BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

The Google Pixel

Everything your Pixel phone can do —
explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for every Pixel owner

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Pixel phones (Android 16 & 17) · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Pixel manual. The **Google Pixel** is Google's own Android phone, running “stock” (pure) Android, with Google's helpful features built right in. 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. It's written for recent Pixels running Android 16 or 17; if a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same. Keep it nearby and reach for whatever you need.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Your Pixel

What it is, the buttons, charging, unlocking, the Home Screen, and the handful of finger gestures that run everything. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe you just unwrapped a brand-new Google Pixel, or maybe you've carried one for a while and always felt there was more it could do if only someone would slow down and explain it. Either way, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this book the same way I'd sit down next to you at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing and no fancy words. If I ever use a term you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then — you won't have to look anything up.

This book is yours — read it any way you like

You do not have to read these pages in order, and there is no test at the end. Start on page one, or flip straight to the chapter that answers today's question and ignore the rest for now. Fold the corners, underline things, scribble in the margins. Keep it in the drawer by your chair and pull it out whenever you need it. It's a reference, not a race — you cannot fall behind.

The big promise: you truly can't break it

Here is the most important thing in this whole book. **You cannot break your Pixel by tapping on it and exploring.** You can't wear it out by pressing the wrong thing. You can't delete something important just by looking around. Tapping, swiping, and poking at the screen to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns — including me.

And if you ever tap something and suddenly feel lost — the screen changed and you don't recognize it — there is always one simple move that brings you straight back to safety, like a front porch you can always walk back to. You'll learn it in Chapter 7, and I promise it works every single time. So relax your shoulders.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When you stop worrying about breaking your phone, you start actually using it — and that's when it becomes genuinely useful: staying close to family, keeping yourself safe, and doing the little daily things with a lot less fuss.

And I'm only a phone call away

This book will carry you a long way on your own. But if you ever get truly stuck, you are never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question. So take a breath, make yourself a cup of coffee, and let's get to know your Pixel together. You're going to do just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Pixel Is & Which One You Have

Before we touch a single button, let's answer the simplest question of all: what *is* this thing in your hand?

A tiny computer, a phone, and a camera — all in one

The easiest way to think about your Pixel is this: it's a **small computer** that also happens to be a telephone and a very good camera, all tucked into something the size of a deck of cards. That's really all it is. The same machine that lets you call your daughter also takes photos of the grandkids, shows you the weather, reads you the news, and helps you find the nearest pharmacy. One little slab of glass, many jobs.

Because it's a computer, it runs on **software** — that's just the name for the instructions inside that make everything work. The software that runs a Pixel (and many other phones) is called **Android**, made by Google. From time to time Google updates it to fix problems and add new things, and it has a version number, a bit like the editions of a book. This manual is written around **Android 16 and 17**, the most recent editions.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **"Android" just means your phone's software; "Pixel" is Google's own phone**
>
> Two words worth knowing. **Android** is the operating system — the master set of instructions that runs the phone — and many brands use it. **Pixel** is Google's *own* phone, so it runs a pure, clean version of Android ("stock Android") with Google's features built right in. When Google sends an update, it's simply a newer, improved copy of that software. Nothing to be afraid of.

Finding out which Pixel you have

There are several Pixel models, released over the years. Knowing exactly which one you have is genuinely useful, so let's find out. It takes about thirty seconds.

To find your model and Android version

1. Find the **Settings** app — it's the one with a little grey gear-wheel icon. Tap it once.
2. Scroll all the way down and tap **About phone**.
3. Look for **Model** (for example, "Pixel 11" or "Pixel 11 Pro") and **Android version** (such as 16 or 17).
4. Now you know both facts about your phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Knowing your model helps us help you — fast

When you call me and can tell me “it's a Pixel 11 running Android 17,” I know in an instant exactly what your screen looks like and can walk you through anything over the phone. Jot your model and version on the inside cover of this book so it's always handy.

TIP

Screens may look a little different — that's normal

This manual covers Android 16 and 17 across Pixel models. If a button sits in a slightly different spot on your screen, or a color looks different, don't worry — the *idea* is always the same, and so are the words you're looking for. I'll always tell you what to look *for*, not just where to poke.

CHAPTER 3

The Buttons & Ports

For all it can do, your Pixel has remarkably few physical buttons — just two on the edge. Almost everything else happens by touching the glass screen. Let's walk around the outside and name each one.

The buttons on the edge

- **The power button** (the upper button on the right-hand edge) — a quick press turns the screen on and off. A longer press talks to Google's helper or offers to power off. (On recent Pixels, holding it opens the Gemini assistant.)
- **The volume buttons** (the two-in-one rocker just below it) — press the top to turn sound up, the bottom to turn it down.

The ports and the camera

- **The charging port** (the small oval opening on the bottom edge) — this is a **USB-C** port, where the charging cable plugs in. It fits either way up.
- **The cameras** — the back has a distinctive camera bar with one or more lenses, plus a smaller camera on the front for video calls and selfies. We give the camera its own part later on.

A quick reference: the buttons and what they do

Button or port	What it does
Power button (right edge)	Press once: screen on or off. Press and hold: talk to the Gemini helper, or power off.
Volume up / down (right edge)	Make sounds louder or quieter. Also snaps a photo when the camera is open.
Charging port (bottom)	Where the USB-C charging cable plugs in — either way up.
Cameras (back & front)	Take photos and videos; the front one is for video calls and selfies.

TIP

When in doubt, the power button is your friend

If the screen ever goes dark and you're not sure the phone is even on, just press that power button once. Nine times out of ten the screen lights right back up. The phone was simply resting its screen to save battery — it was awake the whole time.

CHAPTER 4

Turning On, Charging & Battery Basics

Your Pixel is designed to simply stay on, day and night, for months at a time — you rarely need to turn it fully off. But it's good to know how, and to understand the battery so you're never caught with a dead phone at the worst moment.

Turning the screen on and off (the everyday move)

Most of the time, “turning off” your phone just means putting the *screen* to sleep — the phone itself stays awake and ready.

- **To wake it:** press the power button once, or simply lift the phone up — it often wakes on its own. You can also tap the screen.
- **To rest the screen:** press the power button once. The screen goes dark to save battery. Nothing is lost; it's just napping.

Turning it fully off and back on

Every now and then — say, if the phone is acting sluggish — a full restart fixes things, the same way restarting clears the cobwebs on any computer.

1. **To power off:** press and hold the power button together with the volume-up button for a moment, until the power options appear. Tap **Power off**.
2. **To power back on:** press and hold the power button by itself until the Google logo appears, then let go. Give it a minute to wake up.

> TIP
>
> **A restart is the gentlest fix there is**
>
> If an app freezes or the phone feels slow, turning it fully off and on again solves a surprising number of problems — and it never deletes any of your photos, contacts, or messages. When you call me, it's often the very first thing I'll have you try.

Charging — and yes, overnight is just fine

Charging is simple: plug the small end of the USB-C cable into the port on the bottom of the phone, and the other end into the wall plug. You'll feel a gentle buzz and the battery symbol will show it's filling up.

You may have heard that leaving a phone plugged in overnight “ruins the battery.” For today's Pixels, that's an old worry you can set down. **It is perfectly fine to charge**

overnight. Your phone is smart enough to fill up and then ease off, and it can even learn your routine to finish charging right before you usually wake. Plug it in on the nightstand and sleep easy.

Reading the battery, and stretching it further

Up in the top-right corner of the screen is a little battery symbol, often with the exact percentage beside it. The more it's filled, the more charge you have. When it gets low, the phone warns you and it's time to find a charger. A feature called **Battery Saver** stretches a low battery further by quietly dialing back background activity.

Turning on Battery Saver when you're running low

1. Open **Settings**, then tap **Battery**.
2. Tap **Battery Saver** and turn it on.
3. The battery symbol changes color to remind you it's on. It switches itself off once you've charged back up — you don't have to remember.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never get caught with a dead phone

Knowing how to read the battery and flip on Battery Saver means your phone is there when you need it most — to make a call, pull up directions, or reach a loved one — instead of going dark at the worst possible moment. That peace of mind is the whole point.

CHAPTER 5

Unlocking: Fingerprint, Face & Your PIN

Your Pixel keeps itself locked so that if it's ever lost or left on a bench, a stranger can't get into your photos, messages, and accounts. Unlocking it is the little ritual that proves to the phone it's really you. There are a few ways, and your phone likely uses one or two.

The ways in

- **Fingerprint** — the phone recognizes your *fingerprint* when you rest your finger on the sensor (on Pixels, it's *under the screen* — you touch a spot low on the display).
- **Face unlock** — the phone recognizes your *face*; you glance at the screen and it unlocks.
- **Your PIN, pattern, or password** — a secret code you enter. This is the trusty backup that always works.

Setting up fingerprint or face unlock

You were probably offered this when the phone was first set up, but you can set it up anytime in Settings.

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Security & privacy** (or “Security”).
2. Tap **Device unlock** → **Fingerprint** (or **Face**). It'll ask for your PIN first — that's normal.
3. **For a fingerprint,** rest your finger on the sensor spot over and over as it asks, lifting and setting it down, until it has a full picture.
4. **For face,** hold the phone in front of your face and follow the prompts.
5. From now on, a touch or a glance unlocks your phone.

STAY SAFE

Your PIN is yours alone — never share it

Your PIN or password is the master key to your whole phone. **Never tell it to anyone** who calls, emails, or texts asking for it — no real company or “support” will ever ask. Don't write it on a sticky note on the phone itself. Pick something you'll remember but a stranger couldn't guess (not 1-2-3-4, not your birth year). If you'd like help choosing one, call me and we'll sort it out safely.

CHAPTER 6

The Home Screen & App Drawer

Once your phone is unlocked, you land on the **Home Screen** — your phone's front porch and the place you'll always come back to. It's dotted with little colored squares, each a doorway to something your phone can do. Let's make sense of it.

What's an “app”?

Each little square is called an **app** — short for “application,” which is just a fancy word for a small program that does one job. There's an app for phone calls, one for photos, one for the weather, one for messages to family, and so on. **One tap on an app opens it.** See the picture for the thing you want, tap it once, and you're in.

The Home Screen, the Dock, and the App Drawer

- **The Home Screen** holds your chosen favorite apps, and can spread across a few **pages** you swipe between left and right.
- **The Dock** — the row of apps along the very bottom — stays put on every page, so your most-used apps are always at your thumb.
- **The App Drawer** — this is the Android way of holding *every* app you have. **Swipe up** from the bottom of the Home Screen, and a full, alphabetical list of all your apps slides up.

Finding any app

1. From the Home Screen, **swipe up** from the bottom to open the App Drawer.
2. Either scroll through the alphabetical list, or tap the **search box** at the top and type the first few letters of what you want.
3. Tap the app to open it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The App Drawer holds everything; the Home Screen holds your favorites

Here's the key Android idea: *every* app you have lives in the **App Drawer** (swipe up to see them all), while the **Home Screen** shows just the handful you put there for quick reach. So if you can't find an app on your Home Screen, don't panic — swipe up and it'll be in the drawer, in alphabetical order. You can drag favorites from the drawer onto the Home Screen anytime.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything you own is one tap away

Once the Home Screen and App Drawer click into place, the whole phone opens up: calling family, checking the weather, reading the news, seeing your photos — each is a tap on a little picture. You point at what you want, and there it is.

