chapter 21, *Amazon Fire TV*, Chapter 22, *Apple TV* or Chapter 23, *Google TV and Chromecast*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Hearing aids and TVs

Some newer TVs and streamers can send sound straight to compatible hearing aids. See Chapter 25, *Hearing Aids and Bluetooth* and Chapter 26, *Auracast: Broadcast Audio*.

CHAPTER 20

Roku

Roku calls private listening **Headphone Mode** (older guides said "private listening"). There are three ways in, and at least one works on just about every Roku.

Option 1: Bluetooth headphones paired to the Roku

Only some Roku devices have Bluetooth for headphones, including current Roku Ultra models, the newest Roku Streaming Stick and Streaming Stick Plus, Roku streambars and soundbars, and Roku-made Plus Series, Pro Series and 2025 Select Series TVs. Headphones need Bluetooth 4.2 or newer.

1. Press **Home** on your Roku remote.
2. Select **Settings**, then **Remotes & devices**, then **Wireless headphones**.
3. Select **Add new wireless headphones**.
4. Turn on your headphones and put them in pairing mode.
5. Wait up to 30 seconds while the Roku scans, then select your headphones.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **No "Wireless headphones" menu?**
> Roku says that menu only appears on compatible devices. Use Option 2 or 3 instead.

Option 2: the Roku app on your phone

1. Pair your headphones to your **phone** (not the Roku).
2. Make sure the phone and the Roku are on the same Wi-Fi network.
3. Open the free **Roku** app and go to the **Remote**.
4. Tap the **headphone** icon to turn on Headphone Mode.

Roku says up to four phones can use Headphone Mode on one Roku at the same time, which is a nice way for two people to listen privately.

Option 3: wired headphones in the remote

If your Roku voice remote has a headphone jack on the side, plug in ordinary wired headphones.

TIP

Quick connect while watching

On a Bluetooth-capable Roku, press the **Star** button while a show is playing, choose **Wireless headphones**, pick yours and select **Connect**.

CHAPTER 21

Amazon Fire TV

Fire TV sticks, cubes and Fire TV smart TVs all pair Bluetooth headphones and speakers from the settings menu.

Pair Bluetooth headphones or a speaker

1. Put your headphones in pairing mode.
2. From the Fire TV home screen, go to **Settings** (the gear).
3. Select **Controllers & Bluetooth Devices**.
4. Select **Other Bluetooth Devices**, then **Add Bluetooth Devices**.
5. Select your headphones when their name appears.

GOOD TO KNOW

One audio device at a time

Amazon notes that only one Bluetooth audio device can be connected at a time, and some headphones or speakers may have a slight audio delay.

Newer headsets and hearing aids (Bluetooth LE Audio and Auracast)

On some Fire TV smart TVs, Amazon has a separate path for headsets and hearing aids that support Bluetooth LE Audio or Auracast: **Settings > Controllers and Bluetooth Devices > Audio devices and features > Add New Audio Device**. If you don't see that option, your model doesn't have it yet; use the steps above.

TIP

Same menu for game controllers and remotes

Controllers & Bluetooth Devices is also where you pair a new Fire TV remote or a game controller.

CHAPTER 22

Apple TV

Apple TV pairs with AirPods almost automatically, and with other headphones from the Settings app.

AirPods and Beats

If your AirPods are set up with your iPhone using the same Apple Account as your Apple TV, they're often already known to it. Look for them in the Apple TV's Bluetooth menu (below), where headphones you've used before are listed under **Other Devices**, and select them.

Other Bluetooth headphones

1. Put your headphones in pairing mode.
2. On the Apple TV, open **Settings**, then go to **Remotes and Devices > Bluetooth**.
3. The Apple TV searches for nearby accessories. Select your headphones.
4. If asked, enter the four-digit code from the headphones' instructions.
5. Once paired, they appear under **My Devices**.

TIP

If they won't connect

Apple's suggestions: make sure the headphones are charged and on, move closer to the Apple TV, and check that both the headphones and tvOS are up to date. Then forget the headphones (select them and choose **Forget This Device**) and pair again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Game controllers too

Xbox and PlayStation controllers pair in the same **Bluetooth** menu. See Chapter 28, *Game Controllers*.

