BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 99

Echo Show

Video calls, family photos, cameras on screen
and everything else your Alexa smart display can do

A plain-English guide for every Echo Show owner

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Echo Show 5, 8, 11, 15, 16 & 21 · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Echo Show manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. It covers every current Echo Show, from the little Echo Show 5 to the big wall-mounted models, with both Alexa+ and the original Alexa. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. If a screen on your Echo Show looks a little different, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Meet Your Echo Show

What an Echo Show is, which one you have, what Alexa+ means for you, and the few buttons that matter. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you have an Echo Show on your kitchen counter or by your favorite chair, you have one of the friendliest gadgets Amazon makes. It's Alexa with a screen. That screen lets you see the grandkids on a video call, watch your family photos drift by, peek at whoever is at the front door, and follow a recipe without getting flour on your phone.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years helping people with technology, and these days I help folks all over Portage County, Ohio feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain things sitting next to you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time. When a word might be new to you, I'll stop and explain it.

You can't break it

Here's the most important thing in this whole guide. **You can't break your Echo Show by touching the screen or asking Alexa something.** The worst that happens is a screen you didn't expect. Say **"Alexa, go home"** and you're back where you started. So poke around, try things, and don't worry.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

By the end you'll make and answer video calls, decide exactly who may Drop In on you, fill the screen with family photos, see your doorbell camera on the screen, and know how to close the camera and switch off the microphones whenever you like. You'll also know what costs money and what doesn't, so there are no surprises.

Already read our Alexa & Echo guide?

Our separate Alexa & Echo guide covers Alexa in general: talking to her, timers, music, the smart home and privacy on any Echo. This guide goes deeper on everything the **screen** adds. You don't need to read the other one first, but the two fit together nicely.

And if you get stuck, you're never on your own. Call or text me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together, with no judgment and no rushing.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What an Echo Show Is

An **Echo Show** is a smart speaker with a touch screen and a small camera. Like every Echo, it has **Alexa** inside: Amazon's voice assistant, which listens for its name and then does what you ask. The difference is that an Echo Show can also *show* you things.

What the screen adds

Feature	What it means for you
Video calls	See the person you're talking to, and they see you, using the built-in camera.
Photo frame	When you're not using it, the screen can show a slideshow of your own photos.
Cameras	Ask to see your doorbell or another security camera right on the screen.
Answers you can see	The weather, your calendar, a timer counting down, a shopping list, the words to a song.
Recipes and how-tos	Step-by-step cooking help you can read from across the kitchen.
Shows and videos	Watch shows and videos, especially on the larger models.
Touch	Everything you can ask out loud, you can usually also tap.

GOOD TO KNOW

It still needs the internet

An Echo Show works through your home Wi-Fi. If the internet goes down, Alexa can't answer, the photos stop updating and video calls can't connect. When the Wi-Fi comes back, it all comes back on its own.

Talk, touch, or both

You never have to pick one way of using it. Say "Alexa, set a timer for ten minutes" with flour on your hands, then tap the screen to cancel the timer later. Both are normal and both are right.

CHAPTER 3

Which Echo Show Do You Have?

The number in an Echo Show's name is roughly the size of its screen, measured corner to corner in inches. Here's the family as of November 2026.

Model	What it is
Echo Show 5	The small one, about the size of an alarm clock. Great for a nightstand or desk. Its settings menus can look a little different from the bigger models.
Echo Show 8	The most popular size for a kitchen counter. A new version came out in late 2025 (Amazon calls it the "2025 release"), built for Alexa+, with an 8.7-inch screen and a 13-megapixel camera.
Echo Show 11	New in late 2025: an 11-inch Full HD screen, the same 13-megapixel camera and speakers as the new Echo Show 8, and a built-in smart home hub.
Echo Show 15	A large 15.6-inch screen that hangs on the wall or sits on a stand, with Fire TV built in and a Fire TV remote in the box.
Echo Show 21	The biggest, at 21 inches. Also has Fire TV built in. Often wall-mounted in a kitchen.
Echo Show 16	Announced October 28, 2026, with a 16-inch screen, Fire TV built in, a remote in the box, and night vision on its camera. Taking preorders now and shipping later this year.

You may also have an older model, such as an earlier Echo Show 8 or an Echo Show 10 (the one whose screen turns to follow you around the room). They all work in much the same way, so this guide fits them too.

How to tell which one you have

1. Look at the screen size. A small alarm-clock-sized screen is an Echo Show 5. A screen about the size of a paperback is an 8. Bigger than a laptop screen is a 15, 16 or 21.
2. For the exact name, open the **Alexa** app on your phone and tap **Devices**. Your Echo Show is listed by name. Tap it, then look for **About** or the settings gear to see the model.
3. Write the model down in the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 42. It helps a great deal if you ever call for help.

GOOD TO KNOW

What the new models cost

When Amazon announced them, the 2025 Echo Show 8 was $179.99 and the Echo Show 11 was $219.99. The Echo Show 16 is $499.99 (or $569.99 with an anti-glare "Nanomatte" screen), and its stand is sold separately. Amazon often puts Echo Shows on sale, so prices change. You do **not** need the newest or biggest one: every model makes video calls and shows photos.

CHAPTER 4

Alexa+ and the Original Alexa

In 2025 and 2026 Amazon rolled out a new, smarter version of Alexa called **Alexa+**. It understands everyday speech better, can hold a back-and-forth conversation, and remembers context. On an Echo Show it also changes how the screen looks and where some settings live.

Does Alexa+ cost money?

Your situation	What you pay
If you have Amazon Prime	Alexa+ is included at no extra cost, for the whole household, on all your Alexa devices.
If you don't have Prime	The full Alexa+ is $19.99 a month. There is also a free, limited text-chat version at Alexa.com and in the Alexa app.

Prime members can switch on Alexa+ by saying **"Alexa, upgrade to Alexa+."** New Echo Shows built for Alexa+ (like the 2025 Echo Show 8 and 11) come with it ready to go.

HEADS UP

Don't pay $19.99 by accident

If you already pay for Prime, you never need the separate $19.99 subscription. If a screen or an email offers you Alexa+ for a monthly fee, check first whether you have Prime. If you're not sure, look in your Amazon account under **Memberships & Subscriptions**, or call me.

How to tell which Alexa you have

The quickest clue is on the screen. With Alexa+, there's a small **Menu** icon on the screen that opens Settings and your apps. With the original Alexa, you swipe down from the top edge of the screen to reach Settings. Throughout this guide, when the two differ, I'll give you both.

TIP

Either one is fine

Everything important in this guide, from video calls to Drop In to photos, works with both versions. Alexa+ simply makes the conversation more natural. You don't have to upgrade.

CHAPTER 5

The Buttons, the Shutter, and the Lights

An Echo Show has very few physical buttons, and you'll rarely need them. Most are on the top edge. Here's what they do.