CHAPTER 7

The Gestures That Run Everything

Here's a secret that makes the whole phone suddenly feel easy: there are only about **five finger moves** — called **gestures** — and once they're in your fingers, you can operate anything. Let's learn them slowly, and practice each as we go. You can't do them wrong.

The five everyday moves

- **Tap** — a single, light touch with one fingertip, then lift off. This is how you choose things: open an app, press a button, pick an answer. The screen feels the lightest touch; no need to press hard.
- **Double-tap** — two quick taps in the same spot. Used now and then to zoom in on a photo or a page of text.
- **Press and hold** (a “long press”) — touch and *keep your finger down* for a second or two. This brings up extra options, like a little menu of choices. Patience is the whole trick.
- **Swipe** — touch the glass and *slide* your finger before lifting — up, down, left, or right. Swiping scrolls through a long list and turns between pages.
- **Drag** — press and hold on something, then slide it to a new spot before lifting. This is how you move an app.

The important swipes that run Android

A few swipes are so useful they deserve special attention. On a Pixel, these replace the old on-screen buttons:

- **Swipe UP from the very bottom edge** — go **Home**. This is the big one: it always returns you to the Home Screen from anywhere.
- **Swipe up and hold (a moment) from the bottom** — shows your **recent apps**, the ones you've been using, so you can switch between them.
- **Swipe IN from the left or right edge** — goes **Back** one step (like an undo for wandering too far).
- **Swipe DOWN from the top** — opens your **Notifications** and quick settings (next chapter).

A friendly cheat-sheet of every gesture

Finger move	What it does
Tap once	Choose or open something — your most-used move

Finger move	What it does
Double-tap	Zoom in (and out) on a photo or page
Press & hold	Bring up a little menu of extra options
Swipe (slide)	Scroll through a list or turn a page
Swipe up from bottom	Go Home — always back to safety
Swipe up & hold	See recent apps, to switch between them
Swipe in from a side edge	Go Back one step
Swipe down from top	Open Notifications & quick settings

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Five finger moves and you can do anything

Here's the wonderful part: these same gestures work the *same way in every single app*. Learn them once and you've learned the whole phone. You're not memorizing a thousand things — you're learning a handful, and the phone takes care of the rest.

TIP

Lost? One swipe up brings you home

Here's the reassurance worth repeating: no matter how deep you've wandered into an app, **swiping up from the bottom edge always carries you back to the Home Screen** — your front porch. You can never get stranded. Explore freely.

CHAPTER 8

Quick Settings & the Status Icons

Tucked just off the top edge of your screen is one of the handiest panels on the whole phone: **Quick Settings**. Think of it as the row of light switches by your front door — your most-used controls gathered in one place, one swipe away.

Opening Quick Settings

1. Put a finger at the very **top** of the screen and **swipe down**. A row of little buttons and your notifications slide into view.
2. **Swipe down a second time** (or drag further) to see the *full* grid of Quick Settings buttons.
3. To put it away, swipe back up, or tap any empty space.

What's in there

Quick Settings holds the switches you reach for most. A tap turns each on or off; a highlighted button means it's on. The ones worth knowing:

- **Flashlight** — turns the bright light on the back into a handy torch. Wonderful for a dim restaurant menu or the keyhole at night.
- **Wi-Fi** and **Bluetooth** — switches for your home internet and wireless gadgets like hearing aids or speakers (covered fully later).
- **Brightness slider** — slide to make the screen brighter or dimmer.
- **Airplane mode** — switches off all signals at once, as asked on a flight.
- **Do Not Disturb** — quiets alerts when you want peace.
- **Battery Saver** and more.

The little icons along the top

Across the very top sits a thin row of small symbols — the **status icons** — your phone's dashboard, quietly telling you how things stand. You read them at a glance; you don't tap them:

Icon at the top	What it's telling you
Signal bars	How strong your cell signal is. More bars means a clearer call.
Wi-Fi symbol	You're connected to a Wi-Fi internet network.
Battery symbol	How much charge is left, often with the exact percentage.

Icon at the top	What it's telling you
Bell / moon	Your ringer or Do Not Disturb status.
Airplane symbol	Airplane mode is on — all signals off.

TIP

Poke around in here — you can't hurt a thing

Quick Settings is a wonderful, safe place to practice. Open it and tap the flashlight on and off. Slide the brightness. Nothing here can harm your phone or delete anything — the worst that happens is you turn something on and turn it right back off. Go ahead and explore; that's exactly how you get comfortable.

CHAPTER 8a

The Lock Screen

The **lock screen** is the first thing you see when you wake the phone — before you unlock it. It's more useful than it looks, showing you information at a glance without even opening the phone.

What the lock screen shows

- **The time and date**, large and easy to read.
- **Notifications** — who texted, what's new — so you can see them without unlocking.
- **Shortcuts** (often bottom corners) to the camera and flashlight, usable without unlocking.
- **The weather** and sometimes your next event.

TIP

You can see texts and the time without unlocking

A handy thing: you don't always have to unlock the phone to check it. Just **wake the screen** (press power or lift the phone) and the lock screen shows the time, the weather, and any new messages or alerts at a glance. For a quick “what time is it” or “who texted,” that's all you need — no unlocking required.

CHAPTER 8b

Making the Phone Your Own

Your Pixel can be personalized to feel like *yours* — a photo you love as the background, colors you like, text sized for comfort. These little touches make the phone friendlier and easier to use.

Easy ways to personalize

- **Change the wallpaper** (background picture) — press and hold an empty spot on the Home Screen, tap **Wallpaper & style**, and pick a favorite photo or design.
- **Pick your colors** — the phone can match its colors to your wallpaper, a pleasant touch.
- **Set a favorite photo** of family as your background, so you see it every time.
- **Adjust text size and brightness** for comfort (Part 2).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A phone that feels like yours is friendlier to use

Setting a photo of the grandchildren as your background, sizing the text to be easy on your eyes, choosing colors you like — these small touches turn an intimidating gadget into *your* phone, a familiar and pleasant thing to pick up. It's worth a few minutes to make it yours. And it's a lovely, no-pressure way to practice using the settings.

CHAPTER 8c

Silencing and Sound

Controlling when and how your phone makes noise — ringing, buzzing, or staying silent — is something you'll want day to day. Here's how to keep the peace, or make sure you don't miss a call.

Managing sound

- **The volume buttons** — press them and a slider appears; tap the little icon to choose **ring**, **vibrate**, or **silent**.
- **Do Not Disturb** (in Quick Settings) — silences calls and alerts when you want quiet, like overnight or during a nap.
- **Choose your ringtone** — Settings → Sound → Phone ringtone — pick one you'll recognize and hear well.
- **Turn the ring volume up** if you sometimes miss calls.

TIP

Pick a loud, distinctive ringtone you won't miss

If you sometimes miss calls, two things help: turn the **ring volume up** (in Sound settings), and choose a **loud, distinctive ringtone** you'll clearly recognize as *your* phone. Some folks also turn on vibration so they feel it as well as hear it. A phone that rings loud and clear means you catch the calls that matter. A worthwhile little adjustment.

CHAPTER 8d

The Google Feed and Left Swipe

If you swipe **right** on your Home Screen (past the first page), you may land on a personalized **feed** of news, weather, and updates from Google. It's a pleasant extra some folks enjoy — and easy to ignore if you don't.

About the feed

- **It shows** headlines, the weather, sports scores, and reminders tailored to your interests.
- **Scroll it** like any page; tap a card to read more.
- **You can tune it** — tell it you want more or less of a topic — or simply not use it.
- **It's harmless** — landing on it by accident changes nothing; just swipe back left to your Home Screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Swiped into something unfamiliar? Just swipe back

If you ever swipe and land on an unfamiliar screen — the Google feed, or anything else — don't worry: you haven't broken a thing. Just **swipe back the other way**, or **swipe up from the bottom** to go Home. This is worth remembering for the whole phone: wandering into an unexpected screen is always undo-able with a swipe. So explore freely — you can always find your way back to the familiar Home Screen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A gentle daily briefing, if you want it

For those who enjoy it, the Google feed is a pleasant morning glance — the weather, a few headlines on topics you care about, your day ahead — all in one scroll. And for those who don't, it sits quietly out of the way, bothering no one. Either way, now you know what that screen is, so it holds no mystery. Use it or ignore it, entirely as you please.

PART 2

The Everyday Basics

Your Google account, the Settings app, notifications, typing, connecting to Wi-Fi, and making the screen easy on your eyes. The foundations you'll use every day.

CHAPTER 9

Your Google Account

At the heart of every Pixel is a **Google account** — a free account (the same thing as a Gmail address) that ties your whole phone together. It's worth understanding, because so much flows from it.

What your Google account does

- **It's your sign-in** for the phone, the app store, Gmail, Google Photos, and more — one account for all of it.
- **It safely backs up** your contacts, photos, and settings, so a new phone restores everything (see the Backing Up manual).
- **It's usually an @gmail.com address** — the one you set up (or a family member set up) when the phone was new.

STAY SAFE

Guard your Google account — it's the key to your phone

Because your Google account ties everything together — phone, email, photos, apps — its password deserves real care. Make it strong, don't reuse it, and **never give it to anyone** who calls or messages asking. Turning on **two-step verification** (a texted code at sign-in) is the best lock there is. Jot your Google email on this book's inside cover, and keep the password somewhere safe at home. If you're unsure of it, Chapter 44 helps you reset it.

FROM BILL

Not sure of your Google account? That's common and fixable

A great many folks I help aren't sure of their Google account details — it's one of the most ordinary things in the world, and always sortable. If you're fuzzy on your Gmail address or password, don't let it stop you. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll get it straightened out calmly, together.

CHAPTER 10

The Settings App

The **Settings** app (the grey gear icon) is where you adjust how your phone behaves — and it's where folks feel most nervous about “breaking something.” You can't. Let's take a calm tour so it stops being intimidating.

Finding your way in Settings

Settings is a long list of sections, but you rarely need to scroll far, because there's a **search box** at the very top. Can't find a setting? Tap the search box, type a word (“brightness,” “ringtone,” “Wi-Fi”), and it takes you straight there.

The sections you'll actually use

Section	What's inside
Network & internet	Wi-Fi, mobile data, airplane mode.
Connected devices	Bluetooth — pairing speakers, hearing aids, car.
Display	Brightness, text size, screen timeout, dark mode.
Sound & vibration	Volume, ringtone, Do Not Disturb.
Battery	Charge level, Battery Saver.
Accessibility	Bigger text, magnification, spoken help — comfort features.
Security & privacy	Unlock, Find My Device, app permissions.
About phone	Your model and Android version.

TIP

Use the search box in Settings — don't hunt

The single best tip for Settings: rather than scrolling and hunting, tap the **search box** at the top and type what you want to change. “Text size,” “flashlight,” “alarm volume” — it jumps you right to it. This turns a long, intimidating list into something you can navigate in seconds. When in doubt in Settings, search.

CHAPTER 11

Notifications

A **notification** is the little alert — a sound, a banner, a message at the top — that tells you something has happened: a text arrived, an app has news. They're helpful when they matter and maddening when it's every little thing. You're in charge of how much they bother you.

