BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Gmail

Google's email, explained in plain English
On your iPhone, Android phone, tablet or computer

Read, find, file and protect your email

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For personal Gmail accounts · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Gmail manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Each chapter tells you what a feature does *for you*, then gives slow, numbered steps. Gmail looks a little different on a phone and on a computer, so where the buttons differ, you'll find both. If a screen doesn't match exactly, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What Gmail is, how it connects to your Google Account, the three places you can use it, and a slow tour of the screen. Start here and the rest of the manual will make sense.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is reading this manual — this is for **you**. Maybe a grandchild set up Gmail on your new phone and left you to it. Maybe you've used Gmail for years but your inbox has grown into a mountain, or a message popped up saying your storage is full and you aren't sure what that means. Or maybe you just want to feel sure you'd spot a fake email before it fools you. Wherever you're starting from, you've come to the right place.

I'm Bill. With 30+ years of professional experience, I've helped folks feel at home with their technology, and email is the thing people ask me about more than almost anything else. That makes sense: it's where your bank statements land, where the family photos arrive, where your doctor's office sends reminders. I wrote this manual the way I'd explain it sitting beside you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, and with no fancy words left unexplained.

What this manual covers

- **The everyday basics** — reading, replying, finding an old message, and taking back an email you sent too quickly.
- **Keeping it tidy** — the inbox tabs, labels, and filters that sort mail for you.
- **Attachments and storage** — photos and files, Google Drive links, and what to do when Google says your storage is full, including honest prices for more space.
- **Staying safe** — spam, fake "phishing" emails, 2-Step Verification, passkeys, and setting up ways to get back in if you're ever locked out.
- **The new AI helpers** — what Google's Gemini features in Gmail do, which ones are free, and how to turn them off if you'd rather not use them.
- **Fixing problems** — locked out, hacked, missing mail, or mail that won't send.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this manual does for you

By the end, you'll find any email in seconds, keep your inbox calm without spending hours on it, send photos without fuss, fix a full-storage warning yourself, and recognize a scam email at a glance. Most of all, you'll feel in charge of your own email again.

The big promise: you can't break it

Here's the most important thing in the whole manual. **Looking around Gmail can't break it.** Opening menus, tapping tabs, and reading settings changes nothing until you choose to save. Even deleting a message isn't final right away — it sits in the Trash for 30 days, and you can bring it back (Chapter 8). The only real dangers in email come from other people — scammers — and a whole part of this manual is about spotting them.

And you're never stuck on your own. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question about email.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Gmail Is (and Your Google Account)

Gmail is Google's free email service. Your Gmail address ends in **@gmail.com** — something like *margaret.smith@gmail.com*. Anyone in the world with an email address can write to you there, and you can write back.

Gmail is part of your Google Account

When you made a Gmail address, you were really making a **Google Account** — one sign-in that unlocks a whole family of Google services. The same email and password open:

Service	What it holds for you
Gmail	Your email.
Google Photos	Backed-up photos and videos from your phone.
Google Drive	Online storage for documents and files.
Your Android phone	If you have one, your phone is signed in with this same account.
YouTube, Google Maps, Play Store	Your saved videos, places, and apps.

That's handy — one account to remember — but it also means two things worth knowing from the start. First, your Google Account's **storage space is shared** between Gmail, Photos and Drive (Part 3 explains it). Second, your Gmail password protects far more than email, so it deserves your best protection (Part 4).

GOOD TO KNOW

Personal accounts versus work or school accounts

This manual is written for **personal** Gmail accounts — the free ones ending in @gmail.com. If your email comes from an employer, a school, or a club that uses Google, it may look like Gmail but some settings are controlled by that organization's administrator. When a step here doesn't work on a work or school account, that's usually why, and the administrator is the right person to ask.

Is Gmail really free?

Yes. A Gmail account costs nothing, and every Google Account includes **15 GB** of free storage. You only pay if you *choose* to buy more storage or Google's AI extras through a plan called **Google One**. Chapter 15 lays out the current prices honestly so you can decide

whether you need one — many people never do.

HEADS UP

Nobody needs to charge you to "keep" your Gmail

Gmail never sends a bill to keep your account open. A message or phone call saying your Gmail will be closed unless you pay, or that you owe a "renewal fee," is a scam. The only real Gmail-related charge is a Google One plan that you signed up for yourself, and you can see it at any time at **one.google.com**.

CHAPTER 3

Three Ways to Use Gmail

Your Gmail lives on Google's computers, not on your device. That means you can reach the very same inbox from your phone, your tablet, or any computer — and a message you read on one shows as read on the others. There are three usual ways in.

Where	What it's like
The Gmail app on a phone or tablet	Google's free app for iPhone, iPad and Android. This is the best way to use Gmail on a phone: it has the inbox tabs, labels, search, Undo send, and the security prompts covered in this manual.
Gmail on a computer	Open any web browser (Chrome, Edge, Safari, Firefox) and go to **gmail.com**. Nothing to install. A few settings — like filters and the Undo send time — are only on the computer version.
Another mail app	You can add a Gmail account to the iPhone's own Mail app or to Outlook. It works, but Gmail's own features (tabs, labels, Manage subscriptions, Undo send) may be missing or look different. Bill's Email manual covers those apps.

Getting the Gmail app

1. **Android phone or tablet:** Gmail is almost always already installed — look for the colorful **M** icon. If it's missing, open the **Play Store** and search for **Gmail**.
2. **iPhone or iPad:** open the **App Store**, tap **Search**, and type **Gmail**. Choose the app made by **Google** (check the name under the app) and tap **Get**. The app is free.
3. Open the app and sign in with your Gmail address and password. On an Android phone you may already be signed in, because the phone uses the same Google Account.

HEADS UP

Only the real Gmail app

App stores sometimes show look-alike "email" apps near the top of the results, and some charge a subscription. The real one is called **Gmail**, is made by **Google LLC**, and is free. If an app asks you to pay to read your Gmail, it isn't Google's.

On a computer

1. Open your web browser.
2. In the address bar at the very top, type **gmail.com** and press **Enter**.
3. Sign in with your Gmail address and password (or your passkey — Chapter 18).

4. Tip: once you're in, bookmark the page so it's one click next time.

TIP

Signing out of a shared computer

On a library or hotel computer, always sign out when you're finished: click your **profile picture** or initial at the top right, then **Sign out**. On your own home computer you can stay signed in.

CHAPTER 4

Finding Your Way Around the Screen

Gmail packs a lot onto one screen, but you only need a handful of pieces. Here they are on a phone and on a computer.

In the Gmail app (phone or tablet)

What you see	What it does
Menu (three lines, top left)	Opens the list of everything: Primary and the other inbox tabs, Starred, Sent, Drafts, All mail, Spam, Trash, your labels, Manage subscriptions, and Settings.
Search bar (top)	Type a name or word to find any email (Chapter 9).
Your profile picture (top right)	Shows which account you're in, and lets you switch accounts or manage your Google Account.
Compose (bottom right)	The button for writing a new email.
The message list	Newest at the top. Bold means unread. Tap one to open it.