Control	What it does
Volume up and down	Two buttons, usually on top. You can also just say "Alexa, louder" or "Alexa, volume 5."
Microphone and camera off	A button marked with a microphone (and sometimes a camera) with a line through it. Press it and the microphones and camera turn off. A red light or red bar shows they're off. Press again to turn them back on.
Camera shutter	A small slider on top or on the side that slides a cover over the camera lens. When it's closed, nobody can see through the camera, full stop.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Privacy you can see and touch

You don't have to trust a setting buried in a menu. Slide the shutter and you can *see* the lens is covered. Press the microphone button and the red light tells you Alexa can't hear. We'll go deeper in Chapter 31.

The lights and what they mean

- **A blue light or blue bar** along the screen means Alexa is listening to you or answering.
- **Red** means the microphones (and on most models the camera) are switched off.
- **A green light** or green bar usually means a call or Drop In is happening.
- **A yellow light** usually means you have a notification or a message waiting. Say "Alexa, what are my notifications?"

GOOD TO KNOW

Models differ a little

Some models show these colors as a bar along the edge of the screen and others as a small light. Amazon's help pages explain the exact indicators for each model. If you see a color you don't recognize, ask "Alexa, what does this light mean?"

PART 2

Setting Up Your Echo Show

What to gather, how to get it running, where to put it, and the optional step that lets Alexa recognize you.

CHAPTER 6

What You Need Before You Start

Setup goes smoothly when you have these few things ready before you plug in.

- **Your home Wi-Fi name and password.** The password is often printed on a sticker on your internet router (the box with blinking lights your internet company gave you).
- **Your Amazon account email and password.** This is the same account you shop with. The Echo Show uses it to know who you are.
- **A smartphone or tablet with the free Alexa app** (from the App Store on an iPhone or iPad, or Google Play on Android). Newer models are set up through the app. Older ones can be set up on the screen itself, but the app is still handy later.
- **A spot near an outlet.** An Echo Show has no battery, so it's always plugged in.

STAY SAFE

Only download the real Alexa app

The real app is called **Amazon Alexa** and is published by Amazon. Get it from your phone's own app store, never from a link in a text or email. Setting up an Echo Show never requires paying anyone, and Amazon will never call you to "activate" it.

TIP

Two-step sign-in

If your Amazon account sends a code to your phone when you sign in, keep your phone nearby during setup. You'll type that code in once.

CHAPTER 7

Setting Up Your Echo Show, Step by Step

Amazon has made setup simple. On the newest models, the screen shows a QR code (a square barcode) that your phone reads to start setup in the Alexa app.

On a new Echo Show 8 or 11 (2025) and other Alexa+ models

1. Plug the Echo Show into the wall with the power adapter that came in the box. Wait for the screen to light up.
2. Open your phone's camera and point it at the **QR code** on the Echo Show's screen. Tap the message that pops up. It opens the Alexa app.
3. The Alexa app tells you your new Echo Show is ready to set up. Follow along, tapping **Next** or **Continue**.
4. When asked, choose your Wi-Fi network and type its password.
5. The Echo Show downloads its updates by itself. This can take several minutes. Leave it plugged in.
6. When you see the home screen, setup is done. If it offers **Visual ID**, you can turn it on now or later (see Chapter 9).

On an older model

1. Plug it in and wait for the welcome screen.
2. Tap your language.
3. Tap your Wi-Fi network and type the password using the on-screen keyboard.
4. Sign in with your Amazon email and password.
5. Pick your time zone and give your Echo Show a location name, like "Kitchen."
6. Let it finish any updates. Then you'll see the home screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why the updates take a while

A brand-new Echo Show has often been sitting in a warehouse while Amazon improved its software. The first update brings it current. It's a one-time wait, and later updates happen quietly overnight.

FROM BILL

Setting one up for someone else?

If you're setting up an Echo Show for a parent, do it in *their* home on *their* Wi-Fi whenever you can, signed in to the Amazon account they'll use. Part 8 walks through the choices that matter, including whose account to use.

CHAPTER 8

Where to Put It

Because an Echo Show has a screen and a camera, where you put it matters a bit more than with a plain speaker.

- **Eye level when you're sitting or standing where you use it most.** For video calls, the camera should see your face, not your ceiling.
- **Not facing a bright window.** Light behind you on a video call makes you a dark shadow. Light *in front of* you makes you look your best.
- **Within earshot.** Its microphones hear well across a room, but not through closed doors.
- **Where the Wi-Fi is good.** Video calls and cameras need a steady signal.
- **Think about what the camera sees.** A bedroom or bathroom is a poor spot for a device with a camera, unless you're comfortable keeping the shutter closed.

TIP

The kitchen is the favorite

Most people end up loving their Echo Show in the kitchen: timers, recipes, calls while you cook, and photos to enjoy over breakfast. A bedside Echo Show 5 makes a fine alarm clock too.

Wall mounting the big ones

The Echo Show 15, 16 and 21 are designed to hang on a wall or sit on a stand. Mounting one means finding a stud, running a power cord neatly, and getting it level. It's a fine do-it-yourself project if you're handy, and a reasonable thing to have done for you if you're not.

CHAPTER 9

Visual ID and Voice ID: Letting Alexa Know Who's Who

This step is entirely optional. If several people share your home, Alexa can learn to tell you apart, so she can greet you by name and show *your* calendar and reminders when you walk up.

Feature	How it works
Visual ID	Alexa uses the camera to recognize your face when you're in front of the screen. Only works with the camera on and the shutter open.
Voice ID	Alexa learns your voice by having you say a few phrases. Works even with the camera covered.

The newest models offer Visual ID during setup. You can also set it up later from Settings (look for **Your Profile & Family** or **Profiles**), or say "Alexa, learn my face."

GOOD TO KNOW

You're in charge of it

If you'd rather Alexa didn't recognize faces, simply skip Visual ID. Everything else still works. If you set it up and change your mind, you can delete it in Settings at any time.

PART 3

Finding Your Way Around the Screen

The home screen, how to reach Settings, the everyday taps and swipes, and making the screen comfortable for your eyes.

CHAPTER 10

The Home Screen and Widgets

The **home screen** is what your Echo Show shows when nobody's using it. Depending on your settings, that might be the time and weather, your photos, upcoming calendar events, or suggestions of things to try.

Widgets: little windows of information

A **widget** is a small box on the home screen that shows one thing at a glance: today's calendar, a shopping list, a sticky note, your smart lights. Tap a widget to open it full size.

With Alexa+

The Alexa+ home screen adapts to you. When you walk up close, it can show more detail. From across the room it shows bigger, simpler information. With Visual ID on, it can greet you and show your own reminders. If the changing layout bothers you, you can turn this adaptive behavior off under **Display & Appearance** in Settings.

Choosing what shows on the home screen

1. Open **Settings** (on Alexa+, tap the **Menu** icon, then **Settings**; on the original Alexa, swipe down from the top edge, then tap **Settings**).
2. Tap **Display & Appearance**.
3. Tap **Home Content Categories** (older models may call this **Home Content**).
4. Turn each kind of content on or off. Turning off things like news or suggestions makes the screen calmer.