Seeing and handling notifications

- **They appear at the top** of the screen briefly, and gather in your **notification shade** — **swipe down from the top** to see them all.
- **Tap one** to open whatever it's about (the message, the app).
- **Swipe one sideways** to dismiss it when you've dealt with it.
- **Press and hold one** to control that app's notifications — turn them down or off.

Taming the noise

If an app notifies you too much, press and hold one of its notifications and choose to turn them down or off. Or go to **Settings** → **Notifications** to manage each app. And **Do Not Disturb** (in Quick Settings) silences everything when you want peace — handy at night.

TIP

Turn off notifications for apps that pester you

You don't have to accept a phone that buzzes all day. If a game, a store app, or a news app keeps interrupting you, press and hold its notification and **turn it off** — you'll still have the app, it just won't pester you. Keep notifications on for the things that matter (calls, texts, calendar) and quiet the rest. Your phone should serve you, not nag you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Let your phone alert you to what matters, and stay quiet otherwise

A well-tuned phone tells you about the important things — a call from family, a reminder — and stays peacefully quiet about the rest. A few minutes turning off the pesky notifications transforms the phone from a source of constant interruption into a calm, helpful companion. It's worth doing, and a lovely thing to set up together.

CHAPTER 12

Typing on the Keyboard

Whenever you need to type — a text, a search, an email — an on-screen **keyboard** slides up from the bottom. Typing with your thumbs takes a little practice, but there are tricks to make it easy, including not typing at all.

Typing basics

- **Tap the letters** to type. The phone suggests words above the keyboard — tap a suggestion to save yourself finishing it.
- **The backspace key** (an arrow with an x) erases.
- **Numbers and symbols** are behind the **?123** key.
- **Capital letters** — tap the up-arrow (shift) before a letter.
- **A space** — the long bar at the bottom.

Two easier ways to ‘type’

- **Speak instead** — tap the little **microphone** on the keyboard and just talk; your words appear as text. Wonderful if typing is a strain.
- **Glide/swipe typing** — slide your finger from letter to letter without lifting, and the phone guesses the word. Fast once you get the hang of it.

TIP

The microphone key lets you talk instead of type

If typing on the small keys frustrates you — and it frustrates nearly everyone — tap the **microphone** on the keyboard and simply *say* your message. Your spoken words turn into text. It's faster, easier on the fingers and eyes, and genuinely freeing. For texts, searches, and notes, give voice typing a real try; many folks come to prefer it.

CHAPTER 13

Connecting to Wi-Fi

Connecting to **Wi-Fi** — your home internet — lets your phone do its internet things without using up your cell-phone data plan. You do it once per network, and the phone remembers it.

Joining a Wi-Fi network

1. Open **Settings** → **Network & internet** → **Wi-Fi** (or **Internet**).
2. Make sure Wi-Fi is turned **on**; a list of nearby networks appears.
3. **Tap your home network** by name (the one on your router's sticker).
4. **Type the password** carefully (capital letters matter) and tap **Connect**.
5. A “Connected” note confirms it. From now on, it reconnects automatically at home.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wi-Fi at home saves your cell data

Why bother with Wi-Fi? Because using your home Wi-Fi for internet means you're not using up your phone plan's **cell data** (which may be limited or cost money). So connect to Wi-Fi at home, and the phone uses it automatically for internet, apps, and updates — saving your data for when you're out. Connect once, and it's remembered for good.

FROM BILL

Wi-Fi password troubles? A quick call sorts it

The one thing that trips people up with Wi-Fi is the password — finding it, typing it right. If your phone won't connect to your home Wi-Fi, don't wrestle with it. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll track down the password and get you connected in a couple of minutes. (And if your Wi-Fi is weak in some rooms, see the Mesh Wi-Fi manual.)

CHAPTER 14

Making the Screen Easy to See

Your phone should never leave you squinting. Android has a whole **Accessibility** section of comfort features — and not just for those with poor sight; plenty of people simply find them easier. Let's make your Pixel comfortable.

Comfort settings worth turning on

- **Bigger text** — Settings → Display → **Display size and text**, and drag the sliders to enlarge the words and everything on screen.
- **Magnification** — lets you zoom into any part of the screen with a tap (Accessibility).
- **Bold text and high contrast** — sharper, easier-to-read letters.
- **Dark mode** — light text on a dark background, restful in the evening (Display settings or Quick Settings).
- **Select to Speak / TalkBack** — the phone can read the screen aloud (Accessibility).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A comfortable phone is a phone you'll actually use

Take five minutes to set the text size where it feels easy, turn on bold text, and maybe try dark mode — and you've done yourself a kindness every single day after. A screen you can read without strain is a screen you'll reach for happily. This small bit of setup makes the whole phone more pleasant, so don't skip it.

TIP

Make everything bigger with ‘Display size’

The single most useful comfort setting is **Display size and text** (in Display settings). It has two sliders — one for the text size, one for the overall size of everything on screen. Nudge them larger until the phone is comfortable to read and the buttons are easy to tap. It makes a world of difference. If you'd like help finding and setting it just right, that's a quick, worthwhile call.

CHAPTER 14a

Bluetooth: Connecting Wireless Gadgets

Bluetooth is how your phone connects wirelessly to nearby gadgets — wireless earbuds, hearing aids, a speaker, your car, a smartwatch. It sounds technical but it's simple once you've done it once.

Connecting ('pairing') a device

1. Put the gadget (earbuds, speaker) into **pairing mode** — usually a button you hold until a light blinks (check its instructions).
2. On the phone: **Settings** → **Connected devices** → **Pair new device**.
3. **Tap the gadget's name** when it appears in the list.
4. It connects — and reconnects automatically whenever it's nearby and on from then on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Wireless sound, and hearing aids that connect

Bluetooth is what lets your phone send sound to wireless earbuds or a speaker — and, wonderfully, to many modern **hearing aids**, piping calls and audio right into your ears, clearly and privately (see the Hearing Help Tech manual). It also connects your phone to your car for hands-free calls. Pair a device once, and it just works thereafter. A genuinely useful convenience.

TIP

Pairing is a one-time setup — and I'm glad to help

The first pairing of a Bluetooth device can be fiddly — getting the gadget into pairing mode at the right moment — but once done, it connects on its own forever after. If a speaker, earbuds, hearing aids, or your car won't connect, don't wrestle with it. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll pair it together. After that, it's automatic.

CHAPTER 14b

Wi-Fi vs. Mobile Data

Your phone reaches the internet two ways — **Wi-Fi** at home, and **mobile data** (cell signal) when you're out. Understanding the difference helps you avoid surprise charges and stay connected.

The two kinds of internet

Wi-Fi	Your home (or a shop's) internet — free to you, doesn't use your phone plan. Use it whenever available.
Mobile data	The internet over your cell signal, when you're out and about. Comes from your phone plan — may be limited.

The phone switches between them automatically — Wi-Fi at home, mobile data when you leave. You don't usually have to think about it. The main thing is to connect to Wi-Fi at home so you're not using up data unnecessarily.

HEADS UP

Mind your data if your plan is limited

If your phone plan has **limited data**, be a little mindful when you're out and *not* on Wi-Fi — streaming lots of video or downloading big things uses data, and going over can cost money. For heavy things (updates, movies, big photos), wait until you're on home Wi-Fi. For ordinary texting, calls, and browsing, data use is modest. If you're unsure about your plan, we can check it together.

CHAPTER 14c

Do Not Disturb and Quiet Time

Sometimes you want your phone to simply **stop interrupting you** — during a nap, a meal, the night, or a visit. **Do Not Disturb** gives you that peace with one tap.

Using Do Not Disturb

- **Turn it on** from Quick Settings (swipe down, tap **Do Not Disturb**) — the phone goes quiet, no rings or buzzes.
- **Let important people through** — you can set it to still ring for favorite contacts, or for a second call from the same person (in case of emergency).
- **Schedule it** — have it turn on automatically every night (Settings → Sound → Do Not Disturb).
- **Turn it off** the same way when you want your alerts back.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace when you want it, without missing what matters

Do Not Disturb lets you put the phone to rest — for a nap, a meal, the night — without unplugging from the world entirely, because you can let calls from family still ring through. It's a lovely way to reclaim some quiet on your own terms. Set it to come on each night automatically, and you'll sleep undisturbed by late pings while still reachable in a true emergency.

CHAPTER 14d

Backing Up Your Whole Phone

Beyond photos, your Pixel can back up its whole self — contacts, texts, app data, settings — to your Google account, so a new or replaced phone restores everything. It's one setting, and it's deeply worth having on.

Turning on backup

1. Open **Settings** and search for **Backup** (or go to System → Backup).
2. Make sure **Back up to Google One / Google Drive** is turned **on**.
3. It backs up automatically over Wi-Fi — nothing more for you to do.
4. And confirm **Google Photos backup** is on separately (Part 4) for your pictures.

STAY SAFE

With backup on, a lost phone loses nothing important

This is the heart of phone peace of mind: with **backup turned on**, everything that matters — contacts, photos, messages, settings — is safely copied to your Google account. So a lost, broken, or stolen phone costs you a device, not your memories and connections: sign in on a new phone and it all comes back. Take two minutes to confirm backup is on. The Backing Up Everything manual covers the whole peaceful routine.

CHAPTER 14e

Screen Timeout and the Always-On Display

Two small screen settings are worth knowing: how long the screen stays on before sleeping, and the handy “always-on” display that shows the time at a glance.

Screen settings

- **Screen timeout** — how long before the screen dims and sleeps (Settings → Display → Screen timeout). Set it longer if the screen keeps sleeping while you read.
- **Always-on display** — shows a dim clock, date, and alerts even when the phone is ‘asleep,’ so a glance tells the time without waking it.
- **Adaptive brightness** — the screen adjusts to the light around you, for comfort and battery.

TIP

Screen keeps sleeping while you read? Lengthen the timeout

If the screen annoyingly goes dark while you're still reading a page or a recipe, the fix is simple: lengthen the **Screen timeout** in Display settings (say, to 2 or 5 minutes). Then it stays lit longer before sleeping. A small adjustment that removes a common little frustration. If you can't find the setting, remember the search box at the top of Settings — type ‘timeout.’

PART 3

Calling & Messaging

The phone's oldest jobs, done beautifully: making and taking calls, your contacts, voicemail, texting, and the Pixel's clever tools for blocking spam and screening callers.

CHAPTER 15

Making and Taking Calls

For all its cleverness, your Pixel is still a telephone, and calling is simple. Let's make a call together.

Making a call

1. Tap the **Phone** app (a green icon with a white phone handset), usually in the Dock.
2. To dial a number, tap the **keypad** (a grid of numbers) and type it, then tap the green **Call** button.
3. To call someone saved, tap **Contacts** or **Recents** and tap their name.
4. When you're done, tap the red **End** button to hang up.

Answering a call

- **If the phone is unlocked:** tap the green **Answer** button, or the red to decline.
- **If it's locked:** swipe up to answer, down to decline.
- **During a call,** on-screen buttons let you turn on the **speaker** (to hear hands-free), **mute** your microphone, or open the keypad.

