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BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Bluetooth Speakers

JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears and Soundcore: choosing, charging, pairing, linking two speakers and fixing hiccups, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for seniors and families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears & Soundcore speakers · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Bluetooth speaker guide. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Whether a speaker came as a gift, you're choosing one for the porch or the grandkids, or the one you have has stopped connecting, you'll find plain steps here, plus what each feature actually does *for you*. It covers the four brands most families own (JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears and Anker's Soundcore) as of November 2026. Speaker makers update their apps and models often, so if a button or screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Bluetooth Speakers

What a Bluetooth speaker is and isn't, the four brands most families own, how to pick the right size, and what the buttons and lights mean. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. A portable Bluetooth speaker is one of the nicest small gifts in technology. It turns the music, ballgames, audiobooks and podcasts on your phone into room-filling sound on the porch, in the kitchen, at the campsite or by the pool. Maybe one arrived for your birthday. Maybe the grandkids have one and you'd like to know how they work. Or maybe yours just won't connect today. Whoever you are, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. Helping people feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I've written this guide the way I'd explain it sitting next to you at the kitchen table: plainly, patiently, and without the jargon. When a word like "pairing" or "IP67" comes up, I'll stop and tell you what it means.

You can't break it by exploring

A speaker has only a handful of buttons, and none of them can do any harm. If you press the wrong one, the worst that happens is the music stops or a light blinks. Every speaker in this guide can also be reset to the way it came out of the box, so even a real tangle has a way out (Chapter 27).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Once a speaker is paired, it reconnects on its own. A few minutes of setup means you can carry good sound anywhere: a ballgame on the radio app while you garden, hymns for a family gathering, or an audiobook while you cook, without cords or fuss.

What's in this guide

- **Choosing and setting up**: which brand and size suits you, and what the buttons do (Part 1).
- **Charging and battery**: how to charge safely and make a charge last (Part 2).
- **Connecting** to an iPhone, Android phone, computer, TV or Amazon Echo (Part 3).
- **The free apps** from JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears and Soundcore, and keeping the speaker updated (Part 4).
- **Two speakers or more**: stereo pairs and party modes, brand by brand (Part 5).
- **Water, outdoors and phone calls**: what waterproof ratings really promise (Part 6).

- **Staying safe and fixing hiccups**: charging safety, counterfeit speakers, troubleshooting and factory resets (Part 7).

And I'm only a phone call away

If you get stuck, you're never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small, and no one will make you feel silly for asking. Now let's meet your speaker.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Bluetooth Speaker Is (and Isn't)

A **Bluetooth speaker** is a battery-powered speaker that plays sound sent to it wirelessly from a phone, tablet, computer or TV. **Bluetooth** is a short-range radio built into nearly every phone and computer. The two devices only need to be introduced once, which is called **pairing**. After that, they find each other automatically.

Where the music actually comes from

The speaker doesn't have music of its own. It plays whatever your phone is playing: Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, a podcast, an audiobook, a radio app, even a video's sound. If the phone stops, the speaker goes quiet. If the phone walks out of range, the music cuts out. That's normal.

GOOD TO KNOW

How far away can the phone be?

Bluetooth is made for short distances, roughly the size of a large room. Walls, floors, metal and even people's bodies weaken the signal. If the sound starts skipping, bring the phone a few steps closer to the speaker. Range figures on the box are measured in the open; inside a house you'll get less.

How it differs from other speakers

Type	What it is
Bluetooth speaker	Battery-powered and portable. Plays sound from a phone or computer that's nearby. No Wi-Fi or account needed. The subject of this guide.
Smart speaker	An Amazon Echo, Google Nest or Apple HomePod. Plugs into the wall, uses Wi-Fi and listens for voice commands. Chapter 12 covers using an Echo with a Bluetooth speaker.
Wi-Fi or whole-home speaker	Sonos and similar systems. Play over your home Wi-Fi, room to room. See the Soundbars and Home Audio manual.
Soundbar	A long speaker that sits under the TV to make dialogue clearer. Also in the Soundbars and Home Audio manual.

TIP

One speaker, many uses

A Bluetooth speaker is the most flexible of these. It goes from the kitchen to the porch to the car trunk to a grandchild's ball game. If you mainly want better TV sound, though, a soundbar is usually the better tool, because Bluetooth can add a slight delay between lips and sound (Chapter 11).

CHAPTER 3

The Four Brands at a Glance

Dozens of companies make Bluetooth speakers, but four brands make most of the ones families own and most of the ones on holiday gift lists. Each has a family of models, from pocket-sized to party-sized, and its own free phone app. Here's how to tell them apart.

JBL

JBL (owned by Harman, part of Samsung) makes the best-selling range. Most JBL portables are shaped like a can or a pill with a big JBL logo. The current generation includes:

Model	What it's like
Go 4 / Go 5	Palm-sized. JBL lists up to 7 hours of play on the Go 4 (plus about 2 more with Playtime Boost). The newer Go 5, announced in 2026, is rated IP68.
Clip 5	Small, with a built-in carabiner clip. Up to 12 hours, plus up to 3 more with Playtime Boost. Rated IP67.
Flip 7	The classic can shape, about the size of a water bottle. JBL lists 14 hours, plus about 2 more with Playtime Boost.
Charge 6	A larger can that can also charge your phone. JBL lists 24 hours (28 with Playtime Boost).
PartyBox	Big, plug-in or battery party speakers with light shows, such as the PartyBox Encore 2 and Club 120. Splash-resistant (IPX4), not waterproof.

Bose

Bose speakers are known for full, warm sound for their size. The current SoundLink family:

Model	What it's like
SoundLink Micro (2nd Gen)	The smallest, with a strap to hang it from a bike or backpack.
SoundLink Flex (2nd Gen)	A flat, rugged speaker. Up to 12 hours, rated IP67, and it floats.
SoundLink Plus	Bigger sound. Up to 20 hours, rated IP67. Bose's list price is $269 as of November 2026.
SoundLink Max	Bose's largest portable, with a carrying handle. Up to 20 hours (Bose measures this at 65% volume), rated IP67, and has an AUX input for a cord. It launched at $399.
SoundLink Home	A stylish indoor speaker. About 9 hours. Not water- or dust-resistant, so keep it inside.

Ultimate Ears (UE)

Ultimate Ears, owned by Logitech, makes round, tough, colorful speakers that play sound all the way around ("360-degree" sound). The names all end in BOOM:

Model	What it's like
WONDERBOOM 4	Small and round, with a loop on top. Up to 14 hours, IP67, floats, and has an Outdoor Boost button. Ultimate Ears' suggested price is $79.99; it's often on sale.
BOOM 4 / MEGABOOM 4	Tall cylinders with big + and - symbols on the front. The MEGABOOM is the larger, louder one.
EVERBOOM	Between the MEGABOOM and the big EPICBOOM. IP67, floats, about 20 hours, and has Outdoor Boost.

