BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Google Nest Cameras & Doorbell

See who's at the door, check on home from anywhere,
and pay only for the features you actually use

A plain-English guide for every Nest camera owner

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Nest Cams & Nest Doorbells in the Google Home app · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Google Nest camera and doorbell manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. Google updates the Google Home app often, so if a screen looks a little different on yours, look for the same words; the ideas stay the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Your Nest Cameras

What a Nest camera or doorbell actually does, which one you have, the app that runs it, and what you need before you start. Read this part first and the rest will make sense.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is reading this, this manual is for **you**. Maybe a family member gave you a Google Nest doorbell so they'd worry less. Maybe you bought a Nest camera to keep an eye on the porch where packages keep disappearing. Or maybe the cameras are already up, the alerts keep buzzing your phone, and you just want them to make sense. Wherever you're starting, you're in the right place.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years in professional technology work, and these days I help folks around Portage County, Ohio feel at home with the gadgets in their lives. I wrote this manual the way I'd explain things sitting next to you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time. Whenever a new word comes up, I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this manual covers

This manual is about Google's home cameras and video doorbells, the ones sold under the **Google Nest** name, and the free **Google Home** app that runs them. You'll learn how to set them up, how to answer the door from anywhere, how to look back at what happened, how to stop the flood of unnecessary alerts, and what Google's paid plan (now called **Google Home Premium**) does and doesn't add.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this manual does for you

By the end, you'll know who is at your door before you get up from your chair, see that a package arrived without walking outside, check on the house while you're away, and get only the alerts that matter. You'll also know exactly what you're paying for, so you never pay for more than you need.

The big promise: you can't break it

Here is the most important thing in this manual. **You cannot break your camera or doorbell by exploring the app.** Tapping around, opening settings, and looking at screens is how everyone learns. Almost every setting can be switched right back. The only steps that deserve extra care are the ones where you're working with house wiring or deleting video, and I'll flag those clearly when we get there.

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together, with no judgment. There's no such thing as a silly question.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Nest Camera Actually Does

Before we touch any buttons, let's get clear on what these little devices are and what they do all day.

A camera that's connected to the internet

A Google Nest camera is a small video camera that connects to your home's **Wi-Fi** (your wireless internet). Because it's online, you can look through it from your phone anywhere you have a signal: from the living room, from the grocery store, or from a beach in Florida. A Nest **doorbell** is the same idea built into a doorbell button. When someone presses it, your phone rings and you can see and talk to them.

The four jobs it does for you

Job	What it means for you
Live view	Look through the camera right now, like peeking out a window from wherever you are.
Alerts	Get a notification on your phone when the camera notices a person, an animal, a vehicle or, on a doorbell, a package.
Video history	Look back at short recordings of what happened earlier: who came to the door, when the mail carrier stopped by, whether the dog got into the trash.
Talk and listen	Speak through the camera or doorbell and hear the person on the other end, so you can tell a delivery driver to leave the box by the garage.

GOOD TO KNOW

It only records what it needs to

Most Nest cameras don't keep every minute of the day. They watch, and when they notice something (a person walking up, a car pulling in) they save a short clip of it. That clip is called an **event**. Recording around the clock is possible too, but only on the top paid plan. Chapter 20 explains the difference.

What a camera is not

A camera is a helper, not a guard. It can show you what happened and help you respond, but it can't stop a break-in by itself, and it doesn't call the police on its own. Think of it as a very attentive neighbor who texts you when something's going on. Google does offer an emergency calling feature with its paid plan, which Chapter 21 explains, but you are always

the one who decides to use it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Knowing what a camera can and can't do keeps your expectations realistic. You'll use it for what it's great at: knowing who's at the door, checking on the house, and having a record when you need one.

CHAPTER 3

Which Nest Camera or Doorbell You Have

Google has made many Nest cameras over the years, and they don't all work quite the same way. Knowing which one you have tells you which app to use and which features you'll get. Don't worry about memorizing this page. Just find yours.

The newest models (released October 2025)

In October 2025 Google released three new wired devices. They're the ones you'll find on store shelves in November 2026:

Model	Where it goes	Launch price	Good to know
Nest Cam Indoor (wired, 3rd gen)	Inside, on a shelf or wall	$99.99	Plugs into an outlet. 2K HDR video, 152-degree view.
Nest Cam Outdoor (wired, 2nd gen)	Outside, on a wall or eave	$149.99 (two-pack $249.99)	Needs a cord to an outlet. Weather-rated (IP65).
Nest Doorbell (wired, 3rd gen)	Your front door	$179.99	Replaces a wired doorbell. 166-degree, head-to-toe view.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

Prices change

Those are the prices Google announced at launch. Stores often run sales, and prices can go up or down over time, so check the Google Store or your favorite retailer before you buy.

Earlier models still in many homes

You may have an earlier model, and that's perfectly fine. Many of these are still supported in the Google Home app:

- **Nest Doorbell (battery)**: runs on a built-in rechargeable battery, or can be wired to existing doorbell wires.
- **Nest Doorbell (wired, 2nd gen)**: the earlier wired doorbell.
- **Nest Cam (battery)**: a white, egg-shaped camera that works inside or out on its rechargeable battery.
- **Nest Cam (wired)**: a small indoor camera on a stand that plugs into the wall.

- **Nest Cam with floodlight**: an outdoor camera built into a pair of lights, wired into your house.
- **Older cameras** such as Nest Cam IQ Indoor and Outdoor, the original Nest Cam Indoor and Outdoor, and the original Nest Hello doorbell.

How to tell which one you have

1. Open the **Google Home** app on your phone.
2. Find your camera or doorbell and tap it to open it.
3. Open its settings (look for the **gear** icon) and look for a section with device information. The model name is listed there.
4. No luck? Look at the box it came in, or at the label on the back of the device or its mount.

> **TIP**
>
> **Write it down**
>
> Jot the model name on a sticky note and keep it with your other important papers. When you call me or anyone else for help, "It's a Nest Doorbell, wired, 3rd gen" saves a lot of guessing.

CHAPTER 4

The Google Home App (and the Old Nest App)

Everything you do with your cameras happens in an app on your phone or tablet. For years Google had two apps that did this, which confused a lot of people. Here's the simple version.

