BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Home Printers & Scanners

Setting it up, connecting it, printing and scanning — all in plain English, one calm step at a time

A plain-English guide for every home printer

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

Covers HP, Canon & Epson home printers · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your printer and scanner manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. It's written for the home printers most people own today — HP, Canon, and Epson all-in-ones — and because the big brands all work in much the same way, the ideas here fit almost any machine. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. If a screen or app on yours looks a little different, don't worry — the words you're looking for are still the same.

Part 1 — Getting to Know Your Printer

1 A Note from Bill
2 What a Home Printer Is & the Kinds You'll Meet
3 Where to Put It & Setting It Up the First Time
4 The Parts, Buttons & the Little Screen
5 Loading Paper the Right Way

Part 2 — Ink, Toner & What It Costs to Run

6 Ink, Toner & Tanks Explained
7 Replacing Cartridges & Filling Tanks
8 Buying Ink Without Getting Fooled
9 Ink Subscriptions & Spending Less

Part 3 — Connecting the Printer to Your World

10 How Printers Connect — the Big Picture
11 The Maker's App: HP Smart, Canon PRINT & Epson Smart Panel
12 Printing from an iPhone or iPad (AirPrint)
13 Printing from an Android Phone or Tablet
14 Printing from a Windows PC or a Mac
15 Printing by Email & from the Cloud

Part 4 — Printing Day to Day

16 Everyday Printing & the Print Window
17 Printing Photos Worth Keeping
18 Envelopes, Labels & Double-Sided Pages
19 Taking Charge of the Print Queue

Part 5 — Scanning, Copying & Faxing

20 Making a Copy
21 Scanning: Turning Paper into a File
22 Scanning to PDF & Multi-Page Documents
23 Faxing, If You Still Need To

Part 6 — Going Further & Everyday How-To

24 Printing the Things You Actually Need
25 Making Everything Easy on the Eyes
26 Sharing One Printer Around the House
27 A Simple Home Filing System for Scanned Papers
28 Understanding the Words on the Box & Screen
29 Buying Your Next Printer Wisely
30 Recycling, Disposal & Being Kind to the Planet
31 Printing from Email & Text-Message Attachments
32 A Simple Maintenance Calendar

Part 7 — Care, Troubleshooting & When to Call Bill

33 Keeping Your Printer Healthy
34 Clearing a Paper Jam
35 "It Was Working Yesterday" — Connection Fixes
36 Common Messages & Quick Fixes
37 Should You Fix It or Replace It?
38 When to Call Bill
39 Questions People Ask Me All the Time
40 Your Everyday Printer Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting to Know Your Printer

What it is, where to put it, the parts and buttons, and how to load paper the right way. Start here and the rest of the book gets easy.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If there's one machine in the house that has made more grown adults mutter under their breath than any other, it's the printer. You want one page. It wants a software update, a new cartridge, and a quiet word about your Wi-Fi. I understand completely — and I promise you it does not have to be that way.

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 at your kitchen table next to the printer: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing. If I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then. You won't have to look anything up.

Why printers feel harder than they are

Here's the honest truth about printers: they're not actually complicated, but they have a lot of *small* parts that all have to agree with each other — paper, ink, a connection to your computer or phone, and the printer itself. When one of those four is unhappy, the whole thing stops. Most "printer problems" are really just one of those four needing a nudge, and once you know which four to check, you'll fix most troubles yourself in under a minute.

That's what this book gives you: a calm, orderly way to think about your printer, so a blinking light or a page that won't come out stops being a mystery and becomes a simple checklist.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a working printer gives you back

Boarding passes and shipping labels without a trip to the store. A recipe in big print on the counter. Tax forms, insurance paperwork, and a copy of your will — printed and in a drawer where you can find it. Photos of the grandkids on the refrigerator. A printer that simply works is a quiet little freedom, and it's well within your reach.

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 — the printer won't connect, or it's flashing a light you don't understand — you are never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment. There is no such thing as a silly question. Now let's get to know your machine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Home Printer Is & the Kinds You'll Meet

Before we plug anything in, let's answer the simplest question: what *is* this box on your desk? A printer is a machine that takes words and pictures from your computer, phone, or tablet and puts them onto paper. That's the whole job. Most printers sold for the home today do three jobs in one, which is why you'll hear them called an **all-in-one**:

- **Print** — put something onto paper (a letter, a photo, a form).
- **Scan** — do the reverse: turn a paper document into a picture or file on your computer or phone, so you can email it or keep it.
- **Copy** — scan and print in one motion, like the copier at the library, to make a duplicate of a page.