> **TIP**
>
> **A calmer screen**
>
> Many people like to turn off trending news and shopping suggestions and leave just the clock, weather, calendar and photos. It's your screen. Show what you enjoy.

CHAPTER 11

Getting to Settings: the Menu Icon or the Swipe-Down

Almost every change you'll make starts in Settings. How you get there depends on which Alexa your Echo Show runs (see Chapter 4).

Your Alexa	How to open Settings
With Alexa+	Tap the **Menu** icon on the screen, then tap **Settings**. Press and hold the Menu icon to customize your widgets. Swiping down on the home screen shows your recent conversations with Alexa.
With the original Alexa	Swipe down from the very top edge of the screen. A panel drops down with quick buttons (like Do Not Disturb and brightness) and a **Settings** gear.

The main sections of Settings

Names vary a little by model, but you'll usually find:

- **Network**: your Wi-Fi connection.
- **Display & Appearance** (or **Display**): brightness, home screen content, photos.
- **Notifications & Sounds** (or **Sounds**): alarm and notification sounds, and Do Not Disturb.
- **Communications**: calling, Drop In and Announcements.
- **Accessibility**: captions, the screen reader, magnifier, Tap to Alexa and more.
- **Device Options**: the device name, software updates, restart and reset.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Echo Show 5 is a little different

Amazon notes that Settings menus on the Echo Show 5 can vary from the bigger models. If a menu name in this guide doesn't match, look for the closest word, or just ask Alexa, for example "Alexa, open Settings."

CHAPTER 12

Touch, Talk, or Both: Everyday Screen Gestures

The touch screen works like a phone or tablet. You only need a few moves.

Move	What it does
Tap	Touch something lightly and let go. Opens it.
Swipe	Slide your finger across the screen. Moves between pages or photos.
Swipe from the top edge	On the original Alexa, opens quick settings. Start right at the edge.
Back	Many screens have a back arrow at the top left. Tap it to go back one step.
Go home	Say "Alexa, go home," or tap the Home icon if your model shows one.

Phrases that work on any screen

- "Alexa, go home." Back to the home screen.
- "Alexa, go back." Back one step.
- "Alexa, scroll down." Moves the page down so you don't have to touch it.
- "Alexa, stop." Stops whatever is playing or talking.
- "Alexa, what can I say?" Shows suggestions on the screen.

TIP

Fingers not cooperating?

Dry or cold fingertips sometimes don't register on a touch screen. Use the pad of your finger rather than a fingernail, or just ask Alexa out loud. Chapter 33 also covers **Tap to Alexa**, which puts big tiles on the screen for people who'd rather not speak.

CHAPTER 13

Making the Screen Comfortable

A screen that's too bright at night or too dim in the daytime is easy to fix.

Brightness

- Say "Alexa, brighter" or "Alexa, dimmer," or "Alexa, set brightness to 6."
- Or open **Settings**, then **Display & Appearance** (or **Display**), and move the brightness slider.
- Look for **Adaptive Brightness**, which adjusts the screen to the light in the room.

Bedtime

In the same Display settings, many models offer a nighttime option that dims the screen and shows a simple clock overnight. On a bedside Echo Show 5 this is especially nice. You can also turn on **Do Not Disturb** for the night (see Chapter 21).

Bigger, easier-to-read text

If small text is a strain, Chapter 33 covers the **Screen Magnifier**, which lets you zoom in, and color options such as **Color Inversion**. A larger model, like an Echo Show 11 or 15, is also simply easier on the eyes from across a room.

> **TIP**
>
> **Turn the screen off without unplugging**
>
> Say "Alexa, turn off the screen." Touch the screen or say "Alexa, turn on the screen" to wake it. The Echo Show stays on and listening (unless you've pressed the microphone button).

PART 4

Seeing Family Face to Face

Video calls, regular phone calls, Drop In and its permissions, Announcements, and Do Not Disturb for when you'd rather not be reached.

CHAPTER 14

Your Alexa Contacts

Before you can call someone on your Echo Show, they need to be in your **Alexa contacts**. These live in the Alexa app on your phone, and they can come straight from your phone's address book.

Bringing in your phone's contacts

1. Open the **Alexa** app on your phone.
2. Tap **Communicate** (on some versions it's under **More**).
3. Tap **Contacts**. If the app asks to import your phone's contacts, tap **Allow**.
4. To add one person by hand, look for the **+** or **Add Contact** button and type their name and number.

Who can video call whom

A **video call** works between Alexa devices with a screen and the Alexa app. So you can video call your daughter if she has an Echo Show *or* the Alexa app on her phone. If she answers on a speaker without a screen, it's simply a voice call.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Each person needs their own Amazon account**
>
> Alexa calling works person to person, so the people you call need Alexa set up with their own Amazon sign-in. Many grandchildren already have the Alexa app. If not, it's free to install.

CHAPTER 15

Making a Video Call

This is the feature that wins most people over. You can see the grandkids' faces from across the kitchen, with no phone to hold.

By voice

1. Make sure the camera shutter is open (see Chapter 5).
2. Say **"Alexa, call Sarah."** Use the name as it appears in your contacts. If Sarah has more than one device, Alexa may ask which one.
3. If Sarah answers on an Echo Show or in the Alexa app, you'll see each other.
4. To hang up, say **"Alexa, hang up,"** or tap the red **End** button.

By touch

1. With Alexa+, tap the **Menu** icon, then **Communicate**. On the original Alexa, swipe down from the top and tap **Communicate**.
2. Tap **Call**.
3. Tap the person you want, then choose their Echo Show or Alexa app so the call has video.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why families love it

No one has to hold a phone at arm's length. You can keep stirring the soup, the grandkids can show you their drawings, and on the newer models the camera gently follows and frames you as you move. The 2025 Echo Show 8 and 11 have a 13-megapixel camera with auto-framing.

Looking your best on a call

- Light on your face, not behind you.
- Sit about an arm's length or two back so the camera sees your whole face.
- Turn down music or the TV first.

Video calls between Alexa devices and the Alexa app are encrypted from end to end by default, which means they're scrambled so only the people on the call can see and hear them. For more on video calling in general, including FaceTime and Zoom, see our separate Video Calling guide.

CHAPTER 16

Answering Calls and Turning Video Off

When someone calls, your Echo Show rings and shows who it is. You have a few choices.

- **Answer:** say "Alexa, answer," or tap **Answer**.
- **Answer without video:** slide the camera shutter closed first, or tap **Video Off** once the call starts. They'll hear you but won't see you.
- **Decline:** say "Alexa, ignore," or tap **Ignore**.
- **End the call:** say "Alexa, hang up," or tap **End**.

TIP

Not dressed yet? No problem

Close the shutter before you answer. Your caller sees a blank picture and hears you just fine. Open the shutter whenever you're ready to be seen.