On a computer (gmail.com)

What you see	What it does
Compose (top left)	Starts a new email in a small window.
The left-hand list	Inbox, Starred, Snoozed, Sent, Drafts, then **More** to show Spam, Trash, All mail, Scheduled and Manage subscriptions. Your labels are listed here too.
Search box (top)	Find anything. The little sliders icon at its right end is **Show search options** (used for filters, Chapter 10).
Settings (gear, top right)	Opens Quick settings. **See all settings** at the top of that panel opens every setting.
Tabs across the inbox	Primary, Promotions, Social, Updates — if your inbox uses them (Chapter 7).

TIP

Make it bigger on a computer

If the text looks tiny, press and hold **Ctrl** (or **Command** on a Mac) and tap the **+** key a few times. Everything grows. Hold the same key and tap **0** (zero) to go back to normal. In Quick settings you can also choose a roomier **Density**.

Words you'll keep seeing

Word	Plain meaning
Inbox	Where new mail arrives.
Archive	Takes a message out of the inbox but keeps it, safe, in **All mail**. Not deleted.
Trash	Deleted mail waits here 30 days before it's gone for good.
Spam	Where Gmail puts junk and suspicious mail.
Label	Gmail's version of a folder — a tag you can put on messages (Chapter 8).
Conversation	An email and all its replies, grouped together as one item.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Archive is your best friend

Most people's inboxes get overwhelming because they're afraid to remove anything. Archiving solves that: the message leaves your inbox, but search still finds it in a second, forever. Read it, archive it, and your inbox only holds what still needs you.

PART 2

Everyday Gmail

Reading and writing, taking back an email you sent too fast, the inbox tabs, labels, search, and filters that sort your mail while you sleep.

CHAPTER 5

Reading, Replying & Writing

This is the heart of email, and Gmail keeps it simple. Bill's Email manual goes deeper into email manners, CC and BCC; here's the Gmail way of doing the essentials.

Reading a message

Tap or click any message in the list to open it. Gmail groups a message and its replies into one **conversation**, so a back-and-forth with your sister shows as a single item, with the newest reply at the bottom. Earlier replies may be folded up; tap them to expand.

Writing a new email

1. Tap **Compose** (bottom right on a phone, top left on a computer).
2. In the **To** box, start typing the person's name or address. Gmail suggests people you've written to before — tap the right one.
3. Add a short **Subject** that says what it's about: "Thanksgiving plans" is better than "Hi."
4. Write your message in the big space below.
5. Tap **Send** — the paper-airplane at the top right on a phone, or the blue **Send** button at the bottom on a computer.

Replying and forwarding

Button	What it does
Reply	Answers just the person who wrote to you.
Reply all	Answers everyone on the message. Use it with care — a whole group sees your answer.
Forward	Sends a copy of the message to someone new, so you can share it.

On a phone, these buttons are at the bottom of the open message. On a computer, they're at the bottom of the message, and there's a quick **Reply** arrow at the top right.

TIP

Stars mark what matters

Tap the little **star** outline next to a message to star it. Starred messages collect under **Starred** in the menu, so you can find a recipe, a confirmation number, or an important letter again in one tap.

HEADS UP

Check the "To" line before you send

Gmail's name suggestions are handy, but it's easy to tap the wrong "John." Before you send anything private — medical details, money matters — glance at the To line and make sure it's the right person.

CHAPTER 6

Undo Send & Schedule Send

Everyone has hit Send and then thought, "Oh no." Gmail gives you a few seconds to take it back. It can also hold an email and send it later — for a birthday morning, say.

Taking back an email you just sent

1. Right after you tap **Send**, watch the bottom of the screen. A small bar appears saying **Sent** (on a phone) or **Message sent** (on a computer), with **Undo** beside it.
2. Tap or click **Undo**. The email comes back to you as a draft, unsent.
3. Fix it, then send again — or delete the draft if you've changed your mind.

Giving yourself more time (computer)

Gmail lets you choose how long the Undo button stays: 5, 10, 20 or 30 seconds. Many people pick 30.

1. On a computer, go to **gmail.com**.
2. Click **Settings** (the gear) at the top right, then **See all settings**.
3. On the **General** tab, find **Undo Send** and choose a **Send cancellation period** of **30** seconds.
4. Scroll to the bottom and click **Save changes**.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Undo only works for a few seconds**
>
> Once the Undo bar disappears, the email is truly gone to the other person and can't be called back. Undo works because Gmail quietly waits before sending — it doesn't reach into someone else's inbox.

Sending an email later

1. Write your email as usual.
2. **On a computer:** click the small **down arrow** next to **Send**, then **Schedule send**. **On a phone:** tap **More** (the three dots at the top right), then **Schedule send**.
3. Pick one of the suggested times, or choose your own date and time.
4. The email waits in **Scheduled** (in the menu). To change your mind, open it there and choose **Cancel send** — it becomes a draft again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Remember birthdays without remembering

Write the birthday email when you think of it, schedule it for 8 a.m. on the day, and you're done. Scheduled emails go out on their own, even if your phone is off.

CHAPTER 7

The Inbox Tabs (Primary, Promotions & More)

If your inbox has tabs called **Primary**, **Promotions** and **Social**, Gmail is sorting your mail for you. This trips people up: they think mail is "missing" when it's simply on another tab.

What each tab holds

Tab	What Gmail puts there
Primary	Mail from people you know, and anything that doesn't fit the other tabs. This is your "real" mail.
Promotions	Deals, offers, store newsletters and sales.
Social	Messages from social networks and photo-sharing sites.
Updates	Automatic confirmations, notifications, statements, receipts and reminders.
Forums	Online groups, discussion boards and mailing lists.

HEADS UP

Notifications only come for Primary

Google notes that when you turn on new-mail notifications, you only get them for messages in the **Primary** tab. So a pharmacy reminder that lands in Updates won't buzz your phone. If you rely on certain senders, move their mail to Primary (below) or turn off the tabs you don't want.

Moving a message to the right tab

When Gmail guesses wrong, show it the right answer. It learns over time.

- **On a computer:** drag the message and drop it onto the correct tab at the top of the inbox.
- **On Android:** open the message, tap **More** (three dots), then **Move to**, and choose the tab.

Choosing which tabs you see

You can't make up your own tabs, but you can switch any of them off. Switched-off tabs simply flow back into Primary.

1. **On a computer:** click **Settings** (gear). Under **Inbox type**, make sure **Default** is chosen and click **Customize**. Tick only the tabs you want and click **Save**.

2. **On Android:** tap **Menu** (three lines), then **Settings**, then your account, then **Inbox type** and **Default Inbox**. Tap **Inbox categories** and tick or untick tabs.
3. **On iPhone or iPad:** tap **Menu**, then **Settings**, then **Inbox type** or **Inbox categories**, and choose. The wording can vary slightly by app version.

TIP

Want just one simple inbox?

If tabs feel like one more thing to check, turn off everything except Primary. You'll have one list again, with the newest mail on top. Many of the folks I help prefer it that way, and there's no wrong answer.

CHAPTER 8

Labels, Archive & the Trash

Gmail doesn't use folders the old way. It uses **labels** — think of colored sticky tags. A message can wear more than one label ("Family" *and* "Taxes"), and only you can see your labels.