Google Home is the main app now

The free **Google Home** app is where you set up and use current Nest cameras and doorbells. Google's own setup instructions for the newest models say you need the Google Home app to connect them to Wi-Fi and to get recorded video.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

When you might still need the Nest app

Google's help pages note that some **Nest cameras bought before 2021** still use the older **Nest** app for their subscription features. Google has been moving older devices over to the Google Home app a few models at a time. If you have an older camera that's still in the Nest app, it will keep working there. When the Google Home app offers to move it, the app will walk you through the steps.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

Don't rush an old camera's move

If an older camera works fine in the Nest app, there's no need to force a move to the Google Home app. Some owners have reported older cameras going offline after being moved. If you'd like to move one, do it when you have time to check that it reconnects, or ask a helper to sit with you.

Getting the Google Home app

1. On an iPhone or iPad, open the **App Store**. On an Android phone, open the **Play Store**.
2. Search for **Google Home**. Look for the official app from Google LLC with the colorful house icon.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**. The app is free.
4. Open it and sign in with your **Google Account**: the same email and password you use for Gmail or YouTube, if you have one.

SCAM ALERT

There is only one real app

Copycat apps sometimes show up in app stores with names like "Nest Camera Viewer" or "Doorbell for Nest." You never need them. The Google Home app is free and made by Google. If an app asks you to pay to "unlock" your Nest camera, delete it.

The main parts of the app

The Google Home app has a row of tabs along the bottom of the screen. The names have changed a few times as Google redesigned the app, but you'll generally find:

- A **home** tab showing your favorite devices, including camera pictures you can tap.
- A **devices** view listing everything in your home, room by room.
- An **Activity** tab showing what's happened recently: camera events, doorbell rings and more.
- An **automations** area, for routines that make things happen on their own.
- Your **profile picture** or initial at the top right, where Home settings and subscriptions live.

TIP

If your screens look a little different

Google updates the app often. If a button has moved, look for the same words, or tap your profile picture at the top right, which is where most account-level settings live.

CHAPTER 5

What You Need Before You Start

A little preparation now saves a lot of frustration later. Here's the checklist.

The checklist

- **A smartphone or tablet** with the latest Google Home app.
- **A Google Account** (an email and password). If you don't have one, the app helps you make one for free.
- **Your Wi-Fi network name and password.** Find them on a sticker on your router if you're not sure.
- **Decent internet speed.** Google says each Nest camera or doorbell needs at least **2 Mbps of upload speed**.
- **The tools in the box**, plus a screwdriver, and a drill for outdoor mounting.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

What "upload speed" means

Internet speed has two directions. **Download** is how fast things come *into* your home, like a movie. **Upload** is how fast things go *out*, like a camera sending video to your phone. Cameras care about upload. Most home internet plans have far less upload than download, so if you plan several cameras, it's worth checking.

To check your upload speed

1. Stand near where the camera will go, with your phone on your home Wi-Fi.
2. Open your web browser and search for **speed test**.
3. Run the test and look at the **upload** number. Multiply 2 by the number of cameras you plan. Three cameras need at least 6 Mbps upload.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wi-Fi at the front door matters most

Doorbells and outdoor cameras sit at the edge of your home, often behind brick or metal. A weak Wi-Fi signal there is the single most common reason a camera is slow or drops offline. If the speed test near the door is poor, a mesh Wi-Fi system or an extender can help. Our Mesh Wi-Fi manual covers that.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Ten minutes of checking now means your doorbell rings your phone right away, and the video is clear instead of choppy, from the very first day.

PART 2

Setting Up Your Cameras and Doorbell

Where to put each camera, how to set up indoor and outdoor cameras, how to install a wired or battery doorbell, and how to let family members see the cameras too.

CHAPTER 6

Choosing the Right Spot

Where you put a camera matters more than which camera you buy. A good spot shows you faces and doorways clearly. A poor one shows you a lot of sky, a lot of glare, or the neighbor's driveway.

Good spots for an indoor camera

- Facing the **main door** you use most, so you can see who comes and goes.
- In a **main hallway** or room people pass through.
- Near where a **pet** spends the day, if you like checking on them.
- On a high shelf or the top of a bookcase, angled slightly down.

Good spots for an outdoor camera

- About **7 to 10 feet up**, high enough to be out of easy reach but low enough to see faces.
- Covering the **driveway**, the **back door**, or the **side gate**.
- Under an eave or overhang where it's sheltered from the worst rain and direct midday sun.
- Within reach of an outdoor-safe outlet for wired models, and within good Wi-Fi range.

Spots to avoid

- **Pointing straight at the sun** or a bright window. The camera will see a glowing blob.
- **Behind glass.** At night, the camera's own infrared light bounces off the glass and blinds it.
- **Facing a busy street**. Every passing car can set off an alert.
- **Pointing into a neighbor's windows or yard.** It's unkind, and Chapter 28 explains why it can cause problems.
- **Bathrooms and bedrooms** of guests or helpers. More on that in Chapter 24.

TIP

Test before you drill

Before you put a single screw in the wall, hold the camera (or have someone hold it) where you plan to mount it and open live view on your phone. Check what it actually sees, day and evening. Moving a camera six inches is easy before the holes are drilled.

GOOD TO KNOW

What the new cameras can see

Google says the newest Nest Cams have a 152-degree diagonal view and the newest wired doorbell has a 166-degree view in a square shape, so it can show a visitor from head to toe and a package on the ground.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 7

Setting Up an Indoor Camera

An indoor camera is the easiest Nest device to set up. Most of the work is done by the app, which walks you through every screen. Here's what to expect so nothing surprises you.

Before you begin

- Unbox the camera and keep the box: the setup code is often printed on the camera and in the box.
- Plug the camera into a wall outlet near where it will live, using the cord and adapter that came with it.
- Have your phone on your home Wi-Fi, with Bluetooth turned on. The app uses Bluetooth to find the new camera.

Adding the camera in the Google Home app

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. From the Home tab, tap **Add**, then **Device**, then **Scan QR code**.
3. Choose the home to add it to (most people have just one), then tap **Next**.
4. The app looks for nearby devices. If it asks, pick your camera's model from the list.
5. Point your phone's camera at the **QR code** on the back of the camera (a small square of black-and-white dots). No camera handy? Tap **Set up without QR code** and type in the numbers printed near the code.
6. Choose your Wi-Fi network and type in its password.
7. Pick the room it's in (Living Room, Kitchen and so on) and give it a name you'll recognize, like **Front Hall**.
8. Follow the remaining screens. The app may install an update; let it finish without unplugging the camera.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Name cameras by what they see

"Back Door" and "Driveway" are much easier to understand in a notification than "Camera 2." If you ever use your voice to bring up a camera on a TV or display, a clear name helps there too.

Mounting it (optional)

Most indoor cameras can simply sit on a shelf. If you'd like to put it on the wall, the box includes the screws you need. The newest Nest Cam Indoor comes in three colors (Snow, Hazel and Berry), so it can blend in with a room.