TIP

The speaker button lets you hear without holding the phone up

During a call, tap the **Speaker** button and you can set the phone down and talk hands-free — easier on the arm and the ear, and handy when you need both hands or want someone else to hear. Tap it again to go back to the earpiece. A simple, comfortable feature worth using.

CHAPTER 16

Your Contacts

You don't have to remember or retype phone numbers. Your phone keeps an address book — **Contacts** — and once someone's in it, you reach them by name. And because they're tied to your Google account, your contacts are safe even if you lose the phone.

Adding a contact

1. Open the **Contacts** app (or the Contacts tab in the Phone app).
2. Tap the **+** button to add a new one.
3. Type their **name** and **phone number** (and email, if you like).
4. Tap **Save**. Now you can call or text them by name.

The easiest moment to save someone is right after they call: in **Recents**, tap the number and choose **Add to contacts**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Reach anyone by name, and never lose a number

Keeping your contacts current means the people you love are always a tap away, by name — no squinting at a scrap of paper, no mistyped numbers. And because they sync to your Google account, a lost or replaced phone doesn't lose a single number: sign in on the new phone and they all reappear. Add folks as they call, and your address book fills itself in over time.

CHAPTER 17

Voicemail

When you miss a call, the caller can leave a **voicemail** — a recorded message you listen to later. Pixels have a lovely feature that even shows you voicemails as *written text*.

Listening to voicemail

- **In the Phone app,** tap the **Voicemail** tab to see your messages.
- **Tap one** to play it, or — on Pixel — read the **transcript** (the message typed out as text) right there.
- **Delete** ones you're done with by the trash icon.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pixel can turn voicemails into text you can read

A genuinely handy Pixel feature: it can **transcribe** your voicemails — showing the spoken message as written words you can simply read, instead of listening. Wonderful if hearing a voicemail clearly is a struggle, or you're somewhere you can't play sound. The transcript isn't always perfect, but it usually tells you what you need to know at a glance.

CHAPTER 18

Blocking Spam Calls & Call Screening

Unwanted spam and scam calls plague everyone, and the Pixel has some of the best tools anywhere for fighting them. These features alone make a Pixel worth having.

The Pixel's call defenses

- **Spam warnings** — the Pixel labels likely spam calls right on the screen ("Suspected spam caller") so you know not to answer.
- **Call Screen** — a remarkable feature where **Google's assistant answers an unknown call for you**, asks who's calling and why, and shows you their answer as text — so you decide whether to pick up, all without the caller reaching you.
- **Block a number** — press and hold a number in Recents and choose **Block**; it won't trouble you again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Let your phone screen the junk calls for you

The Pixel's **Call Screen** is a quiet marvel: instead of answering a suspicious unknown call yourself, you let Google's assistant pick up, ask who it is and why they're calling, and show you their reply — then you decide. Spam callers usually just hang up. It means you rarely have to deal with junk and scam calls directly at all. For anyone bothered by endless spam calls, it's a genuine relief.

STAY SAFE

A 'spam' label is a warning — trust it

When your Pixel labels a call **"Suspected spam,"** take that seriously and don't answer — it's usually right. And remember the golden rule from the Scams manual: no real company, bank, or agency will call demanding passwords, gift cards, or urgent payment. Let unknown and spam-labeled calls go to voicemail or Call Screen, and you sidestep the overwhelming majority of phone scams.

CHAPTER 19

Texting with Messages

Beyond calls, **texting** — sending short typed messages — is how a lot of everyday communication happens, especially with younger family. On a Pixel, the **Messages** app handles it.

Sending a text

1. Open the **Messages** app (a blue speech-bubble icon).
2. Tap **Start chat** (or the pencil/+ icon) to begin a new message.
3. **Type a name or number** to pick who it's to.
4. Tap the text box, type your message (or use the microphone to speak it), and tap the **send** arrow.
5. Their reply appears below yours, like a running conversation.

Photos and more in a text

You can send more than words: tap the **+** or paperclip beside the text box to attach a **photo**, and send it along — a lovely way to share a quick picture with family. You can also tap an emoji (the smiley) to add a little heart or thumbs-up.

> TIP
>
> **Speak your texts with the microphone key**
>
> Just like elsewhere, you can **talk instead of type** your texts — tap the microphone on the keyboard and say your message. For quick replies and anyone who finds the small keys fiddly, it's a wonderful shortcut. Give it a try; texting by voice is often faster and easier.

CHAPTER 20

Modern Texting and Group Chats

A couple of things about modern texting are worth knowing, so the colors and features don't puzzle you.

RCS: smarter texting

Between Android phones (and increasingly iPhones too), texts use a smarter system called **RCS** — which gives you **read receipts** (you can see when someone's read your message), **typing dots** (you see when they're writing back), better-quality photos, and it sends over Wi-Fi. It's on by default; you don't need to do anything. It just makes texting nicer.

Group texts

You can text several people at once in a **group** — handy for the family. Start a message and add several recipients; everyone sees the replies, like a group conversation. You can name the group and, if it gets too chatty, mute its notifications (press and hold the conversation).

GOOD TO KNOW

Different colored bubbles just mean different message types

Don't be puzzled by text bubbles being different colors — it usually just reflects whether a message went by the smarter RCS system or plain old texting, or whether it's to an Android or an iPhone. It doesn't change what you do: you type and send the same way regardless. The colors are the phone's bookkeeping, not something you need to manage.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Stay in the loop with family, one text at a time

Texting is how a lot of family life happens now — the quick “on my way,” the photo of the grandkids, the group plan for Sunday. Getting comfortable with Messages keeps you woven into those everyday exchanges. And with voice typing and photo-sharing, it's genuinely easy. A few practice texts, and you'll be chatting away with the family.

CHAPTER 21

Video Calls

Beyond voice, your Pixel can make **video calls** — seeing each other's faces as you talk — a treasure for families spread apart. There are a few ways to do it.

Ways to video-call on a Pixel

- **Google Meet** — built into Pixels; good for calling other Google users and groups.
- **WhatsApp** — hugely popular, free, works with family on any phone (see the WhatsApp manual).
- **Facebook Messenger, Zoom,** and others — whatever your family uses.

In any of them, the idea is the same: open the app, pick the person, and tap the **video-camera** button. Hold the phone up so your face is in view, and enjoy seeing your loved ones.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See their faces, feel close

A video call gives you what a voice call can't — the smiles, the grandchildren's growth, the wave goodbye. Seeing a loved one's face, live, from across the miles is genuinely heartwarming. Whichever app your family uses, your Pixel handles video calls beautifully. (For the full how-to, the WhatsApp and Video Calling manuals in this series walk you through it step by step.)

TIP

Prop the phone up for a relaxed video chat

For a long, comfortable video call, rest your phone against something — a cup, a stand, a stack of books — angled toward your face, so you're not holding it up the whole time. Good light in front of you (facing a window) helps them see you clearly. Little comforts that make a video call a pleasure rather than a strain.

CHAPTER 21a

Favorites and Speed Dial

For the people you call most — your children, your doctor, a close friend — you can make them **favorites** so they're always a single tap away, with no scrolling through contacts.

Setting up favorites

- **In the Phone app,** the **Favorites** tab shows your starred contacts for quick calling.
- **Add a favorite:** open a contact and tap the **star**, or in Favorites tap **Add**.
- **A Home Screen shortcut:** you can even place a direct-dial shortcut for a loved one right on your Home Screen — one tap calls them.

TIP

Put the people you call most one tap away

Make your most-called people — family, your doctor's office, a neighbor — **favorites**, so reaching them is a single tap with no hunting. For someone you call daily, a direct shortcut on the Home Screen is even quicker. It turns calling your loved ones into the easiest thing on the phone. A lovely, practical thing to set up — together, if you like.

CHAPTER 21b

Emergency Features Worth Knowing

Your Pixel has safety features that can genuinely help in an emergency — worth setting up and knowing about, for your own and your family's peace of mind.

Safety features

- **Emergency SOS** — a quick press pattern of the power button can call for help and alert your emergency contacts. Set it up in Settings → Safety & emergency.
- **Medical information & emergency contacts** — you can store these so they're reachable from the lock screen by first responders.
- **Car crash detection** (on Pixels) — can detect a serious crash and call for help.
- **Calling 911** — always works, even on a locked phone (there's an “Emergency” option on the lock screen).

STAY SAFE

Set up your medical info and emergency contacts

Take a few minutes to set up your **emergency contacts and medical information** (Settings → Safety & emergency). Then, if you're ever unable to, first responders can see your key medical details and reach your loved ones right from your locked phone. It's a small setup that could matter enormously one day. A genuinely worthwhile thing to do — and I'm glad to help you set it up and add your contacts.

FROM BILL

Let's set up your phone's safety features together

The emergency and safety features — SOS, medical info, emergency contacts, crash detection — are exactly the kind of thing that's quick to set up with a helper and brings real peace of mind to you and your family. If you'd like your Pixel ready to help in an emergency, call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll get it all set up properly.

PART 4

The Camera & Your Photos

The Pixel's crown jewel: a camera famous for beautiful photos, and Google Photos to keep, organize, and share a lifetime of memories — safely backed up.

CHAPTER 22

Taking Photos

The Pixel's camera is one of the best in any phone — it takes gorgeous photos automatically, so you mostly just point and tap. Let's capture some memories.

Taking a photo

1. Open the **Camera** app (a colorful camera icon) — or, as a shortcut, **double-press the power button** to open it instantly.
2. **Point** the phone at your subject; the screen shows what the photo will look like.
3. **Tap the big round shutter button** (or press a volume button) to take the photo.
4. That's it — the photo is saved. Tap the little thumbnail to see it.

A few handy camera touches

- **Tap the screen** where you want it to focus and set the brightness.
- **Pinch two fingers apart** to zoom in, together to zoom out.
- **Flip to the front camera** (for selfies and video calls) with the little rotate icon.
- **Switch to Video** by sliding the mode selector to “Video,” then tap the red button to start and stop.

TIP

Double-press the power button to open the camera fast

Never miss a moment: **double-press the power button** and the camera opens instantly, even from a locked screen. Perfect for the grandchild's sudden smile or the deer in the yard. You don't have to unlock and hunt for the app — two quick presses and you're ready to shoot. A small shortcut that saves many a missed photo.

CHAPTER 23

The Pixel's Clever Camera Features

The Pixel is famous for smart photo features that make everyone a better photographer. You don't need to understand them deeply — just know they're there to help.

Features worth knowing

Feature	What it does
Night mode	Takes bright, clear photos in the dark — hold steady and it does the rest.
Portrait mode	Blurs the background for a flattering, professional-looking portrait.
Magic Eraser	Removes photobombers or clutter from a photo after you take it.
Best Take / group photos	Helps everyone look their best in a group shot.
Zoom	Pixel Pro models zoom far in to capture distant subjects clearly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A professional camera that does the hard part for you

The wonderful thing about the Pixel camera is that it makes the technical stuff automatic — it adjusts for light, steadies the shot, and even fixes little problems afterward. You just point and tap, and get photos that genuinely look professional. You don't need any photography knowledge; the phone brings it. Capturing beautiful memories of your family has never been easier.