Making a label

1. **On a phone:** tap **Menu** (three lines), scroll down, and under the labels list tap **Create label** (or **Create new**). Type a name and tap **Save** or **Done**.
2. **On a computer:** in the left-hand list, scroll down to **Labels** and click the **+** beside it. Type a name and click **Create**.

Putting a label on a message

- **On a phone:** open the message, tap **More** (three dots), then **Change labels** or **Label**, tick the label, and tap **OK**.
- **On a computer:** open the message and click the **Labels** icon (a tag shape) at the top, then tick the label.
- To see everything with that label, tap the label's name in the menu.

Archive versus delete

Choice	What really happens
Archive	Takes the message out of your inbox but keeps it in **All mail**, forever, and search still finds it. Use this for anything you might want again.
Delete	Moves it to **Trash**. It stays there for 30 days, then Gmail removes it permanently.
Delete forever	From inside Trash: gone right away, and it can't be brought back.

GOOD TO KNOW

Deleting a message removes it from every label

Because labels are tags rather than separate folders, deleting a message takes it out of every label and your inbox at once. Archiving, by contrast, leaves its labels in place.

Getting a message back from the Trash

1. Open the menu (phone) or click **More** in the left-hand list (computer), then **Trash**.

2. Tick the box next to the message (on a phone, tap and hold it).
3. Choose **Move to** and pick **Inbox** or a label.

HEADS UP

30 days is the limit

Google is clear: once a message has been in the Trash more than 30 days, or you've chosen **Delete forever**, it can't be recovered. Deleted drafts don't go to the Trash at all. If something important is missing, check the Trash sooner rather than later.

CHAPTER 9

Finding Any Email with Search

Gmail is made by the company behind Google Search, and it shows. You don't need to file anything to find it again — you just search. This is the single most useful skill in Gmail.

A simple search

1. Tap or click the **search bar** at the top.
2. Type something you remember: a person's name, a store, a word from the subject — "Dr. Patel," "furnace," "Amazon."
3. Press **Search** (or **Enter**). Gmail shows every match, newest first, from your whole mailbox — including archived mail.

Search shortcuts worth knowing

Type these right into the search bar. Leave no space after the colon.

Type this	To find
from:	Mail from one person. **from:susan**
to:	Mail you sent to someone. **to:dave**
subject:	A word in the subject line. **subject:reunion**
has:attachment	Only emails with something attached.
filename:pdf	Emails with a PDF attached (try **filename:jpg** for photos).
older_than: / newer_than:	By age. **older_than:2y** is older than two years; **newer_than:7d** is the last week.
larger:	By size. **larger:10M** finds emails over 10 MB — great for freeing space.
is:unread / is:starred	Unread mail, or starred mail.
in:anywhere	Search everywhere, including Spam and Trash.
"exact words"	Quotation marks find that exact phrase.

You can combine them: **from:susan has:attachment** finds every email from Susan with something attached.

TIP

Let Gmail build the search for you

On a computer, click the small **Show search options** icon (sliders) at the right end of the search box. A form appears with boxes for From, To, Subject, "Has the words," size, and date — no shortcuts to remember. Fill in what you know and click **Search**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Can't find it? Try All mail and in:anywhere

Search already looks through archived mail. If a message still won't turn up, add **in:anywhere** to include Spam and Trash — a message that went to Spam by mistake will show up this way.

CHAPTER 10

Filters: Let Gmail Sort Mail for You

A **filter** is an instruction Gmail follows automatically every time a new email arrives: "Anything from the church office, put the label Church on it." "Anything from that store, skip the inbox." Set it once and it works forever.

GOOD TO KNOW

Filters are made on a computer

Google's instructions for creating filters are for Gmail on a computer. Once a filter is made, it works everywhere — on your phone too — because it runs on Google's side. If you don't have a computer, a family member's will do: just sign in to your account at gmail.com, set it up, and sign out.

Making a filter, step by step

1. Go to **gmail.com** on a computer.
2. In the search box at the top, click **Show search options** (the sliders icon at the right end).
3. Fill in what to look for — for example, put the sender's address in **From**.
4. Optional: click **Search** first to check the right emails come up, then open the search options again.
5. At the bottom of the search window, click **Create filter**.
6. Tick what you'd like done — for example **Apply the label**, **Skip the Inbox (Archive it)**, **Star it**, **Never send it to Spam**, or **Categorize as** Primary.
7. Click **Create filter**.

A shortcut from an existing email

1. Tick the box next to an email from that sender.
2. Click **More** (three dots) at the top, then **Filter messages like these**.
3. Gmail fills in the sender for you. Continue from step 5 above.

Filters that help most

Goal	Search for	Then choose
Never miss the doctor's office	From: their address	Never send it to Spam, Categorize as Primary, Star it

Goal	Search for	Then choose
File family mail together	From: each family address (use OR)	Apply the label Family
Keep a newsletter out of the way	From: the newsletter	Skip the Inbox, Apply the label Reading
Gather bills	Has the words: statement OR invoice	Apply the label Bills

Changing or removing a filter

1. Click **Settings** (gear), then **See all settings**.
2. Click the **Filters and Blocked Addresses** tab.
3. Find the filter and click **edit** or **delete**.

HEADS UP

Be careful with "Delete it" and "Forward it"

A filter set to **Delete it** quietly throws mail away, and one set to forward sends copies of your mail to another address. Scammers who break into an account sometimes add a secret forwarding filter. Peek at your Filters list now and then; if you see one you didn't make, delete it and read Chapter 23.

PART 3

Attachments, Drive & Storage

Opening and sending photos and files, Google Drive links for big ones, and what "storage full" really means — with step-by-step clean-up and honest prices for more room.

CHAPTER 11

Opening & Saving Attachments

An **attachment** is a file that rides along with an email — a photo, a PDF of a bill, a document. In Gmail you'll see attachments as small boxes, or thumbnails, at the bottom of the message, often with a paperclip in the message list.

Looking at an attachment

1. Open the email.
2. Scroll to the bottom and tap or click the attachment's box.
3. It opens in a preview. Photos, PDFs and most documents show right inside Gmail, without anything extra to install.
4. To close the preview, tap the **X** or the back arrow.

Keeping a copy

Choice	How
Save to your device	In the preview, look for the **Download** arrow. On a computer it goes to your Downloads folder. On an iPhone, tap the **Share** button and choose **Save Image** or **Save to Files**.
Save to Google Drive	Look for the **Add to Drive** button (the Drive triangle) in the preview. The file is kept online in your Drive, where any of your devices can open it.
Save a photo to Google Photos	On some attachments you'll see a Photos option. Either way, the photo is kept with your account.

HEADS UP

Look before you open

Attachments are one of the main ways scammers spread trouble. Gmail scans attachments and blocks dangerous program files, but be cautious anyway: an unexpected attachment from someone you don't know — an "invoice," a "shipping label," a "voicemail" — is a red flag. If in doubt, don't open it, and check with the sender by phone. Chapter 17 has more.