HEADS UP

Mind the cord

Tuck the power cord where nobody will trip on it and pets can't chew it. A loose cord is also the easiest way for someone to switch off a camera, so route it neatly behind furniture if you can.

CHAPTER 8

Setting Up an Outdoor Camera

Outdoor cameras set up in the app the same way as indoor ones. The difference is the mounting: they go up on a wall, often a ladder's height off the ground, and they need power and Wi-Fi out there.

Plan the power first

The newest **Nest Cam Outdoor (wired, 2nd gen)** needs a cord to an outlet. Before you start, find the outlet you'll use and measure the distance to the mounting spot. Outdoor outlets should be the weatherproof kind with a cover. If there's no outlet nearby, a battery camera or an electrician may be the better answer.

Step by step

1. **Set it up on the ground first.** Plug the camera in indoors, near the router, and add it in the Google Home app (the steps in Chapter 7). This proves it works before you climb a ladder.
2. Carry it to the mounting spot and open live view on your phone to check the picture and the Wi-Fi.
3. Mark the screw holes using the mount as a template. A bubble level helps keep it straight.
4. Drill pilot holes, use the wall anchors from the box for brick or stucco, and screw the mount in.
5. Attach the camera, angle it, and route the cord neatly down to the outlet.
6. Check live view one more time, in daylight and again after dark.

STAY SAFE

Ladders are the risky part

Most camera injuries aren't electrical, they're falls. Use a sturdy ladder on level ground, keep three points of contact, and have someone hold the ladder and hand you tools. If heights make you uneasy, that's a good reason to have someone else do the mounting.

GOOD TO KNOW

Built for Ohio weather

Google rates the newest outdoor camera and doorbell IP65, meaning they're built to handle dust, wind, snow and rain. Extreme heat or cold can still affect video, so a spot under an overhang helps.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 9

Installing a Wired Nest Doorbell

A wired Nest Doorbell replaces your existing doorbell button and uses the low-voltage wires that are already there. Many handy people do it in under an hour. Here's the whole picture, so you can decide whether to do it yourself or get help.

First, check your doorbell system

Most homes with a working wired doorbell can use a Nest Doorbell, but some doorbell systems give too much or too little power. Google's help center has a compatibility check, and the app checks too. If your system doesn't give enough power, the fix is usually a new doorbell **transformer**, a small box that steps house power down to doorbell power. Google suggests an electrician for that job.

What's in the box (3rd gen wired)

- The doorbell, a base plate, and a **chime connector** (it goes inside your indoor chime box).
- A **wedge** that angles the doorbell up to 20 degrees, handy when your door is in a corner.
- Wire connectors, wall screws, anchors, spacers, a hex key and an extra security screw.

Tools you'll want

- A #2 Phillips screwdriver
- A power drill with small bits (and a masonry bit for brick or stucco)
- A bubble level

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

The steps, in plain English

1. **Turn off the power** to the doorbell and chime at your breaker box. Press the old doorbell to make sure it doesn't ring.
2. **Remove the old doorbell** and disconnect its two wires. Bend or tape the wires so they can't slip back into the wall.
3. Open the **Google Home** app and tap **Add**, then **Device**, then **Scan QR code**. Choose your home, tap **Next**, and pick **Nest Doorbell (wired, 3rd gen)** if asked.
4. Scan the QR code on the back of the doorbell, or tap **Set up without QR code** and enter the numbers. The app now guides you through the rest, including the chime connector.

5. Connect the two doorbell wires to the wire connectors (either wire to either connector). Don't let the wires touch the metal back plate.
6. Mount the base plate (with the wedge if you're using it), attach the doorbell, and turn the power back on.
7. Finish setup in the app: connect to Wi-Fi, choose settings and check the video.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

STAY SAFE

Power off means power off

Doorbell wires are low voltage, but the transformer that feeds them is connected to house power. Always turn the breaker off first and test the old button. If you aren't sure which breaker it is, switch off the main breaker or ask for help. Never work on the transformer itself unless you're qualified.

FROM BILL

This is a good job to hand off

If wires, breakers and ladders aren't your thing, there's no shame in asking for help. I install Nest doorbells regularly, including checking whether your transformer is up to the job. Chapter 34 explains how to reach me.

CHAPTER 10

Battery Doorbells and Battery Cameras

If you have the **Nest Doorbell (battery)** or the **Nest Cam (battery)**, you have more choices about where they go, because they don't need wires. The trade-off is that the battery needs recharging.

Charge it before you start

Charge a battery doorbell or camera fully before you set it up. For the battery doorbell, Google says the status light **pulses white** while charging and turns **solid white** when it's full.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Wired or wire-free?

	Running on battery	Wired to doorbell wires or power
Where it can go	Almost anywhere	Where the wires are
Charging	Take it down and recharge it from time to time	Stays topped up
Indoor chime	Rings through the app and Google speakers	Can ring your existing chime
24/7 recording	Not available	Available on the Nest Cam (battery) when wired and on the Advanced plan; never on the Nest Doorbell (battery)

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Setting it up

1. With the device charged, open the **Google Home** app and tap **Add**, then **Device**, then **Scan QR code**.
2. Scan the QR code on the back of the device, or enter the numbers printed near it.
3. Follow the app to join Wi-Fi, choose the room and name the device.
4. Use the mounting plate from the box. The app shows you how to attach and release the device so you can take it down for charging.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Make charging day easy

Put a reminder on your calendar to check the battery level in the app once a month. When it's low, bring the device inside in the evening, charge it overnight, and put it back in the morning.

HEADS UP

Theft and tampering

Because battery devices come off their mount for charging, make sure the security screw or release mechanism is used. Google's help center has advice on protecting cameras against tampering and theft.

CHAPTER 11

Letting Family See the Cameras

Cameras are often a family project. A son or daughter might want to check that Mom's porch light came on, or a spouse wants doorbell alerts on their own phone. The Google Home app handles this by letting you invite people into your **home**.

Inviting someone

1. Open the **Google Home** app and tap your **profile picture** or initial at the top right.
2. Tap **Home settings** and look for **Household** (or **Members**).
3. Tap to invite a person and enter their email address (it should be their Google Account).
4. They get an email invitation. Once they accept and install the Google Home app, your cameras appear on their phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Members see a lot

A household member can generally see your cameras and video history and change settings. Only invite people you'd be comfortable handing a key to the house. You can remove someone at any time from the same place.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Sharing access lets a family keep an eye out together without anyone sharing a password. Each person uses their own account, so you can remove one person without disturbing anyone else.