Anker Soundcore

Soundcore is Anker's audio brand, known for good value. Two families matter here:

Model	What it's like
Motion (for example, Motion 300)	Rectangular speakers aimed at clear sound. The Motion 300 lists up to 13 hours and is rated IPX7.
Boom (for example, Boom 2, Boom 3i)	Rugged outdoor speakers with a handle. The Boom 2 lists up to 24 hours (IPX7). The Boom 3i is rated IP68 and floats upright; Soundcore's U.S. list price is $129.99.

GOOD TO KNOW

Battery hours are best-case numbers

Makers measure battery life at moderate volume. Independent reviewers routinely get much less when they play loudly; one test of a Flip 7 at a steady, loud level got a little over 6 hours against JBL's 14. Plan on fewer hours if you like it loud.

CHAPTER 4

Choosing the Right Speaker

Brand matters less than you'd think. All four make good speakers. What matters is matching the size, the toughness and a few features to how you'll actually use it.

Start with where it will live

If you mostly want it for…	Look for…
The kitchen or a bedside table	A mid-size speaker such as a Flip, SoundLink Flex or Motion 300. Waterproofing is nice for the sink but not essential. An indoor model like the SoundLink Home is fine.
The porch, garden or pool	An IP67-rated speaker (Chapter 21). One that floats, like a WONDERBOOM 4, SoundLink Flex or EVERBOOM, is a bonus by the water.
Hiking, biking or the beach	Something small with a clip or strap: Clip 5, Go, SoundLink Micro or WONDERBOOM.
Parties and family gatherings	A bigger speaker (Charge, SoundLink Max, MEGABOOM, EVERBOOM, Boom) or two smaller ones linked together (Part 5).
Phone calls hands-free	A model that lists a built-in microphone or speakerphone. Not all do (Chapter 23).

Features worth paying for

- **Water and dust rating** of IP67 or better if it will ever go outside.
- **Battery life** of 10 hours or more, so it lasts a full day.
- **Linking**: if you might want two speakers later, buy the same brand and generation. Linking rarely works across brands, and sometimes not even across generations of the same brand (Chapter 16).
- **Charge-out port** (on the JBL Charge and Bose SoundLink Max) if you'd like it to top up your phone in a pinch.
- **Easy buttons**: big, raised buttons you can feel are easier for stiff fingers and tired eyes than flat touch areas.

What they cost

As of November 2026, small speakers like the WONDERBOOM 4 or JBL Go usually sell for about $40 to $80, mid-size ones like the Soundcore Boom 3i or Bose SoundLink Flex for about $100 to $150, and the bigger Bose models for several hundred (the SoundLink Plus lists at $269). Holiday sales often take 20 to 40 percent off. Buy from the maker's own store or a well-known retailer (Chapter 25).

HEADS UP

Don't pay for more than you'll use

A giant party speaker is heavy and needs a long charge. For one person on a porch, a mid-size speaker is plenty loud. You can always add a second one later and link them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the right speaker does for you

Get the size right and you'll actually carry it around. Many people find a speaker that's easy to lift with one hand ends up getting used every day, while a heavy one stays in the closet.

CHAPTER 5

Unboxing, Buttons and Lights

Open the box slowly and keep the packaging for a few weeks in case anything needs to go back. Most speakers come with very little: the speaker, a short USB-C charging cable and a quick-start sheet. Many don't include a wall plug.

The buttons almost every speaker has

Button	What it does
Power	Usually a circle with a line at the top. Press and hold for a second or two to turn on or off.
Bluetooth	The Bluetooth symbol (a pointed letter B). Press it, or press and hold it, to put the speaker into pairing mode for a new phone.
Volume + and -	Louder and softer. On UE speakers they're the big + and - shapes on the front.
Play/Pause	Often a triangle, or a single button in the middle. Pause, play, and on many models skip a song with two presses.
Linking or party button	Joins two or more speakers. JBL calls the feature Auracast or PartyBoost, Bose uses a shortcut button, UE uses PartyUp or a center button, Soundcore uses PartyCast.
Boost button	Some models have one: Outdoor Boost on UE, Playtime Boost on JBL (in the app). Explained in Chapters 7 and 22.

Reading the lights

Every brand uses lights a little differently, but a few patterns are nearly universal:

- **Blinking blue or white** on or near the Bluetooth button: waiting to pair with a new phone.
- **Steady** light: connected.
- **Red or amber** on the battery light: battery low, or charging (it usually turns off or turns green when full).

> **TIP**
>
> **Write down what the lights mean**
>
> The quick-start sheet has a small chart of the lights. Keep it with the speaker's receipt, or take a photo of it with your phone so it's always with you.

Speakers that talk to you

Many newer speakers announce what's happening: "Ready to pair," "Connected," or a battery level. Bose speakers, for example, announce "Stereo mode" or "Party mode" when you link two of them. If yours plays a tone or a voice, that's normal and helpful.

HEADS UP

Keep the cable you got

The short cable in the box is the right kind (USB-C on every current model in this guide). Chapter 6 covers what kind of wall plug to use with it.

PART 2

Charging and Battery

How to charge your speaker safely, how long it takes, and simple habits that make each charge last longer and keep the battery healthy for years.

CHAPTER 6

Charging the Right Way

Every speaker in this guide has a rechargeable battery built in, and every current model charges through a **USB-C** port: a small, oval-shaped socket, usually under a rubber flap or on the back. The same kind of plug charges most new Android phones and the newest iPhones.

Charging step by step

1. Make sure the speaker and the port are **completely dry**. If it has been outside or near water, see the warning below first.
2. Open the rubber flap over the port, if your speaker has one.
3. Plug the USB-C cable into the speaker, and the other end into a USB wall charger.
4. Watch the battery light. It shows the speaker is charging, and usually changes or goes out when it's full.
5. Unplug it and close the flap snugly. On waterproof speakers, a closed flap is part of what keeps water out.

STAY SAFE

Never charge a wet speaker

Even a fully waterproof speaker should never be plugged in while the charging port is wet. Water plus electricity in that tiny socket can corrode the contacts or cause a short. After the beach, the pool or a rainstorm, shake it gently, wipe it, and let it air-dry with the port open for a few hours before you plug it in. Don't use a hair dryer or put it on a heater.

Which wall charger to use

Use a USB charger from a name brand you recognize: the one from your phone, the speaker maker's own, or a well-known accessory brand. Most small speakers need nothing special. Bigger speakers like the Charge 6, SoundLink Plus or SoundLink Max charge faster from a stronger charger, and may take many hours on a weak one.

Speaker	Charging time the maker lists
JBL Clip 5	About 3 hours to a full charge.
JBL Go 4	About 3 hours, using a 5-volt, 1-amp charger or better.

Speaker	Charging time the maker lists
JBL Flip 7	About 2.5 hours with a charger that supplies 5 volts at 3 amps.
Bose SoundLink Plus	About 5 hours.
Bose SoundLink Max	About 5 hours.
Soundcore Motion 300	Under 4 hours.