Missed a call?

A yellow light or a notification on the screen tells you something is waiting. Say "Alexa, what are my notifications?" or "Alexa, play my messages." To call back, just say "Alexa, call" and the person's name.

CHAPTER 17

Calling Regular Phone Numbers

Your Echo Show can also call ordinary phone numbers, like a landline or someone's cell phone, even if they don't have Alexa. These are **voice-only** calls (no video).

- Say "Alexa, call Mom's mobile" or "Alexa, call 330..." followed by the full number.
- Calls to most numbers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the U.K. are included at no extra charge.
- Alexa can't call premium-rate numbers, three-digit numbers like 211, or most international numbers outside those four countries.

STAY SAFE

An Echo Show is not a way to call 911

Out of the box, Alexa calling **does not connect to 911** or other emergency numbers. Keep a regular phone, or a medical alert button, within reach. Some cell phone customers can link their mobile number to Alexa, which may allow 911, but don't count on it unless you've confirmed it. Chapter 34 explains what an Echo Show can and can't do in an emergency.

GOOD TO KNOW

Caller ID

When you call a regular phone, the person may see your Alexa calling number or the number linked to your Alexa account. If someone doesn't pick up, it may be because they didn't recognize the number. Let family know to expect it.

CHAPTER 18

Drop In: What It Is and Who Can Use It

Drop In is like an intercom. Someone you've approved can connect to your Echo Show *right away*, and you'll hear and (on a screen with the camera open) see them, without anyone tapping Answer.

Two kinds of Drop In

Kind	How it works
Inside your own home	Drop in from the kitchen Echo Show to the bedroom Echo. Say "Alexa, drop in on the bedroom," or "Alexa, drop in on Home" to see a list of your own devices.
Between homes	A trusted person in another home drops in on you, or you on them. This only works if **both** of you have turned on permission for each other.

HEADS UP

Drop In skips the "answer" step

That's the whole point, and also why you should be choosy. Anyone you allow to Drop In can see and hear the room your Echo Show is in, the moment they connect. Only allow people you'd hand a key to your house. The good news: Drop In between homes is **off by default** for every contact.

How you know someone has dropped in

Your Echo Show plays a tone and its light turns green, and the screen shows who has connected. Say "Alexa, hang up" or tap **End** to stop it any time. Closing the camera shutter keeps your picture private even during a Drop In.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why some families want it

For a parent who has trouble reaching the screen to answer, or who may not hear a ring, Drop In lets a trusted son or daughter check in with a quick "Hi, Mom, just saying good morning." Done *with* the parent's agreement, it can be a real comfort. Part 8 covers how to do this respectfully.

CHAPTER 19

Setting Drop In Permissions (and Turning It Off)

You decide who may drop in on you, and you can change your mind at any time.

Allowing a trusted contact to drop in

1. Open the **Alexa** app on your phone.
2. Tap **More**, then **Communicate** (on some versions, tap **Communicate** at the bottom).
3. Tap **Contacts**.
4. Tap the person's name.
5. Turn on **Allow Drop In**. They'll get a notice that you've allowed them.
6. For it to work both ways, they do the same for you in their own Alexa app.

Taking permission away

Repeat the same steps and turn **Allow Drop In** off. You can do this at any time, and you can always turn it back on later.

Turning Drop In off for one Echo Show

You can also turn Drop In off for a particular device, for example a bedroom Echo Show, so nobody can drop in there even if they have permission.

1. In the Alexa app, tap **Devices**, then **Echo & Alexa**.
2. Tap the Echo Show you want to change.
3. Tap **Communications**, then **Drop In**.
4. Choose **Off**, or **My Household** to allow only people in your own home.

On the Echo Show itself, open **Settings**, then **Communications**, then **Drop In**, and make the same choice.

> **TIP**
>
> **Need privacy for an afternoon?**
>
> Turning on **Do Not Disturb** (Chapter 21) blocks Drop Ins, calls and Announcements on that device until you turn it off, without changing anyone's permissions.

CHAPTER 20

Announcements

An **Announcement** is a one-way message that plays on every Echo in your home at once, like a friendly loudspeaker. Nobody has to answer.

Making an announcement

- Say **"Alexa, announce that dinner's ready."** Every Echo in the house says it.
- Or say "Alexa, tell everyone it's time to go."
- With Alexa+, you can also ask Alexa to send an announcement to just one device, such as the upstairs bedroom.
- From the Alexa app when you're out: tap **Communicate**, then **Announce**, then speak or type your message. It plays on your Echos at home.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A gentle way to stay in touch

Running late? From the grocery store parking lot, tap Announce in the Alexa app and say "I'm on my way home, be there in twenty minutes." Everyone at home hears it, with no phone to dig out.

GOOD TO KNOW

Whose voice is it?

With Alexa+, announcements are read out in Alexa's voice by default. You can change this in the Alexa app's communication settings so your own recorded voice plays instead.

CHAPTER 21

Do Not Disturb

Do Not Disturb keeps your Echo Show quiet: no calls, no Drop Ins, no Announcements, no notification chimes. It's perfect for naps, nights, and when company's over.

- Say **"Alexa, turn on Do Not Disturb."** Say "Alexa, turn off Do Not Disturb" to end it.
- A small **crescent moon** appears on the screen while it's on.
- Your **alarms, timers and reminders still work**. Do Not Disturb doesn't silence those.
- You can find it in **Settings** under **Notifications & Sounds**, or (on the original Alexa) in the swipe-down panel.

Setting a schedule

1. In the Alexa app, tap **Devices**, then **Echo & Alexa**, then your Echo Show.
2. Tap **Do Not Disturb**.
3. Turn on **Scheduled** and pick a start and end time, for example 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM.

HEADS UP

Remember it's on

If family say they "can't get through," check for the crescent moon first. Do Not Disturb is the most common reason calls and Drop Ins seem to stop working.

PART 5

Photos, Cameras, and Your Home

Your Echo Show as a photo frame, seeing your doorbell and cameras on the screen, and the smart home dashboard.

CHAPTER 22

Turning Your Echo Show into a Photo Frame

When you're not using it, your Echo Show can show a slow slideshow of your own photos. For many people it quietly becomes their favorite feature.

Where the photos come from

Source	What to know
Amazon Photos	Amazon's photo storage. Prime members get unlimited full-resolution photo storage (plus 5 GB for videos). Without Prime, everyone gets 5 GB free. This is the main source for the Echo Show.
Facebook	Many models can also show photos from your Facebook account.
Google Photos	Not supported on Echo Show. Copy favorites into Amazon Photos instead.

Getting photos into Amazon Photos

1. On your phone, install the free **Amazon Photos** app and sign in with your Amazon account.
2. Let it back up your photos when it asks, or pick just the photos you want.
3. Make an **album** (a named collection) of the photos you'd like on the Echo Show, such as "Grandkids" or "Favorites."