STAY SAFE

Never share your password instead

It can be tempting to just give a relative your Google password so they can log in. Please don't. Your Google Account also holds your email, photos and more. Inviting them as a household member is safer and easy to undo.

PART 3

Using Your Cameras Every Day

Looking in live, answering the door from anywhere, understanding alerts, cutting down the noise, and looking back at what happened.

CHAPTER 12

Looking In Live and Talking Through the Camera

Live view is the simplest and most-used feature: you open the app and see what the camera sees, right now. It works on every Nest camera and doorbell, with or without a paid plan.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

To look in live

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap the camera's picture on the main screen, or find it in your list of devices.
3. The live picture fills the screen. Turn your phone sideways for a bigger view.
4. To zoom in on something, spread two fingers apart on the picture, just like a photo.
5. When you're done, tap the back arrow. Closing the view doesn't turn the camera off.

Talking and listening

Every Nest camera and doorbell has a microphone and a speaker, and Google lists **two-way talk and listen** as a feature that works without a subscription. In live view, look for a **microphone** button. Tap it (or press and hold it, on some screens) and speak; the person near the camera hears you. Let go or tap again to listen.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Speak a beat after you tap

There's a short delay between your phone and the camera. Tap the microphone, wait a second, then speak slowly and clearly. Pause when you're done so the other person can answer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can tell the delivery driver to leave the box by the garage, remind the dog walker about the back gate, or say hello to a grandchild in the living room, all without getting up or being home.

GOOD TO KNOW

The green light means it's working

Google says its newest cameras have a clearly visible green light that shows when the camera is processing or streaming video. If you see it glowing while you're in live view, that's normal.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 13

When Someone Rings the Doorbell

This is the moment most people buy a video doorbell for. Here's what happens when someone presses the button and how to answer.

What you'll see and hear

- Your phone shows a **doorbell notification**, usually with a picture of who's there.
- If your doorbell is wired to a chime, the chime rings inside the house as usual.
- Google speakers and smart displays in your home can announce the visitor too.

To answer

1. Tap the doorbell notification. Live view opens.
2. Look first. You can decide whether to talk at all.
3. To speak, tap the **microphone** button and talk, the same way as in Chapter 12.
4. When you're finished, close live view. The visit is saved in your history.

Quick responses: answering without talking

Sometimes you don't want to speak, or you're somewhere you can't. Google Home includes **quick responses** for Nest doorbells: short, prerecorded messages such as asking a delivery person to leave a package. You pick one on your phone and the doorbell plays it in a friendly voice. Google lists quick responses as a feature of both Google Home Premium plans; check your doorbell's screen in the app to see what yours offers.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

STAY SAFE

You never have to say you're not home

If you're away, there's no need to tell a stranger that. "We can't come to the door right now" is plenty. And you never have to open the door to someone just because they rang.

TIP

Practice with a friend

Ask a family member to ring the bell while you answer from your phone in another room. Ten minutes of practice makes the real thing calm and easy.

CHAPTER 14

Understanding Your Alerts

Nest cameras can tell the difference between a few kinds of things they see, and send a different kind of alert for each. Google calls these **intelligent alerts**. Here's what each one means.

Alert type	What it means
Person	The camera saw someone. Works without a subscription.
Animal	A pet or other animal. Works without a subscription.
Vehicle	A car or truck, handy for a driveway camera. Works without a subscription.
Package	Nest doorbells only: a package was dropped off or picked up.
Motion	Something moved but the camera couldn't tell what it was.
Familiar face	Someone you've named in your face library. Needs Google Home Premium. Chapter 25 explains it.
Sound	Some cameras can tell speech from a dog's bark, or hear a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm (U.S. only, with Google Home Premium).

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

The camera isn't perfect

Google itself notes that alerts can be wrong: a picture of a dog on a T-shirt can trigger an animal alert, and close relatives can be mistaken for each other. Treat alerts as a nudge to take a look, not a final answer.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Choosing which alerts reach your phone

You decide which of these actually buzz your phone. Each camera has its own notification settings:

1. Open the **Google Home** app and open the camera.
2. Tap the **gear** (Settings) icon.
3. Look for **Notifications** (sometimes under **Events** or **Alerts**).
4. Turn on the kinds of alerts you want (for example, **Person** and **Package**) and turn off the ones you don't.

TIP

Start with fewer alerts

Most people are happiest with just **Person** alerts on outdoor cameras and **Package** alerts on the doorbell. You can always add more later. The next chapter has more ways to cut the noise.

HEADS UP

Keep Google Home notifications allowed on your phone

If your phone blocks notifications from the Google Home app, you'll miss doorbell rings. On an iPhone, check **Settings > Notifications > Google Home**. On Android, long-press the app icon, tap the small **i**, then **Notifications**.

CHAPTER 15

Too Many Alerts? Here's How to Calm Them Down

The most common complaint I hear about any camera is "it won't stop buzzing." A tree branch waves, a car drives by, and the phone goes off again. The good news: you can fix this, usually in a few minutes.

Fix 1: turn off the alert types you don't need

Go back to the notification settings from Chapter 14 and switch off **Motion** alerts. Keep **Person**. This one change cuts out most of the noise from leaves, shadows and bugs.

Fix 2: draw activity zones

An **activity zone** is an area of the picture you draw yourself, like the front walk or the driveway. You can then tell the camera to alert you only about what happens inside that zone, and ignore the busy street beyond it. Google lists activity zones as a free feature for current Nest cameras.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

1. Open the camera in the **Google Home** app and tap the **gear** (Settings).
2. Look for **Activity zones** (it may be inside an **Events** or **Detection** section).
3. Tap to add a zone, then drag the corners of the shape over the area you care about.
4. Give it a name, like **Front Walk**, and save.
5. In the notification settings, choose to be alerted only for activity in that zone.

Fix 3: zoom and crop

If your camera sees far more than you need, **zoom and crop** lets you trim the view to just the part you care about, such as a garden bed or walkway. Google lists this as a free feature, and on the newest cameras the cropped view stays sharp in live view and in your history.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

Fix 4: use Home and Away

Most people don't need indoor camera alerts while they're home. The Google Home app can change what your cameras do depending on whether anyone is home, using **Home and Away** routines or camera automations. For example, indoor cameras can stop sending alerts (or turn off) when you're home and turn back on when everyone leaves. Chapter 18

shows you how.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When your phone only buzzes for things that matter, you start paying attention to it again. A calm, trustworthy alert is worth far more than fifty you've learned to ignore.

TIP

Give it a day

After changing zones or alert types, live with it for a day or two and see what comes through. Small adjustments over a week usually get you to just the right amount.