HEADS UP

Skip the gas-station chargers

Very cheap, no-name chargers and cables are a common cause of slow charging and, rarely, overheating. A good charger costs about $15 to $25 as of November 2026 and lasts for years. Our Chargers, Cables and Power Banks manual explains what to look for.

Can I play music while it charges?

Yes, on all the speakers in this guide. It will just take a little longer to fill up. It's a handy way to use a speaker as a plugged-in kitchen radio.

Using your speaker to charge your phone

A few bigger speakers can share their battery with your phone through a USB cable: the JBL Charge series (that's where the name comes from) and the Bose SoundLink Max, whose USB-C port works both in and out. Plug your phone's charging cable into the speaker's port. Remember it drains the speaker's battery, so you'll get fewer hours of music.

CHAPTER 7

Making the Battery Last

A speaker battery is the same kind of lithium-ion battery that's in your phone. It's happiest when it's kept cool and used regularly, and it slowly loses capacity over the years. These habits help.

Get more hours from each charge

- **Turn the volume down a notch.** Volume is the biggest battery drain. Going from full blast to about two-thirds can add hours.
- **Turn the phone's volume up, and the speaker's down.** Set the phone near the top, then adjust the speaker. This gives the cleanest sound at any level.
- **Turn off light shows** on PartyBox and other speakers with lights, in the app.
- **Use Playtime Boost on JBL.** In the JBL Portable app, Playtime Boost trims the deep bass to stretch the battery: about 2 more hours on a Flip 7, up to 3 on a Clip 5. Turn it off when you want full sound.
- **Turn the speaker off** when you're done. Most turn themselves off after a while with no sound, but not right away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What Playtime Boost does for you

It's a simple trade: a bit less thump for a few more hours of music. On a long day at the lake, or when you forgot to charge the night before, it can be the difference between music through dinner and silence at four o'clock.

Keep the battery healthy for years

- Don't leave the speaker in a hot car, on a dashboard, or in direct summer sun for hours. Heat is the battery's worst enemy.
- Don't charge it in a freezing garage or car. Bring it inside to room temperature first.
- If you'll store it for a season, charge it to about half, turn it off, and top it up every few months.
- It's fine to leave it plugged in overnight now and then. Modern speakers stop charging when full.

Checking the battery level

Each brand's app shows the battery level at the top of the screen. Some phones also show a connected speaker's battery in their battery widget. On the speaker itself, the battery light, or the row of small lights on a Charge or Flip, gives a rough idea.

HEADS UP

When the battery is worn out

After several years, a speaker that used to last all day may only last an hour or two. Batteries in most of these speakers aren't meant to be replaced by the owner. If it's still under warranty, contact the maker. If not, it's usually time for a new speaker, and the old one should be recycled, not thrown in the trash (Chapter 24).

PART 3

Connecting Your Speaker

Pairing step by step with an iPhone or iPad, an Android phone, a Windows PC or Mac, a TV, and an Amazon Echo, plus how to share one speaker among the family.

CHAPTER 8

Pairing to an iPhone or iPad

Pairing is the one-time introduction between your speaker and your phone. Once it's done, they remember each other, and the speaker reconnects whenever both are on and nearby. It takes about a minute.

Step 1: Put the speaker in pairing mode

Turn the speaker on. A brand-new speaker usually goes into pairing mode by itself the very first time, with a blinking light. If it doesn't, or you're adding a second phone:

Brand	Pairing mode
JBL	Press the Bluetooth button. The light blinks while it waits.
Bose	Press and hold the Bluetooth button until the light blinks blue.
Ultimate Ears	Press and hold the Bluetooth button (or the center button on a WONDERBOOM) until you hear a tone and the light blinks quickly.
Soundcore	Press the Bluetooth button. The light blinks blue.

Step 2: Choose it on the iPhone

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Bluetooth**. Make sure the switch is on (green).
2. Wait a few seconds. Your speaker's name appears under **Other Devices**, for example "JBL Flip 7" or "Bose SoundLink Flex."
3. Tap the name. After a moment it moves up to **My Devices** and says **Connected**.
4. Play something. The sound now comes from the speaker.

> TIP
> **The app can do it for you**
> Each brand's free app (Chapter 14) can also find and set up the speaker, and it unlocks extra features. But plain Bluetooth pairing in Settings is all you need to play music.

Next time

Just turn the speaker on with the iPhone nearby and Bluetooth on. It reconnects on its own within a few seconds. If it doesn't, open **Settings** > **Bluetooth** and tap the speaker's name.

Removing a speaker from the iPhone

In **Settings** > **Bluetooth**, tap the small **i** (More Info) next to the speaker's name, then **Forget This Device**. This is a useful fix when a speaker refuses to reconnect (Chapter 26). Apple notes that forgetting it removes it from your other Apple devices on the same Apple Account, too.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **The Bluetooth Pairing manual goes deeper**
>
> If Bluetooth itself is new to you, our Bluetooth Pairing manual explains it from the ground up, for every kind of device from earbuds to hearing aids.

CHAPTER 9

Pairing to an Android Phone

Android phones from Samsung, Google and others all pair the same basic way, though the menu names differ a little. Put the speaker in pairing mode first (see the table in Chapter 8).

On a Samsung Galaxy

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Connections**, then **Bluetooth**. Turn it on.
2. Under **Available devices**, tap your speaker's name.
3. If asked to confirm, tap **Pair**. The speaker moves to **Paired devices**.

On a Google Pixel and most other Android phones

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Connected devices**.
2. Tap **Pair new device**.
3. Tap your speaker's name when it appears, then **Pair** if asked.

GOOD TO KNOW

A pop-up may do it for you

Some speakers support Google's **Fast Pair**. With Bluetooth and Location on, a card pops up at the bottom of the screen when the speaker is in pairing mode nearby. Tap **Connect** and you're done.

Removing a speaker from Android

In the Bluetooth list, tap the gear next to the speaker's name, then **Unpair** (Samsung) or **Forget** (Pixel).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What pairing once does for you

Once you've paired, you'll almost never see these menus again. You turn on the speaker, it finds your phone, and you press play. That's the whole routine.

CHAPTER 10

Pairing to a Computer

A speaker makes a laptop's thin sound much fuller for video calls with the family, church services online, or music while you work. Put the speaker in pairing mode first.

Windows 11

1. Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices**.
2. Make sure Bluetooth is **On**, then select **Add device** and choose **Bluetooth**.
3. Select the speaker's name from the list. When it says it's connected, select **Done**.

If sound still comes from the laptop, select the **speaker icon** on the taskbar, then the arrow next to the volume slider, and pick your Bluetooth speaker.

Mac

1. Choose **Apple menu** > **System Settings**, then click **Bluetooth** in the sidebar.
2. Hold the pointer over the speaker's name in the list of nearby devices and click **Connect**.
3. If sound still comes from the Mac, open **System Settings** > **Sound** and choose the speaker under **Output**.

