BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

# Day Clocks & Memory-Friendly Devices

Day-date clocks, one-button music, simple phones and remotes — explained in plain English, one step at a time

**A plain-English guide for families and the people they love**

Take your time — you can't break it

*Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech*

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

*For day clocks, simple music players, phones, remotes & more · facts current November 2026*

# What's Inside

This is your guide to the simple, steady devices that help when memory starts to slip: clocks that say the day and date in plain words, music players with one button, phones with a handful of photo contacts, and TV remotes without the clutter. Read it in any order and at your own pace. One promise runs through every page: this guide helps with the *technology*. For questions about health, care or a diagnosis, the person's doctor and care team are the right people to ask.

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PART 1

# Getting Started

What "memory-friendly" really means, and the one conversation to have before you buy anything.

CHAPTER 1

# A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you're reading this, someone you love may be having more trouble keeping track of the day, the time, or how to work the gadgets around the house. Maybe a doctor has given a diagnosis, or maybe the family has simply noticed that the TV remote, the phone and the calendar are causing more frustration than they used to. Either way, you're in the right place.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain things at the kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything. When a word like "Wi-Fi" or "caregiver app" comes up, I'll stop and explain it.

## What this guide will do for you

- Explain **day clocks** — the big clocks that spell out the day, the date and the time of day — and help you choose, set up and place one.
- Show you **clocks family can update from far away**, including clocks that speak reminders in a familiar voice.
- Walk through **one-button music players** and how to load favorite songs onto them.
- Compare **simplified phones**: Jitterbug phones from Lively, the RAZ Memory Cell Phone, and picture phones for the landline.
- Cover **big-button TV remotes**, simple tablets, photo frames and smart speakers.
- Help with the everyday things: labels, power outages, time changes, and the **scams** that target families and caregivers.

## My one firm rule

I'm a technology helper, not a doctor, nurse or counselor. Everything here is about *how the devices work* and how to set them up kindly. Questions about memory, health, safety at home or care plans belong with the person's doctor and care team. I'll point you to them whenever it matters.

## You can't break anything by reading

Nearly everything in this guide can be tried, adjusted and undone. A clock can be moved to another room. A phone's contacts can be changed. A music player can be loaded again. Take your time, try one idea, and see how it fits the person's day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Why this matters

The right simple device can quietly answer the questions that come up again and again — *What day is it? Is it morning or night? How do I call my daughter?* — so the person feels more confident and the family fields fewer worried calls.

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 2

# What "Memory-Friendly" Means

A memory-friendly device is one that asks very little of the person using it. It shows one thing clearly, does one job reliably, and doesn't change when you're not looking. Here are the qualities to look for, whatever kind of device you're shopping for.

## The five qualities that matter most

1. **Plain words instead of symbols.** "Tuesday Morning" spelled out is easier than a small "TUE 9:00 AM". Many day clocks write the whole thing in words.
2. **Few buttons, and the right ones.** A remote with eight big buttons beats one with fifty small ones. A music player with one button beats a smartphone app.
3. **It looks the same every day.** Screens that pop up updates, ads or new menus cause confusion. Simple devices stay put.
4. **It keeps working through hiccups.** Battery backup, automatic time setting and automatic daylight saving changes mean the device is still right after a storm or a time change.
5. **Family can help from a distance.** Some devices let a family member change reminders, contacts or photos from their own phone, so the person at home doesn't have to.

## The main kinds of devices

| Device | What it helps with | Where in this guide |
|---|---|---|
| Day-date clock | Knowing the day, date and time of day | Chapters 4–7 |
| Connected or talking clock | Reminders, messages from family | Chapters 8–9 |
| One-button music player | Enjoying favorite music without help | Chapters 10–12 |
| Simplified cell phone | Calling family, getting help | Chapters 13–15 |
| Picture phone (landline) | Calling by tapping a photo | Chapter 16 |
| Big-button TV remote | Turning on the TV and changing channels | Chapter 17 |
| Simple tablet or photo frame | Video calls, family photos | Chapters 18–19 |
| Smart speaker or display | Spoken reminders, music by voice | Chapters 20–21 |

TIP

### Start with one

It's tempting to change everything at once after a diagnosis. Usually it works better to bring in one new device, let it become familiar for a couple of weeks, and then add the next.

Memory organizations such as the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia Australia list calendar clocks, reminder devices and simplified phones among the common everyday aids. They also suggest clearing away clutter, which applies to gadgets as much as anything else.

CHAPTER 3

# Before You Buy: Talk It Over Together

The best device is the one the person actually wants to use. Whenever possible, include them in the choice. A new clock or phone that arrives as a surprise can feel like something being taken away. One that they helped pick feels like a gift.

## Questions to ask, one at a time

1. **What's the hardest part of the day right now?** Losing track of the day? Missing calls? Not being able to turn on the TV? Start there.
2. **What do they already use without trouble?** If an old landline phone works fine, you may not need a new cell phone at all.
3. **Is there Wi-Fi in the home?** Some devices need it, some work without it, and some use their own cell connection. This one answer narrows the choices quickly.
4. **Who will set it up and keep it up?** Name one family member as the "device person" who holds the logins and makes changes.
5. **How do they see and hear?** Big bright letters, loud ringers and hearing-aid compatibility matter more than extra features.
6. **What's the budget, including monthly fees?** A plug-in clock is a one-time purchase. Some phones, tablets and connected clocks carry a monthly plan.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Respect and independence**
>
> The goal is to help the person do things for themselves for as long as possible — not to take over. Say "This clock shows the day so you don't have to look it up" rather than "You keep forgetting."