CHAPTER 16

Looking Back: Your Video History

When you miss an alert, or want to see who came by while you were out, you look in your **video history**. How far back you can look depends on your camera and whether you have Google Home Premium.

How much history you get

	No subscription	Standard plan	Advanced plan
Newest models (2025 Nest Cams and Doorbell)	10-second event previews, kept 6 hours	Event recordings, kept 30 days	Events kept 60 days, plus 24/7 recording kept 10 days
Nest Cam (wired), Nest Cam (battery), floodlight	Event recordings, kept 3 hours	Event recordings, kept 30 days	Events kept 60 days, plus 24/7 (wired power) kept 10 days

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

What an "event" recording is

An event recording starts when the camera notices something and runs for up to a few minutes. In between events, your history shows blank space. That's normal: nothing happened, so nothing was saved.

To look back

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap the **Activity** tab to see a list of recent events from all your cameras, newest first. Or open one camera and scroll its history.
3. Use the **filters** to show only certain kinds of events, such as people or packages.
4. Tap any event to play it. Drag along the timeline to move back and forth.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

TIP

Looking for a particular time?

If you know roughly when something happened ("the package came around two"), scroll the timeline to that time instead of tapping through every event.

HEADS UP

History disappears on schedule

Recordings are deleted automatically when they pass your plan's limit. If you need to keep something, for a neighbor, the police or your insurance, save it right away as a clip. The next chapter shows how.

CHAPTER 17

Saving and Sharing a Clip

Sometimes a moment is worth keeping: the grandkids' first snowman in the yard, a deer on the lawn, or proof that a package was delivered. Google Home Premium lets you save and share video clips.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

To save a clip

1. Open the event in your history (Chapter 16).
2. Look for a **Share**, **Save** or **Download** button below the video.
3. If asked, choose the start and end of the part you want to keep.
4. Save it to your phone, or share it by text or email the way you'd share a photo.

Timelapses

A **timelapse** squeezes a long stretch of video into a short clip. Google says a timelapse can condense up to 24 hours of video into a 30, 60 or 120 second clip, which is fun for things like snow piling up or a garden growing. It needs a plan with recorded video to draw from.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

STAY SAFE

Think before you post

A clip of your front door shows your house number, your car, and when you come and go. Share it with family privately rather than posting it publicly online, and blur or crop out neighbors when you can.

TIP

If you need it for a report

If something was stolen or damaged, save the clip the same day and write down the date and time. A police officer or insurance adjuster will usually ask for both.

CHAPTER 18

Making Cameras Work on Their Own

Automations (sometimes called routines) let the Google Home app do things for you on a schedule or when something happens. Google lists **camera automation** as a feature that works without a subscription, and a Gemini helper called **Help me create** for subscribers.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Useful camera automations

- Turn indoor cameras **off when you're home** and **on when you leave**, for privacy.
- Turn the porch light on when the doorbell sees a person after dark (with a compatible smart light).
- Have your Google speakers announce when someone is at the door.

To create an automation

1. Open the **Google Home** app and go to the **Automations** area.
2. Tap **Add** (or **+**) to start a new one.
3. Choose what **starts** it: a time of day, everyone leaving home, or a camera event.
4. Choose what **happens**: for example, turn a camera on or off, or turn on a light.
5. Save it. Test it once to make sure it does what you expect.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **"Help me create" is new**
>
> If you have Google Home Premium, you can describe an automation in plain words and Gemini drafts it for you. Google says this feature is still in development and may not work as expected, so always check that an automation it creates actually does the right thing.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Seeing cameras on a TV or smart display

If you have a Google smart display (such as a Nest Hub) or a TV with Google TV, you may be able to bring up a camera on the bigger screen with your voice, for example "Hey Google, show the front door." What works depends on your devices and whether you've switched to the newer Gemini voice assistant. Our Google Nest Home manual covers speakers and displays in detail.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A couple of well-chosen automations mean your cameras respect your privacy while you're home and keep watch while you're away, without you having to remember to tap anything.

PART 4

Plans, Prices and What You Actually Need

What works for free, what Google Home Premium adds, the new Gemini camera features, how to subscribe or cancel, and an honest way to decide whether a plan is worth it for you.

CHAPTER 19

What Works Without Paying Anything

Let's start with the good news. You do **not** need a subscription to use a Nest camera or doorbell. Plenty of everyday features come free with the device.

Included with every current Nest camera and doorbell

- **Live view**: look in any time.
- **Two-way talk and listen.**
- **Intelligent alerts** for people, animals and vehicles (and packages on doorbells), plus motion alerts.
- **Activity zones** and **zoom and crop**.
- **Filters** for your event history.
- **Camera automations.**
- A short stretch of **free history**: on the newest models, 10-second event previews kept for 6 hours; on earlier models such as the Nest Cam (battery), event recordings kept for 3 hours.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this means for you

If what you mostly want is to see who's at the door and get an alert when someone walks up, you may not need to pay a monthly fee at all. Lots of people live happily on the free features.

GOOD TO KNOW

Google doubled the free history

With the 2025 cameras and doorbell, Google doubled the free event history from three hours to six hours compared with the previous generation, as 10-second clips of each event.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

What you give up without a plan

- Looking back further than a few hours.
- Full-length event recordings on the newest models (you get short previews instead).
- Familiar face alerts, smoke and CO alarm sound alerts, and emergency calling.

- The Gemini features: AI descriptions, Home Brief and Ask Home.

CHAPTER 20

Google Home Premium: Standard vs. Advanced

Google's paid plan for cameras used to be called **Nest Aware**. It's now called **Google Home Premium**, and it comes in two levels: **Standard** and **Advanced**. If you had Nest Aware, Google moved you over to the matching Google Home Premium plan.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

The two plans side by side

	Standard	Advanced
Price in the U.S. (Google Store)	About $10.00 a month or $100 a year	About $20.00 a month or $200 a year
Event video history	30 days	60 days
24/7 continuous recording	No	10 days (wired cameras and wired doorbells)
Familiar faces	Yes	Yes
Smoke and CO alarm sound alerts (U.S.)	Yes	Yes
Emergency calling (U.S.)	Yes	Yes
Alerts with zoomed-in previews	Yes	Yes
AI notifications and AI descriptions	No	Yes
Home Brief (daily summary)	No	Yes
Ask Home (search your video by asking)	No	Yes

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Checked against the Google Store's Google Home Premium listing on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

One plan covers the whole home

A Google Home Premium plan covers your home, not each camera, so one subscription covers all the compatible cameras and doorbells in that home. That's a real difference from some other brands that charge per camera.