CHAPTER 24

Google Photos: Keeping Your Memories

Every photo you take lands in **Google Photos** — the app that stores, organizes, and (most importantly) **backs up** your pictures. For your irreplaceable memories, this is the most important app on the phone.

What Google Photos does

- **Holds all your photos and videos** in one place, newest first.
- **Backs them up safely** to your Google account — so a lost or broken phone never loses your pictures (as long as backup is on).
- **Organizes them cleverly** — search “beach” or “dog” or a person's name and it finds matching photos.
- **Lets you view them anywhere** — the same photos appear on your computer or tablet by signing in.

Make sure backup is on

1. Open **Google Photos** and tap your **picture** in the top-right corner.
2. Check that **Backup** is turned **on** (it'll say “Backup complete” or show a recent time).
3. If it's off, turn it on — this is what keeps your photos safe.

STAY SAFE

Turn on Backup — it protects your irreplaceable photos

The single most important thing to check on your Pixel: that **Google Photos Backup is on**. With it on, every photo you take is safely copied to your Google account, so even if your phone is lost, dropped, or dies, your precious pictures are safe and waiting on any new device you sign into. Without it, a lost phone means lost memories. See the Backing Up Everything manual — and if you're unsure it's on, let's check together.

GOOD TO KNOW

Free storage is limited — you may see ‘storage full’

Google gives you **15 gigabytes** free, shared across Photos, Gmail, and Drive — generous, but a lifetime of photos fills it eventually, and you'll see a “storage full” notice. That's normal, not a crisis: you can buy more space for a dollar or two a month, clear some out, or copy photos to a drive. The Backing Up Everything manual covers your options calmly.

CHAPTER 25

Finding, Editing & Enjoying Photos

Google Photos doesn't just store your pictures — it makes them a joy to find, touch up, and revisit.

Getting the most from your photos

- **Search for anything** — type “sunset,” “birthday,” a place, or a person's name, and it finds matching photos instantly.
- **Edit a photo** — open it, tap **Edit**, and crop, brighten, or use the automatic “Enhance” to improve it with one tap.
- **Memories and highlights** — Photos gathers your pictures into little “on this day” collections and slideshows to enjoy.
- **Favorite the best ones** — tap the heart, and your treasures gather in one place.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A lifetime of memories, findable and enjoyable

Google Photos turns a jumble of thousands of pictures into something you can actually enjoy: type a word and find any photo in seconds, touch up a shot with one tap, and be surprised by lovely “this day years ago” memories. Your photos stop being lost in the phone and become a treasure you revisit — safe, organized, and a pleasure to share.

CHAPTER 26

Sharing Your Photos

Half the joy of photos is sharing them. Your Pixel makes sending pictures to family quick and easy, in several ways.

Ways to share

- **From Photos,** open a picture (or select several), tap **Share**, and choose how — text, email, WhatsApp, and so on.
- **Shared albums** — make an album the whole family can see and add to — lovely for grandchildren's photos.
- **On the big screen** — cast your photos to a smart TV for everyone to enjoy (see the Smart TVs manual).

TIP

A shared family album keeps everyone's photos in one place

A wonderful feature: create a **shared album** in Google Photos and invite the family. Then your daughter's photos of the grandkids and your photos from Sunday dinner all gather in one place everyone can see and add to — no endless texting of pictures. It's a lovely way for far-flung family to share in each other's days. A nice thing to set up together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Share a moment the instant it happens

A photo of the first snow, the birthday cake, the new porch — a couple of taps and it's in your loved one's hands in seconds, anywhere in the world, free. For keeping close to family who live far away, your Pixel's camera and Google Photos together are worth the whole phone.

CHAPTER 26a

Recording Video

Your Pixel records lovely **video** too — the grandchild's recital, a message to far-off family, the garden in bloom. It's as easy as taking a photo.

Taking a video

1. Open the **Camera** and slide the mode selector to **Video**.
2. Tap the red button to **start** recording; tap it again to **stop**.
3. **Hold the phone steady** and move slowly for smooth video; turn it sideways (landscape) for a wider, TV-shaped picture.
4. Your video saves to Photos, ready to watch and share.

TIP

Turn the phone sideways for video

For video you'll watch on a TV or computer later, hold the phone **sideways** (landscape) while recording — it gives the wide, natural picture shape that fills a screen, rather than a tall, narrow strip. Hold it steady, move gently, and you'll capture lovely footage of the moments that matter. A simple habit that makes your videos look much better.

CHAPTER 26b

Scanning Documents and QR Codes

Your Pixel's camera doubles as a handy scanner — for turning paper documents into tidy digital files, and for reading those little square QR codes you see everywhere.

Scanning

- **Scan a document** — in Google Drive (or the Camera), use the scan feature to photograph a paper (a form, a receipt, a letter) and save it as a neat PDF to keep or email.
- **Read a QR code** — just point the Camera at the little square code (on a menu, a flyer, a package) and tap the link that pops up.

HEADS UP

Be cautious with QR codes from unknown sources

QR codes are handy, but a code is really just a link you can't read with your eyes — so give one the same caution as any link. Scanning a code on a legitimate restaurant menu is fine; a code on a random sticker, a mailed “notice,” or an unexpected email could lead somewhere false. After scanning, check the web address before typing anything. When in doubt, don't scan. (The Scams manual has more.)

CHAPTER 26c

Printing Your Photos

Digital photos are lovely, but sometimes you want one **on paper** — for the fridge, a frame, or a gift. Your Pixel makes printing easy, even without a printer of your own.

Ways to print

- **Order prints** — Google Photos and apps like Walgreens or CVS let you order prints of your photos for pickup or mail, right from the phone.
- **Print at home** — if you have a wireless printer, open a photo, tap Share or the menu, and choose **Print**.
- **Make a photo book** — Google Photos can turn a collection into a lovely printed book, a wonderful gift.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Bring your best photos into the real world

There's something special about a photo you can hold — on the fridge, in a frame, in an album. Your Pixel makes it easy to turn your digital treasures into prints, or even a whole photo book, ordered from your chair and arriving in the mail. A printed photo of the grandchildren makes a heartfelt gift, and a printed book of a trip or a year is a keepsake. Lovely things, a few taps away.

PART 5

Google & Gemini: Your Helpers

The Pixel's great advantage is Google's helpfulness built right in: the Gemini assistant you can talk to, Google search and Maps, and the handful of Google apps that make daily life easier.

CHAPTER 27

Meet Gemini, Your Assistant

Your Pixel has a built-in **assistant** you can talk to — ask it questions, have it do things, get help, all by speaking. On recent Pixels this assistant is called **Gemini** (it replaced the older "Google Assistant"). It's genuinely useful once you're comfortable with it.

Calling on your assistant

- **Say "Hey Google"** out loud, and the assistant listens.
- **Or press and hold the power button** (on recent Pixels) to open Gemini.
- **Then just talk** — ask a question or give an instruction in plain English.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A helper you can simply talk to

Having an assistant you can just *ask* is a real everyday help — especially when typing or hunting through menus is a strain. "What's the weather?" "Set a timer for 20 minutes." "Call my daughter." "How do you spell 'necessary'?" — you speak, and it answers or acts. For anyone who finds the phone fiddly, talking to it is wonderfully freeing. It's one of the nicest things about a Pixel.

CHAPTER 28

Handy Things to Ask

You don't need special commands — just speak naturally. Here are examples to give you the idea; say them your own way and it'll understand.

Useful things to say

To do this	Just say…
Quick facts	“What's the weather today?” “How tall is the Empire State Building?”
Timers & alarms	“Set a timer for 15 minutes.” “Wake me at 7.”
Reminders	“Remind me to take my pills at 8.”
Calling & texting	“Call Jane.” “Text my son I'm on my way.”
Directions	“Directions to the nearest pharmacy.”
Spelling & math	“How do you spell ‘rhythm’?” “What's 15% of 60?”

TIP

Speak naturally — it understands plain English

Don't worry about exact wording — just say what you mean, as you'd say it to a person. “What's the temperature outside,” “how warm is it,” “do I need a coat today” all work. If it misunderstands, try again a little differently. It's forgiving, and you'll quickly learn the phrasings that work smoothly. Start with simple things like timers and the weather, and build from there.

GOOD TO KNOW

A word on the assistant and privacy

Your phone listens for “Hey Google” and otherwise isn't recording your conversations. You can review and delete what it has heard in your Google account settings, and turn the always-listening feature off if you prefer (then you open it with the button instead). If the listening concerns you, use the button method — you still get all the help. It's entirely your choice how it works.

CHAPTER 29

Google Search and the Web

Your Pixel puts the whole of human knowledge at your fingertips through **Google search**. Whenever you wonder about something, you can simply ask.

Searching

- **The search bar** on your Home Screen — tap it and type (or speak) your question.
- **Ask anything** — a recipe, a phone number, what year a movie came out, a health question, directions.
- **Chrome** — the web browser (a colorful circle icon) for visiting websites; type a website address or a search in its bar.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Any question, answered in seconds

There's a quiet wonder in being able to ask your phone almost anything and get an answer — the name of that actor, how to remove a stain, what time the pharmacy closes, a word's meaning. Your Pixel turns idle curiosity and little daily questions into instant answers. Whether you type or speak, the world's information is a tap away. It's one of the most genuinely useful things a phone does.

STAY SAFE

Be a little careful what you tap in search results

Google search is wonderfully useful, but as with anything online, use a little care: stick to results from sources you recognize, be wary of ads dressed up as results, and never enter passwords or card details on a page you reached by a stray tap. For serious matters — health, money, government — favor official, well-known sites. The Scams manual has more on staying safe online.

CHAPTER 30

Google Maps

Google Maps (a map icon with a location pin) is one of the most useful apps on any phone — it shows you where things are and guides you there, turn by turn, with a voice.

What Maps does for you

- **Find places** — type or say what you want ("pharmacy," "Italian restaurant," an address) and see it on the map, with hours and phone number.
- **Get directions** — tap **Directions**, and it guides you there by car, walking, or bus, speaking each turn aloud so you can keep your eyes on the road.
- **See traffic** and the best route, and how long it'll take.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never get lost again — the phone guides you

Google Maps means you need never fear getting lost or missing a turn: say where you want to go, and a friendly voice guides you there step by step, rerouting if you miss a turn. For finding an unfamiliar address, a good restaurant nearby, or just the confidence to go somewhere new, it's a genuine boon. Many folks find it one of the phone's most liberating features.

TIP

Let Maps speak the directions so you can drive safely

When driving, set up your destination in Maps *before* you start, then let it **speak the directions aloud** — "turn right in a quarter mile" — so you keep your eyes on the road and never fumble with the phone while driving. Prop it where you can glance at it, turn the voice up, and drive safely. Never tap at the phone while the car's moving.

CHAPTER 31

The Google Apps You Already Have

Your Pixel comes with a set of free, genuinely useful Google apps built in. Here's a quick who's-who so the icons aren't a mystery.

The built-in Google apps

App	What it's for
Gmail	Your email — reading and sending (see the Email manual).
Chrome	The web browser, for visiting websites.
Maps	Finding places and directions.
Google Photos	Your photos, backed up and organized.
Calendar	Appointments and events (see the Calendars manual).
Clock	Alarms and timers.
Play Store	Where you get more apps (next part).
Google / Gemini	Search and your assistant.