TIP

Find every photo anyone ever sent you

Type **has:attachment filename:jpg** in the search bar. Gmail lists every email with a photo attached. Add **from:** and a name to narrow it to one person — perfect for finding the grandkids' pictures.

CHAPTER 12

Sending Photos, Files & Google Drive Links

Sending a picture or a document is easy. The one thing to know is the size limit, and what Gmail does when you go over it.

Attaching a file or photo

1. Start a new email with **Compose**, or open a reply.
2. Tap the **paperclip** (on a phone it's at the top; on a computer, click **Attach** at the bottom).
3. Choose the photo or file. On a phone you'll see your recent photos; on a computer, a window opens so you can pick a file and click **Open**.
4. Wait until the attachment finishes uploading (the bar fills), then send.

> **TIP**
> **Drag and drop on a computer**
> On a computer you can also drag a photo straight from your desktop or a folder and drop it into the message window.

The 25 MB limit

For personal Gmail accounts, attachments on one email can total up to **25 MB**. That's room for several phone photos or a long PDF, but not most videos.

When your attachments add up to more than that, Gmail doesn't refuse. Instead, it automatically uploads the file to your **Google Drive** and puts a **Drive link** in the email. The person you send it to clicks the link to see or download the file.

Sending from Google Drive on purpose

1. On a computer, click **Compose**.
2. At the bottom of the message, click **Insert files using Drive** (the Drive triangle).
3. Choose the files from your Drive.
4. At the bottom, pick **Drive link** (works for any file) or **Attachment** (for ordinary files, not Google Docs or Sheets).
5. Click **Insert**.

6. If the people you're sending to don't have permission to open it, Gmail asks before sending. Choose to share it only with the email recipients unless you mean to share it more widely.

GOOD TO KNOW

Drive links use your storage, not theirs

A file you share by Drive link stays in *your* Drive and counts toward *your* storage. Files other people share with you count toward theirs, not yours. If you share a big video and later delete it from Drive, the link stops working.

HEADS UP

"Shared a file with you" emails can be fake

A very common scam email pretends that someone has shared a Drive document with you, and the link leads to a fake Google sign-in page. A real Drive share only ever opens Google's own pages, and you shouldn't be asked for your password again if you're already signed in. When an unexpected "shared file" arrives, open Drive yourself and look under **Shared with me** instead of clicking.

CHAPTER 13

"Storage Full" — the 15 GB Explained

Sooner or later, many people see a warning that their Google storage is almost full, or full. It's alarming, but it's simple once you see how it works.

One bucket, three faucets

Every Google Account includes **15 GB** of free storage. That 15 GB is **shared** between three things:

Uses your 15 GB	What counts
Gmail	Every email and attachment you keep — including what's sitting in Spam and Trash.
Google Photos	Photos and videos your phone backs up (Bill's Google Photos manual covers this).
Google Drive	Files you store there, including big files Gmail sent as Drive links.

So your Gmail might be small, but if your phone has been backing up years of photos, the shared bucket fills up anyway — and the warning shows in Gmail.

What happens when you're full

According to Google, when you go over your storage limit:

- You can still sign in to your account.
- **Your ability to send and receive email can be affected** — this is the part that matters most.
- New photos and videos stop backing up to Google Photos.
- You can't create new Google Docs, Sheets or other files.

HEADS UP

Two years over the limit can mean deletion

Google's policy says that if you stay over your storage limit for **2 years or longer**, the content in your account — Gmail, Photos and Drive — may be removed. Google promises to warn you by email or notification at least 3 months before, and gives you a chance to free space, buy more, or download your things. Don't ignore those warnings.

Checking how full you are

1. On a computer, go to **one.google.com** and click **Storage**. (Gmail on a computer may also show the amount used at the very bottom of your inbox.)
2. On a phone, open the free **Google One** app if you have it, or type **one.google.com** into your phone's web browser.
3. The Storage page shows a colored bar: how much Gmail, Photos and Drive are each using. Now you know where to clean.

SCAM ALERT

"Your storage is full" emails are a favorite scam

Scammers send emails that look like Google, warning that your photos will be deleted today unless you "upgrade now" through their link, often asking for card details. Real storage warnings come from Google, and you never need a link to act on them: go to **one.google.com** yourself by typing it in. If it says you're fine, the email was fake. Report it as phishing (Chapter 17).

CHAPTER 14

Freeing Up Space, Step by Step

Before you pay for anything, try a clean-up. Many people free up gigabytes in half an hour, mostly by removing a handful of very large old emails.

1. Use Google's free storage manager

1. On a computer, go to **one.google.com** and click **Storage**.
2. Select **Clean up space**.
3. Under **Clean up suggested items** or **Clean up by service**, choose a category — for example **Gmail**, or large items.
4. Review the list, tick what you no longer need, and click **Delete**.
5. Read the confirmation, tick the box, and click **Permanently delete**.

> HEADS UP
> **Clean-up deletions are permanent**
> Items you remove from Gmail and Drive through the storage manager are deleted permanently, not sent to the Trash. Go slowly and download anything precious first. (Photos removed there go to the Photos trash instead.)

2. Find the big emails yourself

In Gmail's search bar, try these one at a time:

Search for	What you'll find
larger:10M	Every email bigger than 10 MB — usually videos and big photo batches.
has:attachment larger:5M older_than:2y	Big emails with attachments from more than two years ago.
category:promotions older_than:1y	Old store emails — small each, but there are often thousands.

1. Look through the results and save any photos you want to keep (Chapter 11).
2. Tick the emails you don't need and tap **Delete**.

3. Empty the Trash and Spam

Deleted mail still takes up space until it leaves the Trash. Go to **Trash** and choose **Empty Trash now**, then go to **Spam** and choose **Delete all spam messages now**. Only do this

once you're sure nothing in there is needed.

GOOD TO KNOW

Give it a couple of days

Google says that after you delete a lot at once, it can take **48 to 72 hours** for your storage number to update. Don't panic if the bar doesn't move right away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A lighter mailbox is easier to live with

A clean-up doesn't just save money. Fewer old promotions means search results are tidier and your phone has less to sync. Many people find they never need to buy storage at all.

CHAPTER 15

Buying More Room: Google One Plans & Prices

If you've cleaned up and still need space — common if your phone backs up a lot of photos — you can buy more through **Google One**, Google's storage and subscription plan. The extra space is shared across Gmail, Photos and Drive, just like the free 15 GB.

U.S. prices on one.google.com (November 2026)

Plan	Total storage	Price	In plain terms
Free	15 GB	No charge	What every Google Account has.
Basic	100 GB	$1.99/month	Plenty for most people's email and a modest photo library.
Standard	200 GB	$2.99/month	Room for a larger photo collection.
Google AI Plus	400 GB	$4.99/month	More storage plus extra Gemini AI features.
Google AI Pro	5 TB	$19.99/month	Far more storage plus more AI. More than most homes need.
Google AI Ultra	20 TB and up	From just under $100/month	For heavy professional use.

Google also offers yearly billing at a discount, and the plans page sometimes shows special offers. Prices change from time to time and can differ by country, so always check **one.google.com** before you buy.