Some all-in-ones also send a **fax**, though few people need that anymore. If yours has it, we'll cover it later; if it doesn't, you aren't missing anything.

Inkjet or laser — the two families

Nearly every home printer is one of two types, and knowing which you have explains a great deal about how it behaves and what it costs to run.

Type	What to know
Inkjet	Sprays tiny drops of liquid ink. Great for color and photos. Most home all-in-ones are inkjets. Uses ink **cartridges** or refillable **tanks**.
Laser	Uses a fine powder called **toner** and heat to fuse it to the page. Fast, crisp for black text, and the toner lasts a long time. Many are black-and-white only. Good if you mostly print documents, not photos.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not sure which you have?

Look at what you buy to refill it. If you drop in small plastic **cartridges** of liquid ink, or pour ink into built-in **tanks**, it's an inkjet. If you slide in a long, heavy plastic **toner** cartridge full of powder, it's a laser. The brand and model name (printed on the front) will also tell me instantly if you call.

Tank printers — the refillable kind

In the last several years a popular middle option has appeared: the **tank printer**, sold by Epson as **EcoTank**, by Canon as **MegaTank**, and by HP as **Smart Tank**. Instead of little

cartridges, these have built-in reservoirs you fill from a bottle of ink. They cost more to buy but a great deal less to run, because a set of bottles can last a year or two of normal home use. If you print often, they're worth knowing about — we'll cover filling them later.

Writing down what you own

Take a moment now to find two facts and jot them on the inside cover of this book: your printer's **brand** (HP, Canon, Epson, Brother, and so on) and its **model name or number** (something like "OfficeJet Pro 9125" or "PIXMA TR8620"). It's usually printed on the front, on a sticker on the back, or shown on the little screen. Those two facts turn any question into a quick answer.

> **TIP**
>
> **The model number is the magic word**
>
> When you call me, or search online, or buy ink, the model number is the one thing that unlocks the right answer. "My HP won't print" could mean a hundred machines; "my HP OfficeJet Pro 9125 won't print" tells me exactly what you're looking at. Write it down once and you'll never hunt for it again.

CHAPTER 3

Where to Put It & Setting It Up the First Time

A little thought about *where* the printer lives saves a surprising amount of grief. Printers like a calm, level spot with a bit of breathing room.

Choosing a good home for it

- **Flat and steady** — a sturdy shelf or desk, not a wobbly stand. Paper feeds best when the machine is level.
- **Near enough to your Wi-Fi** — printers connect over your home internet signal, so don't bury it in a far corner of the basement where the signal is weak. Same floor as your router is ideal.
- **Room to open** — leave space for the lid to lift, the paper tray to extend, and paper to come out the front. A few inches above and in front is plenty.
- **A real wall outlet** — plug the printer straight into the wall or a good power strip. Avoid the cheapest timers and travel adapters.

> HEADS UP
>
> **Don't throw the box away right away**
>
> Keep the printer's box and foam for a couple of weeks until you're sure everything works. If something's wrong out of the gate, returning it is far easier with the original packaging. Once you're happily printing, you can recycle it.

The first-time setup, in plain terms

Every new printer walks through roughly the same first-day routine. Modern ones from HP, Canon, and Epson strongly want you to do this through their free phone app, which we'll cover properly in Part 3. Here's the shape of it so nothing surprises you:

1. **Remove the tape and packing bits.** New printers are covered in orange or blue tape and have foam and cardboard tucked inside. Open every door and pull it all out — the machine won't work with packing still inside.
2. **Plug it in and turn it on.** Use the power button on the printer itself (not just the wall switch).
3. **Install the ink or fill the tanks**, and load some plain paper (the next chapters show you exactly how).

4. **Let it do its first alignment.** The printer will whir, click, and print a test page or an alignment sheet. This is normal and takes a few minutes. Let it finish.
5. **Connect it to your Wi-Fi**, usually by following the maker's app on your phone (Part 3).

GOOD TO KNOW

The app does most of the work now

Years ago you fed a printer a CD full of software. Today you download one free app — **HP Smart**, **Canon PRINT**, or **Epson Smart Panel** — and it walks you through setup with pictures, finds the printer, and connects it to your Wi-Fi for you. If your printer is recent, reach for the app first. We'll install it together in Part 3.

CHAPTER 4

The Parts, Buttons & the Little Screen

Let's walk around your printer and name its parts. You don't need to memorize this — just know where to look things up. Every all-in-one has these pieces in some form.

