BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Garmin Watches

Venu, vivoactive, Forerunner, Lily and more: setup, health features, safety features and fixes, explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for seniors and families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Garmin Venu, vivoactive, Forerunner, Lily & more · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Garmin watch manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there is no test, and you can't fall behind. It covers the Garmin watches you'll see in stores today (Venu, vivoactive, Forerunner, Lily, vivomove, vivosmart, Instinct and fenix) and the free Garmin Connect app that goes with all of them. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you* and slow, step-by-step directions. One promise up front: these watches are wellness helpers, not medical devices, and this guide says so plainly wherever health comes up. Facts are current as of November 2026. Garmin's menus differ a little from model to model, so if a screen on your watch looks slightly different, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Choosing Your Garmin

The Garmin families in plain English, what they cost, and an honest word about what a watch can and can't tell you about your health. Start here, before you buy or right after you open the box.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe a Garmin watch was a gift, and it's sitting on the counter still in its box. Maybe your doctor suggested you walk more and you'd like something to count the steps. Or maybe you're shopping and can't tell a Venu from a vivoactive from a Forerunner. Whoever you are, this guide is for **you**.

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

You can't break it by exploring

A Garmin watch has a few buttons, a small screen and a lot of menus. It's easy to feel you've pressed the wrong thing. You haven't done any harm. Swiping to the wrong screen, starting a workout by accident or changing a watch face doesn't hurt anything. Every mistake can be undone, and Chapter 26 shows how to restart a watch that has stopped responding.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A Garmin can nudge you to get up and move, show how well you slept, buzz your wrist when a text arrives, let you pay at the store without your wallet and, on many models, send your location to family if you ask for help. A little setup is all it takes to get there.

STAY SAFE

The most important thing in this guide

A Garmin watch is **not a medical device** and does not diagnose anything. Its heart rate, sleep, stress, Pulse Ox and Body Battery numbers are general-wellness **estimates**. Talk to your doctor about any reading that worries you, and before you start a new exercise program. In an emergency, **call 911**. Garmin's safety features send a text or email to the people you choose; they do **not** call 911 for you, and they can miss a fall. Chapter 4 explains all of this in plain English.

What's in this guide

- **Choosing**: the Garmin families, prices, and what a watch can and can't tell you (Part 1).
- **Setting up**: your Garmin account, the Garmin Connect app, pairing, the buttons and charging (Part 2).
- **Everyday use**: notifications and texts, alarms, finding your phone and Garmin Pay (Part 3).
- **Health and wellness**: steps, heart rate, sleep, Body Battery, stress, Pulse Ox and the ECG app (Part 4).
- **Walks and safety**: workouts with GPS, emergency contacts, incident and fall detection, LiveTrack (Part 5).
- **Keeping it running**: updates, Connect+, sharing, privacy, scams and fixes (Part 6).

GOOD TO KNOW

Have a different watch?

Bill's Home Tech has separate manuals for the **Apple Watch** and the **Samsung Galaxy Watch**. If you'd like to set up your phone's own emergency features too, see **Emergency SOS & Medical ID**.

And I'm only a phone call away

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

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Which Garmin Is Which?

Garmin makes a lot of watches, and the names don't explain themselves. The good news: they all use the same free app, the same Garmin account, and most of the same health features. The families differ mainly in looks, size, battery life and how many sports features they pack in.

The Garmin families in plain English

Family	What it is
Venu	Garmin's everyday smartwatch. Bright touchscreen plus buttons, strong health tracking, phone calls through the watch on many models. The current model is the **Venu 4** (2025), which added a built-in flashlight. A good fit for most people who want a "smartwatch".
vivoactive	A slimmer, lighter, less expensive cousin of the Venu. The **vivoactive 6** (2025) has a touchscreen, two buttons, GPS and most of the health features.
Forerunner	Garmin's running and walking line, from simple to very advanced. The **Forerunner 70** and **170** (2026) are the newer entry models; the **570** and **970** are for serious athletes.
Lily	Small, light watches designed with smaller wrists in mind, with a hidden display that lights up when you need it. **Lily 2 Active** adds built-in GPS.
vivomove	Looks like a traditional watch with real hands. A small screen appears when you lift your wrist or tap it. The **vivomove Trend** is one current model.
vivosmart	A slim band-style fitness tracker rather than a full watch. Simple and light.
Instinct	Rugged, chunky outdoor watches with very long battery life. The **Instinct 3** came out in 2025.
fenix	Garmin's premium adventure watch (the **fenix 8** family), with maps and every sports feature. Powerful, large and expensive; more than most people need.

TIP

Bill's short list

For most people who want a good-looking everyday watch with clear health tracking and safety features, the **Venu** or **vivoactive** is the place to start. If you'd like something smaller and more jewelry-like, look at **Lily** or **vivomove**. Leave the Forerunner 570/970 and fenix to the marathon runners and backcountry hikers, unless you love the look.

Questions to ask before choosing

1. **Can I read the screen?** Venu and vivoactive screens are the largest and brightest. Lily and vivomove screens are small. Look at one in a store with your reading glasses off.
2. **Do I want a touchscreen?** Venu, vivoactive, Lily and vivomove have one. Many Forerunner, Instinct and fenix models are mainly button-driven, which some people find easier with stiff fingers.
3. **Will I walk outside without my phone?** Then look for **built-in GPS**, so the watch can measure distance on its own. Venu, vivoactive, Forerunner, Instinct, fenix and Lily 2 Active have it.
4. **Do I want the safety features?** Incident detection and assistance alerts (Chapter 20) are on many current models. Check the product page for "safety and tracking features" before you buy.
5. **Do I want to pay with my watch?** Look for **Garmin Pay** on the product page (Chapter 11).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Picking the right family up front means a watch you'll actually wear every day, instead of one that ends up in a drawer because the screen was too small or the buttons were too fiddly.

CHAPTER 3

What They Cost (and What You Don't Need to Pay)

Garmin watches range from around a hundred and fifty dollars for a simple tracker to over a thousand for the top adventure watches. Prices change often, and sales are common, especially around the holidays. Here are Garmin's own suggested prices for a few current models when they launched.

Model	Price, as of November 2026
Venu 4	Suggested retail price from $549.99 (September 2025). Seen on sale for less since.
vivoactive 6	Suggested retail price $299.99 (April 2025).
Forerunner 70 / 170 / 170 Music	Suggested retail prices $249.99 / $299.99 / $349.99 (May 2026).

The app is free; Connect+ is optional

The **Garmin Connect** app, which you need to set up and use the watch, is free on iPhone and Android. Garmin also sells an optional subscription called **Garmin Connect+** for $6.99 a month or $69.99 a year in the U.S., as of November 2026. Garmin says all the existing Garmin Connect features and your data stay free. You don't need Connect+ to use anything in this guide except where Chapter 23 says so.