TIP

Share one plan with family

Google One plans can be shared with up to five other people in your Google family group, at no extra cost. Each person keeps their own private space — nobody sees anyone else's email or photos. One plan for a couple or a whole household can be far cheaper than several.

How to buy, if you decide to

1. Go to **one.google.com** on a computer, or open the **Google One** app on your phone.
2. Look at the plans and pick the smallest that fits. For most people, 100 GB is a lot of email.
3. Follow the steps to pay. On an iPhone, buying inside the app may bill through your Apple Account; on Android, through Google Play.

4. The new space shows up shortly. To cancel later, return to the same place and manage your membership.

FROM BILL

My honest advice

Don't let a warning rush you into the biggest plan. Clean up first (Chapter 14). If you still need room, the smallest plan is usually enough, and you can move up later. You don't need an AI plan to store more email — the storage-only plans do that. I'm glad to look at your storage with you and suggest what fits; it's part of a $49 remote · $99 in your home visit.

HEADS UP

Pay Google directly — never a stranger

Google One is bought only through Google (one.google.com, the Google One app, Google Play, or the Apple App Store). Nobody legitimate will ask you to buy Google storage with gift cards, a wire transfer, or over the phone. That's always a scam.

PART 4

Staying Safe

Junk mail and how to stop it, fake "phishing" emails and how to spot them, and the locks that keep your account yours: 2-Step Verification, passkeys, and recovery options.

CHAPTER 16

Spam, Blocking & Unsubscribing

Gmail already catches most junk before you ever see it and tucks it into the **Spam** folder. For the rest, you have three tools. Picking the right one makes a real difference.

Tool	When to use it
Unsubscribe	For newsletters and store mail you once signed up for and no longer want. Tells the sender to stop.
Report spam	For junk you never asked for. Moves it to Spam and teaches Gmail to catch similar mail.
Block	For one sender you never want to hear from. Their future emails go straight to Spam.
Report phishing	For fake emails trying to trick you into giving information (Chapter 17).

Unsubscribing from one email

1. Open an email from the store or newsletter.
2. Next to the sender's name at the top, tap or click **Unsubscribe**.
3. In the box that appears, choose **Unsubscribe**. Some senders show **Go to website** instead, meaning you finish on their site.
4. Google notes it can take a few days for the emails to stop.

Manage subscriptions: everything in one list

Gmail now has a page that lists every company sending you regular mail, with how many emails each sent recently, and an Unsubscribe button beside each. Google says it's rolling out gradually, so you may not see it yet.

1. **On a phone:** tap **Menu** (three lines), then **Manage subscriptions**.
2. **On a computer:** in the left-hand list, click **More**, then **Manage subscriptions**.
3. Beside any sender you're done with, tap **Unsubscribe**. Tap a sender's name first if you'd like to see their emails.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Ten minutes to a quieter inbox

Going down the Manage subscriptions list once, unsubscribing from everything you don't read, is the single fastest way to shrink the daily flood. Gmail unsubscribes you from all of that sender's lists at once.

HEADS UP

Use Gmail's Unsubscribe button, not links in sketchy mail

For real stores and newsletters, Gmail's own Unsubscribe button next to the sender's name is the safe way. Don't click "unsubscribe" links inside obvious junk or scam emails — that can tell the scammer your address is active. For junk you never signed up for, use **Report spam** instead. Bill's Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual explains this trap.

Reporting spam

1. **On a computer:** tick the email (or several) and click **Report spam** (a stop-sign shape) at the top.
2. **On a phone:** open the email, tap **More** (three dots), and tap **Report spam**.

Blocking a sender

1. Open an email from the sender.
2. Next to **Reply**, tap or click **More** (three dots).
3. Choose **Block "[sender's name]"**. Their future mail goes to Spam.
4. To unblock later, open one of their emails and choose **Unblock**, or on a computer go to **Settings**, **See all settings**, **Filters and Blocked Addresses**.

TIP

Real mail in Spam? Rescue it

Check the Spam folder once in a while. If a real email landed there, open it and choose **Not spam** (or **Report not spam**). Google says adding the sender to your contacts also helps stop it happening again. Gmail empties Spam automatically after 30 days.

CHAPTER 17

Phishing: Spotting Fake Emails

Phishing (said like "fishing") is an email that pretends to be from someone you trust — your bank, Google, Amazon, the post office, even a family member — to trick you into clicking a link, typing your password, or sending money. It's the most common way email accounts get broken into.

The warning signs

- **Urgency or fear:** "Your account will be closed in 24 hours," "Suspicious charge — act now."
- **A request for a password, code, or card number.** Google says plainly: never respond to requests for private information, and don't enter your password after clicking a link in a message.
- **A sender address that doesn't match.** Tap or click the sender's name to see the full address. "Google Support" writing from a random address is a fake.
- **Too good to be true:** prizes, refunds you didn't expect, "you've been selected."
- **Unexpected attachments or "shared documents."**
- **A phone number to call** about a charge or a problem — the classic fake "invoice" scam.

SCAM ALERT

The fake "Google security alert"

A very common one: an email that looks exactly like Google, saying someone signed in to your account and you must "secure it now" with a link. Real Google alerts exist — but you never need the link. Instead, go to **myaccount.google.com** yourself and open **Security & sign-in**, or check **Recent security activity**. If there's nothing there, the email was fake.

SCAM ALERT

The "invoice" with a phone number

Another favorite: a receipt for a computer, antivirus renewal, or crypto purchase you never made, with a number to call to "cancel." There's no charge — the call connects you to a scammer who wants remote access to your computer or your bank details. Never call a number from an unexpected email. Look up the company's real number yourself.

Gmail's warning banners

When Gmail suspects an email is dangerous, it may move it to Spam or show a colored warning banner at the top — something like "Be careful with this message." Take those warnings seriously. Google's own first tip for avoiding phishing is to pay attention to them.

Reporting phishing

1. On a computer, open the suspicious message.
2. Next to **Reply**, click **More** (three dots).
3. Click **Report phishing**. The message goes to Spam, and Google uses it to protect other people too.
4. On a phone, if you don't see Report phishing, use **Report spam** — it still moves the message out of your inbox.

If you already clicked or typed your password

1. Don't panic, and don't wait. Go to **myaccount.google.com** (type it yourself) and change your password right away.
2. Turn on 2-Step Verification if it isn't on (Chapter 18).
3. If you gave card or bank details, call your bank using the number on the back of your card.
4. Follow Chapter 23 to check for anything a scammer may have changed.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **When in doubt, ask before you click**
>
> I'd always rather get a call about an email that turns out to be real than a call after money is gone. If a message makes your stomach drop, stop, don't click anything, and call someone you trust — a family member, or me at (330) 200-8042. Bill's Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual covers many more of these tricks.

CHAPTER 18

2-Step Verification & Passkeys

A password alone is like a single lock on your front door. **2-Step Verification** adds a second lock: even if a scammer learns your password, they can't get in without the second step, which only you have. Google calls it **2-Step Verification**; you may hear it called two-factor authentication.

Turning on 2-Step Verification

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com** (on a phone, you can also tap your profile picture in Gmail and choose **Manage your Google Account**).
2. Tap **Security & sign-in**.
3. Under **How you sign in to Google**, select **Turn on 2-Step Verification**.
4. Follow the steps on the screen. Google will help you set up a second step, usually your phone.