HEADS UP

A computer can steal the speaker

A speaker that's paired to both your laptop and your phone may connect to whichever one wakes up first. If your phone suddenly can't find it, the laptop may have grabbed it. Turn off the laptop's Bluetooth for a moment, or disconnect it there. Chapter 13 explains this.

CHAPTER 11

Pairing to a TV or Streaming Box

Some TVs and streaming boxes can send their sound to a Bluetooth speaker. It's a nice way to hear the news better from your chair, by setting a speaker on the side table next to you. Menus vary a lot by make, so here's the general idea.

Where to look

Device	Where pairing lives
Fire TV	Settings > Controllers & Bluetooth Devices > Other Bluetooth Devices > Add Bluetooth Devices.
Apple TV	Settings > Remotes and Devices > Bluetooth, then pick the speaker.
Google TV	Your profile picture > All Settings > Remote & Accessories > Pair remote or accessory.
Roku	Some newer Roku TVs and players can pair Bluetooth headphones under Settings > Remotes & devices > Wireless headphones. A speaker may or may not be accepted there. Roku's phone app can also play TV sound through your phone.
Smart TVs (Samsung, LG and others)	Look in the TV's Sound settings for Sound Output or Bluetooth Speaker List.

GOOD TO KNOW

Expect a small delay

Bluetooth adds a fraction of a second of delay. Usually it's not noticeable, but on some setups the voices may seem a hair behind the lips. Some TVs have an audio delay or lip-sync setting to fix it. If it bothers you, a soundbar wired to the TV is the better solution; see our Soundbars and Home Audio manual.

TIP

One at a time

Most TVs and streaming boxes send sound to only one Bluetooth device at a time, and the TV's own speakers usually go quiet while it's connected. To go back to TV sound, turn the speaker off.

CHAPTER 12

Using Your Speaker with an Echo or Alexa

An Amazon Echo and a Bluetooth speaker can work together in two directions. Which one you want depends on which speaker sounds better and which one you want to talk to.

Direction 1: Your phone plays through the Echo

This treats the Echo as a Bluetooth speaker. It's handy if you don't own a separate speaker.

1. Say **"Alexa, pair Bluetooth."** Alexa says she's ready to pair.
2. On your phone, open the Bluetooth settings (Chapter 8 or 9) and tap the Echo's name.
3. Play something on your phone. To stop, say **"Alexa, disconnect."** Next time, just say **"Alexa, connect to my phone."**

Direction 2: The Echo plays through your Bluetooth speaker

This lets you keep talking to Alexa, but hear her music, radio stations and answers through your better Bluetooth speaker. It's good with a small Echo Dot, which has a modest speaker.

1. Put the Bluetooth speaker in pairing mode (Chapter 8).
2. On your phone, open the **Alexa** app and tap **Devices**.
3. Find and tap your Echo, then open its settings.
4. Look for **Bluetooth Devices** and tap **Pair a New Device**. Choose your speaker when it appears.
5. Now ask Alexa to play music. It comes out of the Bluetooth speaker.

HEADS UP

Some things stay on the Echo

When an Echo plays through a Bluetooth speaker, some sounds, such as alarms, timers and Alexa's own voice on some models, may still come from the Echo. And if the Bluetooth speaker turns itself off to save battery, the Echo goes back to its own speaker. Keep the Bluetooth speaker plugged in if you use it this way every day.

TIP

Echo menus change

Amazon updates the Alexa app often, and Alexa+ changed some screens. If you can't find **Bluetooth Devices**, open the Echo's settings and look for any Bluetooth item. Our Echo Show manual covers the Alexa app in more detail.

CHAPTER 13

Sharing One Speaker with the Family

A speaker can remember several phones, so everyone in the house can use it. But in general only one or two can play at the same moment, which explains most "it won't connect" puzzles.

How speakers remember phones

- Each speaker keeps a list of phones and computers it has paired with.
- When you turn it on, it usually reconnects to the **last** device it played from, if that device is nearby with Bluetooth on.
- Some newer models can connect to two phones at once and switch to whichever one starts playing. Check your model's quick-start sheet or app for "multipoint" or "two devices."

When a grandchild's phone grabbed it

1. Ask them to pause their music or turn off Bluetooth on their phone for a moment.
2. On your phone, open the Bluetooth settings and tap the speaker's name to connect.
3. If it still won't switch, turn the speaker off and back on with only your phone nearby.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Understanding the "last phone wins" rule saves a lot of frustration. Nine times out of ten, a speaker that won't connect isn't broken. It's simply still talking to someone else's phone or a laptop.

TIP

Give it a friendly name

Several brand apps let you rename the speaker, such as "Kitchen Speaker" or "Porch Flip." That makes it much easier to pick the right one from a list, especially if the neighbors have the same model.

PART 4

The Brand Apps and Updates

The free phone apps from JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears and Soundcore: what they add, how to set one up, and how to keep your speaker's software up to date.

CHAPTER 14

The Free Brand Apps

You don't need an app to play music. But each brand has a free app that adds useful extras: a battery gauge, sound adjustments, linking speakers, and software updates. The apps are free from the App Store on iPhone and Google Play on Android. None of them require a subscription.

Which app goes with which speaker

Brand	App
JBL	**JBL Portable** for the Go, Clip, Flip, Charge and Xtreme. Big PartyBox speakers have used the **JBL PartyBox** app. In 2026 JBL began moving some speakers into its **JBL One** app, while the older apps keep working. Your speaker's quick-start sheet or box says which one to use.
Bose	The **Bose** app for current SoundLink models. Some older Bose speakers used an earlier app called Bose Connect; the quick-start sheet says which.
Ultimate Ears	The **BOOM** app (UE | BOOM) for BOOM, MEGABOOM, EVERBOOM, EPICBOOM and HYPERBOOM. The small WONDERBOOM doesn't use an app.
Soundcore	The **Soundcore** app.

Setting up the app

1. Pair the speaker with your phone first (Chapter 8 or 9). Most apps find it more easily that way.
2. Open the App Store or Google Play, search for the app name above, and install it. Check the maker's name under the app (Harman for JBL, Bose Corporation, Logitech for UE, Anker for Soundcore) so you get the real one.
3. Open the app and allow Bluetooth access when it asks. Some ask for Location on Android; that's how Android lets apps find Bluetooth devices nearby.
4. If the app asks you to create an account, that's optional for most features. Look for a Skip or Later option if you'd rather not.
5. Tap your speaker when it appears. The app may offer a software update right away; let it finish (Chapter 15).

What you'll find inside

- **Battery level**, usually shown as a percentage.
- **EQ** (equalizer): sliders or presets for more or less bass and treble. Handy if voices sound muddy.
- **Linking** two or more speakers (Part 5).
- **Shortcut button** settings on Bose, and **Outdoor Boost** on UE.
- **Playtime Boost** on newer JBL speakers (Chapter 7).
- **Rename** the speaker, and **Software update**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the app does for you

If voices on podcasts or audiobooks sound boomy, turning the bass down a step or two in the app's EQ can make speech much clearer. It's one of the most useful two-minute changes you can make.