## Write down what you decide

Keep a short note of what you bought, where, the account login (if any), and who set it up. A "Write it down once" list is in the cheat-sheet at the end, Chapter 28. It saves real trouble months later when a setting needs changing or the device needs replacing.

HEADS UP

### Be careful with "free" offers

Calls or letters offering a free clock, phone or medical device in exchange for a Medicare number or bank details are a well-known scam. Buy from stores and companies you choose yourself. Chapter 26 has more.

PART 2

# Day Clocks

The big clocks that spell out the day, the date and the time of day — choosing one, setting it up and putting it where it helps most.

CHAPTER 4

# What a Day Clock Shows

A day clock — sometimes sold as a "calendar clock", "day-date clock" or "dementia clock" — is a digital clock with a large screen that shows the whole picture in words. Instead of a small number in the corner, it might say:

**Now it's Tuesday Morning**
**November 17, 2026**
**9:15 AM**

## Why the words help

- **The day of the week, spelled out.** Days can blur together, especially in retirement. Seeing "Tuesday" in large letters answers the question instantly.
- **The part of the day.** Many clocks say Morning, Afternoon, Evening or Night. This matters in winter, when it's dark at 5 p.m., and in summer, when it's light at 9 p.m.
- **The full date.** Helpful for appointments, birthdays and knowing what month it is.
- **The time, large and clear.** Usually with AM and PM spelled out.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A day clock gives the person a reliable answer they can check on their own, as often as they like, without having to ask anyone. For families, it often means fewer worried phone calls about what day it is.

## Extras some clocks add

- **Alarms or reminders** that show a message such as "Take your pills" or "Lunch time".
- **Automatic dimming** so the screen isn't glaring at night.
- **Battery backup** so the time isn't lost when the power blinks.
- **Automatic daylight saving time** changes.
- **Choice of languages** and display styles.
- **Wi-Fi or an app** so family can send messages and reminders from afar (Chapter 8).

Memory organizations note that clocks showing morning or evening can be especially useful when it's light in the evening or dark in the morning.

CHAPTER 5

# Choosing a Day Clock

Day clocks range from about $40 to a few hundred dollars. The cheaper ones are simple plug-in screens. The pricier ones add reminders, talking, or a family app. More features aren't always better: the simplest clock that shows what the person needs is usually the right one.

## Plain plug-in day clocks

These plug into the wall, sit on a table or hang on the wall, and show the day, date and time in large words. One widely sold example is the **American Lifetime Day Clock**, which has an 8-inch screen, automatic dimming, battery backup and several alarms that can show a reminder. A review from the seller Relish listed it at **$59.95** as of November 2026, and it's widely available online.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Model years change often

Plain day clocks are sold under many slightly different model names and years. Features such as the number of alarms can differ between versions, so check the instruction sheet that comes in the box before you plan around a feature.

## Clocks with reminders built in

Some clocks focus on reminders. The **Relish Day Hub**, for example, is a day clock with up to 10 task alerts and was listed at **$199.99** as of November 2026. Talking clocks that play reminders in a family member's recorded voice are covered in Chapter 9.

## Connected clocks family can update

If family lives far away and wants to send reminders or messages, look at clocks and tablet apps with a caregiver app. They usually need Wi-Fi and may have a monthly fee. Chapter 8 covers these.

## A quick checklist in the store or online

| Look at | What to want |
|---|---|
| **Screen size** | 7 to 10 inches is common; bigger is easier from across the room |
| **Words or numbers** | Look for the day of the week and the part of the day spelled out |
| **Brightness** | Automatic dimming or a night mode, so it doesn't keep anyone awake |
| **Power** | Plug-in with battery backup is the most reliable |
| **Time setting** | Automatic daylight saving time is a real help |
| **Reminders** | Only if the person will use them; too many alarms can upset |
| **Buttons** | Few, and ideally on the back where they won't be pressed by accident |

TIP

### Wall or table?

A table clock can be picked up and studied up close. A wall clock can't be knocked over or carried off to another room. Many clocks come with both a stand and a wall hook, so you can try both.

CHAPTER 6

# Setting Up a Plug-In Day Clock

Every brand is a little different, but the steps are nearly always the same. Set it up yourself before you hand it over, so the person gets a clock that's already right.

## The usual setup steps

1. Unpack the clock and look for a small plastic tab sticking out of the battery door. Pull it out — that turns on the backup battery.
2. Plug the power cord into the clock and the wall. The screen lights up.
3. Find the buttons, usually on the back or side. Look for one labeled **Menu** or **Set**.
4. Press **Menu**. Use the up and down buttons (often marked + and -) to choose each item: language, time, date and display style.
5. Set the **time**, checking AM or PM carefully.
6. Set the **date**: year, month and day. The day of the week usually fills in by itself.
7. If there's a **daylight saving** setting, turn it on so the clock changes in March and November.
8. Choose the **display style** the person will find easiest — often the one with the most words.
9. Set **brightness** or turn on **automatic dimming**.
10. Press **Menu** or **Exit** to save. Watch the clock for a minute to be sure the time moves on.

HEADS UP

### AM and PM

The most common setup mistake is setting the time 12 hours off. If the clock says "Evening" in the morning, go back and switch AM to PM.

## Setting a reminder alarm

1. Open the clock's menu and look for **Alarm** or **Reminder**.
2. Choose the time.
3. If the clock lets you choose a message, pick or type a short one: "Lunch time" or "Pills on the kitchen counter".
4. Choose how often — every day, or certain days only.