The second step: what you'll see

Method	How it works
Google prompts (recommended)	A message pops up on your phone: "Trying to sign in?" with the place and device. Tap **Yes** if it's you, **No** if it isn't. Works on Android phones signed in to your account, and on iPhones with the Gmail, Google, YouTube or Google Photos app signed in.
Text message or call	Google sends a code to your phone number to type in.
Authenticator app	An app such as Google Authenticator shows a changing code.
Backup codes	A printed list of one-time codes for emergencies. Keep it somewhere safe at home.

TIP

Tick "Don't ask again" on your own devices

When you sign in on your own phone or home computer, you can tick **Don't ask again on this device**, so you aren't asked for the second step every time. Only do this on devices you own and don't share.

SCAM ALERT

Never read a code to anyone

Google will never phone you and ask for a verification code. If someone calls, texts or emails asking you to read back a code you just received, it's a scammer trying to get into your account. Hang up. And if a Google prompt appears that you didn't ask for, tap **No**.

Passkeys: signing in with your face or fingerprint

A **passkey** lets you sign in to your Google Account the same way you unlock your phone — your fingerprint, face, or screen-lock PIN — instead of typing a password. Google says passkeys can't be copied, written down, or handed to someone else, which makes them much stronger against phishing. Your fingerprint or face never leaves your device.

1. Make sure your phone has a screen lock (PIN, fingerprint or face).
2. Go to **myaccount.google.com/signinoptions/passkeys** and sign in if asked.
3. Choose to create a passkey and follow the prompts. On an iPhone, Google may ask you to turn on iCloud Keychain.
4. Next time you sign in to Google, you'll be offered the passkey — just unlock with your face, fingerprint or PIN.

GOOD TO KNOW

What you need for a passkey

Google lists phones with Android 9 or iOS 16 or later, and computers with Windows 10, macOS Ventura, or ChromeOS 109 or later, using an up-to-date browser. Signing in with a passkey skips the second step, because it already proves you have your device.

HEADS UP

Only on devices you own

Google warns that anyone who can unlock a device with your passkey on it can get into your Google Account. So create passkeys only on your own phone, tablet or computer — never on a shared or borrowed one. You can still use your password if you prefer: under **Security & sign-in**, turn off **Skip password when possible**.

Bill's Securing Your Accounts and Passwords and Password Managers manuals go further into strong passwords and passkeys across all your accounts.

CHAPTER 19

Recovery Options: Your Way Back In

The best time to plan for getting locked out is now, while you can still get in. Google uses **recovery options** to confirm it's really you if you forget your password or lose your phone. Five minutes here can save you weeks of frustration.

The three to set up

Option	What it does
Recovery phone number	Your mobile number. Google can text a code to it to prove it's you.
Recovery email	A different email address — a spouse's, or another of yours. It also receives Google's security alerts.
Recovery contacts	Newer: up to 10 trusted people with Google Accounts who can vouch for you if you're locked out.

Checking your recovery phone and email

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com** and tap **Security & sign-in**.
2. Under **How you sign in to Google**, check **Recovery phone** and **Recovery email**.
3. Make sure both are current. If you changed phone numbers years ago, fix it now.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **Changes can take a week to count**
> Google notes that after you change recovery information it may take up to 7 days to take effect for account recovery. Another reason to do it today, not on the day you need it.

Adding a recovery contact

A **recovery contact** is a family member or close friend who can help you back in. If you're ever locked out, Google gives you a number; you tell your contact the number, and they pick the matching one on their phone. Your contact does *not* see your email or get your security alerts.

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com** and tap **Security & sign-in**.
2. Under **How you sign in to Google**, tap **Recovery contacts**. Sign in again if asked.
3. Tap **Add recovery contact** and type the person's email address. Check it carefully.
4. Tap **Send request**. They have 7 days to accept.

5. After they accept, there's another 7-day wait before they can be used for recovery.

TIP

Choose someone who answers the phone

Google says your recovery contact should be someone you know well, and who can respond within **15 minutes** — the number you give them expires after that. A grown child or a close neighbor who keeps their phone handy is ideal. You can't add one once you're already locked out.

HEADS UP

Decline requests from strangers

If you get an email asking you to be a recovery contact for someone you don't know, Google says to ignore or decline it.

The Security Checkup

Google offers a free review of your account's security that walks you through everything above, plus which devices are signed in. Go to **myaccount.google.com/security-checkup** and follow the suggestions. Doing it twice a year is a good habit.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind for you and your family

With a current phone number, a recovery email, and a trusted recovery contact, being locked out stops being a disaster and becomes a five-minute fix. It's one of the kindest things you can set up for your future self.

PART 5

Gemini & What's New

Google's AI helpers inside Gmail — what they do, which are free, and how to switch them off — plus recent changes: a new Gmail address, more than one account, and features Google is retiring.

CHAPTER 20

Gemini in Gmail: The AI Helpers

Gemini is the name of Google's artificial-intelligence assistant. In 2026 Google built more of it into Gmail. You don't have to use any of it — Gmail works exactly as before if you ignore it — but some of it is genuinely handy. Here it is as Google describes it, with costs.

What's free and what costs

Feature	What Google says it does	Cost (U.S.)
AI Overview summaries	A short summary at the top of a long email thread, pulling out the key points and replies.	Free
Help me write	Drafts a new email from a short description, or polishes what you wrote ("make it friendlier," "shorten").	Free for personal accounts in the U.S., in supported languages
Suggested Replies	Offers ready-made one-tap replies that fit the conversation.	Free
Ask your inbox	Type a question in search ("Who was the plumber who quoted the bathroom?") and get an AI answer from your emails.	Paid Google AI plan
Proofread	Deeper grammar, tone and style checking before you send.	Paid Google AI plan
AI Inbox	A briefing that pulls to-dos and important mail to the top.	Paid Google AI plan

Google announced the free features in January 2026 for U.S. users in English, rolling out over time, so you may not see every one yet. Which paid plan includes which extra changes from time to time; Google lists it on **one.google.com**. Plans with Gemini start at Google AI Plus, $4.99 a month (Chapter 15).

Trying a summary

1. Open a long email conversation.
2. At the top of the thread, tap **Summarize this email** (if your Gmail offers it).
3. Read the short overview. Tap **Minimize** to hide it.

Trying Help me write

1. Tap **Compose** (or open a reply).
2. Look for the **Help me write** button or prompt bar.
3. Type what you want in plain words: "Thank my neighbor for shoveling the driveway."

4. Tap **Create**. Read the draft carefully, change anything you like, then send it yourself.

HEADS UP

AI can get things wrong — you're still the author

Google's own help pages warn that Gemini may suggest inaccurate information, and that you shouldn't rely on it for medical, legal or financial advice. Always read an AI draft or summary before you act on it, and never let it send anything you haven't checked. Google also says Help me write may use details from your other emails and Drive files to personalize drafts.

Turning the AI features off

If you'd rather not have them, Google ties these features to settings called **smart features**.