GOOD TO KNOW

You already have what you need for most things

A reassuring thing about a Pixel: the apps that come built in — email, web, maps, photos, calendar, clock, assistant — already cover most of what you'll want to do. You don't need to go hunting for apps to get started; the essentials are right there. Add others only as you find a specific need. For many folks, the built-in apps are nearly all they ever use.

FROM BILL

Want a tour of your phone's apps? Happy to help

If the row of app icons on your Pixel is a bit of a mystery, I'm glad to give you a friendly tour — what each one does, which you'll actually use, and how to tidy away the ones you won't. It makes the whole phone feel far less cluttered and intimidating. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll make sense of your apps together.

CHAPTER 31a

Google Translate

Google Translate is a small wonder — it translates words, signs, and even spoken conversation between languages. Handy for travel, for a sign you can't read, or for talking with someone who speaks another language.

What Translate does

- **Type or speak** a phrase and get the translation — in text, and spoken aloud.
- **Point the camera** at a sign, menu, or label in another language and see it translated on screen, like magic.
- **Conversation mode** — the phone listens and translates back and forth, so you can talk with someone across a language barrier.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Talk with anyone, read anything

Google Translate quietly removes the language barrier: read a foreign menu by pointing your camera at it, ask for directions in another country, or have a real back-and-forth conversation with someone who speaks a different language, your phone translating each way. For travel, for a neighbor, for connecting across languages, it's a genuinely remarkable tool — and free, right on your Pixel.

CHAPTER 31b

Paying with Your Phone (Google Wallet)

Your Pixel can act as a **contactless payment card** — tap it at a store's card reader to pay, using **Google Wallet**. It's optional, secure, and surprisingly handy once set up.

How it works

- **Add your card** to the **Google Wallet** app (a one-time setup; it's securely stored).
- **To pay,** unlock the phone and **hold it near the card reader** at checkout — a tap, and it's paid.
- **It's secure** — the store never sees your real card number, and it requires your unlock, so a thief can't use it.
- **Also holds** boarding passes, event tickets, and loyalty cards.

GOOD TO KNOW

Paying by phone is actually safer than a card

It feels futuristic, but tapping your phone to pay is genuinely **safer** than swiping a card: the store never receives your real card number (a one-time code is used instead), and it only works after *you* unlock the phone — so a lost phone can't be used to pay. It's optional, so no pressure to use it; but it's secure and convenient if you'd like to try. I'm happy to help you set it up safely.

STAY SAFE

Only add your own cards, and keep your phone locked

As with anything involving money, a little care: add only **your own** cards to Google Wallet, keep your phone's screen lock on (it's what protects payments), and never let anyone set up payment on your phone who you wouldn't trust with your wallet. Done sensibly, phone payment is safe and handy. If a “support” call ever asks you to set up or “verify” a payment, that's a scam — hang up.

CHAPTER 31c

Reading, News and Entertainment

Your Pixel is a library, a newsstand, and an entertainment center in your pocket. Here's a taste of the ways it can entertain and inform you.

Things to enjoy

To do this	Use this
Read the news	Google News, or your favorite paper's app — free and paid options.
Read books	Google Play Books, Kindle, or Libby (free library books with your card!).
Watch videos	YouTube — endless free how-tos, music, old clips, church services.
Listen to music	YouTube Music, Spotify, Pandora, or the radio apps.
Podcasts & audiobooks	Spoken shows and books to listen to.
Games & puzzles	Solitaire, crosswords, word games — many free.

TIP

Your library card unlocks free books and more

A lovely, little-known perk: with your **library card** and the free **Libby** app, you can borrow and read e-books and audiobooks on your phone — completely free, from your local library, without leaving home. Many libraries also offer free movies and magazines this way. If you enjoy reading, it's one of the best free things your Pixel can do. Ask your library, or let me help you set it up.

CHAPTER 31d

Live Caption: Words on the Screen

A wonderful accessibility feature on Pixels: **Live Caption** can show **captions** — the spoken words written out — for almost any audio or video on your phone, in real time. A real help if hearing is a struggle.

Using Live Caption

- **Turn it on** in Settings → Accessibility → **Live Caption** (or press a volume button and tap the Live Caption icon).
- **It captions videos, podcasts, even calls** — the words appear on screen as they're spoken.
- **Great for** a video with no subtitles, a voicemail, or following along when sound is hard to catch.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Read along when you can't quite hear

Live Caption is a quiet gift for anyone whose hearing isn't what it was: it writes out the spoken words of videos, podcasts, and even phone calls, right on your screen, as they happen. So you can follow a video with no subtitles, or read what a caller is saying. It works across the phone, automatically. Pair it with the Hearing Help Tech manual's advice, and your Pixel becomes a real ally for hearing.

CHAPTER 31e

Sharing Files with Nearby Phones

When you want to send a photo or file to someone standing right next to you, **Quick Share** (Android's nearby-sharing feature) zaps it across instantly, no texting needed.

Sharing nearby

- **Open the photo or file,** tap **Share**, and choose **Quick Share** (or Nearby Share).
- **Pick the nearby device** — the other person's phone appears if they're close and have it on.
- **They accept,** and the file zips over directly — fast, and it doesn't use your data or clutter a text thread.

TIP

Handy for passing photos to family in the same room

Quick Share shines when family is together: snap a group photo and send it straight to everyone's phones in the room, instantly, without texting each person. It's quick, uses no data, and keeps the full quality. A lovely feature at family gatherings — and a nice one to try the next time the family's over. (It works between most modern Android phones, and with some computers too.)

PART 6

Apps, Internet & Daily Life

Getting new apps safely from the Play Store, browsing the web, and a tour of the everyday things your Pixel makes easier — from the weather to your boarding pass.

CHAPTER 32

Getting New Apps (the Play Store)

Your Pixel comes with many apps, but you'll often want more — your bank's app, a game, a news app, your pharmacy. You get them from the **Play Store**, Google's official, safe place for apps.

Installing an app

1. Open the **Play Store** (a colorful triangle icon).
2. Tap the **search box** at the top and type what you want — the app's name or a word like "weather."
3. Find the right one (check it's the official one, with lots of reviews) and tap **Install**.
4. Wait a moment while it downloads; it then appears in your App Drawer, ready to open.

STAY SAFE

Only get apps from the Play Store — and check they're the real one

Stick to the official **Play Store** for apps — it's Google's vetted source, far safer than downloading apps from random websites or links (which can carry scams or harmful software). And within the store, make sure you've got the *genuine* app: the real maker's name, a huge number of reviews, the correct logo. A fake look-alike app can be a scam. When unsure which is the real one, ask me — a quick check saves trouble.

GOOD TO KNOW

Most good apps are free — watch for in-app charges

Many excellent apps are completely free to install. Some are paid, or free-but-with-charges-inside ("in-app purchases"). The Play Store shows the price (or "Free") before you install, so there are no surprises at download. Just be a little mindful of apps — especially games — that tempt you to spend money *inside* them; you can set a PIN for purchases to prevent accidental spending.

CHAPTER 33

Managing Your Apps

As you add apps, a little tidying keeps your phone pleasant and uncluttered. Here's how to arrange, and remove, apps.

Tidying your apps

- **Add a favorite to the Home Screen:** in the App Drawer, press and hold an app and drag it onto the Home Screen.
- **Move an app:** press and hold it and drag it where you like; lift off to drop it.
- **Remove an app:** press and hold it and choose **Uninstall** (removes it) or **Remove** (just takes it off the Home Screen; it stays in the drawer).
- **Make a folder:** drag one app on top of another to group them — tidy for, say, all your games together.

TIP

A tidy Home Screen with your favorites up front is a calmer phone

Put your handful of most-used apps — Phone, Messages, Camera, Photos, whatever you reach for — right on your main Home Screen, and let the rest live in the App Drawer. A clean, familiar Home Screen with just your favorites makes the phone feel like *yours* and far less overwhelming. A few minutes tidying pays off every day. Happy to help you set it up.

CHAPTER 34

Browsing the Web with Chrome

Chrome is your Pixel's web browser — the app for visiting websites, reading the news, looking things up, shopping. Let's get comfortable with it.

Using Chrome

- **Open Chrome** (a colorful circle) and tap the **bar at the top**.
- **Type a website address** (like weather.com) or just **type what you're looking for** to search, then tap Go/Enter.
- **Tap links** to move around; **swipe up and down** to scroll.
- **The back arrow** (or swipe from the edge) returns to the previous page.
- **Bookmark** a favorite site (the star) so you can return to it easily.

TIP

Bookmark the sites you visit often — and reach them safely

For websites you use regularly — your bank, your news, the weather — **bookmark** them (tap the star) and reach them through the bookmark every time. This saves typing and, importantly, ensures you always land on the *real* site rather than a fake look-alike you might reach by a mistyped address or a bad link. Setting up bookmarks for your key sites is a lovely little safety-and-convenience project.

STAY SAFE

Type important web addresses yourself, never from a link

When visiting anything important — your bank, Amazon, a government site — type the address yourself (or use your bookmark), never a link in an email or text. That's the single best habit against the fake-website scams covered in the Scams manual. A link can look right and lead somewhere false; an address you typed yourself can't.

CHAPTER 35

Everyday Things Your Pixel Makes Easy

Beyond the big apps, your Pixel quietly makes dozens of little daily tasks easier. Here's a sampler, so you know what's possible.

Handy everyday uses

To do this	Use this
Check the weather	Ask your assistant, or the Weather app / Home Screen widget.
Set reminders & alarms	By voice or the Clock app (see the Calendars manual).
Get directions	Google Maps, spoken turn by turn.
Pay with your phone	Google Wallet — tap to pay at stores (optional, secure).
Boarding passes & tickets	Stored in Google Wallet for easy access.
Flashlight	Quick Settings — a handy torch.
Calculator, notes, scanner	Built-in apps for little daily jobs.
Translate	Google Translate — even speaks for you in another language.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A pocketful of helpers for daily life

Your Pixel is really a whole drawer of tools in one pocket: a flashlight, a calculator, a map, a camera, a notepad, a weather station, a translator, even your boarding pass. Once you know what's there, you reach for it naturally through the day, and a hundred little tasks get easier. Explore gently, and you'll keep discovering handy things it can do.

CHAPTER 36

Widgets and the At-a-Glance Screen

Your Home Screen can show more than app icons — it can display little live panels called **widgets** that show information at a glance, like the weather, your next appointment, or the date.

About widgets

- **The top of the Home Screen** often shows an “At a Glance” widget — the date, weather, and reminders of upcoming events.
- **Add a widget:** press and hold an empty spot on the Home Screen, tap **Widgets**, and pick one (a big clock, the weather, your calendar).
- **They update themselves** — the weather widget always shows the current forecast, for instance.

TIP

A big clock or weather widget makes the Home Screen useful at a glance

If you'd like the time, date, or weather visible the moment you look at your phone, add a **widget** for it to your Home Screen — a large, easy-to-read clock or a weather panel. Then a glance tells you what you need without opening anything. Widgets are optional, but a well-chosen one or two make the Home Screen genuinely handy. A nice touch to set up together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your phone, arranged around your life

Between your favorite apps up front, a tidy App Drawer, and a useful widget or two, your Pixel becomes a phone shaped around *your* days — the things you use most, right where you want them, the clutter tucked away. That bit of personalizing turns a daunting gadget into a comfortable, familiar helper. It's worth the small effort.