CHAPTER 23

Google TV and Chromecast

The Google TV Streamer, Chromecast with Google TV, and many TVs with Google TV built in (Sony, TCL, Hisense and others) pair Bluetooth headphones and speakers from Settings.

Pair Bluetooth headphones

1. Put your headphones in pairing mode.
2. From the TV's home screen, select your **profile picture** (top right), then **All Settings**.
3. Select **Remote & Accessories**, then **Pair remote or accessory**.
4. Select your headphones from the list.
5. On the Bluetooth pairing request screen, select **Pair**.

The Fast Pair shortcut

If your headphones support Fast Pair, just put them in pairing mode. When they appear on the TV screen, select **Connect** with the remote. Google says Fast Pair also links them to your Google Account, which makes switching between devices easier.

TIP

Google TV Streamer button

On the Google TV Streamer, you can also press and hold the button on the back of the box for 5 to 10 seconds to start pairing. A message appears on screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rename, reconnect or forget

Paired headphones appear in the **Remote & Accessories** section of Settings, where you can connect, rename or forget them. Google notes only one audio device can be connected at a time.

CHAPTER 24

Your Car

Pairing your phone with your car gives you hands-free calls through the car's speakers and microphone, and lets you play music, audiobooks and directions through the stereo. Every car maker's screens look different, but the pattern is the same.

Pair your phone with your car

1. Park the car with the engine running or in accessory mode. Most cars won't let you pair while moving.
2. On the car's screen, look for **Phone**, **Bluetooth**, **Connections** or **Add device**. Choosing this puts the car in pairing mode.
3. On your phone, open the Bluetooth settings: **Settings > Bluetooth** on iPhone, **Settings > Connected devices > Pair new device** on Pixel, or **Settings > Connections > Bluetooth** on Samsung.
4. Tap the car's name when it appears.
5. Check that the six-digit numbers on the car and the phone match, then tap **Pair** on both.
6. If asked, allow the car to see your **contacts** and **recent calls**, so you can call people by name.

> **TIP**
> **The car's manual is the authority**
> Apple's own help says to check your car's manual for its pairing steps, since most cars need the setup started on the car's display. Many car makers also post short videos for each model.

If your phone won't connect to the car

- Restart the phone, then turn Bluetooth off for about five seconds and back on (Apple's suggestion).
- Delete the phone from the car's list of paired phones, forget the car on your phone, and pair again.
- If several family phones are paired to the same car, give yours a clear name. On iPhone: **Settings > General > About > Name**.
- Ask the dealer whether the car's stereo has a software update.

GOOD TO KNOW

CarPlay and Android Auto

Many newer cars also offer Apple CarPlay or Android Auto, which put maps, messages and music on the car screen. They usually start with the same Bluetooth pairing, then add a step or two. We cover them fully in a separate CarPlay guide.

STAY SAFE

Set it up before you drive

Do the pairing in the driveway, not at a red light. Once it's set up, calls and music come through on their own, and your eyes stay on the road.

CHAPTER 25

Hearing Aids and Bluetooth

Many modern hearing aids can stream phone calls, music, TV and video calls straight into your ears. That can make a phone call clearer than holding the phone up to a hearing aid. There are a few different kinds of Bluetooth hearing aid, and your phone has to speak the same kind.

Kind	What it means for you
Made for iPhone (MFi)	Works with iPhone and iPad. Paired in the iPhone's Accessibility settings.
ASHA	Google's standard for streaming to hearing aids on Android phones.
Bluetooth LE Audio (HAP)	The newer, open standard. Supported on newer Android phones and on Windows 11 PCs with the right hardware.
Classic Bluetooth	Some hearing aids pair like ordinary headphones, sometimes through a small streamer clip.

iPhone and iPad

1. Make sure your iPhone is up to date.
2. Put your hearing aids in pairing mode. Your hearing aid manual explains how; often you turn them off and on, or open and close the battery doors.
3. Open **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**.
4. Tap your hearing aids' name when it appears under the MFi hearing devices list, then tap **Pair**. With two aids, you may be asked twice.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pair once, reconnects on its own

Apple says you pair only once; after that your hearing aids reconnect whenever they turn on. To unpair, go to **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**, tap the name, and tap **Forget this device**.