1. **On a computer:** click **Settings** (gear), then **See all settings**. On the **General** tab, find **Google Workspace smart features** and click **Manage Workspace smart feature settings**. Turn off **Smart features in Google Workspace** and save.
2. **On Android:** tap **Menu**, **Settings**, your account, then **Google Workspace smart features**, and untick the box.
3. The **General** tab also has **Smart features in Gmail, Chat, and Meet** — switching it off turns off other conveniences too, like summary cards and Smart Compose.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turning off is all or nothing

Google says that turning off smart features also turns off other AI-assisted tools, such as writing help and proofreading, across Gmail and its other apps. Your email itself isn't affected.

SCAM ALERT

Gemini never asks for your password

Scammers love whatever is new, so be wary of any email dressed up as a "Gemini security alert" or an "AI account upgrade." Gemini lives inside Gmail itself; it doesn't email you asking you to sign in, call a number, or pay. Treat those emails like any other phishing (Chapter 17).

CHAPTER 21

Changing Your Gmail Address

For years, the one thing you couldn't change in Gmail was the address itself. That changed in 2026: Google now lets many people swap their @gmail.com address for a new @gmail.com address *without* starting a new account or losing any mail.

What happens when you change it

- Your old address becomes an **alternate** address on the same account.
- You keep receiving email sent to **both** the old and new addresses, in the same inbox.
- All your emails, photos and files stay exactly where they are.
- You can sign in with either address.
- You can switch back to the old one later, but you can't make another new @gmail.com address for 12 months, and you can't delete the new one.

Checking whether you can

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com/google-account-email** and sign in if asked.
2. Under **Google Account email**, look for **Change Google Account email**.
3. If it isn't there, your account can't change yet — Google is rolling it out gradually.
4. If it is, read Google's list of possible issues (Chromebooks, "Sign in with Google" on other sites), then enter the new name you'd like and follow the steps.

FROM BILL

Think it over first

A new address is nice if your old one was awkward, but it means updating your bank, doctor, pharmacy and family. Since old mail keeps arriving, there's no rush to tell everyone at once. If you'd like a hand working through the change and the list of places to update, that's an easy remote visit.

HEADS UP

No one will email you to "change your address now"

Google doesn't require anyone to change their address. An email urging you to "update your Gmail address" through a link is phishing. Only make the change by typing myaccount.google.com yourself.

CHAPTER 22

More Than One Account & Other Email in Gmail

Plenty of people have two email accounts — an old one from the internet provider and a Gmail, or a personal and a club account. The Gmail app can hold them all.

Adding another account to the Gmail app

1. In the Gmail app, tap your **profile picture** at the top right.
2. Tap **Add another account**.
3. Pick the type — **Google** for another Gmail, or Outlook, Yahoo or **Other** for other providers.
4. Sign in to that account. It now appears when you tap your profile picture; tap a picture to switch.

> **TIP**
> **Know which account you're in**
> The profile picture at the top right always shows which account you're looking at. Before sending something important, glance at it, so it goes from the right address.

Changes Google is making: Gmailify and POP

Google is **removing two older features** that some people used to pull another provider's email into Gmail on a computer:

Being retired	What it did
Gmailify	Added Gmail's spam protection and inbox tabs to a non-Gmail account. Google is removing it.
Check mail from other accounts (POP)	Fetched another provider's mail into your Gmail on a computer. Google says this option will no longer be available.

Google's suggested replacements:

- **On your phone or tablet:** keep reading and sending from your other account in the Gmail app (above). That still works.
- **On a computer:** ask your other email provider to automatically **forward** new mail to your Gmail address.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your Gmail itself isn't changing

This only affects collecting *other* providers' mail into Gmail. Your own Gmail keeps working everywhere as usual. If you're not sure whether you use these features, you probably don't — but if your old provider's mail suddenly stops showing up in Gmail on your computer, this is why.

PART 6

Fixing Problems

A hacked account, a forgotten password, mail that's gone missing or won't send — each with calm, ordered steps straight from Google's own guidance.

CHAPTER 23

If Someone Got Into Your Account

Friends say they got a strange email "from you." Your password suddenly doesn't work. Google warns of a sign-in you don't recognize. Any of these can mean someone else has been in your account. Act promptly, but calmly — these steps put you back in charge.

Signs to watch for

- Emails in your **Sent** folder that you didn't write.
- Security alerts about a new sign-in or a changed password that wasn't you.
- Your recovery phone or email changed without your knowledge.
- New filters or forwarding you didn't set up (Chapter 10).
- Purchases or charges you don't recognize on Google services.

What to do, in order

1. **If you can still sign in:** go to **myaccount.google.com** and change your password immediately to a new, strong one you haven't used before.
2. **If you can't sign in:** go to Google's account recovery page (Chapter 24) and answer the questions as best you can.
3. Open **Security & sign-in** and review **Recent security activity** and **Your devices**. Sign out any device you don't recognize.
4. Check your **Recovery phone** and **Recovery email** are still yours.
5. In Gmail on a computer, open **Settings**, **See all settings**, and check **Filters and Blocked Addresses** and **Forwarding and POP/IMAP**. Delete anything you didn't set up.
6. Turn on 2-Step Verification (Chapter 18).
7. Change the password on any other account that used the same password — Google recommends this too.
8. If money or card details were involved, call your bank using the number on your card.

TIP

Let your contacts know

If scam emails went out in your name, send a short note to your contacts (or call the close ones): "My email was broken into — please ignore any message asking for money or gift cards." It protects the people you care about.

SCAM ALERT

Beware the "recovery service"

Google says plainly that you can't call Google for help signing in, and that it doesn't work with any service that claims to offer account or password support. Anyone online or on the phone offering to recover your Gmail for a fee is a scammer — sometimes the same one who broke in. Bill's Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual has a chapter on these recovery scams.

GOOD TO KNOW

Missing emails after a break-in

Google's help notes that if someone got into your account without permission and deleted messages, there is a **Gmail Message Recovery Tool** on Google's help site that may be able to bring them back. Search Gmail Help for "messages are missing" to find it.

CHAPTER 24

Locked Out: Recovering Your Account

Forgot your password? New phone and the codes aren't coming? Don't create a new account yet. Google's recovery process is free, and Google says there's no limit to how many times you can try.

Forgot your password

1. On the Google sign-in page, enter your Gmail address and tap **Forgot password?**
2. Google asks questions to confirm it's you — for example sending a code to your recovery phone or email, a prompt on a phone that's already signed in, or asking a recovery contact. Answer as best you can.
3. If one way doesn't work, look for **Try another way**.
4. When prompted, choose a new, strong password you haven't used on this account before.

Forgot your Gmail address

Google can look it up if you know the **recovery phone number or recovery email** and the **full name** on the account. On the sign-in page, choose **Forgot email?** and follow the steps — you'll see a list of matching accounts.

Tips that help recovery succeed

- Use a **device you've signed in with before** — your usual phone or home computer.
- Try from **a place you usually use** it, like home, on your home Wi-Fi.
- If you're asked for an old password, give the most recent one you remember — a guess is fine.
- Wrong guesses won't lock you out of the recovery process.