SCAM ALERT

Only download the real app

Search results sometimes show look-alike "speaker booster" or "Bluetooth connect" apps that are full of ads or charge a subscription. The real brand apps are free. If an app asks you to pay to "unlock" your speaker, delete it.

CHAPTER 15

Updating Your Speaker's Software

Speakers have a small amount of software inside, called **firmware**. Makers send updates that fix connection bugs and sometimes add features, such as JBL adding lossless sound over USB-C to the Charge 6 through an update. Updating takes a few minutes and is done through the brand app.

How to update

1. Charge the speaker to at least half, or plug it in. An update shouldn't run on a nearly empty battery.
2. Connect the speaker to your phone and open the brand app.
3. Look for a banner that says an update is available, or open the speaker's settings and look for **Software update**, **Firmware** or **Product update**.
4. Tap to start, and keep the phone right next to the speaker.
5. Don't turn off the speaker or walk away with the phone until the app says it's finished. The speaker may restart on its own.

HEADS UP

Update every speaker before linking them

Linking features work best when every speaker has the latest software. Ultimate Ears says every speaker in a PartyUp group should be updated. If two speakers refuse to link, updating both is the first thing to try.

When an update goes wrong

It's rare, but if a speaker stops responding after an update, charge it fully, then try a restart: on Bose, holding the Power button for 15 seconds restarts the speaker without erasing anything. Bose has a help article called "Product doesn't work after update" for its speakers. If a restart doesn't help, see the factory resets in Chapter 27.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What updating does for you

Many "my speaker keeps cutting out" problems are fixed by an update the maker already released. A quick check in the app every few months keeps your speaker working the way it did the day you got it.

PART 5

Two Speakers or More

Stereo pairs and party modes explained, then step-by-step linking for JBL, Bose, Ultimate Ears and Soundcore, including which models will and won't link together.

CHAPTER 16

Linking Two Speakers: Stereo and Party Modes

Most speakers in this guide can link with a second speaker of the same brand, and many can link with dozens. There are two ways to use two speakers, and it helps to know which one you want.

Mode	What it does
Stereo pair	Two matching speakers act as a left and right pair, like an old stereo system. Best when both are in the same room, a few feet apart, with you in front of them.
Party mode	Every speaker plays the same full sound. Best for spreading music around: one in the kitchen, one on the deck, one by the grill.

The names each brand uses

Brand	Party / multi-speaker	Stereo pair
JBL (current models)	Auracast	Yes, two of the same model
JBL (older models)	PartyBoost (before that, Connect+)	Yes, two compatible models
Bose	Party mode	Stereo mode, two of the same model
Ultimate Ears	PartyUp (BOOM family) or Double Up (WONDERBOOM)	Yes
Soundcore	PartyCast	Yes (often called TWS pairing)

HEADS UP

Brands don't mix, and generations sometimes don't either

A JBL won't join a Bose party, and a Bose won't join a UE party. Even within JBL, the newest Auracast speakers (such as the Flip 7 and Charge 6) can't link with older PartyBoost speakers (such as the Flip 6 and Charge 5). Before you buy a second speaker to go with the first, check that the two will link.

Tips that apply to every brand

- Update all the speakers first (Chapter 15).
- Start with the speakers close together, within a few feet, while you link them. Spread them out afterward.

- Only the first speaker (sometimes called the host or primary) needs to be connected to your phone.
- The volume buttons on any linked speaker usually change all of them, or just that one, depending on the brand.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What linking does for you

Two modest speakers spread around a yard often sound better than one loud one, because nobody has to stand next to a blaring speaker to hear. For a family reunion or a graduation party, it's a simple way to fill the space evenly.

CHAPTER 17

JBL: Auracast, PartyBoost and Stereo

JBL has changed its linking system several times, so the first step is knowing which generation you have. Look at the model name on the speaker or box.

System	Which speakers use it
Auracast	Go 4, Go 5, Clip 5, Flip 7, Charge 6, Xtreme 4 and 5, and newer PartyBox models such as the Encore 2 and Club 120. Auracast is a new Bluetooth standard, so in principle there's no fixed limit on how many speakers can join.
PartyBoost	Flip 5, Flip 6, Charge 5, Xtreme 3 and others from roughly 2019 to 2024. Up to 100 speakers.
Connect+ or Connect	Older models like the Charge 4 and Flip 4. Don't link with PartyBoost or Auracast.

GOOD TO KNOW

The one speaker that bridges both

The JBL Xtreme 4 is the exception: it can link with older PartyBoost speakers and with newer Auracast speakers. The newer Xtreme 5 supports only Auracast.

Linking JBL Auracast speakers

1. Turn on all the speakers and place them near each other.
2. Connect your phone to one speaker by Bluetooth and start the music.
3. Press the **Auracast** button on that speaker. The quick-start sheet shows which button it is on your model. The speaker starts sharing its sound.
4. Press the same button on each additional speaker. Each joins in after a moment.
5. Or open the **JBL Portable** app, where linked speakers show up and you can switch between party and stereo.

TIP

Stereo with two of the same speaker

Two of the same model, such as two Flip 7s, can be set as a left and right pair. In the app, look for the stereo option once both are linked. The newer Go 5 can even be stereo-paired by gently tapping two of them together, a feature JBL calls AirTouch.

Older JBL speakers with PartyBoost

On PartyBoost speakers, play music on one, then press the **PartyBoost** button (an infinity-shaped symbol) on the first speaker and then on the second. To switch the pair between party and stereo, use the JBL Portable app.

HEADS UP

Buying a second JBL?

If you have a Flip 6 or Charge 5 and want a partner for it, a new Flip 7 or Charge 6 won't link with it. Either buy another older PartyBoost model while they're still sold, or plan to use both speakers separately.

CHAPTER 18

Bose: Stereo Mode and Party Mode

Bose makes linking simple with a **shortcut button** on the newer SoundLink speakers (Flex 2nd Gen, Micro 2nd Gen, Plus, Max and Home). Out of the box, that button links speakers.

Linking two Bose speakers

1. Turn on both speakers and connect your phone to the first one.
2. Press the **shortcut button** on the first speaker, then on the second. (The very first link has to be made with the shortcut button.)
3. Listen for the announcement. Two speakers of the same model announce **Stereo mode**, one as Left and one as Right. Two different models announce **Party mode**.
4. To switch a matching pair between Stereo and Party, press the shortcut button once on either speaker.

Using the Bose app

In the Bose app, select the speaker group, tap **Speaker Link**, and turn the **Stereo (L/R)** switch on or off. To unlink, turn off the second speaker, press and hold its shortcut button, or end the link in the app.

GOOD TO KNOW

Exceptions to know

The SoundLink Home links only with another SoundLink Home, in stereo. It doesn't link with other Bose speakers. Stereo mode always needs two of the same model.