HEADS UP

Prices change

These are the U.S. Google Store prices in November 2026. Google has changed Nest Aware prices before, and prices differ in other countries. Always check the price shown in the app or on the Google Store before you subscribe.

Other ways to get it

Google also includes Google Home Premium with some of its Google AI plans (Google's help center mentions activating it with a **Google AI Pro plan or higher**), and some Google One plans include the Standard plan as a benefit. If you already pay Google for extra storage or AI features, check whether you have Home Premium before buying it separately. Google also notes that gift subscriptions aren't available.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

CHAPTER 21

The New Gemini Camera Features and Emergency Calling

Google has added features powered by **Gemini**, its artificial intelligence (a computer system that can describe what's in a picture and answer questions in plain language). Here's what they do, in plain terms.

Feature	What it does
AI descriptions	Instead of just "Person seen," your history can show a short description of what happened, written by Google's servers from the recorded video.
AI notifications	A shorter version of that description right in the alert on your phone, so you can tell what happened at a glance.
Home Brief	A daily overview of what happened at home, so you don't have to scroll through hours of events.
Ask Home	Type or say a question like "Did a package come today?" and get an answer with the matching clips.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

These features need the **Advanced** plan. Google says they're rolling out to more devices and regions over time and work best with the newest 2025 cameras and doorbell.

GOOD TO KNOW

How it works behind the scenes

Google's help center explains that AI descriptions are made by processing your recorded camera events on Google's servers. If that doesn't sit right with you, simply don't turn these features on; the camera works fine without them.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Emergency calling

With either Google Home Premium plan, in the U.S., the Google Home app can connect you to the **emergency call center closest to your home**, even when you're far away. That matters: if you call 911 from your phone while visiting family in another state, you'd reach their local dispatcher, not yours. Emergency calling is started from the **Activity** tab during an emergency event, and you must finish its setup in the Home app first.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

STAY SAFE

Set it up before you need it

Emergency calling only works if it's already set up. If you're paying for a plan, take five minutes today to complete the setup in the Google Home app, including your home address.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

If your camera shows smoke, a fall, or a break-in while you're away, you can get help sent to the right address in seconds, without hunting for a local phone number.

CHAPTER 22

Subscribing, Trying It Free, and Canceling

You can check, start, change or cancel your plan right in the Google Home app.

To see your plan

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap your **profile picture** or initial at the top right.
3. Tap **Home settings**, then **Subscriptions**, then **Google Home Premium**.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

From there you can see whether you have a plan, which one, and start or change one. On an Android phone you can subscribe right in the app. You can also buy a plan on the Google Store website.

The free trial

Google's help center describes a **30-day trial** of Google Home Premium. If the app offers you one, it's a good way to see whether you actually use the longer history. Put a reminder on your calendar a few days before the trial ends so you can decide on purpose rather than by accident.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

To cancel

Start from the same **Subscriptions** screen, or sign in to the Google Store account where you bought it. If your plan came from a home security partner, or as part of a Google AI or Google One plan, you manage it through that company or plan instead. Google's help center has a separate page for plans bought from a partner.

HEADS UP

Save what you want to keep first

When a plan ends, your longer video history goes with it. Save any clips you want to keep (Chapter 17) before you cancel.

SCAM ALERT

Google won't call you about your plan

Google doesn't phone customers to say their camera plan is expiring, and it never asks for payment by gift card. If someone calls about your "Nest account," hang up and check the Subscriptions screen yourself.

CHAPTER 23

Is a Plan Worth It for You?

There's no single right answer. Here's an honest way to think it through.

You can probably skip a plan if...

- You mostly want to see who's at the door when the bell rings.
- You check alerts as they come in, and rarely need to look back more than a few hours.
- You'd rather not pay a monthly fee, and that's a perfectly good reason.

Standard is a good fit if...

- You travel or are often away, and want to look back over days, not hours.
- You'd like full event recordings, not just short previews, on the newest models.
- You want familiar face alerts, smoke and CO alarm sound alerts, or emergency calling in the U.S.

Advanced is worth a look if...

- You want a camera recording **all the time** (24/7), not just when it notices something.
- You'd like the Gemini features: written descriptions, the daily Home Brief, and asking questions about your video.
- You need a longer record (60 days) for peace of mind, for example at a vacation home.

FROM BILL

My honest take

Start with the free features for a couple of weeks. If you find yourself wishing you could look back further, try the Standard plan. Most households never need more. Advanced is for people who want around-the-clock recording or love the AI summaries. Whatever you choose, you can change it later.

TIP

Count your cameras across brands

If you have cameras from more than one brand, you may be paying two subscriptions. Our Camera Subscriptions Compared manual lines up the plans from Google, Ring, Arlo, Blink, Wyze and Eufy side by side.

PART 5

Privacy, Safety and Scams

Keeping your cameras private, using familiar faces wisely, locking down your Google Account, spotting the scams that target camera owners, and being a good neighbor.

CHAPTER 24

Keeping Your Cameras Private

A camera in your home is only comforting if *you* are the one in control of it. Here's how Google protects your video, and the simple habits that keep it that way.

What Google says it does

- Video from the newest cameras is **encrypted by default**, meaning it's scrambled so only your account can view it.
- Your cameras are protected by your **Google Account**, which can use **2-Step Verification** (Chapter 26).
- A **green light** on the camera shows when it's processing or streaming video.

Checked against Google's product announcement on The Keyword blog on November 13, 2026.

Habits that keep you private

- **Turn indoor cameras off when you're home**, by hand or with an automation (Chapter 18).
- **Never put cameras in bathrooms or bedrooms**, and tell guests, caregivers and house cleaners where cameras are.
- **Only invite people you trust** as household members (Chapter 11), and remove anyone who no longer needs access.
- **Keep the app and the camera updated.** Updates usually install automatically; let them.

Turning a camera off

1. Open the camera in the **Google Home** app.
2. Look for the camera's on/off switch, usually a **power** button on the camera screen or a **Camera** toggle in its settings.
3. Turn it off. It stops streaming and recording until you turn it back on.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Off really means off**
>
> When a camera is turned off in the app, it doesn't record or stream. If you'd feel better with extra assurance, you can also simply unplug an indoor camera or turn it to face the wall.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

Using a camera thoughtfully lets you enjoy the peace of mind without feeling watched in your own home, and it keeps the trust of everyone who visits.