The main parts

Part	What it is and does
Paper tray	A drawer or tray (front or bottom) that holds a stack of blank paper, and a second slot or tray for photo paper on some models.
Output tray	A small shelf, usually at the front, that catches pages as they print. It often pulls out or folds down.
Scanner lid & glass	Lift the top lid to find a pane of glass. You lay a document face-down here to scan or copy it.
Document feeder (ADF)	On many models, a slot on *top* that pulls through a stack of pages automatically for scanning — handy for multi-page documents.
Ink / toner door	A front or top cover that opens to the cartridges, tanks, or toner.
Control panel	The buttons and (often) a small touchscreen on the front, where you start copies, scans, and see messages.

Reading the control panel

The control panel is how the printer talks to you and you talk back. There are two common styles:

- **A touchscreen** — a small color screen you tap, like a tiny tablet. Newer printers have these. You'll see icons for Copy, Scan, and settings.
- **Buttons and lights** — simpler printers have a few physical buttons and small symbols that light up or blink. A steady light usually means "all is well"; a blinking light usually means "I need something" (paper, ink, or attention).

TIP

When a light blinks, it's asking — not yelling

A blinking light or a symbol on the screen is the printer politely telling you it needs something: paper in the tray, a cartridge seated properly, or a jam cleared. It is almost never a sign of real damage. Open the doors, take a look, and nine times in ten you'll spot the simple thing it wants.

The power button vs. the wall

Always turn the printer off with its own **power button**, and wait for it to go fully dark, before unplugging it. Inkjet printers park and cap their print heads when they shut down properly — that keeps the ink from drying out. Yanking the plug while it's on can leave the ink exposed and lead to streaky printing later.

CHAPTER 5

Loading Paper the Right Way

More printing troubles come from paper than from anything else — and nearly all of them are easy to avoid. A minute of care loading the tray prevents jams, crooked pages, and "out of paper" messages when there's clearly paper right there.

The everyday paper you want

For almost everything, you want ordinary **plain white printer paper**, the kind labeled "letter size" (8.5 by 11 inches) and often marked "20 lb" or "multipurpose." A ream (500 sheets) costs very little and lasts most homes a long time. Keep it flat and dry — paper that's gone wavy from a damp basement jams more easily.

Loading the main tray

1. Pull out the paper tray (or fold down the rear feeder, depending on your model).
2. **Fan the stack** — hold a small stack and riffle the edges with your thumb, like a deck of cards. This separates sheets that want to stick together, the usual cause of two pages feeding at once.
3. **Tap the stack even** on the table so all the edges line up neatly.
4. Lay it in the tray. Don't overfill — most trays have a line showing the most they'll hold.
5. **Slide the paper guides** (the little movable walls) in until they just touch the sides of the stack. Snug, not squeezing. This is the step most people skip, and it's what keeps pages straight.
6. Push the tray back in until it clicks. The printer may ask you to confirm the paper size on its screen — just tap OK.

HEADS UP

The guides are the secret to straight pages

If pages come out crooked, or the printer grabs two at once, the paper guides are almost always the reason — too loose and the stack shifts, too tight and it binds. Set them so they rest gently against the paper, and most feeding problems simply vanish.

Which side faces up?

For plain paper it rarely matters. For **photo paper** and **letterhead** it does: the shiny or printed side needs to face the way the printer prints. There's usually a tiny icon in the tray

showing which way is up. When in doubt, load one sheet, print a test, and you'll know for next time.

Envelopes, labels, and photo paper

- **Photo paper** — load it in the dedicated photo tray if your printer has one, shiny side as the printer expects, and only a few sheets at a time.
- **Envelopes** — most printers have a guide showing how to lay them (usually flap side a particular way). Load a few, not a thick stack.
- **Labels and card stock** — feed these from the rear or manual slot if you have one, a few at a time, so they don't curl and jam.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Good loading habits save you the most common headache

Fanning the stack, tapping it even, and snugging the guides takes fifteen seconds and prevents the great majority of jams and misfeeds. Build that little habit and your printer will feel far more reliable — because the paper, its most finicky part, is finally happy.

PART 2

Ink, Toner & What It Costs to Run

The part everyone worries about: cartridges, refillable tanks, ink subscriptions, and honest ways to spend less without getting fooled.

CHAPTER 6

Ink, Toner & Tanks Explained

The single most confusing — and most expensive — thing about printers is what goes inside to make the marks on the page. Let's clear it up once and for all, because understanding this saves you real money and real frustration.