TIP

Change what the shortcut button does

If you never link speakers, the Bose app lets you set the shortcut button to do something else, such as start your Spotify music or call up your phone's voice assistant.

CHAPTER 19

Ultimate Ears: Double Up and PartyUp

Ultimate Ears has two separate systems: one for the little WONDERBOOM, and one for the BOOM family.

Two WONDERBOOMs: Double Up

1. Turn on both WONDERBOOM speakers and connect your phone to one.
2. Press and hold the **center button** on one speaker for about three seconds, until you hear a repeating tone.
3. Press and hold the center button on the other speaker until you hear the same tone.
4. A pairing tone from both speakers means they're linked. Ultimate Ears says a further press sets them up as left-and-right stereo.

HEADS UP

WONDERBOOM doesn't join PartyUp

WONDERBOOMs link only with other WONDERBOOMs. Ultimate Ears says PartyUp doesn't work with WONDERBOOM, BLAST or MEGABLAST speakers.

BOOM, MEGABOOM, EVERBOOM and bigger: PartyUp

PartyUp links any mix of BOOM, MEGABOOM, EVERBOOM, EPICBOOM and HYPERBOOM speakers, up to 150 of them, using the BOOM app.

1. Update every speaker in the BOOM app first.
2. Connect your phone to one speaker (the host) and open the **BOOM** app.
3. Swipe to the **PartyUp** screen.
4. Turn on the other speakers. They appear in a drawer at the bottom. Drag each one into the party.
5. Volume is shared across the party, and you can adjust each guest speaker separately.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What PartyUp does for you

If the family already owns a few UE speakers between them, you can bring them all to a gathering and have one person's phone play through every one of them, even if they're different sizes.

CHAPTER 20

Soundcore: PartyCast and Stereo Pairing

Soundcore uses **PartyCast** on its Boom family and party speakers, and simple two-speaker stereo pairing (sometimes labeled **TWS**, for "true wireless stereo") on models like the Motion 300.

Linking PartyCast 2.0 speakers

1. Connect your phone to one PartyCast speaker by Bluetooth.
2. Press the **PartyCast** button on that speaker until the light turns steady white.
3. Turn on the next speaker and press its PartyCast button until its light is steady white. A chime means it joined.
4. Repeat for each additional speaker. Soundcore says more than 100 can join one group.

TIP

Keep them close while linking

Soundcore suggests keeping the speakers within about 16 feet (5 meters) of each other during setup, with no other electronics in between.

GOOD TO KNOW

Old and new PartyCast

Soundcore says PartyCast 2.0 speakers work with older PartyCast 1.0 speakers. But the Motion 300 doesn't use PartyCast at all. It stereo-pairs only with another Motion 300.

Stereo pairing two Motion speakers

Two matching Motion speakers can be set up as a stereo pair. The exact button press differs by model, so follow the "TWS pairing" section of your speaker's user guide, which is on Soundcore's support site, or set it up in the Soundcore app.

PART 6

Water, Outdoors and Phone Calls

What waterproof ratings like IP67 really promise, using a speaker by the pool, in the garden or in the shower, and using it as a speakerphone.

CHAPTER 21

Waterproof Ratings Explained

Speaker boxes are covered in codes like **IP67** or **IPX4**. They come from an international standard (IEC 60529) and tell you exactly how much dust and water the speaker was tested against. Once you know how to read them, they're simple.

How to read the code

IP stands for "ingress protection," meaning protection from things getting in. The **first digit** is for dust and dirt (0 to 6). The **second digit** is for water (0 to 9). An **X** in either place means that part wasn't tested.

Rating	What it means
IPX4	Splash-resistant: rain and splashes from any direction. Not for dunking. JBL's PartyBox Encore 2 and Club 120 are IPX4.
IPX7	Can be under water up to about 1 meter (3 feet) for up to 30 minutes. Dust wasn't rated. The Soundcore Motion 300 and Boom 2 are IPX7.
IP67	Dust-tight (6), plus the same 1-meter, 30-minute dunk (7). Sand and beach-friendly. The JBL Clip 5 and Go 4, Bose SoundLink Flex, Plus and Max, and UE WONDERBOOM 4 and EVERBOOM are IP67.
IP68	Dust-tight, and protected for longer or deeper submersion than IP67, under conditions the maker specifies. The JBL Go 5 and Soundcore Boom 3i are rated IP68.
No rating	Keep it dry and indoors. The Bose SoundLink Home has no water or dust rating.

GOOD TO KNOW

Waterproof is not the same as water-play

These tests are done in still, fresh water at room temperature. Bose, for example, says the SoundLink Flex floats, but is not designed to be used in water; its rating is about surviving an accidental drop into the water for up to 30 minutes. Treat the rating as insurance, not as an invitation to swim with it.

What ratings don't cover

- **Salt water and chlorine**: rinse the speaker in fresh water afterward, then let it dry.
- **Hot water and steam**: a hot tub or a long hot shower is harder on seals than a cool dunk.
- **Soap, sunscreen and drinks**: sticky residue can gum up buttons and the speaker grille. Rinse with fresh water.

- **An open flap**: if your speaker's charging port has a rubber cover, the rating may depend on it being closed.
- **Age and drops**: seals wear over time, and a hard drop can crack them. An old speaker isn't as waterproof as a new one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the rating does for you

An IP67 speaker means you can stop worrying about a sudden shower at the picnic or a grandchild knocking it into the kiddie pool. Rinse it, dry it, and keep going.

CHAPTER 22

Outdoors, the Pool and the Shower

Portable speakers are made for the outdoors. A few habits keep them sounding good and lasting for years.

In the yard, on the porch or at the park

- Set the speaker **up off the ground**, on a table or ledge. Sound carries better, and it stays out of puddles and dirt.
- Put it **with its back near a wall or corner** for fuller bass, or in the middle of a table for round, 360-degree speakers like the UE models.
- **Keep the phone close.** If you walk away with your phone to the far end of the yard, the music will cut out.
- **Mind the neighbors.** Sound carries outdoors, especially in the evening.

Outdoor Boost and other outdoor settings

Ultimate Ears speakers like the WONDERBOOM 4 and EVERBOOM have an **Outdoor Boost** button that tunes the sound to be louder and clearer in the open air, where there are no walls to bounce sound back. On the WONDERBOOM 4 it's on the bottom of the speaker; press it and a voice tells you Outdoor Boost is on. On the EVERBOOM, it's a button on the speaker and in the BOOM app. Turn it off indoors, where it can sound harsh.

By the pool or the lake

- Use only an IP67 or IP68 speaker near water, and close any port flaps first.
- Floating models (WONDERBOOM 4, EVERBOOM, SoundLink Flex, Boom 3i) are good insurance, but keep the speaker out of the water when you can.
- Rinse it with fresh water after chlorine or salt water, and dry it before charging (Chapter 24).
- Keep it in the shade. A dark speaker in hot sun gets very hot, which is hard on the battery.