Android phones

1. Put your hearing aids in pairing mode.
2. Open **Settings > Connected devices > Pair new device**. Google recommends trying this first; it works with all types of hearing devices.

3. Or use **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing devices > Pair new device**, which works best with ASHA hearing aids.
4. Tap your hearing aids' name and follow the prompts.

TIP

Ask your audiologist

Google's advice is to check with your audiologist or hearing aid maker which phones your model streams to. Many hearing aid makers also have a free app for volume and programs. For much more on hearing, see our separate Hearing Help Tech guide.

HEADS UP

Turn off Bluetooth on other nearby devices while pairing

Apple's guide notes that if your hearing aids are already paired to another nearby device, you should turn off Bluetooth on that device during pairing, so it doesn't grab them first.

CHAPTER 26

Auracast: Broadcast Audio

Auracast is a newer Bluetooth feature that lets one source, such as a TV, a lecture hall, an airport gate or a gym, broadcast sound to *any number* of nearby headphones, earbuds or hearing aids that support it. Think of it like tuning a radio to a station.

What it can do for you

- Hear the TV in a waiting room, bar or gym directly in your earbuds or hearing aids.
- Tune in to announcements or talks in places that offer an Auracast broadcast.
- Share what you're listening to with a friend's compatible earbuds.

Where it works today (November 2026)

Device	Status
Android 16	Supported on many newer phones with compatible Bluetooth LE Audio earbuds or hearing aids. On Pixel, Google brought it to supported models through a Google Play services update.
Samsung Galaxy	Supported on recent Galaxy phones with LE Audio accessories.
iPhone	Apple has not added built-in Auracast support as of November 2026. Some accessory makers offer workarounds in their own apps.
Fire TV smart TVs	Some models can stream to Auracast headsets and hearing aids (see Chapter 21, *Amazon Fire TV*).

Find a broadcast on a Pixel

1. Connect your LE Audio earbuds or hearing aids to your phone first.
2. Open **Settings > Connected devices > Connection preferences**.
3. Tap **Audio sharing** (or **Nearby audio streams**), then **Find an audio stream**.
4. Tap the broadcast's name. If it's locked, type the password the host gives you. Some places offer a QR code you can scan with the camera instead.

TIP

On a Samsung Galaxy

Google's Android Help describes it this way: open Quick Settings, go to Bluetooth, tap the gear next to your LE Audio accessory, and choose **Find a broadcast**.

GOOD TO KNOW

This is still rolling out

Auracast needs support on both ends: your phone *and* your earbuds or hearing aids. Ask your audiologist whether your hearing aids support LE Audio and Auracast, and expect more public places to offer it over time.

PART 5

Keyboards, Mice & Game Controllers

A real keyboard for your tablet, a comfortable mouse for your laptop, and the controllers the grandkids will ask about.

CHAPTER 27

Keyboards and Mice

A Bluetooth keyboard turns an iPad or Android tablet into something much more comfortable for email and letters. A Bluetooth mouse is easier on the hand than a laptop's touchpad. Both pair just like headphones.

1. Put batteries in, or charge it, and turn it on.
2. Put it in pairing mode. Many have a **Connect** button or a key with the Bluetooth symbol; hold it until a light blinks.
3. Open your device's Bluetooth list (see Chapter 6, *iPhone and iPad*, Chapter 7, *Android Phones: Pixel and Others*, Chapter 10, *Windows 11 PCs (and Swift Pair)*, Chapter 11, *Mac (macOS Tahoe)* or Chapter 12, *Chromebook*).
4. Select the keyboard or mouse.
5. If a code appears on screen, **type it on the new keyboard** and press Enter (or Return). That proves the right keyboard is pairing.

TIP

Keyboards that switch between devices

Many keyboards and mice can remember two or three devices and switch with a button, often marked 1, 2, 3. Pair each device on its own number: press 1 and pair the tablet, press 2 and pair the computer. Check the maker's instructions for the exact buttons.

GOOD TO KNOW

Apple Magic Keyboard and Mouse

For a Mac, connect it with its cable, turn it on, and it pairs automatically (see Chapter 11, *Mac (macOS Tahoe)*). On an iPad, pair it in **Settings > Bluetooth** like any other accessory.