5. Save, then wait for it to go off once while you're there, so you know what it looks and sounds like.

TIP

### Fewer alarms are kinder

An alarm that goes off when no one knows why can cause worry. Start with one or two that matter most, such as a meal or a medicine time agreed with the doctor, and add more only if they help.

STAY SAFE

### Reminders don't replace a plan

A clock reminder is a nudge, not a guarantee that a pill was taken or a door was locked. For medicines, work out a plan with the pharmacist, and see our separate guide to pill dispensers and medication reminders.

CHAPTER 7

# Where to Put It: Placement, Brightness and Night Mode

Where the clock lives matters as much as which clock you buy. The best spot is somewhere the person looks naturally many times a day.

## Good spots

- **Beside the favorite chair** in the living room, at eye level when seated.
- **On the kitchen table or counter**, where the day starts.
- **In the bedroom**, visible from the bed, so the first question of the morning is answered right away. Make sure it dims at night.

## Things to avoid

- Bright windows behind or in front of the screen, which cause glare.
- Places where the cord crosses a walkway and could trip someone.
- Next to a second clock showing a different time. Remove or correct old clocks so there's one right answer.
- Spots where it might be unplugged to charge something else. A short note on the plug helps: "Clock — please leave plugged in."

TIP

### One clock, one answer

If there's an old clock that runs slow, a stove clock that blinks 12:00, or a calendar still on last month, fix or remove it. Mixed messages are confusing for anyone.

## Brightness and night mode

A screen that's comfortable at noon can feel like a spotlight at midnight. Most day clocks have a brightness setting, and many dim automatically when the room gets dark. Set it once in the evening, with the room lights as they'll usually be, and check that the words are still readable from the bed.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Why this matters

Waking at night and seeing "Night" in calm, dim letters can help someone settle back down instead of getting up and dressed for a day that hasn't started yet.

PART 3

# Clocks That Do More

Clocks family can update from their own phone, and clocks that speak reminders in a familiar voice.

CHAPTER 8

# Clocks Family Can Update from Afar

A connected day clock shows the same large day and date, but it also links to an app on a family member's phone. From anywhere, that family member can add a reminder ("Dr. Patel at 2 p.m."), send a short message ("Sarah is coming for lunch") or share a photo. Most of these need Wi-Fi in the home.

## Option 1: Turn an iPad into a day clock

If there's a spare iPad, an app can turn it into a large-text day clock and calendar that family manages from their phone.

- **RecallCue** shows the day, date and time in large text, with reminders, alarms, messages, photos and video calls managed by a caregiver from a phone. It's free to download, and its Pro features are a subscription — the U.S. App Store listed **$9.99 a month or $99.99 a year** as of November 2026. The developer offers a 7-day free trial.
- **Calendar Clock** is a free iPad day-clock app with a separate administrator app for family to send reminders and messages and start video calls. The clock display keeps working even without internet.

## Setting up an iPad day clock, in general

1. Charge the iPad fully and connect it to the home Wi-Fi.
2. Install the day-clock app from the **App Store** on the iPad.
3. Install the matching caregiver or administrator app on the family member's phone.
4. Follow the app's steps to link the two, usually with a code or an invitation.
5. Send a test reminder from the phone and watch it appear on the iPad.
6. Put the iPad on a sturdy stand, plugged into its charger, where the person sits most.

TIP

### Keep the iPad on one screen

An iPad can be tapped, swiped and wandered away from the clock. Apple's Guided Access or Assistive Access features can keep it on one app; ask a family member who knows iPads, or see Chapter 18.

## Option 2: A stand-alone connected clock

Some companies make a dedicated clock with its own caregiver app. One example is the **Idem Smart Clock**, designed for people with memory loss: caregivers send reminders, notes and messages in real time through the free Idem Companion App, and the clock uses home Wi-Fi with no subscription needed (it won't work on public Wi-Fi). Idem is sold through partner stores in some regions, so check whether it's available where you live before you plan around it.

## Questions to ask before you buy

| Ask | Why it matters |
|---|---|
| **Does it need Wi-Fi?** | If the home has no Wi-Fi, choose a plain clock or one with its own cell plan |
| **Is there a monthly fee?** | Many apps charge for the family features; know the yearly total |
| **Who gets the app?** | Ideally one or two family members, so reminders don't pile up |
| **What happens if Wi-Fi drops?** | The clock should still show the right time and day |
| **Can the person turn it off by accident?** | Look for few or hidden buttons |

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A connected clock lets a son or daughter three states away add Thursday's appointment in ten seconds, so it's right there on the screen when the day comes — no phone call needed.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Gentle with messages

Short, calm messages work best: "Lunch with Ann today at noon." Avoid long notes or worrying news on the clock screen.

CHAPTER 9

# Talking Clocks and Recorded Reminders

For some people, hearing a reminder works better than reading one — especially in a familiar voice. Talking reminder clocks let a family member record short messages that play at set times.

## Reminder Rosie

The **Reminder Rosie 2** (also sold as SMPL Rosie 2) is a voice-controlled clock that plays up to **25 recorded reminders** in your own voice or a family member's. It has large amber number digits, answers simple spoken questions such as *"What day is it?"* and *"Today's reminders"*, and uses three AAA batteries as backup during power outages. Its list price was about **$249.99** as of November 2026, with sale prices around $200 at some sellers.