In the shower or bathroom

A waterproof speaker is a pleasant way to hear the morning news or music while getting ready. Set it on a shelf out of the direct spray, keep the port flap closed, and take it out of the steamy bathroom to dry and charge. Never charge a speaker in the bathroom, and never use a plugged-in speaker near a tub or sink.

STAY SAFE

Water and cords don't mix

A battery-powered speaker is safe near water because nothing is plugged into the wall. A speaker that's plugged in to charge is a different story. Keep any charging cable and wall plug well away from tubs, sinks, pools and hot tubs.

TIP

Cold weather

Batteries don't like the cold. In winter, a speaker may run out much faster outdoors. Keep it in a pocket or bag until you need it, and let it warm up to room temperature before charging.

CHAPTER 23

Using Your Speaker as a Speakerphone

Some Bluetooth speakers have a built-in microphone, so you can answer a phone call and talk hands-free through the speaker. It's handy in the kitchen or workshop when your hands are busy. Others have no microphone at all.

Does yours have a microphone?

- Look on the box or quick-start sheet for **speakerphone**, **built-in mic** or **hands-free calling**.
- Look for a tiny pinhole on the speaker labeled with a microphone symbol.
- Look for a phone-handset symbol on a button.

Don't assume a bigger or newer speaker has one. Reviewers point out, for example, that the JBL Charge 6 has no microphone, so it can't be used for calls.

Taking a call through the speaker

1. With the speaker connected to your phone, a call rings through the speaker.
2. Press the **Play/Pause** button (or the phone button, if there is one) to answer. On most speakers, pressing it again hangs up.
3. Speak toward the speaker from a few feet away, in a normal voice.
4. To move the call back to your phone for privacy, tap the audio or speaker button on your phone's call screen and choose **iPhone** or **Phone**.

HEADS UP

Mind who can hear

On a speakerphone, everyone in the room hears both sides of the call. Be careful when a call involves anything private, like a doctor's office, your bank or a family matter. Move the call back to your phone.

SCAM ALERT

Speakerphone and phone scams

If a caller you don't know asks you to read out a code, a bank number or a password, hang up, whether you're on a speaker or not. Real banks and companies don't ask for those over the phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a speakerphone does for you

If holding a phone to your ear is tiring, or you wear hearing aids that whistle with a phone, a speakerphone can make long calls with family much more comfortable.

PART 7

Staying Safe and Fixing Problems

Charging and heat safety, counterfeit speakers and too-good deals, a troubleshooting ladder for the common problems, factory resets brand by brand, and when to call for help.

CHAPTER 24

Safety: Charging, Heat and Wet Ports

Bluetooth speakers are very safe in everyday use. Like phones, they run on lithium-ion batteries, and a few simple habits keep it that way.

The safety habits

- **Dry before you charge.** Never plug in a speaker while the port is wet, even a waterproof one. Let it air-dry for a few hours first.
- **Charge on a hard surface**, not on a bed, couch or pile of papers, and not under a pillow.
- **Keep it out of heat**: hot cars, dashboards, next to the grill, campfires, heaters and hours of direct summer sun.
- **Use a name-brand charger and cable** in good condition. Replace frayed or bent cables.
- **Don't charge it overnight in a child's bedroom** if you can avoid it. Charge it in a kitchen or other common area.

STAY SAFE

Stop using it if you see these signs

If a speaker gets **very hot**, **swells** or bulges, gives off a **chemical smell**, **hisses**, or leaks, unplug it if you can do so safely, move it away from anything that can burn (outdoors onto concrete is ideal), and don't charge or use it again. Contact the maker. If there's smoke or fire, get everyone out and call 911.

Check for recalls

Now and then a speaker model is recalled for a battery or charging problem. You can search for your model at **cpsc.gov/Recalls**, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's site, or check the maker's support page. Registering your speaker with the maker also means they can contact you.

When it's time to throw it out

Don't put an old speaker in the household trash or the curbside recycling bin. Lithium-ion batteries can be crushed in garbage trucks and start fires. Many electronics stores and local recycling drop-offs take them; our Chargers, Cables and Power Banks manual lists options.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What these habits do for you

A minute of care, like letting a speaker dry before charging and keeping it out of the hot car, means it stays safe and lasts for years instead of one summer.

CHAPTER 25

Scams: Counterfeits and Too-Good Deals

Popular speakers, especially JBL and Bose, are copied by counterfeiters. Fakes look nearly identical in photos but sound thin, often don't last, and may have cheaply made batteries and chargers that aren't safe. Here's how to avoid them.

Warning signs of a fake or a scam

- **The price is far too low.** A brand-new current model for half price or less, outside a major holiday sale, is a red flag.
- **A website you've never heard of**, often found through a social-media ad, with a countdown timer or "only 3 left!"
- **A Marketplace or classified seller** with several "new in box" speakers of the same model.
- **Payment by gift card, wire transfer, Zelle or a payment app** to a stranger. Legitimate stores take credit cards.
- **The brand app won't find it** or can't update it. Real speakers work with the official app.
- **Spelling mistakes** on the box, a missing serial number, or a logo that looks slightly off.

SCAM ALERT

The too-good deal

Ads that say "Clearance! Bose speaker $29.99, warehouse closing" or "JBL giveaway, just pay shipping" are almost always scams. At best you get a fake; at worst you get nothing and your card number is stolen. If an ad pushes you to hurry, slow down.

Where to buy safely

- The maker's own website (jbl.com, bose.com, ultimateears.com, soundcore.com).
- Well-known retailers you already shop with, in person or online.
- On Amazon or Walmart.com, check that it says **sold by** the brand or by Amazon or Walmart itself, not just "fulfilled by."
- Pay with a **credit card**, which gives you the strongest protection if something goes wrong.

SCAM ALERT

Fake support numbers

If you search the web for "JBL support phone number" or "Bose help," the top results can be ads for fake support lines. They may ask for remote access to your computer or payment by gift card. Go to the maker's website by typing the address yourself, and find Support from there. Real speaker support never asks for gift cards.

If you think you bought a fake

1. Contact the seller and ask for a refund. On Amazon, eBay or Walmart, use their return or guarantee process.
2. If you paid by credit card and the seller won't help, call the number on the back of your card and dispute the charge.
3. Report a fake website or ad to the FTC at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.
4. Stop charging a suspected fake. Counterfeit batteries are the biggest safety risk.

GOOD TO KNOW

More on scams

Our Spotting and Avoiding Scams and Facebook Marketplace manuals cover online shopping scams in more detail.

CHAPTER 26

Troubleshooting: Won't Connect, No Sound, Cutting Out

Most speaker problems are fixed by the same few steps, done in order. Start at the top and stop when it works. None of these will hurt anything.