HEADS UP

Mouse suddenly jumpy or keyboard skipping letters?

It's almost always the batteries. Replace or charge them before anything else. Moving a USB receiver or the computer away from a Wi-Fi router can help too (see Chapter 32, *Battery, Range and Interference*).

GOOD TO KNOW

Some come with a tiny USB plug instead

Many wireless mice and keyboards use a small USB receiver rather than Bluetooth. Those don't need pairing at all: plug the receiver into the computer and turn the mouse on.

CHAPTER 28

Game Controllers

Xbox and PlayStation controllers can pair with iPhones, iPads, Apple TVs, Macs, Android phones and Windows PCs, which is handy when the grandkids visit and want to play on your tablet or TV.

Xbox Wireless Controller

1. Press the **Xbox** button to turn the controller on.
2. Press and hold the small **Connect** (pairing) button on the top edge of the controller for a few seconds, until the Xbox button flashes.
3. On your iPhone, iPad or Apple TV, open the Bluetooth settings and select the controller.

PlayStation DualSense (PS5) and DualShock 4 (PS4)

1. If the controller is on, hold the **PS** button until it turns off, and unplug any USB cable.
2. **DualSense or DualSense Edge:** hold the **PS** and **Create** buttons together until the light bar flashes. **DualShock 4:** hold **PS** and **Share** together.
3. Open your device's Bluetooth settings and select the controller.

GOOD TO KNOW

Back to the console afterward

A controller paired with a phone or tablet may need to be reconnected to its game console. Usually that means plugging it into the console with its USB cable and pressing the PS or Xbox button.

TIP

Stuck connection?

Apple's fix: select the controller in Bluetooth settings, choose **Forget This Device**, and pair it again.

PART 6

Living With Bluetooth

Moving a gadget to a new phone, tidying up your device lists, fixing a pairing that won't cooperate, and keeping Bluetooth safe — plus when to call Bill.

CHAPTER 29

Switching a Device Between Phones

Got a new phone? Want to share the car between two phones, or move the earbuds from your phone to your tablet? Here's how switching works.

Moving to a new phone

1. On the **old** phone, forget the accessory (see Chapter 30, *Renaming and Forgetting Devices*), or simply turn Bluetooth off on the old phone.
2. Put the accessory in pairing mode.
3. Pair it with the **new** phone as usual.
4. For a car, also delete the old phone from the car's list of paired phones, so it doesn't keep trying.

AirPods: automatic switching between Apple devices

When you're signed in with the same Apple Account, AirPods can move on their own between your iPhone, iPad and Mac, for example from your Mac to your iPhone when a call comes in. If that jumping annoys you, you can turn it off:

1. With your AirPods connected, open **Settings** and tap your AirPods' name near the top.
2. Tap **Audio & Routing** if you see it.
3. Tap **Connect to This iPhone**, then choose **When Last Connected to This iPhone**. Choose **Automatically** to turn switching back on.

Galaxy Buds: Auto switch between Galaxy devices

Galaxy Buds can switch automatically between Samsung phones and tablets (and Samsung TVs from 2022 on) that are signed in to the same Samsung account and have been connected to the buds before. To turn it on, open the **Galaxy Wearable** app, tap the **Menu** (three lines), then **Settings > Auto switch**. Samsung notes it isn't available on iPhone.

> **TIP**
>
> **The simplest switch of all**
>
> If an accessory only connects to one device at a time, turn off Bluetooth on the device you're *not* using. The accessory then connects to the one that's left.

CHAPTER 30

Renaming and Forgetting Devices

Over the years, Bluetooth lists fill up with old headphones, rental cars and mystery names. A little tidying makes pairing easier and safer.

Why rename?

- In a house with three identical pairs of earbuds, "Dad's Buds" is easier to pick than "Buds3 Pro."
- If several family phones pair with one car, unique phone names stop mix-ups. Apple suggests this exact fix.