The three ways printers hold their 'ink'

What's inside	What it means for you
Cartridges (inkjet)	Small plastic pods of liquid ink that snap in and out. You replace the whole pod when it runs low. The most common home setup — and, cup for cup, the priciest ink.
Tanks (inkjet)	Built-in reservoirs you fill from a bottle (Epson EcoTank, Canon MegaTank, HP Smart Tank). Cheaper to run; a set of bottles lasts a long time.
Toner (laser)	A cartridge of fine powder. Lasts for many hundreds or thousands of pages. Great for black text, less so for photos.

Color ink and why it runs out 'on its own'

Most inkjets use at least two inks: a **black** and a set of **colors** (cyan, magenta, and yellow — which mix to make every color, including the blacks in photos). Here's a fact that surprises people: inkjets use a little color ink even when you print in black and white, because they periodically clean their own nozzles to keep from clogging. That's normal and keeps the printer healthy — but it's why color ink drops even if you "never print in color."

GOOD TO KNOW

"Low" does not mean "empty"

When your printer warns that a cartridge is low, you usually have plenty of pages left — often dozens. The warning is early on purpose. Don't rush out to replace a cartridge the moment it says "low"; keep printing until the quality actually fades or it truly stops. You'll buy ink far less often.

If you print rarely, read this

Liquid ink can dry up in the nozzles if a printer sits untouched for weeks. If you only print now and then, a **laser** printer (toner powder doesn't dry out) or a **tank** printer often serves you better than a cartridge inkjet. And whatever you own, printing even one page every week or two keeps the ink flowing and the nozzles clear.

CHAPTER 7

Replacing Cartridges & Filling Tanks

Changing ink is less fiddly than it looks. Go slowly, keep your hands clean, and follow the printer's lead — most will light up or show on screen exactly which one needs attention.

Replacing an ink cartridge

1. With the printer **on**, open the ink door. The carriage usually slides to the middle so you can reach the cartridges — let it finish moving before you touch anything.
2. Press down or pull the tab on the empty cartridge to release it, and lift it out. Note which slot it came from (they're often labeled by color).
3. Take the new cartridge out of its wrapper. **Remove only the protective tape** — the little strip covering the copper or gold contacts or the nozzle. Don't touch those shiny parts with your fingers.
4. Slide the new cartridge into the matching slot at the angle shown, and press gently until it clicks firmly into place.
5. Close the door. The printer will usually run a short alignment and may ask you to print a test sheet. Let it.

HEADS UP

Leave the tape, lose the print

The one mistake to avoid: forgetting to peel the protective tape off a new cartridge, or touching the metal contacts. Both lead to a cartridge the printer says is empty or missing when it's brand new. Peel the tape, handle it by the plastic, click it home.

Filling a tank printer

Tank printers (EcoTank, MegaTank, Smart Tank) are filled from bottles. It's clean and simple on modern models — the bottles are keyed so ink only flows into the matching tank.

1. Open the tank cover on the front or side. You'll see the tanks, each marked with its color.
2. Open the cap on the tank you're filling, and uncap the matching ink bottle.
3. Turn the bottle upside down into the opening. On newer printers it only flows when properly seated and **stops on its own when the tank is full** — you don't have to watch the level or squeeze.
4. Lift out the empty bottle, recap the tank, and close the cover. Wipe any stray drops with a paper towel.

TIP

Match the color, every time

Always pour the yellow bottle into the yellow tank, cyan into cyan, and so on. Getting a color into the wrong tank is the one real mishap with tank printers and it's a nuisance to fix. Go one color at a time and double-check the label before you tip the bottle.

Replacing laser toner

Toner cartridges are larger and drier — no liquid to spill. Open the front cover, pull the old cartridge straight out by its handle, rock the new one gently side to side to loosen the powder (as the instructions show), pull any orange seal strip, and slide it in until it seats. Close up and you're done, often for a thousand pages or more.

CHAPTER 8

Buying Ink Without Getting Fooled

Ink is where printers quietly cost you money, and where a little know-how pays off. It's also, sadly, a place where scammers and look-alike sellers prey on people. Let's keep you safe and spending sensibly.

Know your cartridge number

Every cartridge has a **number** — HP uses numbers like "67" or "910," Canon uses codes like "PG-245" and "CL-246," Epson often uses a little picture (a number paired with an everyday object, like "232"). Write your numbers on the inside cover. With the right number you'll never buy the wrong ink, in the store or online.