## Recording a good reminder

1. Choose a quiet room, with the TV and radio off.
2. Plan the words first. Keep it to one sentence.
3. Start with the person's name, then the task: "Mom, it's lunch time. Your sandwich is in the fridge."
4. Speak slowly and warmly, a little louder than usual.
5. Play it back and listen. Re-record if it sounds rushed.
6. Set the time and how often it repeats, following the clock's instruction sheet.

TIP

### Use the voice they trust

Many families find a reminder in a son's or daughter's voice is welcomed more readily than a beep. If the recorder isn't the person's favorite voice, ask another family member to record.

HEADS UP

### Too many voices

Twenty-five reminders is a maximum, not a goal. A clock that talks every hour can be tiring or unsettling. Start with two or three, and watch how they're received.

## Other talking options

- **Plain talking clocks** announce the time when you press a big button. They're inexpensive and helpful for people with poor eyesight too.
- **Smart speakers** like an Amazon Echo can speak reminders that family sets from the Alexa app. See Chapter 21.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A spoken reminder reaches someone who isn't looking at a screen — in the kitchen, in the chair, or just waking up — and a familiar voice can make it feel like a friendly nudge rather than an alarm.

PART 4

# Music Made Simple

One-button music players, simple radios and music boxes — and how to fill them with favorite songs.

CHAPTER 10

# Why a One-Button Music Player

Music is one of the great pleasures of life, and favorite songs often stay familiar long after other things get harder. The trouble is that modern music comes through phones, apps and streaming services, each with its own menus and passwords. A one-button music player removes all of that.

## How the lid player works

The best-known design is the **Simple Music Player** from SMPL, which looks like a small old-fashioned radio with a lid:

- **Lift the lid** and the music starts.
- **Close the lid** and the music stops.
- **Press the one big button** to skip to the next song.
- The volume buttons are hidden underneath, so family sets the level once and it stays put.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

The person can play their own music whenever they like, with no help, no menus and no chance of getting lost in an app. Families often find it becomes part of the daily routine.

## What it costs

As of November 2026, U.S. sellers listed the Simple Music Player and its radio version at roughly **$150 to $200**, depending on the store and version. Prices vary a good deal, so compare a few sellers you trust.

GOOD TO KNOW

### A gentle word about health claims

You'll see music players advertised with big promises about memory or mood. Enjoying familiar music is wonderful, but if you're looking for help with a health concern, talk with the person's doctor or care team rather than relying on a product's advertising.

CHAPTER 11

# Loading Music onto a Lid Music Player

The lid player doesn't use the internet. A family member loads songs onto it from a computer, using the USB cable that comes in the box. It sounds technical, but it's really just copying files.

## What you need

- A Windows PC or Mac.
- The USB cable that came with the player.
- Songs as **MP3** files. If your music is on CDs, many computers can copy ("rip") a CD into MP3 files; if it's in a streaming app, you usually can't copy it, so you'll need to buy the songs as downloads.

## Copying the songs

1. **Unplug the player's power cord first.** The instructions say to do this before connecting it to a computer.
2. Connect the USB cable to the player and to the computer.
3. The player shows up on the computer like a USB flash drive. On a PC, open **File Explorer**; on a Mac, look in **Finder**.
4. Open the player's drive. Drag your MP3 files onto it. No extra software is needed.
5. Wait until the copying finishes, then safely eject the drive (on a Mac, click the eject symbol; on a PC, choose **Eject**).
6. Unplug the USB cable, plug the power back in, and lift the lid to test.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Songs may play in any order

Reviewers note that the player may not play songs in the order you loaded them. Choose songs that are all welcome, so it doesn't matter which comes next.

## Choosing the music

- Ask the person, and family, about favorite singers, hymns, dance music and songs from their teens and twenties.
- Leave out anything sad, startling or loud.
- Start with 30 to 50 songs. You can add more later.
- Keep a list of what's on it, so others can add to it without duplicating.

TIP

### Set the volume while you're there

Use the hidden buttons underneath to set a comfortable volume — a pencil tip helps press them. Then it's right every time the lid opens.

CHAPTER 12

# Radios, Music Boxes and Smart Speakers

If loading songs from a computer isn't practical, there are other simple ways to bring music into the day.

## A one-button radio

The **SMPL Music Player + Radio** adds AM/FM radio to the lid player, with up to ten stations stored, one large on/off button, and the tuning and volume controls tucked away on the base. Family tunes in the favorite station once.

## A simple music box

The **Little Birdhouse Music Box** is another approach: one knob on the front turns it on and sets the volume, and one button on the side skips to the next song. Relish listed it at **$79.95** as of November 2026.

## A smart speaker, by voice

An Amazon Echo or Google speaker can play music when asked: *"Alexa, play Frank Sinatra"*. This works well for people who are comfortable speaking to it, and family can set it up from their phone. Be aware that many music requests need a music subscription, and the speaker needs Wi-Fi. See Chapter 20.

| | Lid player | One-button radio | Smart speaker |
|---|---|---|---|
| How to start | Lift the lid | Press one button | Speak a request |
| Needs Wi-Fi | No | No | Yes |
| Family's job | Load songs by computer | Tune stations once | Set up the app and account |
| Ongoing cost | None | None | Often a music subscription |

TIP

### Keep the old radio if it works

If a familiar old radio still plays the favorite station, it may be the best music device of all. A bit of tape over the tuning knob can keep it on the right station.

PART 5

# Simple Phones

Choosing a phone that's easy to call family on — Jitterbug phones, the RAZ Memory Cell Phone and picture phones for the landline.