HEADS UP

A price that looks too good usually is

If you see a "Garmin Venu" for $59 in a social media ad or on an unfamiliar website, it's almost certainly a fake or a scam. Buy from Garmin's own website or a well-known store, and keep the receipt for the warranty. Chapter 25 covers Garmin scams.

TIP

Last year's model is usually fine

When Garmin brings out a new model, the previous one often stays on sale for a while at a lower price. For most people, last year's Venu or vivoactive is a perfectly good buy, as long as it comes from a real store.

CHAPTER 4

What a Garmin Can and Can't Tell You About Your Health

Before we look at a single health feature, I want to set the ground rules honestly, the way I'd want them set for my own family. A Garmin watch can be a genuinely helpful companion for staying active and paying attention to your sleep and energy. It is **not a doctor**, and nothing it shows you is a diagnosis.

What the numbers are

- Heart rate, sleep score, stress, Body Battery, Pulse Ox and Health Snapshot readings are **general-wellness estimates** made from a light sensor on the back of the watch and its motion sensors.
- Garmin's own manuals say the watch is not a medical device and is not intended to diagnose or monitor any medical condition.
- Readings can be thrown off by a loose band, tattoos, cold hands, an unusual sleeping position or simply moving around.
- A trend over weeks tells you more than any single number. A reading is a **starting point for a conversation** with your doctor, never the final word.

The one exception: the ECG app

On select watches, the Garmin **ECG app** has U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance to record your heart rhythm for 30 seconds and check for signs of atrial fibrillation (AFib), a type of irregular heartbeat. Even this app **cannot detect a heart attack**, blood clots or a stroke. Chapter 17 explains what it does and doesn't do.

> **STAY SAFE**
>
> **If something feels wrong, don't look at your watch: get help**
>
> If you have chest pain, trouble breathing, sudden weakness, numbness, confusion or you simply feel that something is seriously wrong, **call 911**, no matter what your watch says. A normal reading has *not* ruled anything out. Your body and your doctor outrank any gadget, every time.

Talk to your doctor

- **Before starting a new exercise program**, especially if you have a heart condition, take medicines that affect your heart rate, or haven't been active for a while.
- **About any reading that worries you**, or a pattern that keeps repeating. Bring your phone; the Garmin Connect app keeps a history you can show them.
- **Before changing any medicine or treatment** because of something your watch said. Never do that on the watch's say-so.

HEADS UP

Safety features are a backup, not a medical alert service

Incident detection, fall detection and assistance alerts (Chapter 20) send a text or email with your location to up to three people you choose, through your phone. Garmin says plainly that the app does **not** contact emergency services and that these features should not be relied on as your main way to get help. They can miss a fall. If you live alone or have had falls, ask your doctor or family about a dedicated medical alert service as well.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing what the watch can and can't do lets you enjoy the useful nudges (more walking, better sleep habits, a reminder to breathe) without either ignoring real symptoms or worrying over a number that doesn't mean what it seems to.

PART 2

Setting Up Your Watch

Your Garmin account, the free Garmin Connect app, pairing with an iPhone or Android phone, the buttons and screen, and keeping the battery charged.

CHAPTER 5

Your Garmin Account & the Garmin Connect App

Every Garmin watch works hand in hand with a free phone app called **Garmin Connect**. The watch collects your steps, sleep and workouts; the app is where you set things up, see your history and change settings on a bigger screen. To use the app you need a free **Garmin account**, which is simply an email address and a password.

Installing the app

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**. On an Android phone, open the **Google Play Store**.
2. Search for **Garmin Connect**.
3. Check that the developer listed under the app is **Garmin**. Copycat apps exist.
4. Tap **Get** or **Install**, then open the app.
5. Tap the option to create an account, or sign in if you already have a Garmin account from an earlier watch or a Garmin GPS.

Creating your Garmin account

- Use an email address you check regularly. Garmin sends account and security messages there.
- Choose a password you don't use anywhere else, and write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28.
- The app asks for things like your birth year, height and weight. These help the watch estimate calories and fitness. You can change them later.
- If a family member is helping, set the account up in **your** name with **your** email, so the data and safety contacts belong to you.

GOOD TO KNOW

One account for everything Garmin

The same Garmin account works for the Garmin Connect app, Garmin Express on a computer (Chapter 22) and Garmin's website. If you replace your watch later, sign in with the same account and your history is still there.

Finding your way around the app

The app opens to a home screen of cards showing today's steps, sleep and other numbers. Tap any card for more detail. Settings, your devices and the safety features live in the app's **menu**: look for a button with three dots or three lines, depending on your phone. Garmin's manuals call this the **Menu** button, and that's what this guide calls it too.

To find	Go to
Your watch's settings	**Menu** > **Garmin Devices** > your watch.
Safety contacts	**Menu** > **Safety & Tracking** (Chapter 19).
Notifications	Your watch's settings in the app, plus your phone's own notification settings (Chapter 9).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once the app is set up, your steps, sleep and walks are saved and kept for you, even if you lose or replace the watch, and you can change settings on a phone screen instead of a tiny watch face.

CHAPTER 6

Pairing with an iPhone or Android Phone

"Pairing" just means introducing the watch and the phone so they can talk to each other over Bluetooth. You do it once, and after that they reconnect on their own whenever they're near each other. With Garmin there is one golden rule.

HEADS UP

Pair through the Garmin Connect app, not Bluetooth settings

Garmin says to pair the watch **from inside the Garmin Connect app**, not from your phone's Bluetooth settings. Pairing it in Bluetooth settings first can make the watch look connected while the app still can't sync it.

Pairing a new watch

1. Charge the watch for a while first (Chapter 8), then turn it on by holding its main button. The first time a new watch turns on, it's already in pairing mode.
2. Keep the phone within about 30 feet (10 meters) of the watch; close beside it is best.
3. Open the **Garmin Connect** app and sign in (Chapter 5).
4. If the app doesn't offer to add the watch on its own, tap **Menu** > **Garmin Devices** > **Add Device**.
5. Choose your watch from the list and follow the on-screen steps.
6. Some watches show a six-digit code. Check that it matches the one on your phone and confirm it.
7. When the phone asks for permission to use Bluetooth, show notifications or know your location, tap **Allow**. Without these, the watch can't show texts or send your location to emergency contacts.
8. Let the first sync and any software update finish. It can take several minutes.

If you skipped pairing during setup

Open the watch's settings and look for **Phone** or **Connectivity**, then **Pair Phone**. The exact menu name differs by model. This option only appears when the watch isn't already connected to a paired phone. Then follow the app steps above.

iPhone or Android: is there a difference?