The ladder: try these in order

1. **Charge it.** A speaker with a nearly empty battery may turn on but refuse to connect or play. Charge it for 30 minutes.
2. **Check the volume on both** the phone and the speaker. Press volume up several times on each.
3. **Check where the sound is going.** On the phone, make sure the speaker is chosen as the audio output, not the phone itself or a pair of earbuds.
4. **Turn Bluetooth off and on** on your phone. Wait 10 seconds between.
5. **Turn the speaker off and on.**
6. **Check for another phone or laptop** that grabbed the speaker (Chapter 13).
7. **Forget and re-pair.** On the phone, forget the speaker (Chapter 8 or 9), put the speaker in pairing mode, and pair again.
8. **Restart your phone.**
9. **Update the speaker** in the brand app (Chapter 15).
10. **Factory reset the speaker** (Chapter 27), then pair it again as if it were new.

Common problems and quick fixes

Problem	Try this
It stopped working / won't turn on	Charge it for at least 30 minutes with a known-good charger and cable. On Bose, try holding Power for 15 seconds to restart it.
Won't connect / not showing in the list	Put the speaker in pairing mode (blinking light). Move the phone within a few feet. Make sure another device isn't connected.
Connected but no sound	Turn up the volume on both. Check the phone's audio output. Pause and play again.
Sound cuts out or skips	Bring the phone closer. Keep the phone out of a back pocket. Move away from microwaves and Wi-Fi routers. Update the speaker.
Two speakers won't link	Check they're compatible (Chapter 16). Update both. Start with them a few feet apart.
Sound is muffled after getting wet	Water in the grille. Let it drain and dry for several hours.
Delay between TV picture and sound	Normal with Bluetooth. Look for a lip-sync or audio-delay setting on the TV, or use a soundbar.
Bose light flashing white and amber	Bose has a help article for exactly this light pattern on its support site. Follow the steps there.

TIP

Read the help article for your model

Every brand has a support page for each model with its own troubleshooting articles: support.jbl.com, support.bose.com, the Ultimate Ears section of support.logi.com, and service.soundcore.com. Search there for your model name and the problem.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the ladder does for you

Working through the steps in order fixes the large majority of speaker problems without a store trip or a phone call, and you'll know exactly what you tried if you do need help.

CHAPTER 27

Factory Resets, Brand by Brand

A **factory reset** returns the speaker to the way it came out of the box. It erases the list of paired phones and any settings like EQ or the shortcut button. It does not delete any music (the speaker never had any) and it doesn't harm the speaker. Use it as the last step in Chapter 26, or before you give the speaker away.

TIP

Before you reset

Charge the speaker first. Then, on your phone, forget the speaker in the Bluetooth settings (Chapter 8 or 9). Ultimate Ears also suggests removing it from the BOOM app first. After the reset, pair it again as if it were new.

Bose

Model	How to reset
SoundLink Flex (2nd Gen) and SoundLink Plus	Unplug the USB-C cable. Press and hold **Volume +** and **Volume -** together for about 15 seconds, until the Power light blinks white and the speaker turns off. Press Power to turn it back on.
SoundLink Flex (original, 2021)	Press and hold **Power** for 10 seconds, until the speaker turns off and the lights go out.
Restart only (any current SoundLink)	Hold **Power** for 15 seconds. This restarts the speaker without erasing your paired phones; try it first.

Ultimate Ears

Model	How to reset
BOOM 4 and MEGABOOM 4	With the speaker on, press and hold **Volume -** and **Power** together for 5 to 10 seconds. It plays a tone and turns off. Turn it on again and it's ready to pair.
WONDERBOOM 4	Press and hold **Volume -** and **Power** together for 5 to 10 seconds.

Soundcore

Model	How to reset
Motion 300	Press and hold the **Bluetooth** button and **Volume +** together for at least 4 seconds.
Other Soundcore models	Soundcore has a reset chart for each speaker; times differ by model. Search service.soundcore.com for "How to reset a soundcore speaker."

JBL

JBL portable speakers reset with a combination of two buttons held together for a few seconds, and the combination differs between models and generations. Rather than guess, go to **support.jbl.com**, search for your exact model (the name is printed on the speaker), and open its owner's manual or "factory reset" article. On many models the brand app also has a reset option in the speaker's settings.

HEADS UP

Reset is a last step, not a first one

A factory reset fixes stubborn pairing problems, but it also erases your speaker links and settings. Try the simpler steps in Chapter 26 first, especially "forget and re-pair."

GOOD TO KNOW

Giving the speaker away?

Reset it first, so it won't keep trying to connect to your phone, and so the new owner starts fresh.

CHAPTER 28

When to Call Bill

Most speaker questions can be solved with this guide and a little patience. But sometimes a hand from someone who's done it many times is worth it. Here's when it may make sense to call.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like the speaker paired to every phone, tablet and computer in the house, and the brand app set up, in one visit.
- You want an Echo playing through a Bluetooth speaker, or the TV sound coming through one, and the menus aren't cooperating.
- You're linking several speakers for a family event and want it to work the first time.
- A speaker won't connect, update or reset after you've worked through Chapters 26 and 27.
- You're choosing a speaker as a gift and want an honest opinion about which one fits the person.
- You're not sure whether a deal or a website is real.

What working with Bill is like

I've spent more than 30 years in professional technology work, and these days I help families around Portage County feel comfortable with the gadgets in their lives. I go at your pace, explain what I'm doing as I do it, and write down anything you'll want to remember. I can help over a remote session on your computer or phone, or come to your home.

FROM BILL

Call Bill

$49 remote · $99 in your home. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Who answers the phone

When I'm out helping someone, my AI receptionist, **Sophie**, may answer the phone or the chat on the website. She can answer simple questions and book a time for me to help you.

CHAPTER 29

Your Bluetooth Speaker Cheat-Sheet

The essentials, all in one place.

Task	How
Pairing mode	Turn it on, then press (or hold) the Bluetooth button until the light blinks.
Pair an iPhone	Settings > Bluetooth > tap the speaker under Other Devices.
Pair an Android	Settings > Connected devices > Pair new device (Samsung: Settings > Connections > Bluetooth).
Echo through your speaker	Alexa app > Devices > your Echo > Bluetooth Devices > Pair a New Device.
Phone through an Echo	"Alexa, pair Bluetooth."
The apps	JBL Portable (or JBL One), Bose, BOOM (Ultimate Ears), Soundcore.
Link speakers	JBL Auracast or PartyBoost · Bose shortcut button · UE PartyUp or Double Up · Soundcore PartyCast.
IP67	Dust-tight, and survives up to 1 meter of water for 30 minutes. Still dry it before charging.
Charging	USB-C, name-brand charger, dry port, hard surface.
Bill	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book · $49 remote · $99 in your home

Write it down once

Item	Mine
My speaker's brand and model	_____
Where and when I bought it	_____
Serial number (on the bottom or box)	_____
The app it uses	_____
The name it shows in Bluetooth	_____
How to reset my model	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Charge it.
2. Check the volume on the phone and the speaker.
3. Turn Bluetooth off and on, and the speaker off and on.
4. Make sure no other phone or laptop is connected.
5. Forget it on the phone and pair again.
6. Update it in the brand app.
7. Factory reset (Chapter 27), then pair again.
8. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.