CHAPTER 36a

Banking and Shopping Apps, Safely

Your bank, your pharmacy, your favorite stores — most have an **app** that's genuinely convenient for checking a balance, refilling a prescription, or ordering. Used safely, these are a real boon.

Using these apps safely

- **Get them from the Play Store** — search for your bank or store by name and install the *official* app (check the maker's name and reviews).
- **Sign in** with your account for that bank/store, and let the app remember you behind your phone's lock.
- **Use your phone's lock and fingerprint** to protect them — many banking apps can require your fingerprint to open.
- **Never sign in via a link** in a text or email — open the app you installed, or type the address yourself.

STAY SAFE

Reach your bank through its real app, never a message link

Banking from your phone is safe and convenient — as long as you reach your bank through the **official app you installed from the Play Store** (or its real website typed yourself), never through a link in a text or email. Scammers send fake “your bank” messages with links to fake sign-in pages. If a message about your account arrives, don't tap its link — open your real bank app and check there. See the Scams manual.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your errands, handled from your chair

A bank balance checked without a trip, a prescription refilled in seconds, groceries ordered for pickup, a bill paid on time — the right apps turn tiring errands into a few taps from your chair. For anyone who finds getting out harder than it used to be, that convenience is genuine independence. Set up safely, your phone becomes a real daily helper for life's errands.

CHAPTER 36b

YouTube: A World of Free Video

YouTube is a free app holding an astonishing variety of video — and it's often the first app folks truly fall in love with, because there's something on it for every interest.

What you'll find

- **How-to videos** for absolutely anything — fixing a faucet, a recipe, using a gadget.
- **Music and concerts**, old and new; **old TV clips** and shows you remember.
- **Church services, lectures, travel, nature, cooking** — whatever you're curious about.
- **Just search** for a topic in the YouTube app, and tap a video to watch.

TIP

Search YouTube for anything you're curious about

YouTube is a wonderful place to start exploring what your phone can do: open it, tap the search, and type *anything* — “how to prune roses,” a favorite old song, “Tai chi for beginners,” your hometown's name. You'll be amazed what's there, all free. It's entertaining, educational, and a gentle, enjoyable way to get comfortable searching and watching on your phone. Dive in.

HEADS UP

Mind the ads and ‘up next’ suggestions

Two small cautions with YouTube: free videos have **ads** (just wait or tap ‘skip’ when it appears — don't tap the ad itself), and it always suggests more videos to keep you watching, which can swallow an afternoon. Enjoy it, but be aware it's designed to keep you scrolling. And as ever, be a little wary of videos making wild health or money claims; not everything on there is reliable.

CHAPTER 36c

App Permissions: What Apps Can Access

When you install an app, it may ask for **permission** to use parts of your phone — the camera, your location, your contacts. Understanding these keeps you in control of your privacy.

About permissions

- **Apps ask before using sensitive things** — a camera app needs the camera, a map app needs your location. That's normal.
- **You can say yes, no, or 'only while using'** — the last is a good, privacy-friendly choice for location.
- **Be thoughtful** — if a simple flashlight app wants your contacts and location, that's a red flag; deny it.
- **Review anytime:** Settings → Security & privacy → Permissions, to see and change what each app can access.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's fine to deny permissions that don't make sense

You're in charge of what apps can see and do. If an app asks for access that doesn't fit its job — a game wanting your contacts, a wallpaper app wanting your location — it's perfectly fine to say **no**; the app will usually still work for what you want. Grant access only where it makes obvious sense (the camera for a camera app). This simple thoughtfulness quietly protects your privacy without any technical know-how.

CHAPTER 36d

Switching Between Apps

As you use the phone, you'll often want to hop between apps — from a text back to the web, from the camera to Photos. Android makes this quick once you know the moves.

Moving between apps

- **See your recent apps:** swipe **up from the bottom and hold** for a moment — your recently-used apps appear side by side as cards.
- **Tap a card** to jump back to that app, right where you left it.
- **Swipe a card up** to close that app (tidying, not deleting).
- **Quick switch:** swipe left or right along the very bottom edge to flip between your last couple of apps.

TIP

Your apps wait where you left them

A reassuring thing: when you switch away from an app, it doesn't close or lose your place — it waits in the background exactly where you left it. Swipe up and hold to see your recent apps and tap back into any of them, picking up right where you were. So you can check a text mid-recipe and return to the recipe without starting over. The phone remembers for you.

CHAPTER 36e

Weather, Widgets, and Daily Glance

A few small setups make your Pixel genuinely useful at a glance each day — the weather, your schedule, the time — without opening anything.

At-a-glance helpers

- **The weather** — add the Weather app or a weather widget to your Home Screen, or just ask “Hey Google, what's the weather?”
- **Your day** — the ‘At a Glance’ widget shows the date and your next appointment at the top of the Home Screen.
- **A big clock** — a clock widget makes the time easy to read the moment you look.
- **Morning routine** — ask your assistant “what's my day look like?” for the weather and schedule read aloud.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A quick glance tells you what you need

With a weather widget, your calendar at a glance, and a big clock on your Home Screen, a single look at your phone tells you the time, the forecast, and what's on today — no opening apps, no tapping. It's a small bit of setup that makes the phone quietly useful every single morning. A pleasant way to start the day informed, and a nice thing to arrange together.

FROM BILL

Let's set up your phone to be useful at a glance

Arranging your Home Screen with the handful of things you check daily — weather, time, schedule, favorite people — right up front makes a Pixel feel genuinely helpful rather than cluttered. If you'd like your phone set up to show you what matters at a glance, call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll arrange it around *your* daily habits. It makes a real difference.

PART 7

Staying Safe & Solving Problems

Keeping your Pixel and your information secure, spotting the scams that target phone users, finding a lost phone, and calm fixes for the everyday troubles.

CHAPTER 37

Keeping Your Phone Secure

Your phone holds a great deal of your life — photos, messages, email, maybe banking. A few simple habits keep it, and you, safe. None is complicated.

The security essentials

- **A screen lock** — a PIN, fingerprint, or face unlock, so a lost phone stays shut to strangers.
- **A strong Google account password**, not reused elsewhere, with **two-step verification** turned on.
- **Keep the phone updated** — updates patch security holes (next chapter).
- **Only install apps from the Play Store.**
- **Never share passwords or codes** with anyone who contacts you.

STAY SAFE

Two-step verification is the best lock on your account

The single best thing you can do for your phone's security is turn on **two-step verification** for your Google account — so that signing in needs your password *and* a code sent to your phone. Even a thief with your password can't get in without your phone in hand. It's a few minutes to set up (in your Google account's security settings), and it protects your email, photos, and everything tied to your account. Well worth doing — together, if you like.

CHAPTER 38

Scams That Target Phone Users

Scammers love phones — by call, text, and pop-up. The good news: your Pixel has strong defenses (Part 3), and knowing the common tricks makes you very hard to fool. (The Scams manual in this series covers all of this in depth.)

The scams to know

- **Scam calls** — “your account is compromised,” fake tech support, the IRS, a “grandchild in trouble.” Let Call Screen and spam labels handle unknowns.
- **Scam texts** — fake package notices, “your account is locked,” prize wins, with links to tap. Don't tap; delete.
- **Scary pop-ups** while browsing — “your phone is infected, call this number!” Always fake; never call.
- **Requests for gift cards, codes, or remote access** — always a scam.

SCAM ALERT

No real company asks for passwords, codes, or gift cards

The golden rule that beats nearly every phone scam: **no legitimate bank, company, or government agency will ever call, text, or pop up asking for your password, a verification code, gift-card payment, or remote access to your phone.** Anything that does is a scam, 100% of the time. Don't tap the link, don't call the number, don't share the code. Slow down, and when in doubt, call someone you trust — or me. See the Scams manual for the full picture.

FROM BILL

A call or text that worries you? Call me first

If you ever get a call, text, or pop-up that frightens or pressures you — about your account, money, a package, anything — please don't act on it in the moment. Hang up or set it down, and call me at (330) 200-8042. We'll figure out together whether it's real (it's almost never) and handle it safely. I'd far rather get that call than hear afterward. No question is too small.

CHAPTER 39

Finding a Lost Phone

Misplacing your phone is a sinking feeling — but your Pixel has a built-in way to find it, make it ring, or lock it, from any other device. It's worth knowing before you need it.

Find My Device

- **From a computer or another phone,** go to **google.com/find** (or the Find My Device app) and sign in with your Google account.
- **See your phone on a map,** make it **ring** loudly (even if silenced) to find it under the couch cushions, or **lock** it and show a message if it's truly lost.
- **Make sure it's turned on** ahead of time: Settings → Security → Find My Device → on.

TIP

Set up Find My Device now, before you ever need it

Take two minutes to confirm **Find My Device** is turned on (Settings → Security), so that if you ever lose your phone, you can locate it, ring it, or lock it from any other device. It's a wonderful safety net — most “lost” phones are just under a cushion and a loud ring finds them. Setting it up in advance is the key, because you can't turn it on *after* the phone's lost. A great thing to check together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind if your phone goes astray

Knowing you can find, ring, and lock your phone from anywhere takes a lot of the dread out of misplacing it. Dropped it between the car seats? Ring it. Left it at a friend's? See it on a map. Truly lost? Lock it so no one can get in. That safety net, set up once, is a quiet comfort every day you carry the phone.

CHAPTER 40

Keeping Your Pixel Updated

Your phone gets **updates** from Google now and then — improvements, new features, and important security fixes. Keeping current is one of the simplest, most protective things you can do.

Updating

- **Most updates install automatically**, often overnight while charging — you needn't do anything.
- **To check by hand:** Settings → **System** → **Software update** (or search “update” in Settings) → **Check for update**.
- **Let it install** when offered; it may restart — that's normal. Plug in and connect to Wi-Fi first.

TIP

Let updates happen — they keep you safe and current

When your Pixel offers an update, let it run (it's happiest overnight, charging, on Wi-Fi). Updates fix problems, add features, and — importantly — patch security holes that scammers look for. Pixels are especially good about getting updates for years. An up-to-date phone is a safer, smoother phone, and it mostly happens on its own. Just let it.

CHAPTER 41

When Something Goes Wrong

When your phone acts up, the fix is usually simple. Here's a calm checklist that solves the great majority of troubles.

The calm fix-it checklist

1. **Restart the phone** — turn it fully off and on again. This alone fixes a remarkable share of problems, and never deletes anything.
2. **Check your internet** — if apps won't load, see whether Wi-Fi or signal is the real issue.
3. **Close and reopen the troublesome app** — swipe up and hold to see recent apps, swipe the app away to close it, then reopen.
4. **Check for an update** — an update sometimes fixes a misbehaving app or phone.
5. **Still stuck?** Call me — some things are quicker with a hand.

TIP

The restart is the gentlest, most effective fix there is

If your Pixel is slow, stuck, or acting strange, the first thing to try is always a **restart** — power it fully off and back on. It clears a huge range of gremlins and never harms your photos, contacts, or messages. When you call me, it's usually the very first thing I'll have you try, so it's worth trying yourself first. Simple, safe, and surprisingly powerful.