Choosing what the Echo Show displays

1. Say **"Alexa, set up my photo display,"** or open **Settings**.
2. With Alexa+, tap **Display & Appearance**, then the photo option. On the original Alexa, tap **Clock & Photo Display**.
3. Choose **Amazon Photos**, then pick the album or albums to show.

Handy photo phrases

- "Alexa, show my photos."
- "Alexa, start Photo Frame."
- With Alexa+ and people tagging turned on in Amazon Photos: "Alexa, show me photos of Emma."
- With Alexa+: "Alexa, show photos from our beach trip."

TIP

Let the family fill it up

Family members can add photos to a shared group in Amazon Photos, and those photos can appear on your Echo Show. The "Ways Your Echo Show Can Make Life Easier" topic in this guide walks through it step by step.

GOOD TO KNOW

Want only a photo frame?

In October 2026 Amazon announced the **Alexa Photo Frame**, a 10-inch frame with Alexa that shows photos from Amazon Photos. If you already have an Echo Show, it does the same job and much more, so there's no need to buy both.

CHAPTER 23

Keeping the Photo Frame Just Right

A few small settings make the slideshow a pleasure rather than a distraction.

- **Choose albums, not everything.** If you show your whole library you'll also get receipts, screenshots and blurry shots. A hand-picked album looks far nicer.
- **Change how long each photo stays.** Look in the same photo settings for the slideshow speed.
- **Hide a photo you don't want.** Remove it from the album in the Amazon Photos app, and it disappears from the Echo Show.
- **Mind private photos.** Anyone in the room can see the screen. Keep the album to pictures you're happy for visitors to see.

GOOD TO KNOW

The full-screen slideshow has a time limit

On some models, the full-screen Photo Frame slideshow you start by voice runs for a few hours per session and then returns to the home screen. Amazon sells an optional add-on that removes the limit. Your photos can still rotate on the home screen without it, so most people never need it.

FROM BILL

A great job for a visit

Setting up the Amazon Photos app on a grandchild's phone and starting a shared album is one of the nicest half-hours a family can spend together. Once it's done, new pictures just keep arriving.

CHAPTER 24

"Show Me the Front Door": Cameras on Your Screen

If you have a video doorbell or security camera that works with Alexa, your Echo Show can show you its live picture. No more getting up to peek through the curtains.

Connecting your camera to Alexa (one time)

1. Open the **Alexa** app on your phone.
2. Find your camera's **skill** (an add-on for Alexa): search for **Ring**, **Blink**, **Arlo**, **Google Nest** or your camera's brand under **Skills**.
3. Tap **Enable** and sign in with your camera account when asked. This links the two.
4. Let Alexa discover your cameras. They'll appear with the names you gave them in the camera's app, like "Front Door."

Seeing the camera

- Ring: say **"Alexa, show the front door."** Say "Alexa, hide the front door" to close it.
- Blink: say "Alexa, show" and the camera's name. Say "Alexa, show my cameras" to see several at once (split screen on some models). A Blink live view on the Echo Show lasts up to 5 minutes.
- Google Nest: say "Alexa, show the" and the camera name, then "feed," for example "Alexa, show the porch feed."
- Many cameras let you talk through them from the Echo Show, so you can say "Just leave it on the porch, thank you!"

GOOD TO KNOW

When the doorbell rings

With Ring and Blink, you can set the Echo Show to announce the doorbell and show the live picture automatically. Some of these extras need a paid camera plan (such as a Ring Home plan), so check in your camera's app. Ask by name exactly as the camera is named in its own app, or Alexa won't know which one you mean.

STAY SAFE

Check before you open the door

Use the screen to see who's there *before* you open up. If someone you don't know claims to be from the gas company or a utility, you can talk through the doorbell and call the company yourself from a number on your bill. Real workers don't mind waiting.

Your camera's own app (Ring, Blink, Arlo and so on) has many more settings, such as motion alerts and recordings. The Echo Show is simply a handy extra window onto it.

CHAPTER 25

The Smart Home Dashboard

If you have smart lights, plugs, a thermostat or locks connected to Alexa, your Echo Show can be a touch-screen control panel for all of them.

Opening the dashboard

- Say **"Alexa, open my smart home dashboard."**
- On the 2025 Echo Show 8 and 11, tap the **more** icon in the top-left corner, then **Smart Home**.
- On older models, look for a **Smart Home** widget or the lightbulb icon.

From the dashboard you can tap to turn lights on and off, see if a door is locked, view connected camera feeds, and switch the whole house between **Home**, **Away** and **Night** modes with a single tap.

GOOD TO KNOW

Echo Show 16 and the Home Map

The new Echo Show 16 adds a 3D **Alexa Home Map** that shows each light, lock and camera where it actually sits in your house. It's lovely, but not necessary. The ordinary dashboard does the same jobs.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One less trip up the stairs

Check that the garage light is off, or turn on the porch light before you head out, from your chair. For setting up smart plugs and lights in the first place, see the smart home part of our Alexa & Echo guide.

PART 6

Your Helper in the Kitchen and Living Room

Timers you can see, reminders, the family calendar, recipes, and watching shows on the screen.

CHAPTER 26

Timers, Alarms, and Reminders on a Screen

Timers and reminders work on every Echo, but the screen makes them better: you can *see* how much time is left from across the room, and a reminder shows up in writing as well as out loud.

To do this	Say or tap
Set a timer	"Alexa, set a timer for 20 minutes." Name it if you have several: "Alexa, set a potato timer for 40 minutes."
See your timers	They count down on the screen. Or ask "Alexa, how much time is left?"
Stop a ringing timer	Say "Alexa, stop," or tap **Dismiss** on the screen.
Set an alarm	"Alexa, wake me up at 7 a.m." or "Alexa, set an alarm for weekdays at 6:30."
Set a reminder	"Alexa, remind me to call the pharmacy at 2 p.m."
Repeating reminder	"Alexa, remind me to take my pills every day at 8 a.m."
See what's coming up	"Alexa, show my reminders."

TIP

Reminders on the screen stay put

On an Echo Show, a reminder you haven't dealt with often stays on the screen as a notification, so if you were in the other room when it spoke up, you'll still see it when you walk by.

GOOD TO KNOW

More about reminders

Our Alexa & Echo guide has whole chapters on timers, alarms, reminders and medication reminders. They all work the same way on an Echo Show.

STAY SAFE

A reminder is a helper, not a safeguard

Alexa reminders are a great nudge, but they depend on the internet and on someone hearing them. For important medications, keep a pill organizer or pharmacy reminder as well.

CHAPTER 27

Calendars and the Family Schedule

Connect your calendar and your Echo Show becomes a wall calendar that updates itself. You can glance at today's appointments, or ask what's happening this week.

Connecting a calendar

1. In the **Alexa** app, tap **More**, then **Settings**.
2. Tap **Calendar** (it may be under **Calendar & Email**).
3. Choose your calendar service, such as Google, Apple (iCloud) or Microsoft Outlook, and sign in.
4. Choose which calendars Alexa may show.