- Both work well. The setup steps are the same.
- On an **iPhone**, you can read texts on the watch, but you can't reply to texts from the watch.
- On a compatible **Android** phone, you can also send quick text replies from the watch (Chapter 9).
- Keep the Garmin Connect app installed and signed in. If you delete it, the watch stops syncing.

TIP

If the phone can't find the watch

Turn Bluetooth off and on in your phone's settings, restart the phone, put the watch back into pairing mode and try again from the app. Chapter 26 has more fixes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A paired watch shows who's calling or texting, syncs your health data automatically and makes the safety features in Part 5 possible. It's the one setup step everything else depends on.

CHAPTER 7

Buttons, Touchscreen & Finding Your Way Around

Every Garmin family has its own button layout, so I won't pretend one diagram fits them all. The ideas are the same everywhere, though, and five minutes of practice makes them feel natural.

The touchscreen (Venu, vivoactive, Lily, vivomove)

- **Swipe up or down** on the watch face to scroll through small summary screens Garmin calls **glances** or **widgets**: steps, heart rate, sleep, weather and so on.
- **Tap** a glance to open more detail.
- **Swipe** to reach your notifications and the **controls** menu (quick switches like do not disturb, flashlight on Venu 4, find my phone and Garmin Pay).
- Swipe right, or press the back button, to go back.

The buttons

- Most Garmin watches have **two to five buttons** around the edge. One is usually the main **start/stop** button for workouts and another a **back** or **light** button.
- Holding a button often does something different from pressing it. On many models, holding one button opens the controls menu or the settings, and holding it longer turns the watch off.
- Button-only watches (many Forerunner, Instinct and fenix models) use **UP** and **DOWN** to scroll and **START** to select.
- The quick-start guide in the box shows your model's buttons. Your watch's full owner's manual is free on Garmin's website (search "Garmin" plus your model name plus "owner's manual").

Locking the screen and buttons

If your sleeve keeps pressing things, use the lock. On the Venu 4, the lock option stops the buttons and the touchscreen from responding to accidental presses and swipes. Look for **Lock** in the controls menu or the system settings.

Making it easier to read

- Choose a simple watch face with big numbers. On the watch, hold the watch face (or open settings) and look for **Watch Face**; or browse faces in the app under your watch's settings.
- Turn up the brightness in the watch's display settings.
- Change the units, 12- or 24-hour clock and language in the watch's system settings, or in the app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you know the swipe for glances and the button for workouts, you can check your steps or start a walk in a second, without hunting through menus.

TIP

Practice the two you'll need most

Learn two moves first: how to get back to the watch face, and how to start and stop a walk (Chapter 18). Everything else can wait.

CHAPTER 8

Battery & Charging

One of the nicest things about Garmin watches is the battery. Many models last a week or more between charges in everyday use, far longer than most smartwatches. How long yours lasts depends on the model and on which features you leave switched on.

How to charge

1. Use the **Garmin charging cable** that came in the box. Garmin watches use their own small plug on the back of the watch; a regular phone cable won't fit the watch.
2. Plug the other end into a USB wall adapter or a computer.
3. Connect the small end to the back of the watch. It clicks or snaps into place.
4. The screen shows the battery level while it charges.
5. A vivomove Trend can also charge on a Qi wireless charging pad, the same kind many phones use.

> TIP
> **Wipe the charging contacts**
> If the watch stops charging, wipe the metal contacts on the watch and the cable with a dry cloth. Sweat and lotion build up there and can stop the connection.

What drains the battery fastest

Feature	What to know
Always-on display	Keeps the screen lit all the time. It can cut battery life by more than half. Turn it off in the display settings if you don't need it.
GPS workouts	Recording a walk with GPS uses much more power than everyday wear.
All-day Pulse Ox	Garmin says turning on all-day Pulse Ox readings decreases battery life (Chapter 16).
All-day fall detection	Garmin says choosing the **All Day** fall detection setting decreases battery life (Chapter 20). For many people the safety is worth it.
Music and phone calls	Playing music or taking calls on the watch uses more power.

GOOD TO KNOW

Venu 4 battery, as reported at launch

At launch, the Venu 4 was rated for up to about 12 days (45 mm size) or 10 days (41 mm size) in smartwatch mode, and only a few days with the always-on display turned on. Your results depend on use.

A good charging habit

Pick a regular time to charge, such as while you shower and dress, so the watch is on your wrist overnight for sleep tracking and during the day for the safety features. A watch on the nightstand can't help if you need it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A simple charging routine means the watch is always ready: tracking your sleep, counting your steps and ready to send an alert if you ever need one.

PART 3

Everyday Smartwatch Features

Texts and call alerts on your wrist, alarms, finding a misplaced phone, and paying at the store with Garmin Pay.

CHAPTER 9

Notifications & Texts on Your Wrist

A "notification" is the little alert your phone shows when a text, call, email or app message arrives. Once your watch is paired, it can show those alerts with a gentle buzz, so you don't miss a call from the doctor's office because your phone was in another room or at the bottom of a bag.

Turning notifications on

1. Pair the watch with your phone first (Chapter 6).
2. On the watch, open the settings and look for **Phone** or **Connectivity**, then **Notifications** or **Smart Notifications**. The exact name differs by model.
3. Make sure the status is **On**.
4. Choose whether the watch should vibrate, beep or both, and whether to show alerts during workouts.

Choosing which apps can buzz you

- On an **iPhone**, the watch shows the notifications your iPhone shows. To stop an app buzzing your wrist, turn off its notifications on the iPhone in **Settings** > **Notifications**.
- On **Android**, open the Garmin Connect app and look under **Settings** > **Notifications** to choose which apps send alerts to the watch.
- Fewer alerts is usually better. Keep calls, texts and the people who matter; turn off games and shopping apps.

Replying to texts (Android only)

With a compatible Android phone, you can answer a text from the watch with a short ready-made reply such as "Can't talk now." You can edit the list of quick replies in the Garmin Connect app. Your normal texting charges apply. With an iPhone, you can read texts on the watch but reply on the phone.

> **TIP**
>
> **Quiet at night**
>
> Turn on **do not disturb** or a sleep mode from the watch's controls menu, or set your sleep hours in the app, so texts don't buzz you awake. Alarms still go off.

SCAM ALERT

Your watch shows scam texts too

The watch simply repeats what reaches your phone, including scam texts about packages, tolls or bank problems. Never act on a text from your wrist. Look at it on the phone, and when in doubt, don't tap anything and call the company using a number you already trust.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A gentle buzz on your wrist means you catch the calls and texts that matter, even when the phone is charging in the kitchen, without having to keep it in your hand all day.

CHAPTER 10

Alarms, Find My Phone & Handy Extras

Beyond health and notifications, a Garmin watch does a handful of small everyday jobs very well. These are some favorites.