How to rename or forget, device by device

Device	Rename	Forget
iPhone (an accessory)	AirPods: Settings, tap AirPods name, Name	Settings > Bluetooth > (i) > Forget This Device
iPhone (the phone itself)	Settings > General > About > Name	—
Pixel / Android	Bluetooth list > gear > Edit	Bluetooth list > gear > Forget
Samsung Galaxy	Connections > Bluetooth > gear > Rename	Same gear > Unpair
Mac	—	System Settings > Bluetooth, Control-click > Forget
Apple TV	—	Remotes and Devices > Bluetooth > device > Forget This Device
Google TV	Settings > Remote & Accessories	Settings > Remote & Accessories

Changing your phone's own Bluetooth name

This is the name other things (like your car) see. On iPhone: **Settings > General > About > Name**. On Pixel: **Settings > Connected devices > Connection preferences > Bluetooth > Device name**, then type a new name and tap **Rename**.

TIP

Forget what you don't use

Once a year, look through your Bluetooth list and forget old headphones, speakers you gave away, and rental cars. It takes two minutes.

CHAPTER 31

When Pairing Fails: The Troubleshooting Ladder

When something won't pair or won't connect, climb this ladder **one rung at a time**, starting at the bottom. Try pairing again after each rung. Most problems are fixed in the first four steps.

1. **Charge it.** Charge or replace the batteries in the accessory. Apple lists this among its first steps.
2. **Get close.** Put the accessory right next to the phone, away from the microwave and the Wi-Fi router.
3. **Turn the accessory off and on again.**
4. **Turn Bluetooth off and on.** On your phone or computer, switch Bluetooth off, wait about five seconds, and switch it back on.
5. **Start pairing mode again**, right before you tap the name. Watch for the flashing light (see Chapter 4, *Pairing Mode: Getting the Accessory Ready*).
6. **Check other devices.** Turn off Bluetooth on other phones, tablets and computers nearby that might grab the accessory first.
7. **Restart your phone or computer.**
8. **Forget and re-pair.** Forget the accessory on your phone (see Chapter 30, *Renaming and Forgetting Devices*), then put it in pairing mode and pair it fresh.
9. **Update.** Install software updates on the phone or computer, and use the accessory's app to update it if there is one.
10. **Reset the accessory** using its maker's instructions. This erases its memory of every phone.
11. **Reset your phone's network settings** (last resort; see below).

The last rung: network settings reset

HEADS UP

This erases saved Wi-Fi passwords too

A network reset wipes out **all** your Bluetooth pairings and **saved Wi-Fi networks and passwords**. Your photos, apps and contacts are not touched. Have your Wi-Fi password handy before you do this.

Device	Where the reset lives
iPhone	Settings > General > Transfer or Reset iPhone > Reset > Reset Network Settings
Pixel	Settings > System > Reset options > Reset Bluetooth & Wi-Fi
Samsung Galaxy	Settings > General management > Reset > Reset Wi-Fi and Bluetooth settings

Specific troubles

What you see	What it usually means
It never shows up in the list	Pairing mode isn't on, or it's already connected to something else nearby.
It pairs, then drops	Low battery, distance, or interference. See Chapter 32, *Battery, Range and Interference*.
Paired, but sound comes from the phone	Choose the output. See Chapter 18, *Choosing Where the Sound Plays*.
It worked yesterday, not today	Turn both off and on. If still stuck, forget and re-pair.
It pairs with other phones but not mine	Unpair it from those other devices, then try yours again (Apple's suggestion).
Bluetooth switch is grayed out or won't turn on	Restart. If it persists, it's time to call the phone maker or Bill.

TIP

Pixel has a built-in checkup

Google says Pixel 6 and newer phones offer Bluetooth diagnostics in their help tools, which can spot common problems for you.

CHAPTER 32

Battery, Range and Interference

Bluetooth is a small, low-power radio, so a few everyday things affect how well it works. Knowing them saves a lot of frustration.

Range

The Bluetooth standards group says range depends on many things, including the devices' radios, antennas and what's in between. Headphones and wearables are built for short distances. Walls weaken the signal, and denser materials such as concrete, brick and metal weaken it more. Your own body counts too: a phone in a back pocket can make the earbud on the far side cut out.

Interference

Bluetooth shares the same 2.4 GHz radio band as many Wi-Fi routers, cordless phones, baby monitors and microwave ovens. If sound stutters when the microwave runs, that's why. Moving a few feet usually solves it.