CHAPTER 25

Familiar Faces: Telling You Who's There

With Google Home Premium, some Nest cameras and doorbells can learn the faces of people who come by often and tell you who they are: "Jane is at the front door" instead of "Someone is at the front door." Google calls this **familiar faces**.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

How it works

- The camera notices faces it sees again and again and puts them in a **face library** in the app.
- You give each face a name, or mark it as someone you don't know.
- From then on, alerts can say who it is. You can also get alerts when the camera sees someone it doesn't recognize.
- You can rename or delete face profiles in the face library any time.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

Not available everywhere

Google says familiar face alerts aren't available in some places, including the U.S. state of Illinois, and only on select cameras. If you don't see the option, that may be why.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

STAY SAFE

Ask before you name someone

Face recognition involves other people's faces. It's courteous, and in some places expected, to let regular visitors know your camera recognizes faces. Name family members with their permission, and delete a profile if someone asks you to.

GOOD TO KNOW

It can make mistakes

Google warns that close relatives can be mistaken for each other. A "familiar face" alert is a strong hint, not proof. Look at the video if it matters.

CHAPTER 26

Locking Down Your Google Account

Your cameras are only as safe as the Google Account that controls them. Anyone who gets into your account can see your cameras. The good news is that two simple steps make an account very hard to break into.

Step 1: a strong, unique password

Use a password you don't use anywhere else: a long phrase of four or five unrelated words works well. If you reused your Google password on another website and that site is ever hacked, criminals will try it on your Google Account first.

Step 2: turn on 2-Step Verification

2-Step Verification means that signing in on a new phone or computer takes your password *and* a second check, usually a tap on your own phone. A stranger with your password still can't get in.

1. On your phone or computer, go to **myaccount.google.com** and sign in.
2. Tap **Security** (on some screens, **Security & sign-in**).
3. Find **2-Step Verification** and follow the steps to turn it on.
4. Add a backup method, like a backup phone number, in case you lose your phone.

TIP

Do a security checkup once a year

Google's Security Checkup at myaccount.google.com walks you through your devices, recent sign-ins and recovery options. Ten minutes once a year is a great habit.

SCAM ALERT

Google never asks for your code

If anyone calls, texts or emails asking you to read them a sign-in code, it's a scam, every time. That code is the key to your account. Our Securing Your Accounts manual goes deeper.

CHAPTER 27

Scams That Target Camera Owners

Criminals know that camera owners worry about their homes, and they use that worry. Here are the tricks to watch for. The rule underneath all of them is simple: **Google doesn't call you, and it never asks for gift cards, remote access to your computer, or your sign-in codes.**

SCAM ALERT

"Your camera has been hacked"

A pop-up, email or call claims your camera was hacked and you must call a number or pay for "security support." It's fake. If you're worried, change your Google password and turn on 2-Step Verification yourself (Chapter 26). Never call a number from a pop-up.

SCAM ALERT

Fake "Nest support" phone numbers

Searching the web for "Nest support phone number" can turn up ads for paid companies or outright scammers pretending to be Google. Get help from the Google Home app itself or from support.google.com, typed in yourself.

SCAM ALERT

Subscription renewal emails

An email says your "Nest Aware" or "Google Home Premium" plan is expiring and asks you to click and re-enter your card. Don't click. Open the Google Home app and check **Home settings > Subscriptions** yourself.

Scams at the front door

Your doorbell is also a great tool against in-person scams. Before you open the door, look and listen through the app. Common ones include people posing as utility workers who "need to check something inside," roofers who "noticed damage" on your house, and people asking to use your phone or bathroom.

- Ask for identification through the doorbell, and check it by calling the company's number from your own bill, not one they give you.
- Real utility workers usually don't need to come inside without an appointment.

- You never have to open the door. "Please leave a card in the mailbox" is a complete answer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A video doorbell lets you have a conversation through a closed door. That alone stops a lot of in-person scams before they start.

FROM BILL

If you think you've been taken

Call your bank right away if money or a card was involved, change your Google password, and then call me. There's no embarrassment in it; these schemes fool careful people every day. Our Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual has a full recovery checklist.

CHAPTER 28

Being a Good Neighbor with Your Cameras

Cameras that point outside your home can't help seeing a bit of the world beyond your property. A little thought keeps everyone comfortable.

Simple courtesies

- **Aim at your own property**: your door, driveway and yard, not the neighbor's windows or patio.
- Use **zoom and crop** and **activity zones** (Chapter 15) to keep the neighbor's yard out of the picture and out of your alerts.
- If a neighbor asks about your camera, show them what it sees. It usually puts their mind at rest.
- Share video of a neighbor's property only with them or the police, not on social media.

Recording sound

Nest cameras can record audio as well as video. Rules about recording conversations differ from place to place, so be thoughtful, especially with indoor cameras around caregivers or guests. Most cameras let you turn off the microphone (look for a **Microphone** or **Audio recording** setting in the camera's settings) if you only want video. If you have a specific question about the law, ask a lawyer; I'm a tech helper, not a legal expert.

> **TIP**
>
> **A window decal helps**
>
> The newest Nest Doorbell comes with a window decal. Letting people know a camera is in use is courteous, and it can discourage trouble too.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

PART 6

Fixing Common Problems

A camera that's gone offline, a doorbell that won't chime, blurry or dark video, batteries that drain too fast, and what to do when you move, sell or give away a camera.

CHAPTER 29

My Camera Says "Offline"

"Offline" means the camera can't reach the internet right now, so the app can't show you its picture. Nine times out of ten it's a Wi-Fi or power hiccup, and it's fixable. Work through these in order.

1. **Check your internet.** Can your phone load a website on your home Wi-Fi? If not, the problem is your internet, not the camera. Restart your router (unplug it for 30 seconds, plug it back in, and wait five minutes).
2. **Check the camera's power.** Is it plugged in, and is the outlet working? For battery devices, check the battery level and charge it.
3. **Restart the camera.** Unplug a wired camera for 10 seconds and plug it back in. Wait a few minutes for it to reconnect.
4. **Move the router and camera closer, if you can,** or reduce interference: keep the router out of cabinets and away from microwaves and cordless-phone bases.
5. **Did your Wi-Fi name or password change?** If you got a new router or changed the password, the camera needs to be told. Remove it from the app and set it up again with the new details.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

A new router means re-connecting

When your internet company swaps your router, every camera, doorbell and smart device has to be connected to the new network. The easy trick: give the new router the **exact same network name and password** as the old one, and most devices reconnect on their own.

TIP

Check if it's just you

Once in a while, a Google service outage makes cameras look offline for everyone. If all your cameras dropped at once and your internet is fine, wait an hour and check again before you start taking things apart.