A silent alarm that wakes only you

The watch can wake you with a vibration on your wrist instead of a loud clock, which is kind to a sleeping partner. On the Venu 4, open **Clocks** > **Alarms** from the watch, add or choose an alarm and pick the time and days. **Sound & Vibe** sets how it alerts you.

Smart Wake

On supported watches such as the Venu 4, you can turn an alarm into a **Smart Wake** alarm. It tries to wake you at a good moment in your sleep during the 30 minutes before the alarm time. Set for 8:00, it may go off anywhere from 7:30 to 8:00.

Find my phone

Can't find your phone? If it's within Bluetooth range, open the watch's controls menu and choose **Find My Phone**. The phone plays a sound, and the watch shows how strong the signal is so you can tell if you're getting closer.

Find my watch

It works the other way too. In the Garmin Connect app, open your watch's settings and look for **Find My Device**. If the watch is within range of the phone, it vibrates and beeps until you press a button.

Other handy extras

- **Timers and stopwatch**: for cooking, medicine reminders or a rest break. Look under **Clocks**.
- **Weather**: a weather glance, using your phone's connection.
- **Flashlight** (Venu 4 and some other models): a built-in light for finding the keyhole or the path at night.
- **Breathing**: a guided relaxation exercise from the stress glance (Chapter 15).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Small helpers like a vibrating alarm and Find My Phone save minutes every day and spare you the frustration of searching the couch cushions.

CHAPTER 11

Garmin Pay: Paying with Your Watch

Many Garmin watches can pay at the checkout just like a contactless credit card: hold your wrist near the card reader and you're done. It's called **Garmin Pay**. It's handy on a walk when you've left your wallet at home.

Check your bank first

Garmin Pay only works with cards from participating banks and credit unions, and not in every country. Garmin keeps the list at **garmin.com/garminpay/banks**; the app links there too. If your bank isn't listed, Garmin Pay won't work with that card yet.

Setting it up

1. In the Garmin Connect app, open your watch's settings and look for **Garmin Pay** or **Wallet**, then **Get Started** or **Create Your Wallet**.
2. Create a **4-digit passcode** for the watch wallet. Write it somewhere safe (not on the watch band).
3. Add your credit or debit card by following the on-screen steps. Your bank may send you a code to confirm.
4. You can add up to 10 cards.

Paying at the store

1. Open the wallet from the controls menu (or by holding a button on some models).
2. Enter your passcode if the watch asks for it.
3. Hold the watch near the card reader until it confirms the payment.

On many models, once you've entered the passcode you can pay without entering it again for 24 hours, as long as you keep wearing the watch. Take it off, and it asks again. That protects you if the watch is lost or stolen.

HEADS UP

Three wrong passcodes locks the wallet

If the wrong passcode is entered three times, the wallet locks. You reset the passcode in the Garmin Connect app. If you forget it completely, you set up Garmin Pay again and re-add your cards. If you ever remove the watch from the app or reset it, expect to add your cards again too.

SCAM ALERT

Garmin will never ask for your card number by phone

Garmin Pay is set up only inside the Garmin Connect app. If someone calls, texts or emails saying they're from Garmin and need your card number or passcode to "fix" Garmin Pay, hang up. It's a scam.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Leave the wallet at home on your morning walk and still buy a coffee or a newspaper, with your passcode protecting the card if the watch ever goes missing.

PART 4

Health & Wellness

Steps, heart rate, sleep, Body Battery, stress, Pulse Ox and the ECG app: what each one measures, how to read it, and the honest limits of every number.

CHAPTER 12

Steps, the Move Bar & Activity Goals

Counting steps is the simplest thing a Garmin does, and for many people the most useful. You don't have to start anything: wear the watch and it counts all day.

Your daily step goal

Garmin watches use an **Auto Goal**. On many models it starts at 7,500 steps a day and then adjusts itself up or down based on how active you've been recently. If you'd rather choose your own number, turn Auto Goal off in the Garmin Connect app and set a personal step goal.

The move bar

If you sit still for an hour, a **move bar** appears on the watch, and it grows a little more every 15 minutes you stay put. Walking for a couple of minutes clears it. It's a gentle nudge to get up and stretch, and you can turn the alert off in the activity tracking settings if it bothers you.

Intensity minutes

Intensity minutes count the time you spend moving briskly enough to raise your heart rate, such as a fast walk. Garmin sets a default weekly goal of **150 minutes**, following World Health Organization guidance, and vigorous minutes count double. You can change the goal in the app.

STAY SAFE

Check with your doctor before you push harder

Garmin's goals are general guidance for healthy adults, not a prescription for you. Before starting a new exercise program, or if you have a heart condition, joint problems or balance concerns, ask your doctor what's right for you. You can lower any goal in the app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Seeing your steps add up is a friendly motivator. Many people find they take the stairs or walk to the mailbox a little more often once the watch is keeping count.

TIP

Steps are an estimate

Pushing a shopping cart or a walker, where your wrist barely swings, can mean fewer steps counted. That's normal; the trend over days matters more than any single number.

CHAPTER 13

Heart Rate & Heart Rate Alerts

The green lights on the back of the watch measure your pulse through your skin. The watch checks it around the clock and shows your current heart rate, your **resting heart rate** (your pulse when you've been still and relaxed) and a graph of the day.

Seeing your heart rate

- Swipe or scroll to the **heart rate** glance on the watch.
- In the Garmin Connect app, tap the heart rate card for the day's graph and your resting heart rate trend.
- For the best readings, wear the watch snug, about a finger's width above your wrist bone.

Setting a high or low heart rate alert

You can ask the watch to buzz if your heart rate goes above or below a number you choose after you've been inactive for a while. On Venu and vivoactive models the path is:

1. Open the watch's **Settings**.
2. Choose **Wrist Heart Rate** > **Abnormal Heart Rate Alerts**. (On button watches, start from the heart rate glance and open its options.)
3. Choose **High Alert** or **Low Alert**.
4. Pick a threshold number. Ask your doctor what makes sense for you.
5. Turn the alert on.

> **STAY SAFE**
>
> **An alert is a nudge, not a diagnosis**
>
> Garmin says plainly that this alert does not notify you of any potential heart condition and is not intended to treat or diagnose any medical condition. If the alert keeps happening, or you also feel dizzy, short of breath or unwell, call your doctor. If you have chest pain or feel seriously unwell, **call 911**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Medicines matter

Some medicines, such as beta blockers, lower the heart rate on purpose, and a pacemaker can affect readings. Tell your doctor you're wearing a watch, and let them suggest sensible alert numbers.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A graph of your resting heart rate over weeks is something you can show your doctor, and a high or low alert set to numbers your doctor chose can prompt a timely phone call.