Battery tips

- Low batteries cause dropouts, crackling and failed pairings long before the device dies.
- Charge earbuds in their case; the case itself needs charging too.
- Many accessories turn themselves off after a while with no sound, to save battery. Roku, for instance, disconnects headphones when the screensaver starts.

How to check battery levels

- **iPhone:** AirPods show their battery levels on screen when you open the case near the phone.
- **Android:** the level often shows next to the device's name in Bluetooth settings, or in the maker's app.
- **Windows:** Settings > Bluetooth & devices often shows the level next to the accessory.

TIP

Stuttering sound checklist

Charge it, move the phone to the same side of your body as the earbud, step away from the microwave or router, and close apps you're not using.

CHAPTER 33

Bluetooth Security and Scams

Bluetooth is safe to use every day. A few sensible habits close the small gaps that do exist. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers plain advice, and it boils down to this list.

Good habits

1. **Only accept pairing requests you started.** If a "Pair?" message or a code appears when you weren't pairing anything, tap **Cancel** or **Don't Allow**.
2. **Check that the numbers match** on both screens before tapping Pair.
3. **Don't stay discoverable.** The FCC recommends keeping Bluetooth in "hidden" rather than "discoverable" mode when you aren't pairing. Phones handle this for you: they're only discoverable while the Bluetooth settings screen is open, so close it when you're done.
4. **Turn Bluetooth off when you don't need it**, especially in crowded public places. The FCC suggests this.
5. **Keep everything updated.** Software updates for phones, computers and accessories fix security holes.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs remote access to pair your earbuds

If a pop-up or caller says your Bluetooth is "infected" or "hacked" and asks you to call a number, install an app, or pay to fix it, that's a scam. Real Bluetooth problems never come with a phone number to call. Close it, and if you're unsure, call someone you trust.

SCAM ALERT

Strange files or contacts over Bluetooth

Never accept a file, photo or contact card sent over Bluetooth from someone you don't know. Tap Decline. AirDrop and Quick Share requests from strangers work the same way: decline them.

HEADS UP

Trackers that aren't yours

Small Bluetooth tracking tags (like AirTags) can be misused to follow someone. iPhones and Android phones can alert you to an unknown tracker traveling with you. If you get such an alert, follow the on-screen steps and, if you feel unsafe, contact local police.

STAY SAFE

What Bluetooth can't do

Someone can't drain your bank account just because your Bluetooth is on. Real risks need you to accept something, so the simple rule, "don't accept what you didn't start," covers most of it.

CHAPTER 34

Rental Cars, Selling and Giving Away

When your phone pairs with a car, the car may copy your contacts and call history so you can use them hands-free. That's convenient in your own car, but you don't want it left behind in a rental or a car you sell.

Rental cars and loaners

1. Before you return the car, open its **Phone** or **Bluetooth** settings.
2. Find your phone in the list of paired devices and choose **Delete**, **Remove** or **Forget**.
3. On your phone, forget the car too (see Chapter 30, *Renaming and Forgetting Devices*).

GOOD TO KNOW

The FCC agrees

The FCC's Bluetooth tips specifically advise unpairing your phone from a rental car and clearing your personal data before you return it.

Selling or trading in your car

Remove your phone from the car's Bluetooth list, and look in the car's settings for a **factory reset** or **clear personal data** option, which also erases saved addresses and garage door codes. Your car's manual or dealer can show you where it is.

Giving away headphones, speakers or a keyboard

- Forget it on all your devices first.
- Reset it to factory settings using the maker's instructions, so it doesn't try to reconnect to you.
- For AirPods or other Find My or Find Hub devices, remove them from your account so the new owner can set them up.

TIP

Borrowing the grandkids' speaker?

When you're done, forget it on your phone. Next time, it'll pair fresh without confusion.

CHAPTER 35

Words You'll Hear

Bluetooth comes with its own jargon. Here's a plain-English dictionary so none of it can make you feel left out.