CHAPTER 13

# Choosing a Simplified Phone

A smartphone can do almost anything, which is exactly the problem: there's too much on the screen. Simplified phones do fewer things, more clearly. The right one depends on what the person needs the phone for.

## Start with what the phone is for

- **Calling a few family members**: a photo-contact phone such as the RAZ Memory Cell Phone (Chapter 15) or a picture phone on the landline (Chapter 16).
- **Calls and texts, plus a help button**: a Jitterbug flip phone from Lively (Chapter 14).
- **A bit of everything, simplified**: a Jitterbug smartphone, or an iPhone set up with Assistive Access (Chapter 18).
- **The old phone still works**: keep it. Familiar beats new.

## Features worth looking for

| Feature | Why it helps |
|---|---|
| **Photo contacts** | Tap a face instead of finding a name |
| **Loud, clear sound** | Hearing-aid compatibility and an adjustable ringer |
| **Few screens** | No app store, no browser, nothing to wander into |
| **Remote management** | Family can change contacts and settings from their own phone |
| **Help or alert features** | An urgent-response button, or an alert to family if calls stop |
| **Easy charging** | A charging cradle or dock is easier than a small plug |

GOOD TO KNOW

### The plan matters too

Simplified phones often need a particular service plan. Add up the phone price, the monthly plan and any extra services before you choose, and ask about canceling terms.

TIP

### Practice together

Whatever you choose, practice making and answering calls together several times in the first week. Then a short practice call every few days keeps it familiar.

CHAPTER 14

# Jitterbug Phones from Lively

Lively — the company once called GreatCall — makes the Jitterbug line of phones designed for older adults. Lively phones run on the Verizon network and need a Lively service plan.

## The Jitterbug Flip3

The flip phone has **big buttons, a large easy-to-read screen and a simple menu**. Lively lists adjustable text size, a Read Out feature, hearing-aid compatibility and keypad vibration feedback. There's no web browser or app store to get lost in. It's sold by Lively and by Best Buy.

## The Urgent Response button

The Flip3 has an **Urgent Response** button that connects to Lively's response agents — but only if the plan includes the Urgent Response service. Without it, Lively says the button is disabled. Family members can use the **Lively Link** app on their own smartphone to get an alert if the person contacts Urgent Response; Lively's store notes it requires a Preferred or Premium plan.

HEADS UP

### Check the plan includes it

If the help button is part of why you chose the phone, confirm on the account that the right plan is active, then make a test call together. A button that's switched off gives false comfort.

## Jitterbug smartphones

For someone who wants photos, video calls or a few apps, Lively's **Jitterbug Smart5** smartphone uses a simplified list-style menu. Lively listed it at **$119.99** plus a required Lively plan as of November 2026.

## What plans cost

Lively plans are month-to-month with no long contract. As of November 2026, Lively's store said plans start around **$20 a month** plus taxes and fees; plans with the help and caregiver features cost more. Check Lively's current price list before you buy, because plans change.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

## What this does for you

A Jitterbug flip phone feels like the phones many people already know, with bigger buttons and louder sound — and, with the right plan, one button that reaches a live person when help is needed.

CHAPTER 15

# The RAZ Memory Cell Phone

The **RAZ Memory Cell Phone** from RAZ Mobility is built for people with memory loss. It has one screen, and that screen shows photos of the people they call most. To call someone, they tap the photo. That's it.

## What it does — and doesn't do

- One home screen of **photo contacts**; no menus to get lost in.
- It can announce who's calling by name.
- There's **no internet browsing, no apps, no email and no camera**, so there's nothing to wander into and no scam emails to open.
- Family manages it remotely with the **RAZ Care app**: adding or changing contacts, and adjusting settings, from their own phone.
- It can send family an alert when the person makes or answers fewer calls than expected over a set time — a quiet sign that something may be wrong.

## Price and where to buy

As of November 2026, the RAZ Memory Cell Phone sold for about **$349**. It's sold by RAZ Mobility directly, through the Lively store, and as an unlocked phone at Verizon. Check with the seller which phone plans it works with before you buy.

## Setting it up for someone

1. Install the **RAZ Care** app on the family member's smartphone and follow its steps to link the phone.
2. Choose a small number of contacts — the people who really call. Fewer photos are easier.
3. Use clear, recent, close-up photos with plain backgrounds.
4. Turn on the call-activity alert if the family wants it, and agree who receives it.
5. Practice calling each contact together, and set the charging cradle somewhere it's used every night.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

The person can call family by tapping a face they know, and family can add the new grandchild's photo from three states away — without ever touching the phone.

CHAPTER 16

# Picture Phones for the Landline

If there's still a home phone line, a picture phone may be the simplest answer of all. It's a desk phone with large buttons, and some of the buttons hold small photos of family. Press the photo and the phone dials that person.

## An example: the Future Call Picture Care Phone

The **Future Call FC-0613** is a corded, amplified picture phone with **ten photo memory buttons**, each holding a picture about one inch square. Sellers describe the handset as amplified to about 40 dB and hearing-aid compatible. It has an on/off switch that prevents accidental reprogramming, and it's made for a desk, not the wall.

## Setting up the photo buttons

1. Print small, clear head-and-shoulders photos and trim them to fit the buttons.
2. Slide each photo under its clear button cover.
3. Follow the phone's instruction sheet to store each person's number under their photo.
4. Turn the programming switch to the locked position, so the numbers can't be changed by accident.
5. Make a test call from every photo button.