CHAPTER 14

Sleep & Your Sleep Score

Wear the watch to bed and it estimates how long and how well you slept. In the morning you'll see a **sleep score** from 0 to 100 and a breakdown of the night.

What goes into the score

- How long you slept.
- Your estimated time in light, deep and REM sleep, and time awake.
- How restless you were, and your stress level during sleep.
- Some watches also track breathing rate and Pulse Ox during the night.

Sleep coach and naps

On compatible watches, the **sleep coach** suggests how much sleep to aim for tonight, based on things like your age, recent activity, recent sleep and naps. Garmin counts sleep shorter than three hours as a **nap**.

Getting good sleep data

1. Charge the watch during the day so it has battery overnight (Chapter 8).
2. Wear it snug enough that it doesn't slide around, but comfortably.
3. Set your usual bedtime and wake time in the Garmin Connect app so the watch knows when to look for sleep.
4. Turn on do not disturb or sleep mode so notifications don't buzz you awake.

STAY SAFE

Sleep tracking is not a sleep test

These readings are general-wellness estimates, not a diagnosis. Talk to your doctor about any reading that worries you. If you feel seriously unwell, call 911; don't wait for the watch. Garmin's sleep tracking can't diagnose sleep apnea or any sleep disorder. If you snore loudly, stop breathing in your sleep, or feel exhausted during the day, tell your doctor; they can arrange a real sleep study.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Seeing your sleep score alongside your day helps you notice what makes for a good night: a walk, less late coffee, a regular bedtime.

CHAPTER 15

Body Battery & Stress

These two Garmin features are about energy and rest. Neither is a medical measurement; think of them as a friendly fuel gauge and a reminder to slow down.

Body Battery

Body Battery estimates how much energy you have in reserve, like the fuel gauge in a car. Garmin says the watch works it out from your heart rate variability (tiny changes in the time between heartbeats), your stress level, sleep quality and activity. A higher number means more energy in reserve. It drains with activity and stress, and recharges with rest and good sleep.

- Wear the watch day and night for the most useful number.
- A low morning number after a poor night is a hint to take it easy, not something to worry over.
- Garmin notes that alcohol can drain Body Battery and make sleep less restful.

Stress level

While you're sitting still, the watch looks at your heart rate variability and gives a **stress level** from 0 to 100. On the Venu line Garmin describes 0 to 25 as rest, 26 to 50 as low, 51 to 75 as medium and 76 to 100 as high. A brisk walk or a cup of coffee can push it up; a calm evening brings it down.

A guided breathing break

From the stress glance, many watches offer a short guided **breathing** activity. Follow the screen as it paces your breath in and out. It's a nice two-minute pause in a busy day.

STAY SAFE

Not a measure of your mental health

These readings are general-wellness estimates, not a diagnosis. Talk to your doctor about any reading that worries you. If you feel seriously unwell, call 911; don't wait for the watch. A watch can't tell anxiety from excitement or a hot afternoon. If you feel persistently stressed, low or anxious, please talk to your doctor or someone you trust. In a crisis, call or text **988**, the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Body Battery and stress turn "I feel worn out" into a picture you can see, helping you plan the busy errand for the morning and the rest for the afternoon.

CHAPTER 16

Pulse Ox & Health Snapshot

Pulse Ox is Garmin's name for an estimate of how much oxygen your blood is carrying, shown as a percentage. It uses red light on the back of the watch. It is **not** the same as the fingertip pulse oximeter your doctor may use.

Choosing when it measures

Mode	What it does
Manual check	The watch takes a reading only when you open the Pulse Ox glance and hold still. Easiest on the battery.
During sleep	Readings while you sleep, shown in your sleep data.
All day	Readings whenever you're inactive during the day. Garmin says this decreases battery life.

Look for **Pulse Ox** or **Pulse Oximeter** in the watch's health or sensor settings. Hold your arm still, at heart level, while a manual reading is taken.

STAY SAFE

Pulse Ox is not a medical device

Garmin's manuals say the watch is not a medical device and the pulse oximeter is not available in all countries. Garmin also notes that unusual sleeping positions can cause abnormally low readings at night, so a single low number may just mean the watch was pressed against a pillow. These readings are general-wellness estimates, not a diagnosis. Talk to your doctor about any reading that worries you. If you feel seriously unwell, call 911; don't wait for the watch. If you use oxygen at home or have a lung or heart condition, rely on the equipment your doctor gave you.

Health Snapshot

On many current watches, **Health Snapshot** records several readings at once (such as heart rate, stress and breathing rate) while you sit still for two minutes. It's a tidy way to take a consistent check at the same time each day, and the results are saved in the Garmin Connect app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A morning Health Snapshot or a week of overnight Pulse Ox readings gives you a consistent record to look back on, or to mention to your doctor, without fuss.

CHAPTER 17

The ECG App (Select Watches)

The Garmin **ECG app** records the electrical signal of your heart for 30 seconds, a bit like a much simpler version of the test at the doctor's office. It's the one Garmin health feature with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) clearance. It looks for signs of **atrial fibrillation** (AFib), a common type of irregular heartbeat.

Who and which watches

- It's for adults **22 and older**.
- It works only on **select watches**, including the Venu 4, the fenix 8 family and the Forerunner 970, and only in some countries. Garmin keeps the current list at **garmin.com/ECG**.
- It's free; no Connect+ subscription is needed.

Setting it up

1. Open the Garmin Connect app and tap the picture of your watch at the top of the screen (or go to **Menu** > **Garmin Devices** and choose the watch).
2. Look for **Set Up ECG App** (it may be under **Finish Setup**) and follow the on-screen steps. They include reading Garmin's instructions.

Taking a reading

1. Sit down and rest your arm and wrist on a table. Stay still and quiet.
2. Open the ECG app on the watch.
3. Place the thumb and index finger of your other hand on the metal ring around the watch face.
4. Keep your fingers there, without pressing hard, for the full 30 seconds.
5. Read the result on the watch. The full recording is saved in the Garmin Connect app, where you can find it in your health stats.

What the results mean

Result	Plain meaning
Sinus rhythm	The heart was beating in a regular pattern during the 30 seconds.
Atrial fibrillation	Signs of AFib were seen. Contact your doctor.
Inconclusive	The app couldn't classify the recording, often because of movement or poor contact. Try again, sitting very still.
High or low heart rate	Your heart rate was outside the range the app can classify.

STAY SAFE

What the ECG app cannot do

Garmin's instructions say the ECG app **cannot check for signs of a heart attack**, and cannot detect blood clots, stroke or other heart conditions such as high blood pressure or heart failure. A "sinus rhythm" result does not mean you're fine if you feel unwell. If you think you're having a medical emergency, **call 911**. Don't change any medicine based on the app; talk to your doctor.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If you ever feel a fluttering or racing heartbeat, you can record what's happening in 30 seconds and show it to your doctor, instead of trying to describe a feeling that's gone by the appointment.