GOOD TO KNOW

Recently changed your recovery info?

Google says changes to recovery information can take up to 7 days to take effect. If recovery isn't working because you just changed your phone number, try again in a few days.

HEADS UP

If nothing works

Sometimes Google simply can't confirm it's you, especially if there were no recovery options set up. In that case Google suggests creating a new account — and setting up recovery options right away (Chapter 19) so it never happens again. It's frustrating, but no one else, including me, can override Google's decision. Anyone who claims they can is running a scam.

FROM BILL

I can sit with you through it

Recovery often goes better with a calm second person who knows where the buttons are, on your own device, at home. I can't reach into Google's systems, but I can make sure you give Google the best chance to recognize you. Call (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 25

Missing Mail & Mail That Won't Arrive

"My daughter says she sent it, but it isn't here." Before worrying, run through this list. Nine times in ten the email is sitting somewhere in your account.

Where to look, in order

1. **Another inbox tab.** Check Promotions, Social and Updates (Chapter 7).
2. **Search for it.** Type the sender's name or a word they'd use. Search includes archived mail.
3. **Spam.** Open Spam from the menu. If it's there, choose **Not spam**.
4. **Trash.** If you deleted it by accident in the last 30 days, move it back.
5. **Search everywhere:** type **in:anywhere** and the sender's name.
6. **A filter or block?** On a computer, check **Settings**, **See all settings**, **Filters and Blocked Addresses** for anything that might be catching it.
7. **Storage full?** If your storage is full, receiving can stop (Chapter 13).
8. **Ask the sender** to check the address they used — one wrong letter sends it elsewhere.

TIP

Stop a sender going to Spam

Google says adding someone to your contacts stops Gmail sending their messages to Spam. A filter with **Never send it to Spam** also works (Chapter 10).

Phone not showing new mail?

- Pull down on the message list to refresh.
- Check you're in the right account (the profile picture, top right).
- Make sure the phone is online — open a web page to check.
- Update the Gmail app in the App Store or Play Store.
- Turn the phone off and on again.

CHAPTER 26

Can't Send, Notifications & Other Hiccups

A few more common snags, each with its usual cure.

Problem	What to try
Email stuck in Outbox (phone)	Usually no internet at that moment. Gmail sends it once you're online again. Check Wi-Fi or mobile data.
"Couldn't send message" with an attachment	A file didn't finish uploading to Drive, often from slow internet or full storage. Remove the attachment and add it again.
Attachment won't attach	Gmail blocks program files (like ones ending in .exe) for safety. For big files, use a Drive link (Chapter 12). On a computer, try another browser.
Storage full, can't send or receive	Free up space or buy more (Chapters 14 and 15).
No sound when mail arrives	Gmail only notifies for the Primary tab. Check Gmail's notification settings and your phone's own Settings for the Gmail app.
Gmail looks different today	Google updates the app regularly. Menus may move a little; the Menu button and search bar are always there.
Text too small	On a computer, Ctrl and + (Command and + on a Mac). On a phone, raise the text size in the phone's own Settings.

Turning notifications on or off

1. In the Gmail app, tap **Menu**, then **Settings**, then your account.
2. Find **Notifications** and choose **All**, **High priority only**, or **None** (wording varies a little by phone).
3. If Gmail notifications still don't come, open your phone's own **Settings**, find **Gmail**, and make sure notifications are allowed.

GOOD TO KNOW

The universal first aid

When anything in the app misbehaves: close the Gmail app completely and reopen it; update it; restart the phone. On a computer, reload the page or try another browser. These four steps clear most hiccups — the same advice you'll find in Bill's Email manual.

PART 7

Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, how to reach me, and a one-page summary of the whole manual.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this manual so you can handle nearly all of Gmail yourself. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or money. Here's my straight advice.

Times it's well worth a call

- **You think you've been hacked or scammed** — the sooner, the better. We'll lock things down together, step by step.
- **You're locked out** and the recovery steps aren't working. A calm second person helps.
- **Storage is full** and you'd like help cleaning up — or an honest opinion on whether a plan is worth it.
- **Setting up the safety net** — 2-Step Verification, a passkey, recovery phone, recovery email and a recovery contact, all in one sitting.
- **Taming a giant inbox** — unsubscribing, filters and labels that keep it calm from now on.
- **A new phone or computer** — getting Gmail on it, signed in and working.
- **You'd simply rather have someone patient show you.** Always a good enough reason.

What working with me is like

I help folks here in Portage County, Ohio, in their homes, and anywhere by remote session. I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money. That's been my way through 30+ years of professional experience.

How	Details
Price	$49 remote · $99 in your home
Call or text	(330) 200-8042
Book online	billshometech.com/book
When I can't pick up	My AI receptionist, Sophie, can answer the phone, answer common questions and take a booking for you.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This manual is free to read and share; the help is how I make my living, and I'm always glad to give it.

Thank you for letting me help you feel at home in your email. Take your time, explore without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your Gmail Cheat-Sheet

The whole manual, boiled down. Keep it handy.

Everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Write an email	Tap **Compose**, add To, Subject, message, **Send**.
Take it back	Tap **Undo** right after sending. Set 30 seconds in Settings on a computer.
Find anything	Search bar: a name, a word, or **from:**, **has:attachment**, **larger:10M**.
Tidy without losing	**Archive** — it's still in All mail and search finds it.
Get a deleted email back	**Trash**, tick it, **Move to** Inbox — within 30 days.
Mail missing	Other tabs, Search, Spam, Trash, **in:anywhere**.
Stop newsletters	**Manage subscriptions** in the menu, or **Unsubscribe** by the sender's name.
Junk / scam	**Report spam**; on a computer, More > **Report phishing**.

Storage at a glance

- 15 GB free, shared by Gmail, Google Photos and Google Drive.
- Check and clean up at **one.google.com** > Storage > Clean up space.
- More room from $1.99/month for 100 GB (U.S. price, November 2026).
- Over the limit for 2 years or more, content may be deleted — after warnings.

Your safety checklist

1. 2-Step Verification on (myaccount.google.com > Security & sign-in).
2. Recovery phone and recovery email current.
3. A trusted recovery contact added.
4. A passkey on your own phone, if you'd like the easiest sign-in.
5. Never give a code or password to anyone who contacts you.
6. Never call a phone number from an unexpected email.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
My Gmail address	_____
Recovery phone on file	_____
Recovery email on file	_____
My recovery contact	_____
Where I keep my backup codes	_____

HEADS UP

Keep that list private

Write your password somewhere safe at home if you need to — never in an email to yourself, and never on this list if it leaves the house. Bill's Passwords and Password Managers manual shows safe ways.

When something's wrong, in order

1. Can't find an email: check tabs, Spam, Trash, then search **in:anywhere**.
2. Storage full: one.google.com > Storage > Clean up space; empty Trash and Spam.
3. Strange sign-in or emails you didn't send: change your password at myaccount.google.com now.
4. Locked out: Google sign-in page > Forgot password? > Try another way.
5. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You can now read, write, find and file your email, send photos big and small, keep storage in check, spot a fake at a glance, and lock your account so it stays yours. That's everything you need to enjoy Gmail with confidence.