HEADS UP

### Check what kind of phone line you have

Many "landlines" today run through a box from the cable or phone company rather than an old copper line. One seller warns that the FC-0613 is not a VoIP phone and may not work correctly on some internet phone systems. Ask the phone company what kind of service the home has, and test the phone before you rely on it.

TIP

### Add a note beside the phone

A small card that says "To call, press the picture and lift the handset" helps, especially in the first weeks.

PART 6

# TV, Tablets, Photos and Speakers

Big-button remotes, simple tablets, photo frames family can fill, and smart speakers that speak reminders.

CHAPTER 17

# Big-Button TV Remotes

Today's TV setups often mean two or three remotes with fifty buttons each. One wrong press and the TV is on the wrong input, and the evening news is gone. A simplified remote fixes the most common problem: just turning on the TV and changing channels.

## How a simplified remote works

Remotes such as the **Flipper Big Button** remote have only a few large, color-coded buttons: power, volume, mute and channel up and down, plus a few saved favorite channels. It's an infrared universal remote that runs on two AA batteries and can be set to control both the TV and a cable or satellite box. For example, volume can go to the TV while channels go to the cable box, and the power button can turn on both at once.

HEADS UP

### Not for streaming apps

Big-button remotes like this don't navigate streaming apps such as Netflix or YouTube, and reviewers report some cable and satellite boxes aren't compatible. If the person watches through a streaming stick, a simplified remote may not help; ask Bill or a family member to look at the whole setup.

## Setting it up

1. Write down the brand of the TV and the cable or satellite box.
2. Find the setup codes in the remote's instruction sheet.
3. Follow the sheet to enter the TV code, then the box code.
4. Test power, volume and channels from the person's favorite chair.
5. Save favorite channels, if the remote offers it, and label them.
6. Put the old remotes away in a drawer — not in the trash — in case you need them for setup later.

TIP

### The wrong-input rescue

If the TV says "No signal", it's usually on the wrong input. Tape a small note to the TV's own remote, stored in the drawer: "If the screen says No Signal, press Input until the picture comes back." Family can talk someone through it on the phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

The person can turn on their programs and change channels on their own again — one of the simplest, most welcome bits of independence a device can give back.

CHAPTER 18

# Simple Tablets: GrandPad and Assistive Access

A tablet is wonderful for video calls with grandchildren and looking at family photos — but a regular tablet has notifications, updates and app stores. Two ways around that are a tablet built to be simple, or an iPad or iPhone switched into a simplified mode.

## GrandPad

**GrandPad** is a tablet made for older adults. Every plan includes the tablet, a stylus, a charging dock, a 4G LTE data connection (so it doesn't need home Wi-Fi), round-the-clock customer care, and a **Companion App** for family. Plans are monthly or yearly with no commitment, and GrandPad replaces a broken tablet, dock or stylus during the plan. The yearly cost runs to several hundred dollars; check grandpad.net for the current price, as figures differ between sources.

## Assistive Access on an iPhone or iPad

Apple's **Assistive Access** turns an iPhone or iPad into a much simpler device with large buttons for just the apps you choose — say, Calls, Photos and Camera. A family member sets it up:

1. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Assistive Access**.
2. Tap **Set Up Assistive Access** and follow the steps to choose the apps and contacts.
3. Set a passcode that only the family helper knows.
4. To leave Assistive Access later, triple-click the side button (or the Home button) and enter that passcode.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Keep the passcode safe

Write the Assistive Access passcode and the Apple Account details in the cheat-sheet (Chapter 28) and keep it somewhere family can find it.

CHAPTER 19

# Photo Frames Family Can Fill

A Wi-Fi photo frame shows a slow slideshow of family pictures, and family members add new photos from their own phones, wherever they are. The person doesn't have to do anything at all.

## How they work

- The frame connects to the home Wi-Fi.
- Family members install the frame's app and are invited to the frame.
- When they add a photo in the app, it appears on the frame.
- Some frames, such as Aura frames, don't require a subscription; others charge for extra features.
- Aura frames in the U.S. also let invited family text a photo to the frame.

Amazon also announced an **Alexa Photo Frame** in October 2026. Our separate guide to digital photo frames covers setup step by step.

TIP

### Choose photos kindly

Recent photos of the people who visit help with recognizing faces. Older photos bring back happy memories. Leave out photos of people who have died if seeing them might cause fresh grief — families know best here.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

Grandkids can share the soccer game the same afternoon, and the person at home gets a steady, cheerful connection to family without pressing a single button.

CHAPTER 20

# Smart Speakers and Displays: Echo Show and Echo Time

Amazon Echo speakers and Echo Show screens answer to voice. For some people with memory changes, asking "Alexa, what day is it?" is easier than any button. For others, a device that talks can be confusing. Try it and watch.

## What a smart display can do

- Show the time and date on its screen, along with photos.
- Answer "What day is it?" or "What's the weather?" any time.
- Play music by voice.
- Speak reminders that family sets from the Alexa app (Chapter 21).
- Make video calls with family who have the Alexa app or an Echo Show.

## Echo Time

In October 2026 Amazon launched **Echo Time**, a camera-free smart alarm clock with a 3.2-inch round touchscreen and many clock faces, priced at about **$199.99**. It dims at night, offers an optional smart alarm, and some features need Alexa+, which is included with Prime. It's a smart bedside clock rather than a dementia day clock, so if the main need is seeing the day and date in large words, a dedicated day clock (Chapter 5) is usually clearer.