Using it

- "Alexa, what's on my calendar today?"
- "Alexa, add lunch with Carol on Friday at noon."
- Tap the calendar widget on the home screen to see daily, weekly and monthly views.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One calendar for the whole family

With Alexa+, you can connect several family members' calendars and ask things like "What does everyone have on Saturday?" A grown son or daughter can share their calendar with you so you know when they're traveling, or add your doctor's appointments so they can help with rides.

GOOD TO KNOW

The big screens shine here

On the Echo Show 15 and 21, and the new Echo Show 16 with its Family Organizer screen style, the whole family's color-coded schedule can live on the kitchen wall.

CHAPTER 28

Recipes and Cooking Help

This is where a screen in the kitchen really earns its place. Ask for a recipe and you'll see the ingredients and steps in large print, and Alexa can read them out one at a time.

- "Alexa, show me recipes for chicken soup."
- "Alexa, what can I make with chicken, rice and broccoli?" (Alexa+ is especially good at this.)
- "Alexa, next step." or "Alexa, go back." while you cook, with no messy fingers on the screen.
- "Alexa, how many tablespoons in a quarter cup?"
- "Alexa, add eggs to my shopping list." The list shows on the screen and in the Alexa app at the store.

TIP

Timers while you cook

Name your timers so you know which is which: "Alexa, set a rice timer for 18 minutes" and "Alexa, set an oven timer for 45 minutes." Both count down side by side on the screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Recipes keep improving

Amazon has said Alexa+ is adding more personalized recipe features to the Echo Show over time, and the Echo Show 16 adds a meal-planning screen and Cooking Library. Exactly what you see depends on your model and its latest update.

CHAPTER 29

Watching Shows and Videos

Every Echo Show can play some video, but what you can watch depends a lot on the model.

Model	What you can watch
Echo Show 15, 16, 21	Have **Fire TV** built in, with a remote in the box. You get the Fire TV app store: Prime Video, Netflix, YouTube and many more. It's a small TV for the kitchen.
Echo Show 8 and 11 (2025)	Tap **Menu**, then **TV & Videos** to find shows from supported providers in one place.
Other Echo Show 8 and 10 models	Can play Prime Video and Netflix, among others. What's available varies by streaming service.
Echo Show 5	Small screen, best for short clips. Netflix isn't available on the Echo Show 5 (3rd generation).

Handy phrases

- "Alexa, open Prime Video." or "Alexa, open YouTube" (on models that have it).
- "Alexa, pause." "Alexa, resume." "Alexa, rewind 30 seconds."
- "Alexa, turn on captions" if you'd like words on the screen.

TIP

Send a show from your phone

On compatible Echo Shows, you can start a Prime Video show in the Prime Video app on your phone and cast it to the Echo Show. Both need to be on the same Wi-Fi and signed in to the same Amazon account.

HEADS UP

Subscriptions cost money

The Echo Show doesn't include Netflix, Disney+ or the like. Each service has its own monthly fee, just as on a TV. Prime Video comes with Amazon Prime. Free services such as Tubi and Pluto TV are available on the Fire TV models.

CHAPTER 30

Music, Radio, and Audiobooks

Music works just as on any Echo, with a bonus: the screen shows the album cover and, for many songs, the words scroll by so you can sing along.

- "Alexa, play Frank Sinatra."
- "Alexa, play WKSU" or the name of your favorite local station.
- "Alexa, read my book" for Audible or Kindle books.
- "Alexa, play rain sounds" to relax or fall asleep.

On the 2025 Echo Show 8 and 11, tap **Menu**, then **Music & More** for one page with music, podcasts, books and relaxing sounds.

GOOD TO KNOW

Which music is free?

Prime includes a large Amazon Music catalog. Other services such as Spotify or Apple Music work too, using your own account. Our Alexa & Echo guide explains the options and costs in detail.

PART 7

Privacy, Safety, and Accessibility

The shutter and the microphone button, your privacy settings, features that help with seeing, hearing and speaking, what an Echo Show can do in an emergency, and the scams to watch for.

CHAPTER 31

The Camera Shutter and the Microphone and Camera Off Button

A device with a camera and microphones in your home deserves respect. The good news is that the two controls that matter most are physical, and you can check them at a glance.

Control	What it does
Camera shutter (slider)	Slides a cover over the lens. Nobody can see through the camera while it's closed, including on calls and Drop Ins. Alexa can still hear you.
Microphone and camera off button	Electrically switches off the microphones and the camera. A red light or red bar shows they're off. Alexa can't hear the wake word and can't stream audio or video. Press again to turn them back on.

Things to know

- With the shutter closed or the camera off, **Visual ID can't recognize you**, and on an Echo Show 10 the screen stops turning to follow you.
- You can still use the touch screen with the microphones off: tap to see the weather, your photos, or a timer.
- On the newest Echo Shows, the camera is on by default after setup. If you'd like it covered, close the shutter.

TIP

A simple habit

Many people keep the shutter closed and slide it open only for a video call. It takes a second and gives complete peace of mind.

CHAPTER 32

Your Privacy Settings and Recordings

Alexa only sends what you say to Amazon after she hears the wake word ("Alexa"). The blue light tells you when she's listening. You can review and delete those recordings whenever you like.

Reviewing and deleting your voice history

1. In the **Alexa** app, tap **More**, then **Alexa Privacy**.
2. Tap **Review Voice History**.
3. Pick a date range and delete individual recordings or all of them.

GOOD TO KNOW

A change with Alexa+

With the original Alexa you could say "Alexa, delete what I just said." Amazon says deleting by voice isn't available with Alexa+. Use the app steps above instead.

Other privacy choices worth knowing

- In **Alexa Privacy**, **Manage Your Alexa Data** lets you choose how long recordings are kept.
- Turn off **Drop In** for contacts you no longer want connecting (Chapter 19).
- Skip or delete **Visual ID** if you'd rather Alexa didn't recognize faces (Chapter 9).
- Keep the shutter closed when you're not on a call (Chapter 31).

FROM BILL

Want the full story?

Our Alexa & Echo guide has a full part on privacy, including the honest answer to "Is Alexa always listening?" If you'd like me to walk through your settings with you, that's a quick and worthwhile session.

CHAPTER 33

Accessibility: Show and Tell, Captions, and More

The Echo Show has thoughtful features for people who see, hear or speak with more difficulty. Most live in **Settings**, then **Accessibility**.

Show and Tell: "What am I holding?"

Show and Tell uses the camera to identify common pantry items and other products. Hold the can or box up in front of the camera and ask Alexa what it is. She tells you and gives a short description. For a guided tour of how to hold things, say **"Help with Show and Tell."** It's available on all Echo Show devices.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why it matters

If your eyesight makes it hard to tell the cream of mushroom from the cream of chicken, Show and Tell gives you an answer in seconds, without waiting for someone to stop by.