CHAPTER 30

Doorbell Power and Chime Problems

Wired doorbells depend on the power coming through your doorbell wires. When that power is too low, odd things happen.

Signs your doorbell isn't getting enough power

- The doorbell won't turn on.
- The app shows a message saying there isn't enough power.
- The doorbell keeps losing Wi-Fi, or the video looks poor.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

What to try

1. Make sure the breaker for the doorbell is on.
2. With the power off, check that both wires are tight on the doorbell's connectors and not touching the metal back plate.
3. Check the chime connector inside your indoor chime box is attached the way the app showed you.
4. If it still doesn't work, your **transformer** may be too weak. Google's help center has a guide to upgrading it and recommends professional help for that job.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

The indoor chime doesn't ring

If the doorbell works in the app but the chime is silent, check the chime settings for your doorbell in the app first (some doorbells let you turn the indoor chime on or off). Then check the chime connector. A battery doorbell running on its battery alone won't ring a wired chime; it rings through your phone and Google speakers instead.

STAY SAFE

Leave the transformer to a pro

The doorbell transformer connects to your home's 120-volt wiring. Replacing it is an electrician's job, or at least someone experienced with home wiring.

CHAPTER 31

Blurry, Laggy or Dark Video

Blurry or smeared picture

- **Wipe the lens** gently with a soft, dry cloth. Spider webs, pollen and fingerprints are the usual culprits.
- Make sure the camera isn't behind a window. Glass causes glare by day and reflections at night.
- Very hot or cold weather can affect video quality; shade and shelter help.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Choppy or delayed video

Delays and lag usually mean a weak Wi-Fi signal (or, on a wired doorbell, not enough power). Move the router and camera closer if you can, reduce interference, and check your upload speed (Chapter 5).

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

Dark at night

Nest cameras have **infrared night vision**: invisible light that lets them see in the dark, in black and white. Google says the newest models also stay in full color longer at dawn and dusk. If night video is poor, check that a porch light isn't shining straight into the lens and that the camera isn't behind glass.

> **TIP**
>
> **A little light goes a long way**
>
> A porch or motion light that lights up the visitor (not the camera) gives you clearer, color video at night and helps the camera recognize people.

CHAPTER 32

Making a Battery Last Longer

Battery doorbells and cameras use the most power when they record, stream live view, and send alerts. A busy spot drains the battery faster than a quiet one.

Ways to stretch the battery

- **Reduce false alerts** with activity zones and fewer alert types (Chapter 15). Every alert is a recording.
- **Keep live view short.** Peeking in for a minute is fine; leaving it open for half an hour isn't.
- **Aim away from busy streets and waving trees.**
- **Mind the cold.** Batteries of all kinds hold less charge in freezing weather. In an Ohio winter, check the level more often.
- If there are doorbell wires at your door, consider **wiring the battery doorbell** so it stays topped up.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check the level in the app

Open the device in the Google Home app; the battery level is shown on its screen or in its settings. The app also sends a notice when the battery is getting low.

CHAPTER 33

Moving, Selling or Giving Away a Camera

Cameras are tied to your Google Account. Before a camera leaves your hands, or when you move house, a few steps protect your privacy and make life easier for the next owner.

Before you give away or sell a camera

1. Save any clips you want to keep (Chapter 17).
2. In the **Google Home** app, open the camera, tap the **gear** (Settings), and choose **Remove device**.
3. If Google's instructions for your model include a factory reset, do that too.
4. Now the camera is no longer linked to your account and your video stays with you.

When you move house

Google's help center has a guide for moving a camera or doorbell to a different room, home or country. If you're taking cameras with you, remove them before you go and set them up again at the new place; that also connects them to your new Wi-Fi. If you're leaving a doorbell behind for the new owners, remove it from your account first so they can set it up on theirs.

Checked against Google Home and Nest Help on November 13, 2026.

HEADS UP

Bought a home with cameras already installed?

Ask the seller to remove the cameras from their account before closing. Until they do, they may still be able to see what those cameras see. If you can't reach them, contact Google support for help.

PART 7

Getting Help and Quick Reference

When it makes sense to call for help, what I can do for you, and a one-page summary of the words and buttons in this manual.

CHAPTER 34

When to Call Bill

This manual should carry you a long way on your own. But some jobs are simply easier with a helper, and there's no prize for struggling.

Good reasons to call

- Installing a **wired doorbell** or checking whether your **transformer** is strong enough.
- Mounting outdoor cameras **up a ladder**.
- Fixing **weak Wi-Fi** at the front door or garage.
- Moving older cameras from the Nest app to the Google Home app.
- Setting up **alerts, activity zones and automations** so your phone only buzzes when it matters.
- Deciding whether a **subscription** is worth it, and canceling the ones you don't need.
- Anything that just feels confusing. That's what I'm here for.

How I can help

Option	What it looks like
Remote help	We connect over the phone and internet, and I walk you through it or take a look with your permission. Many camera and app questions can be solved this way.
In your home	I come to you in Portage County and nearby, install or adjust things in person, and leave you with everything working.

My prices are simple: **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. If I'm with another customer, my assistant Sophie will answer, take your details and help you find a time.

FROM BILL

No judgment, ever

With more than 30 years of professional experience, I've seen every kind of camera puzzle there is. Nothing you ask will surprise me, and nothing is too small to call about.

CHAPTER 35

Quick Reference

Words to know

Word	Meaning
Google Home app	The free app you use to set up and control Nest cameras and doorbells.
Live view	Watching what a camera sees right now.
Event	A short recording saved when the camera notices something.
Video history	Your saved events (and 24/7 video on the Advanced plan).
Activity zone	An area of the picture you draw so alerts come only from there.
Familiar faces	A paid feature that learns and names regular visitors.
Google Home Premium	Google's paid plan, formerly Nest Aware. Standard or Advanced.
Gemini	Google's AI, which writes descriptions and answers questions about your video on the Advanced plan.
Transformer	The small box that powers a wired doorbell.
Upload speed	How fast your internet sends video out. Each camera needs at least 2 Mbps.

The places you'll go most in the app

To do this	Go here
Look in live	Tap the camera's picture
See what happened	The **Activity** tab, or open a camera and scroll its history
Change alerts or zones	Open the camera, tap the **gear** (Settings)
Add a camera	**Add > Device > Scan QR code**
Check your plan	Profile picture **> Home settings > Subscriptions > Google Home Premium**
Invite family	Profile picture **> Home settings**, then Household

TIP

Keep this handy

Keep this quick reference somewhere easy to find. Most everyday questions come back to these few places.

— Bill, Bill's Home Tech · (330) 200-8042