## Echo Show screens

Echo Show models with larger screens show the time, date and photos and can be set up by family. As of late 2025, the Echo Show 8 listed at $179.99 and the Echo Show 11 at $219.99. Our separate Echo Show guide covers setup.

HEADS UP

### Drop In takes a conversation

Echo devices have a **Drop In** feature that lets approved contacts connect to the device without the person answering. It's off for contacts until both sides allow it. It can be reassuring, but it's also a big privacy step. Talk it over with the person first, and only turn it on for the people they agree to.

TIP

### Keep it simple

Turn off features the person won't use, such as shopping by voice. In the Alexa app, go to **More** > **Settings** > **Account Settings** > **Voice Purchasing** to turn it off or require a four-digit voice code, which avoids accidental orders.

CHAPTER 21

# Reminders Family Can Set on Alexa

One of the most useful things an Echo can do for a family is speak reminders on schedule — and a family member can set them from the Alexa app on their own phone, as long as the Echo is on the same Amazon account.

## Setting a reminder by voice

Standing by the Echo, say: **"Alexa, remind me to eat lunch every day at noon."** Alexa repeats the reminder back to confirm.

## Setting one from the Alexa app

1. Open the **Alexa** app on the phone that's signed in to the same Amazon account as the Echo.
2. Find **Reminders** (in the app's menu).
3. Add a new reminder and type what it should say.
4. Choose the date, time and how often it repeats.
5. Choose which Echo device should speak it — the one in the person's home.
6. Save, and if possible be there the first time it plays.

Amazon's help pages also describe follow-up reminders that keep notifying until the reminder is confirmed. Our pill reminders guide covers these in more detail.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Reminders for a household member

The app can set a reminder for a specific household member only if that person has an Alexa voice profile. For most families, setting the reminder to play on the person's Echo is simpler.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A family member can add "Your hair appointment is at 10 this morning" from their own kitchen, and Alexa will say it out loud in the person's living room at the right time.

PART 7

# Living with the Devices

Labels, power outages and time changes, knowing when a device has stopped helping, sharing the job among family — and the scams to watch for.

CHAPTER 22

# Labels, Notes and Hiding Extra Buttons

Small, low-tech touches often make the biggest difference. A clear label or a piece of tape can turn a confusing gadget into a usable one.

## Labels that help

- Use **large, dark letters** on a light background. A label maker or a thick marker on white tape both work.
- Use **words, not symbols**: "ON" rather than a power symbol, "LOUDER" rather than a plus sign.
- Label only the buttons that matter. Labeling everything adds clutter.
- Put a short how-to card beside a device: "To call Mary, press her picture."

## Hiding what isn't needed

- Cover unused remote buttons with tape, or choose a simplified remote (Chapter 17).
- Put spare remotes, chargers and cables away in one labeled drawer.
- Turn off settings menus and app stores where a device allows it.
- Remove old clocks and calendars that show the wrong day (Chapter 7).

TIP

### Same place, every time

Give each device a home — the phone on its charger by the chair, the music player on the kitchen shelf. When things live in the same place, they're found and used more often.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

A few minutes with tape and a marker can mean the difference between "I can't work this thing" and "I did it myself."

CHAPTER 23

# Power Outages, Time Changes and Batteries

Simple devices still need care: batteries wear out, the power blinks, and twice a year the clocks change. A little planning keeps everything right.

## After a power outage

1. Look at the day clock. If it has battery backup, it should show the right time. If not, set it again (Chapter 6).
2. Check that the cordless or picture phone works — many need power to dial.
3. Check the Wi-Fi router's lights are back on, so connected clocks, frames and speakers reconnect.
4. Make sure cell phones are charged in case the power stays out.

## Daylight saving time

Clocks change on the second Sunday in March and the first Sunday in November in most of the United States. Clocks with automatic daylight saving should change themselves; on the Monday after, check that they did. Clocks without it need setting by hand.

## A battery calendar

| Device | When |
|---|---|
| **Day clock backup battery** | Check once a year; replace if the time is lost in an outage |
| **Talking clock (AAA backup)** | Replace yearly, or when the clock warns |
| **Big-button remote (AA)** | Replace when buttons stop working reliably |
| **Cell phone** | Charge every night in the same spot |
| **Smoke alarms** | Check monthly with the test button, while you're at it |

TIP

### Pair the job with a date

Many families check batteries at each daylight saving change. Two dates a year, easy to remember.

CHAPTER 24

# When a Device Stops Helping

Needs change over time. A device that helped last year may become confusing this year. That's not a failure — it's a sign to adjust.

## Signs it's time to change something

- The person avoids the device or seems frustrated by it.
- Alarms or reminders are causing worry instead of helping.
- Settings keep getting changed by accident.
- Calls are being missed because the phone isn't charged or isn't found.
- The person keeps asking someone else to use it for them.

## Stepping down gently

1. Remove features first: fewer alarms, fewer contacts, fewer channels.
2. Then move to a simpler device of the same kind: from a smartphone to a photo-contact phone, from a smart speaker to a lid music player.
3. Keep the familiar look where possible — the same spot, the same chair, the same routine.
4. Ask the person's care team for ideas; occupational therapists often have practical suggestions.

GOOD TO KNOW

**Change is easier one piece at a time**

Swap one device, give it a couple of weeks, then consider the next. Several changes at once can be unsettling.

TIP

**Unplugged it, or deleted something by mistake?**

It happens. A clock that was unplugged just needs plugging in and checking; a contact that was deleted can usually be added back by the family helper from the app. Nothing here is a disaster.