Word	What it means in plain English
Pair	The first-time introduction between two devices.
Connect	Using an already-paired device. Usually automatic.
Pairing mode / discoverable	The accessory announcing itself so others can find it. Usually a blinking light.
Forget / Unpair / Remove	Erase the pairing. You'd have to pair again.
Passkey / PIN	A short code to confirm pairing. Often numbers that must match on both screens.
Fast Pair	Google's pop-up shortcut for pairing on Android, Chromebook and Google TV.
Swift Pair	Microsoft's pop-up shortcut for pairing on Windows.
Multipoint	Headphones that stay connected to two devices at once.
LE / Bluetooth Low Energy	A low-power version of Bluetooth used by trackers, watches and newer earbuds.
LE Audio	The newer Bluetooth audio standard, used by newer earbuds and hearing aids.
Auracast	Broadcast audio: one source sending sound to many listeners. See Chapter 26, *Auracast: Broadcast Audio*.
MFi hearing device	A hearing aid made to work directly with iPhone.
ASHA	Google's standard for streaming to hearing aids on Android.
Latency	A small delay between the picture and the sound.
Firmware	The software inside an accessory. Updates fix bugs.

TIP

A dictionary, not a quiz

Nobody expects you to memorize these. Come back whenever a word trips you up.

CHAPTER 36

When to Call Bill

Most Bluetooth pairing you can absolutely do yourself with this guide. But some situations go faster with someone beside you, and there's no shame in that.

Good reasons to call

- You've climbed the whole troubleshooting ladder and it still won't pair.
- New hearing aids that need to work with your phone, tablet and TV.
- Setting up TV headphones so you can hear the dialogue without blasting the room.
- Pairing a new car and moving your contacts over, or cleaning a car out before you sell it.
- A new phone, and all your earbuds, speakers and car need moving to it.
- A keyboard and mouse for your tablet or computer, set up the way that's comfortable for you.
- Teaching a family member, or yourself, to do this with confidence next time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Device Training

My **Device Training** sessions are made for exactly this: we sit together with your own phone, earbuds, TV or car, and you do the pairing yourself while I coach. You walk away knowing how, not just with it working.

SCAM ALERT

A real technician never cold-calls you

If someone calls out of the blue saying your Bluetooth, phone or computer has a problem and they need remote access or payment, hang up. I'll never call you unasked to "fix" something.

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book online at **billshometech.com/book**. Bill's Home Tech serves **Portage County, Ohio**, and I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit. If you reach my assistant **Sophie** on the main line, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule.

FROM BILL

What it costs

My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. The guides themselves, like this one, are free to read and share.

— Bill

CHAPTER 37

Your Bluetooth Cheat-Sheet

The most-used steps on one page. Keep it handy, save it or print it for the fridge.

The four-step pattern

1. Turn Bluetooth on.
2. Put the accessory in pairing mode (blinking light) and keep it close.
3. Open the list of new devices.
4. Tap its name and accept the prompt (check that the numbers match).

Where to pair

Device	Where to go
iPhone / iPad	Settings > Bluetooth
Pixel / Android	Settings > Connected devices > Pair new device
Samsung Galaxy	Settings > Connections > Bluetooth
Windows 11	Settings > Bluetooth & devices > Add device > Bluetooth
Mac	System Settings > Bluetooth, then Connect
Chromebook	Time (bottom right) > Bluetooth > Pair new device
Roku	Settings > Remotes & devices > Wireless headphones
Fire TV	Settings > Controllers & Bluetooth Devices > Other Bluetooth Devices
Apple TV	Settings > Remotes and Devices > Bluetooth
Google TV	Profile > All Settings > Remote & Accessories > Pair remote or accessory
Hearing aids (iPhone)	Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices

If it won't pair

1. Charge it and bring it close.
2. Turn the accessory off and on.
3. Turn Bluetooth off and on.
4. Start pairing mode again.
5. Restart the phone.
6. Forget it and pair fresh.

Safety in five

1. Only accept pairing requests you started.
2. Check that the numbers match.
3. Decline files from strangers.
4. Keep your phone and accessories updated.
5. Unpair from rental cars before you return them.

Keep this handy

What	Notes
My phone's Bluetooth name	_____
My earbuds / headphones	_____
My car	_____
My hearing aids and app	_____
My TV box (Roku, Fire TV...)	_____
Car pairing PIN (if any)	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

FROM BILL

One skill, dozens of gadgets

You now know the pattern behind every Bluetooth gadget in the house. When the next one shows up, you'll recognize the dance. And if it ever gets tricky, call or text me at (330) 200-8042.