PART 5

Walks, Workouts & Safety Features

Recording a walk with GPS, setting up emergency contacts, incident and fall detection, asking for help from your wrist, and letting family follow along with LiveTrack.

CHAPTER 18

Walks & Workouts with GPS

Steps are counted all day without you doing anything. When you go for a proper walk, though, it's worth **recording** it as an activity. The watch then uses **GPS**, the same satellite positioning a car navigator uses, to measure your distance and pace and draw your route on a map in the app.

Recording a walk

1. Step outside, where the watch can see the sky.
2. Press the watch's **start** button (or open the activities list from the watch face).
3. Choose **Walk**. Other choices include run, bike, pool swim, strength, yoga and more.
4. Wait a moment while the watch finds satellites. A message or a color change on the screen tells you when GPS is ready. Garmin says the watch doesn't record activity data until you start the timer.
5. Press **start** again to start the timer, and off you go.
6. When you're done, press the start/stop button to stop the timer.
7. Choose **Save**. (Choose **Resume** if you stopped by mistake, or **Discard** to throw it away.)

When the watch next syncs with your phone, the walk appears in the Garmin Connect app with a map, your distance, time and heart rate.

TIP

Indoors? Use an indoor activity

On a treadmill or walking laps at the mall, choose an indoor activity such as **Treadmill** or **Indoor Walk** if your watch offers it. GPS doesn't work well under a roof.

STAY SAFE

Start gently, and check with your doctor first

Before you start a new exercise program, talk with your doctor, especially if you have a heart or lung condition, diabetes, balance problems or haven't been active for a while. The watch's heart rate and training numbers are estimates, not medical advice. If you feel chest pain, faintness or unusual shortness of breath, stop and get help; in an emergency, call 911.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Recorded walks build a log you can be proud of: how far you went this week, this month, this year. Seeing the map of a new route is a real pleasure too.

CHAPTER 19

Emergency Contacts: Set Them Up First

Garmin's safety features (Chapter 20) can send a message with your location to people you trust. They only work if you tell Garmin who those people are. This takes five minutes, and I'd put it near the top of your list.

Adding emergency contacts

1. Open the Garmin Connect app on your phone.
2. Tap **Menu** > **Safety & Tracking**.
3. Look for **Safety Features** > **Emergency Contacts** > **Add Emergency Contacts**. (On some versions it's under **Incident Detection & Assistance**.)
4. Choose people from your phone's contacts, or type a name, phone number and email.
5. Follow the on-screen steps, then let the watch sync so it has the changes.

Good to know about contacts

- You can choose up to **three** emergency contacts.
- They must be able to receive text messages or emails. Normal text rates may apply.
- On many models, each person gets a message saying they've been added and can accept or decline. If someone declines, choose someone else.
- Pick people who usually answer their phone and live or work reasonably nearby, and tell them what a Garmin message will look like and what you'd like them to do (call you first, then come or call 911).

STAY SAFE

Your contacts get the message, not 911

Garmin sends your contacts a text or email with your name and location. **Garmin does not contact emergency services for you.** Make sure your contacts know that if they can't reach you, they should call 911 for you. If you can call 911 yourself, always do.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your phone has emergency features too

iPhones and Android phones have their own Emergency SOS and Medical ID features that can call 911 and share medical information. The **Emergency SOS & Medical ID** manual from Bill's Home Tech walks through them. Setting up both is a good idea.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five minutes now means that if you ever press for help or take a hard fall on a walk, the people who love you get your location right away.

CHAPTER 20

Incident Detection, Fall Detection & Asking for Help

Many Garmin watches can send an alert to your emergency contacts in two ways: automatically, if the watch senses a hard fall or crash, or when you ask for help yourself by holding a button. Both need some things in place first, and both have honest limits.

What has to be in place

- Emergency contacts set up in the Garmin Connect app (Chapter 19).
- The watch paired with your phone, the phone **nearby**, with the Garmin Connect app installed, and the phone having a **data connection** (cell service).
- If the phone is at home, or out of signal, the alert can't be sent.

Incident detection

Incident detection watches for a sudden, drastic change in movement **while you're recording certain outdoor GPS activities**, such as a walk, run or bike ride. It's turned off in wheelchair mode on watches that offer that mode.

All-day fall detection (Venu 4 and some other models)

A 2026 software update added **fall detection** that can run all day, not just during activities, on the Venu 4 and some other recent watches. To turn it on:

1. Set up emergency contacts first (Chapter 19). The watch won't turn this on without them.
2. On the watch, open **Settings** > **Safety & Tracking** > **Fall Detection**.
3. Choose **Status**, then **All Day**, or choose only certain activities.

Garmin notes that the All Day setting decreases battery life.

What happens after a fall or incident

1. The watch vibrates and shows a countdown.
2. If you're fine, cancel it before the countdown ends. On the Venu 4 you can hold any button to cancel.
3. If you don't cancel, the Garmin Connect app on your phone sends an automatic text or email to your emergency contacts with your name and GPS location, if available.

Asking for help yourself (assistance)

1. Hold the watch's main button. On Venu models it's the top button.
2. When you feel **three vibrations**, let go. The countdown screen appears.
3. If you pressed by mistake, cancel before the countdown finishes.
4. Otherwise your contacts get your name and location.

STAY SAFE

Please read this one carefully

Garmin says these are **supplemental** features that should not be relied on as your primary way to get emergency help, and that the Garmin Connect app **does not contact emergency services** for you. Fall detection can miss a fall, especially a slow slide to the floor, and it won't work if your phone isn't nearby with signal. It is **not a medical alert service**. In an emergency, **call 911** from your phone. If you live alone or have fallen before, talk with your doctor and family about a dedicated medical alert service as well.

TIP

Practice once, with warning

Tell your contacts you're testing, then hold the button for help and cancel during the countdown, so you know how it feels. If you let one through, call them right away to say you're fine.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

On a walk alone, a hard fall or a press of a button can send your location to the people you trust, while your phone stays in your pocket. It's a real extra layer of safety, as long as you know its limits.

CHAPTER 21

LiveTrack: Let Family Follow Your Walk

LiveTrack lets family or friends follow along on a map while you're out on a walk, run or ride. They get a link by email or text and can watch your progress in real time on a Garmin Connect tracking page, from their own phone or computer. They don't need a Garmin.

Starting LiveTrack

1. Make sure your phone is with you, with a data connection. LiveTrack uses the phone to share your location.
2. In the Garmin Connect app, tap **Menu** > **Safety & Tracking** > **LiveTrack**.
3. Add the people you'd like to invite by email (or share the link another way).
4. Start a GPS activity on the watch, such as a walk (Chapter 18), and follow the app's prompts to begin sharing.
5. Your followers open the link to see your live location and progress.