CHAPTER 42

Storage, Battery & Everyday Troubles

A few specific everyday troubles come up often enough to address directly — none is cause for worry.

Common troubles and fixes

Trouble	Try this
“Storage full”	Usually photos/videos. Make sure Photos backup is on, then free space (or buy a little); see Backing Up manual.
Battery drains fast	Normal as batteries age; turn on Battery Saver; a restart can help. Very old batteries can be replaced.
Phone is slow	Restart it; close unused apps; make sure it's updated; clear a little storage.
Won't charge	Try a different cable/plug; clean the port gently; make sure it's plugged in firmly.
Screen won't respond	Restart (hold power + volume up); if wet or very hot/cold, let it settle.

FROM BILL

Whenever your Pixel stumps you, I'm a call away

You've learned a great deal about your phone, but you'll never be expected to know every quirk — that's what I'm here for. A puzzling problem, a setting you can't find, a worry about a message, help with a new app — call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort it out calmly together. Your phone should make life easier, and I'll help keep it doing just that.

CHAPTER 42a

Moving to a New Pixel

When you get a new phone, moving everything over — photos, contacts, apps, messages — is far easier than folks fear, because it's all tied to your Google account. The worry “will I lose everything?” has a happy answer: no.

The move, in brief

1. Turn on the new Pixel and follow the setup; when offered, choose to **copy from your old phone** (you can connect them with a cable, or restore from your Google backup).
2. **Sign in with your same Google account.**
3. Your **contacts, photos, apps, and settings** flow onto the new phone automatically.
4. Give it time; when it's done, the new phone is *your* phone — everything in its place.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A new phone that already feels like your old one

This is the quiet reward of everything being tied to your Google account: you unbox a brand-new Pixel, sign in, and within an hour it's *yours* — same photos, same contacts, same apps, same wallpaper. No frantic collecting of numbers, no mourning lost pictures. Upgrading becomes something to look forward to rather than dread. (The Backing Up Everything manual has more.)

FROM BILL

New phone day is a great day for a visit

Moving to a new phone — making sure every photo, contact, and message comes across, and the new one is set up comfortably — is one of the most common and satisfying things I help with. If you've a new Pixel in a box feeling daunting, don't let it sit there. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll bring it to life together, with nothing lost.

CHAPTER 42b

Taking Care of Your Phone

A little physical care keeps your Pixel working well and lasting for years. None of it is fussy — just sensible habits.

Everyday care

- **A case and screen protector** — cheap insurance against drops and cracks; well worth it.
- **Keep it out of extreme heat and cold** — a hot car or freezing weather is hard on the battery.
- **Mind water** — Pixels resist a splash, but aren't for swimming; dry it off if it gets wet.
- **Clean the screen gently** with a soft, slightly damp cloth.
- **Keep the charging port free of lint** — a common cause of ‘won't charge.’

TIP

A case and screen protector are cheap insurance

The single best thing you can do to protect your investment is put a **case and a screen protector** on your Pixel — a modest cost that saves the heartbreak (and expense) of a cracked screen from a single drop. Phones are slippery, and drops happen to everyone. A good case also makes the phone easier to grip. Well worth it from day one; happy to recommend ones that fit.

CHAPTER 42c

A Simple Routine to Keep Things Smooth

To wrap up, here's the low-effort routine that keeps your Pixel healthy, safe, and trouble-free — mostly automatic, with just a habit or two from you.

The easy routine

- **Charge it nightly** on the nightstand (overnight is fine).
- **Let updates install** — they keep it safe and smooth.
- **Keep Photos backup, Find My Device, and your screen lock on.**
- **Restart it** if anything acts up — your go-to first fix.
- **Review subscriptions and storage** now and then.
- **Stay scam-aware** — the habits from Part 7 and the Scams manual.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A trusty companion, mostly looking after itself

Set up well and tended with a couple of simple habits, your Pixel becomes a trusty companion that mostly looks after itself — updating, backing up, and running smoothly while you get on with enjoying it. Call family, capture memories, find your way, stay safe, and reach the whole world's knowledge, all from your pocket. That's a phone working the way it should: quietly making your life a little easier every day.

FROM BILL

Whatever your Pixel throws at you, I'm a call away

You've learned an enormous amount about your Pixel — but you'll never be expected to know it all, and that's exactly what I'm here for. Any puzzle, any new thing you'd like to try, any worry — call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort it out together, calmly and kindly. Your phone should be a help and a joy, and I'll always be glad to keep it that way for you.

CHAPTER 42d

Checking Your Call and Message History

Your Pixel keeps a tidy record of your calls and messages, so you can always see who you've been in touch with, call someone back, or find an old conversation.

Finding your history

- **Recent calls:** the **Recents** tab in the Phone app shows every call — made, received, and missed — with names and times. Tap one to call back.
- **Missed calls** show in red, and as a notification, so you never miss knowing who called.
- **Old texts:** in Messages, scroll your conversations, or use the **search** to find an old message by a word or name.

TIP

Call someone back with one tap from Recents

To return a call, you don't need to look up the number — just open the Phone app's **Recents** tab, find the person or number, and tap it to call straight back. Missed calls are right there in red. It's the quick, easy way to see who's been trying to reach you and get back to them. No hunting required.

CHAPTER 42e

The Factory Reset (Last Resort)

You may hear of a **factory reset** — wiping the phone back to how it came from the store. It's a powerful last-resort fix for deep problems, but one to understand carefully, because it erases everything on the phone.

What a reset is

- **It erases the phone** — all your apps, settings, and anything not backed up — returning it to factory-fresh.
- **Backed-up things come back** — if your Google backup and Photos backup are on, you restore them by signing in afterward.
- **Use it only** for serious, unfixable problems, or before selling/giving away the phone.
- **It's found in** Settings → System → Reset — but don't do it casually.

HEADS UP

A factory reset erases everything — don't do it alone or in a panic

A factory reset wipes the phone clean, so **never do one casually or in frustration** — you could lose anything that wasn't backed up, and you'll have to set the phone up again. It's a genuine last resort for deep trouble, or for safely erasing a phone you're passing on. If you think you need one, please call me first at (330) 200-8042 — often there's a simpler fix, and if a reset truly is needed, I'll make sure your things are safe and help you set the phone back up.

FROM BILL

Stubborn problem? Let's try everything before a reset

If your Pixel has a problem the simple fixes won't budge, please don't jump to a factory reset on your own. Call me at (330) 200-8042 first — nine times out of ten there's a gentler solution, and if a reset is genuinely the answer, I'll help you back everything up, do it safely, and get your phone restored and comfortable again afterward. We'll solve it the calm way.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

A warm, honest word about when a hand is worth it — and a one-page everyday cheat-sheet to keep by your chair.

CHAPTER 43

When to Call Bill

This whole book is here so you can do more on your own, with confidence. But part of being genuinely helpful is being honest about when a hand from someone who does this all day will save you time and worry. So here, plainly, is when I'd say pick up the phone.

Good reasons to call

- You're **setting up a new Pixel** — your Google account, Wi-Fi, apps, photos — and want it done right.
- You'd like to turn on **two-step verification, Find My Device,** or a **screen lock** — all worth doing, quick with company.
- You think you may have **replied to a scam** or given out a password — call right away.
- You're **moving to a new phone** and want your photos, contacts, and messages to come across safely.
- You'd like your phone **set up comfortably** — big text, favorite apps up front, voice typing.
- Anything that gives you that **“this doesn't feel right”** twinge. Trust it.

Things you can almost always handle yourself

Calling, texting, taking photos, searching, getting directions, setting reminders, using the assistant, and the restart fix for most troubles — these are all yours now. Use this book as your refresher, take your time, and remember you can't break anything by trying.

FROM BILL

How I like to help

I'm Bill, and I've spent 30+ years helping folks feel at home with their technology, right here in Portage County, Ohio. I don't rush, I don't talk down to anyone, and there's no such thing as a silly question at my table. Whether it's a two-minute phone answer or sitting down together with your Pixel, we'll get it sorted. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**.

STAY SAFE

If you think you've been scammed, call sooner rather than later

If you ever believe you gave a password or payment to a scammer, reach out quickly — to me, to your bank, or to a trusted family member. Changing a password and alerting your bank promptly can stop trouble before it grows. You will not be scolded; you'll be helped. These things happen to careful, smart people every single day.

Thank you for letting me be a small part of how you stay connected to the people and things you care about. You've learned a great deal in these pages — calling and texting, the camera and photos, your helpful assistant, staying safe, and finding your way around — and I'm proud of you for it. Keep this book handy, be kind to yourself as you practice, and don't be a stranger.

— Bill

CHAPTER 44

Resetting a Forgotten Password

Forgetting your Google account password is one of the most common things in the world, and it is **always fixable**. You will not be locked out forever. Take a breath, and let's walk through it calmly.

Resetting it

1. Go to **google.com** (or the sign-in screen) and choose **Forgot password**.
2. Google confirms it's you — usually by a **code texted to your phone**, or a prompt on a device you're signed into.
3. Enter the code, then **choose a new password, twice** — something memorable but hard to guess. Write it in a safe place.
4. You're back in. Your email, photos, contacts, and apps are exactly as you left them — resetting the password changes none of it.

HEADS UP

Reset only on the real Google sign-in — never via a surprise link

Always reset your password by going to Google yourself — never by clicking a “reset your password” link in an email or text you didn't ask for. That kind of link is a classic scam. If *you* started the reset, you're fine; if a *message* is pushing you to, stop. When in doubt, call me and we'll do it the safe way together.

FROM BILL

Locked out? Let's get you back in, calmly

Password resets are fiddly precisely because they're designed to be hard for strangers — which can make them hard for you in the moment. If you hit a snag, don't batter away until you're locked out. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll do it together. I help someone with this nearly every week; you're in very good company.

CHAPTER 45

Your Pixel Cheat-Sheet

Tear this out, or fold the corner, and keep it by your chair. The everyday moves, all in one place.

The everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Go Home	Swipe UP from the very bottom edge — always back to safety.
Go Back	Swipe IN from the left or right edge.
See all your apps	Swipe UP from the bottom (the App Drawer).
Quick Settings & alerts	Swipe DOWN from the top.
Open the camera fast	Double-press the power button.
Talk to your assistant	Say “Hey Google,” or hold the power button.
Make text bigger	Settings → Display → Display size and text.
Flashlight	Swipe down, tap the flashlight.

The safety rules, short and sharp

- No real company asks for your password, codes, or gift cards — ever.
- Don't tap links or call numbers in surprise texts, calls, or pop-ups.
- Only get apps from the **Play Store**.
- Keep **Photos backup**, **Find My Device**, and **updates** on.
- When something feels off — **stop and ask.**

Keep these handy

My details	
My phone model	Pixel _____ (Android ____)
My Google (Gmail) address	_____
Where my password is kept	_____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You know your way around now

Look back at where you started. You can call and text, take beautiful photos and keep them safe, ask your assistant for help, find your way anywhere, get new apps safely, and — most important of all — spot a scam before it spots you. That's genuine independence. Be proud, keep this book close, and enjoy everything your Pixel can do for you.

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