For seeing

- **VoiceView** is a screen reader: it reads aloud what's on the screen as you touch it.
- **Screen Magnifier** lets you zoom in and move around the screen.
- **Color Inversion** and **Color Correction** can make the screen easier to read.

For hearing

- **Alexa Captioning** shows Alexa's answers in writing.
- **Call Captioning** shows the words your caller says during Alexa calls.
- To turn them on, say **"Alexa, turn on all captions,"** or go to **Settings**, then **Accessibility**, then **Captioning**.

For speaking

- **Tap to Alexa** puts tiles and a keyboard on the screen so you can use Alexa without speaking.
- **Real Time Text (RTT)** lets you type during an Alexa call, and the other person sees your words appear as you type.

The "Ways Your Echo Show Can Make Life Easier" topic in this guide gives step-by-step setup for Call Captioning and Tap to Alexa. For more hearing-related tech, see our Hearing Help Tech guide.

CHAPTER 34

Emergencies: What an Echo Show Can and Can't Do

It's natural to hope a device that's always listening could get help in an emergency. Here's the honest picture.

What it can't do

- **It can't call 911** through regular Alexa calling (see Chapter 17).
- It isn't a medical alert system and can't detect a fall by itself.
- If the power or internet is out, it can't do anything at all.

Alexa Guard has been retired

Amazon used to offer a free feature called **Alexa Guard** that listened for smoke alarms or breaking glass while you were away. Amazon has retired it. People who had already set up **Away Lighting** (lights that switch on and off to make the house look lived-in) can keep using it through Alexa's Home and Away modes. If you see old instructions mentioning Alexa Guard, they're out of date.

Alexa Emergency Assist (paid)

Amazon offers a subscription called **Alexa Emergency Assist** in the U.S. It includes:

- **Urgent Response:** say "Alexa, call for help" to reach a trained agent, 24 hours a day, who can request police, fire or an ambulance be sent to your home. A person must talk to the agent; it doesn't call for help automatically.
- **Emergency contacts:** up to 25 people can be notified when an Urgent Response call starts and ends.
- **Smart Alerts:** an alert on your phone if your Echo hears a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm or glass breaking.
- A profile with helpful details for responders, such as allergies, a gate code or your pets.
- To check it works, say "Alexa, test the emergency helpline." Calls from an Echo won't go through during a power or internet outage.

HEADS UP

It costs money, and it isn't an alarm company

Emergency Assist is a monthly or yearly subscription. Amazon's own listing showed $5.99 a month or $59 a year, plus tax, when checked in November 2026. Prices change, so check in the Alexa app before signing up. Amazon says it is **not** a professional monitoring service and doesn't replace a medical alert button or a monitored alarm.

FROM BILL

Talk it over before you pay

For someone living alone, a wearable medical alert button that works anywhere in the house is usually the better first step. Emergency Assist can be a useful extra. I'm glad to help you think through what fits.

CHAPTER 35

Scams That Mention Your Echo Show or Amazon

Scammers love to use Amazon's name because almost everyone has an Amazon account. Here's what to watch for.

SCAM ALERT

"Your Echo needs activating" is a scam

An Echo Show never needs a paid activation, a technician's remote access, or a gift card. If a website, pop-up or phone number says otherwise, it isn't Amazon. Close it. Searching the web for "Echo Show setup help" can turn up fake support numbers, so use the steps in Chapter 7 or call someone you already know and trust.

SCAM ALERT

The fake "Amazon" call about a suspicious order

A caller or recorded voice says there's a problem with your account or an expensive order, and asks you to press 1, give a code, or install an app. Hang up. Check your orders yourself in the Amazon app or at amazon.com.

Good habits

- Never read out a code that was texted to you. That code is the key to your account.
- Never pay anyone with gift cards. Real companies don't ask for them.
- Don't install an app or give "remote access" because a caller asked you to.
- Be wary of a Drop In or call from someone you don't know. You can't get one unless you've given permission, so if something odd happens, check your Drop In settings (Chapter 19).

FROM BILL

When in doubt, hang up and call me

There's no shame in hanging up on a caller. If you're unsure whether something is real, call me at (330) 200-8042 before you do anything. A two-minute call can save a great deal of trouble.

PART 8

For Families: An Echo Show for an Aging Parent

How an Echo Show can help a parent who lives alone stay close to family, set up with their consent and in a way that respects their privacy.

CHAPTER 36

Why an Echo Show Can Help a Parent Who Lives Alone

For a parent who lives on their own, the Echo Show can quietly make the days less lonely and the family less worried. It's not a medical device or a babysitter. It's a simple way to see each other more often.

What it offers	What that looks like
Seeing family	A video call needs only "Alexa, call Susan." No phone to hold, no buttons to find.
Answering hands-free	"Alexa, answer" works from across the room.
Photos that keep arriving	Grandchildren add photos to a shared album and they appear on the screen.
Gentle reminders	Spoken and on-screen reminders for appointments, trash day or pills.
Seeing who's at the door	With a video doorbell: "Alexa, show the front door."
Less fiddling	Big text, captions and Tap to Alexa for eyes, ears or a voice that need help.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Connection, not surveillance

The best Echo Show setups for a parent are about staying close, not about watching. When Mom decides who can call and Drop In, and knows how to close the shutter, she's far more likely to welcome it and use it every day.

Our separate guide, Protecting an Aging Parent, covers the wider picture: scams, accounts, and safety. This part focuses on the Echo Show itself.

CHAPTER 37

Setting It Up for Mom or Dad

A few decisions up front make all the difference. Talk them through with your parent before you start.

Whose Amazon account?

- **Best:** your parent's own Amazon account. Their calls come from their name, their contacts are their own, and they control their privacy.
- If they don't have one, you can help create a free Amazon account for them. Alexa+ is included if their account has Prime. Without Prime, the original Alexa still makes calls and shows photos (see Chapter 4).
- Avoid setting it up on *your* account: their calls would look like they come from you, and your shopping and settings would mix with theirs.

A setup checklist

1. Set up the Echo Show in their home, on their Wi-Fi (Chapter 7).
2. Install the Alexa app on *your* phone, signed in to *your* account, so you can call them.
3. On their Alexa app (or yours, with their account), add the family members they'll call. Keep the list short and clear: "Susan," "Mike," "Grandkids."
4. Make a test video call together while you're there. Show them "Alexa, answer" and "Alexa, hang up."
5. Point out the camera shutter and the microphone button, and let them try both.
6. Set up the photo frame with a shared album (Chapter 22).
7. Turn on captions or larger text if they'd help (Chapter 33).
8. Write the key phrases on the Cheat-Sheet in Chapter 42 and leave it by the Echo Show.

HEADS UP

Drop In only with a clear yes

Drop In connects without anyone answering. Before you set it up, ask your parent plainly: "Would it be all right if I could drop in to say hello without you having to answer?" If the answer is yes, set it up only for one or two people they choose (Chapter 19), and show them how to turn it off. If the answer is no, ordinary video calls work beautifully.