TIP

Try it once at home first

Do a short practice walk around the block with LiveTrack on, and ask a family member to tell you what they see. The LiveTrack screen in the app shows the settings Garmin offers for your watch, so look through them together.

GOOD TO KNOW

LiveTrack is free; Connect+ adds extras

Basic LiveTrack is part of the free Garmin Connect app. Garmin's paid Connect+ subscription adds some extra LiveTrack features (Chapter 23), but you don't need them for family to follow your walk.

HEADS UP

LiveTrack shares where you are

Only invite people you trust, and remember the link shows your location while the session is running. Don't post a LiveTrack link publicly on social media.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A spouse or adult child can glance at a map and see you're safely on your way home, without calling to check. Many families find that peace of mind is worth more than any other feature on the watch.

PART 6

Keeping It Running

Software updates, the optional Connect+ subscription, sharing with family, your privacy, Garmin scams, and step-by-step fixes when something goes wrong.

CHAPTER 22

Updates: Garmin Connect & Garmin Express

Garmin regularly sends free software updates that fix problems and sometimes add new features, like the 2026 update that brought all-day fall detection to the Venu 4. Keeping your watch and the app up to date is one of the simplest ways to avoid trouble.

Updating through the phone app (the usual way)

- Most of the time, updates arrive on their own: the Garmin Connect app downloads them and sends them to the watch when it syncs. The watch may ask you to confirm before installing.
- On watches set up with Wi-Fi, Garmin Connect can download updates automatically when the watch connects to Wi-Fi.
- Keep the **Garmin Connect app** updated too, through the App Store or Google Play.
- Charge the watch before a big update, and leave it alone until it finishes and restarts.

Updating with Garmin Express on a computer

Garmin Express is Garmin's free program for Windows and Mac computers. It's useful if the phone update keeps failing, or if you'd like to sync over a cable.

1. On your computer, go to **garmin.com/express** and download Garmin Express. It's free.
2. Open it and sign in with your Garmin account.
3. Plug the watch into the computer with its charging cable.
4. Add the watch if asked, and follow the on-screen steps to install any updates.
5. **Don't unplug the watch** until Garmin Express says the update is finished.

SCAM ALERT

Garmin Express is free, and so are updates

Garmin doesn't charge for watch updates or for Garmin Express. Download it only from garmin.com/express. Websites and phone numbers that offer to "update your Garmin" for a fee are scams (Chapter 25).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Up-to-date software means fewer glitches, better battery life and the latest safety features, all for free.

CHAPTER 23

Garmin Connect+: Do You Need It?

In 2025 Garmin introduced **Garmin Connect+**, an optional paid subscription inside the Garmin Connect app. It's worth knowing what it is so you can decide calmly, and so an in-app offer doesn't catch you off guard.

What it costs

Plan	Price
Monthly	$6.99 a month in the U.S., as of November 2026.
Yearly	$69.99 a year in the U.S., as of November 2026.
Free trial	30 days. It turns into a paid subscription unless you cancel before it ends.

What you get, and what stays free

- Garmin says all the existing features of the Garmin Connect app, and your data, **stay free**. That includes steps, sleep, heart rate, Body Battery, stress, workouts, the safety features, basic LiveTrack and the ECG app.
- Connect+ adds extras such as **Active Intelligence** (written insights generated by artificial intelligence from your data), more detailed dashboards and charts, and extra LiveTrack and live-activity features.
- Some features depend on which watch you have.

TIP

Bill's honest take

Most people using a Garmin for walking, sleep and safety don't need Connect+. If you're curious, try the free trial, put a reminder on your calendar a few days before it ends, and decide then. If you sign up through your iPhone or Android phone, you can cancel in your phone's subscription settings.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the free app does everything in this guide means you never pay for something you don't need, and you can say yes to Connect+ only if its extras appeal to you.

CHAPTER 24

Sharing with Family & Your Privacy

Your watch collects personal information: where you walked, how you slept, your heart rate. Garmin Connect lets you share some of it with people you choose, and keep the rest to yourself.

Ways to share with family

- **Emergency contacts** (Chapter 19) receive your location only when an alert is sent.
- **LiveTrack** (Chapter 21) shares your location live during a walk, only when you start it.
- **Connections**: you can connect with family members who also use Garmin Connect, so you can see each other's activities and cheer each other on, depending on everyone's privacy settings.
- **Show your doctor**: open the Garmin Connect app at your appointment and scroll through the heart rate, sleep or ECG history together.

Checking your privacy settings

Garmin Connect has two kinds of privacy settings: who can see your **profile**, and who can see your **activities** (your walks and their maps). The choices include **Only Me**, your connections, and **Everyone**.

1. In the Garmin Connect app, open your profile (tap your picture or initials), or go to **Menu** > **Settings**.
2. Look for **Profile & Privacy** or **Privacy** settings.
3. Set your profile and the default for new activities to **Only Me** or your connections, rather than **Everyone**.
4. Changing the default affects new activities. Older activities can be changed one by one.

HEADS UP

Walk maps show where you live

If your activities are set to **Everyone**, strangers may be able to see maps that begin and end at your front door. Unless you have a reason to share publicly, keep activities private or limited to people you know.

GOOD TO KNOW

Phone permissions

The Garmin Connect app asks to use Bluetooth, notifications and location. These are needed for the watch to work and for the safety features to send your location, so it's fine to allow them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A few minutes in the privacy settings means family can cheer you on and keep an eye out for you, while strangers see nothing.

CHAPTER 25

Fake Garmin Support & Other Scams

Scammers love popular brands, and Garmin is no exception. The most common trick is a fake "Garmin support" phone number or website that shows up when you search online for help with an update or a problem.

How the fake support scam works

- You search for "Garmin update" or "Garmin support phone number" and click a result or ad that looks official, but isn't Garmin.
- The person who answers says your watch or account has a problem and asks for remote access to your computer, a credit card, a gift card or a "service fee".
- Some claim to be an "authorized Garmin dealer" or "Garmin technician." The Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker has reports of exactly this.

SCAM ALERT

The rules that keep you safe

Garmin software updates and Garmin Express are free. Garmin will not call you out of the blue about your watch, and no real support agent will ask for gift cards or for control of your computer to fix a watch. If anyone does, hang up.

Finding the real Garmin support

1. Type **support.garmin.com** into your web browser yourself, rather than clicking a search result or ad.
2. Choose your watch model there to find help articles, the owner's manual and the official ways to contact Garmin.
3. Or use the help section inside the Garmin Connect app.

Other scams to watch for

- **Too-cheap watches** on social media ads or unfamiliar websites. Fakes and non-delivery are common.
- **Emails or texts** saying your Garmin account will be closed or your payment failed. Don't click; open the Garmin Connect app yourself to check.
- **Fake apps**: install only the Garmin Connect app published by Garmin (Chapter 5).