CHAPTER 25

# Sharing the Job Among Family

When several family members help, devices can get confusing behind the scenes too: two people changing reminders, nobody knowing the Wi-Fi password, a phone plan in an old email account. A little organization prevents all that.

## Agree on a few things

- **One device person** who holds the logins and makes changes, with a back-up person.
- **Where the information lives**: a printed cheat-sheet in the home, plus a copy with the device person (Chapter 28).
- **Who gets alerts** from phones, clocks or speakers, so nobody assumes someone else has it.
- **How to tell each other** when something changes — a family group text works well.

STAY SAFE

### Passwords and accounts

Use a strong password for each account, keep them written down safely or in a password manager, and turn on two-step sign-in where offered. Accounts that control a loved one's phone or reminders are worth protecting.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### What this does for you

When the device person is away, the back-up can step in without a scramble, and the person at home gets the same steady help either way.

CHAPTER 26

# Scams Aimed at Families and Caregivers

People with memory loss, and the families who care for them, are sadly a favorite target for scammers. Simple devices help — a phone with no internet can't open a scam email — but it's still worth knowing what to watch for.

## The common ones

- **"Free medical device" calls**: a caller offers a free clock, alert pendant or brace and asks for a Medicare number. Hang up. Medicare doesn't call to offer free devices.
- **Fake tech support**: a pop-up or call says the tablet or computer has a virus and asks for remote access or payment. Real companies don't do this.
- **Gift-card requests**: anyone asking to be paid in gift cards is a scammer, every time.
- **The grandparent scam**: a call claiming a grandchild is in trouble and needs money right away, and not to tell anyone. Hang up and call the grandchild or a parent directly.
- **Fake sellers** of dementia products online at prices that look too good to be true.

SCAM ALERT

**If a caller asks for a Medicare number, hang up**

Don't confirm or give a Medicare, Social Security or bank number to anyone who calls you. If you're unsure, call the number on the back of the card or on an official statement.

## Protective steps

- On a photo-contact phone, allow calls only from saved contacts if the phone offers it.
- Put the home number on the National Do Not Call Registry at donotcall.gov. It won't stop scammers, but it cuts down legitimate sales calls.
- Ask the bank about alerts on large withdrawals, and about adding a trusted contact.
- Agree as a family: "We never ask for money by phone or gift card."

TIP

**Got taken in?**

If money or a number was given to a scammer, don't feel ashamed — these people are professionals. Call the bank right away, report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov, and change any passwords that were shared.

PART 8

# Help and Reference

When a hand is worth it, and a one-page cheat-sheet to keep by the phone.

CHAPTER 27

# When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide a family can do on a quiet afternoon. But sometimes it helps to have someone who does this every day come and set things up, especially when family lives far away.

## When a hand is worth it

- Setting up several devices at once before a loved one comes home, or moves.
- Connecting a clock, frame or speaker to Wi-Fi when the password is lost.
- Programming a big-button remote to the TV and cable box.
- Loading favorite music onto a lid music player.
- Setting up a RAZ phone, Jitterbug or Assistive Access and the family apps that go with them.
- Untangling a TV, phone and internet setup that has grown confusing.
- A second opinion on what to buy, before you spend money.

## What working with me is like

I serve Portage County, and I work at the person's pace — no rushing, no jargon, no making anyone feel silly. I've spent more than 30 years in professional technology work, and I'm happy to explain as I go so the family can carry on confidently afterward.

FROM BILL

### How to reach me

**$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. The guides are free to read and share.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Meet Sophie

When you call or visit the website, you may be greeted by Sophie, my AI receptionist. Sophie can answer common questions and book a time for you.

CHAPTER 28

# Your Memory-Friendly Devices Cheat-Sheet

Keep this page by the phone or in the kitchen drawer. Fill in the blanks once.

## The essentials

| Topic | Remember |
|---|---|
| **Day clock** | Plug in, pull the battery tab, set time (check AM/PM), date, daylight saving, dimming |
| **Best clock spot** | Beside the favorite chair, the kitchen, and visible from the bed |
| **Connected clocks** | RecallCue or Calendar Clock on an iPad; family sends reminders from a phone |
| **Talking clock** | Reminder Rosie 2: up to 25 recorded reminders; keep it to a few |
| **Music** | Lid player: lift to play, close to stop, one button skips; load MP3s by USB |
| **Phones** | Jitterbug Flip3 (Lively), RAZ Memory Cell Phone, Future Call picture phone |
| **TV** | Big-button remote for TV and cable box; old remotes in one drawer |
| **Alexa reminders** | "Alexa, remind me to ... every day at ..." or set from the Alexa app |
| **Scams** | Never give a Medicare or bank number to a caller; no gift cards, ever |

## Write it down once

| Item | Write here |
|---|---|
| **Family device person** | _____ |
| **Back-up person** | _____ |
| **Home Wi-Fi name and password** | _____ |
| **Phone company and account** | _____ |
| **Clock / frame app login** | _____ |
| **Amazon account used for Echo** | _____ |
| **Assistive Access passcode** | _____ |
| **Where the instruction sheets are** | _____ |

## When something's wrong, in order

1. Is it plugged in and switched on? Check the outlet and any power strip.
2. Is the battery charged or fresh?
3. For anything connected: are the router's lights on? Unplug the router for 30 seconds and plug it back in.
4. Turn the device off and on again.
5. Check the time, date and AM/PM on clocks.
6. Call the family device person.
7. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.