GOOD TO KNOW

If your parent has memory loss

When a parent can no longer weigh these choices, talk with whoever holds their power of attorney and with other family members, and keep the setup as simple and respectful as possible. A closed shutter in the bedroom and Drop In only from one trusted person is a reasonable middle ground for many families.

CHAPTER 38

A Simple Daily Check-In Plan

Routines help everyone relax. Here's one gentle plan many families can adapt. Change it to suit your family.

When	What happens	How
Morning	A quick hello call or Drop In from one family member	"Alexa, call Mom" from the Alexa app, or Drop In if she has agreed
Midday	Reminder for lunch or a medication	A repeating Alexa reminder (Chapter 26)
Afternoon	New photos from the grandchildren	Shared album in Amazon Photos
Evening	Video call with the grandkids	"Alexa, call" and the name
Bedtime	Do Not Disturb overnight	A Do Not Disturb schedule (Chapter 21)

TIP

Agree on what happens if there's no answer

Decide together ahead of time: if Mom doesn't answer the morning call, who phones her landline or cell, and who lives close enough to stop by? An Echo Show can't tell you she's all right. A plan and a neighbor can.

STAY SAFE

Keep a real phone close

Because an Echo Show can't call 911 (Chapter 17), make sure your parent always has a phone or a medical alert button within reach, especially at night.

PART 9

Fixing Things and Getting Help

The common hiccups and their fixes, restarting and resetting, when it's worth calling Bill, and a one-page cheat-sheet.

CHAPTER 39

Fixing the Common Hiccups

Most Echo Show problems have a simple fix. Try these in order.

Problem	Try this
Alexa doesn't respond	Is there a red light? The microphones are off. Press the microphone button. Is Do Not Disturb on (crescent moon)? Turn it off.
"I'm having trouble connecting to the internet"	Check that other devices are online. Restart your router, wait two minutes, then restart the Echo Show (Chapter 40).
Video calls show no picture of me	The camera shutter is probably closed. Slide it open. Or you may have tapped Video Off.
Family say they can't Drop In	Both of you must allow Drop In for each other (Chapter 19). Also check Do Not Disturb and that Drop In isn't set to Off for that device.
Calls never reach me	Check Do Not Disturb, and that the caller has you in their Alexa contacts.
Photos stopped changing	Check the album still has photos in Amazon Photos, and that your photo display setting still points to it (Chapter 22).
"Show the front door" doesn't work	Use the camera's exact name from its app. Check the camera works in its own app. If not, re-link the camera's skill in the Alexa app.
The screen is too bright at night	Say "Alexa, dimmer," or turn on the nighttime display option (Chapter 13).
Alexa misunderstands	Speak at a normal pace, close to the device, with the TV turned down. Rephrase simply: "Alexa, call Susan" rather than a long sentence.

TIP

Blink and Ring cameras

Blink suggests that if a camera won't show on the Echo Show, open its live view in the Blink app first. If it works there, update the Alexa app and the Echo Show's software and try again.

CHAPTER 40

Restarting and Resetting

Restart: the fix for most problems

1. Unplug the Echo Show's power cord from the wall or from the back of the device.
2. Wait about 10 seconds.
3. Plug it back in. Give it a minute or two to start up fully.

Restarting doesn't erase anything. Your settings, contacts and photos stay exactly as they were.

Checking for updates

Echo Shows update themselves, usually overnight. To check by hand, open **Settings**, then **Device Options**, and look for **Check for Software Updates**. You can also ask "Alexa, check for software updates."

Factory reset: the last resort

A **factory reset** erases everything on the Echo Show and returns it to how it came out of the box. Use it only if nothing else works, or before you give the device away or sell it.

1. Open **Settings**, then **Device Options**.
2. Look for **Reset to Factory Defaults** and follow the on-screen steps.
3. Afterward, set it up again as new (Chapter 7).

HEADS UP

Before you reset

A reset removes the device from your account and signs it out. You'll need your Wi-Fi password and Amazon sign-in to set it up again. Your contacts and photos are stored in your Amazon account, so they'll come back once you sign in. If you're not sure, call me first.

GOOD TO KNOW

Giving an Echo Show away?

Do a factory reset first, then also remove it from your account in the Alexa app (tap **Devices**, the Echo Show, the settings gear, and look for **Deregister**). That way the next owner can't see your photos or call your contacts.

CHAPTER 41

When to Call Bill

This guide should carry you a long way on your own. But sometimes a patient person beside you saves a lot of time. Here's my honest advice on when a call is worth it.

Good reasons to call

- **Setting up an Echo Show for a parent**, including contacts, Drop In with their consent, and a shared photo album the whole family can add to.
- **Getting cameras on the screen**: linking Ring, Blink or other cameras so "show the front door" just works.
- **Wi-Fi trouble** that makes calls freeze or the screen say it can't connect.
- **Wall-mounting** a larger Echo Show neatly and safely.
- **Privacy check-up**: going through Drop In permissions, voice history and Visual ID together.
- **You'd simply rather have someone show you**. That's always a good enough reason.

SCAM ALERT

Real help never cold-calls

Neither Amazon nor I will ever call you out of the blue to say your Echo Show has a problem. If someone does, it's a scam. Hang up, and call a number you already know.

What working with me is like

I've been doing this for more than 30 years, and I work at your pace. No rushing, no talking down, and no selling you things you don't need. If a subscription or gadget isn't worth your money, I'll tell you so.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. When you call the main line, my assistant **Sophie** may answer and help you set up a time. Help costs **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. The guides are free to read.

Thank you for letting me help. Enjoy those video calls and family photos, and remember: you can't break it.

— Bill

CHAPTER 42

Your Echo Show Cheat-Sheet

Print this page and keep it handy next to the Echo Show.

I want to...	Do this
Go back to the home screen	Say "Alexa, go home."
Make a video call	Say "Alexa, call" and the name.
Answer or hang up	Say "Alexa, answer" or "Alexa, hang up."
Hide my picture	Slide the camera shutter closed, or tap Video Off.
Stop Alexa listening	Press the microphone button. Red means off.
Tell the whole house something	Say "Alexa, announce" and your message.
Not be disturbed	Say "Alexa, turn on Do Not Disturb."
See my photos	Say "Alexa, show my photos."
See the front door	Say "Alexa, show the front door" (use your camera's name).
Set a timer	Say "Alexa, set a timer for 10 minutes."
Get a reminder	Say "Alexa, remind me to..." and the time.
Open Settings	Alexa+: tap the Menu icon, then Settings. Original Alexa: swipe down from the top.
Fix almost anything	Unplug it, wait 10 seconds, plug it back in.

Write these down

Item	Yours
My Echo Show model	
Wi-Fi name and password (keep private)	
Amazon account email	
Do I have Prime? (Alexa+ included)	
People allowed to Drop In	
My cameras' names (for "show the...")	
Family to call (names as in contacts)	
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book