- Anyone asking for your **Garmin Pay passcode** or card details (Chapter 11).

FROM BILL

When in doubt, call me

If you're not sure whether a call, website or message is really Garmin, stop and call me at (330) 200-8042 before you pay or click anything. A second opinion takes two minutes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing that updates are free and that real support never asks for gift cards protects your money and your computer, and lets you get genuine help when you need it.

CHAPTER 26

Fixing Problems: Not Syncing, No Notifications, Frozen & Reset

Most Garmin problems come down to the watch and phone losing touch with each other. Work through these steps in order; usually the first two or three fix it.

The watch isn't syncing

1. Make sure the phone's **Bluetooth** is on and the watch is close by.
2. Open the **Garmin Connect** app and leave it open for a minute; it syncs when it connects.
3. Update the Garmin Connect app from the App Store or Google Play. App bugs are a common cause, and Garmin fixes them in updates.
4. Restart the phone. Then restart the watch (see "The watch is frozen" below).
5. On Android, check that battery saving or battery optimization isn't putting the Garmin Connect app to sleep. Look in the phone's **Settings** > **Apps** > **Garmin Connect** > **Battery**.
6. Make sure the watch isn't also paired to a tablet or an old phone; they compete for the connection.
7. Still stuck? Remove the watch in the Garmin Connect app, then "forget" it in your phone's Bluetooth settings, and pair it again from the app (Chapter 6).
8. As a backup, plug the watch into a computer and sync with Garmin Express (Chapter 22).

Notifications stopped

1. Check that **do not disturb** or sleep mode isn't on (look in the watch's controls menu).
2. Check that notifications are still **On** in the watch's phone or connectivity settings (Chapter 9).
3. On the phone, make sure the Garmin Connect app is still allowed to send notifications and use Bluetooth.
4. Make sure the watch shows as connected in the Garmin Connect app.
5. Restart both the phone and the watch.

The watch is frozen

If the watch stops responding, hold the button Garmin names for your model until the watch turns off, then hold it again to turn it back on. On many models it's the upper-left or **LIGHT** button, held for about 15 seconds. Your owner's manual's "Restarting" section names the exact button. Some models also restart when you plug them into the charger. Garmin warns that a forced restart may erase some data or settings, so only use it when the watch is truly stuck.

Resetting the watch (last resort)

A reset puts settings back to how they were out of the box. **Sync with the app first** so your activities are uploaded. Then, on the watch, open **Settings** > **System** > **Reset** (on newer models, **Restore & Reset**). You'll usually see two choices:

Option	What it does
Reset Default Settings	Puts settings back to factory defaults but keeps your saved information and activity history on the watch.
Delete Data and Reset Settings	Erases everything on the watch and resets it. Use this before giving the watch away. You'll need to pair it again and re-add Garmin Pay cards.

HEADS UP

Before you give a watch away

Sync it, then use **Delete Data and Reset Settings**, and remove it from your devices in the Garmin Connect app. That clears your health data and payment cards from the watch.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Working through these steps in order fixes most problems in a few minutes, without a trip to the store or a long hold on the phone.

PART 7

Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

When a hand from Bill is worth it, and a one-page summary of everything that matters.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, and I hope you will. But some days it's nicer to have someone sit beside you and just get it done. Here's when a call is worth it.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like help **choosing** a Garmin that suits your wrist, eyesight and budget, without a sales pitch.
- You want everything **set up at once**: Garmin account, app, pairing, notifications, a readable watch face and a simple charging routine.
- You'd like the **safety features** set up properly: emergency contacts, fall detection, assistance and LiveTrack, with a practice run so the whole family knows what to expect.
- You want **Garmin Pay** added and want to know how to keep it secure.
- The watch **won't sync** or notifications have stopped, and Chapter 26 didn't fix it.
- You're not sure whether a **phone call, website or message** claiming to be Garmin is genuine.
- You'd like a **patient lesson**, at your own pace, on reading your steps, sleep and heart rate in the app.

What working with me is like

I'm Bill, and I serve Portage County, Ohio and the surrounding area. I bring more than 30 years of professional experience, and I work at your pace, explaining as I go so you can do it yourself next time. No jargon, no rushing and no selling you things you don't need. I can't give medical advice, but I can make sure your watch is set up so the numbers are there to show your doctor.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Have your watch, its charging cable and your phone handy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Meet Sophie

When you call or visit the website, you may be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer simple questions and book a time for you. If you'd rather talk to me, just tell her.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

An hour together can turn a confusing box into a watch you enjoy wearing, with the safety features ready and the confidence to handle the next hiccup yourself.

CHAPTER 28

Your Garmin Cheat-Sheet

Everything that matters, in one place. Keep this handy.

The essentials

What	How
The app	Garmin Connect (free, by Garmin) on iPhone or Android.
Pairing	Always from inside the Garmin Connect app: **Menu** > **Garmin Devices** > **Add Device**. Not from phone Bluetooth settings.
Emergency contacts	**Menu** > **Safety & Tracking** in the app. Up to three people.
Ask for help	Hold the main button (top button on Venu) until three vibrations, then let go.
Fall detection	On the watch: **Settings** > **Safety & Tracking** > **Fall Detection** (Venu 4 and others).
In an emergency	**Call 911.** Garmin alerts go to your contacts, not to 911.
Heart rate alerts	**Settings** > **Wrist Heart Rate** > **Abnormal Heart Rate Alerts**.
Updates	Automatic through the app, or garmin.com/express on a computer. Always free.
Real support	Type support.garmin.com yourself. Never call a number from an ad.
Connect+	Optional: $6.99/month or $69.99/year (as of November 2026). Core features stay free.

Write it down once

Item	Yours
Watch model	_____
Serial number	_____
Bought from / date	_____
Garmin account email	_____
Garmin Pay passcode hint	_____
Emergency contact 1	_____
Emergency contact 2	_____
Emergency contact 3	_____
Doctor's heart rate alert numbers	High _____ Low _____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Charge the watch for 15 minutes.
2. Check Bluetooth is on and the phone is close.
3. Open the Garmin Connect app and let it sync.
4. Update the Garmin Connect app.
5. Restart the phone, then restart the watch.
6. Remove the watch in the app, forget it in Bluetooth settings, and pair again from the app.
7. Sync and update with Garmin Express on a computer.
8. Contact Garmin through support.garmin.com, or call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

Remember

Your Garmin's health numbers are wellness estimates, not a diagnosis. Talk to your doctor about anything that worries you, and call 911 in an emergency.

FROM BILL

I'm here when you need me

$49 remote · $99 in your home. (330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book. Enjoy your walks.