Standard vs. XL — the bigger bottle usually wins

Most cartridges come in a regular size and a larger **XL** (high-yield) size. The XL costs more up front but gives you noticeably more pages per dollar. If you print with any regularity, the XL is usually the better buy. If you barely print, the standard size may not dry out before you use it up.

Genuine, third-party, and refilled — the honest picture

Kind of ink	The trade-off
Genuine (made by your brand)	Most reliable and best quality; most expensive. Safest choice, especially for photos and for printers under warranty.
Third-party / compatible	Made by another company to fit your printer. Much cheaper. Quality varies — some are fine, some cause trouble or trigger "non-genuine" warnings. A reasonable gamble for everyday documents if you buy a well-reviewed brand.
Refilled / remanufactured	Used cartridges cleaned and refilled. Cheapest and greenest; the most hit-or-miss. Buy only from a seller with a solid return policy.

SCAM ALERT

Watch for fake 'ink help' and look-alike sellers

Two traps catch good people. First: a pop-up or a search result for "printer ink support" that's really a scammer wanting remote access to your computer or your card — no real ink seller needs to "log in" to your computer. Second: online listings with your brand's logo that are actually cheap imitations. Buy ink from the printer maker's own site or a store you already know and trust. If a deal feels far too cheap, it usually is. When unsure, call me first — **(330) 200-8042** — before you type in a card number.

A word on recycling

Empty cartridges shouldn't go in the household trash. Most office-supply stores take them back free, and HP, Canon, and Epson all offer prepaid recycling envelopes. It keeps a bit of plastic out of the landfill, and some stores even give you a small store credit for each one.

CHAPTER 9

Ink Subscriptions & Spending Less

You may have been offered an **ink subscription** when you set up your printer, or you may be wondering whether one is worth it. Let's look plainly, with no sales pitch, because the answer really does depend on you.

What an ink subscription is

With a subscription — HP calls theirs **HP Instant Ink**, and Canon and Epson have their own versions — you pay a small monthly fee based on how many pages you print, not how much ink you use. Your printer quietly keeps an eye on its levels and the company mails fresh cartridges to your door before you run out. Unprinted pages often roll over to the next month, up to a limit.

The honest pros and cons

Consider	What it means
It can save money	If you print a fair amount, especially in color, per-page pricing is often cheaper than buying cartridges, and ink shows up automatically.
It's hands-off	No more running to the store. Good for folks who hate the surprise of a dry printer right before something important.
The ink is 'rented'	This is the big catch: the subscription cartridges generally **stop working if you cancel** and the billing cycle ends. You're paying for a service, not owning the ink outright.
Low-volume plans can waste money	If you print only a handful of pages some months, you may pay for pages you never use. Watch the smallest plan's price against how little you print.

FROM BILL

My plain advice on subscriptions

If you print regularly — grandkids' photos, lots of documents, a home business — a subscription can genuinely save money and spare you the hassle. If you print rarely, you're usually better off buying an XL cartridge now and then, or owning a tank printer. There's no single right answer; there's only the right answer *for how you print*. If you'd like, call me and we'll work out which is cheaper for your household in a few minutes.

Simple ways to use less ink and paper

- Print in **black and white** (grayscale) when color isn't needed — choose it in the print window before you print.

- Use **draft** or **economy** mode for everyday pages you don't need to look crisp; it uses noticeably less ink.
- **Print on both sides** (double-sided, or "duplex") to halve your paper use — many printers do this automatically.
- **Preview before you print**, and use "print selection" or "reader" view on web pages so you don't print ten pages of ads to get one recipe.
- Don't chase every "low ink" warning — keep printing until quality actually drops.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Spend on ink like you mean to

Knowing your cartridge number, buying the right size from a seller you trust, and matching a subscription (or not) to how you actually print — these few habits can cut your printing costs by a lot over a year, with no drop in what you get. That's money that stays in your pocket.

PART 3

Connecting the Printer to Your World

The part that trips everyone up: Wi-Fi, the maker's app, and printing from your phone, tablet, and computer. Take it slowly and it clicks into place.

CHAPTER 10

How Printers Connect — the Big Picture

Before we set anything up, let's understand the idea, because once it's clear the steps make sense. For your printer to print something, it has to *receive* that something from your phone, tablet, or computer. There are two roads it can travel on:

- **A cable** — a USB cord runs straight from the printer to one computer. Simple and rock-solid, but only that one computer can use it, and the printer has to sit near it.
- **Wi-Fi** — the printer joins your home's wireless internet, the same signal your phone and computer use. Then *anything* in the house can print to it, from anywhere in the house, with no cords. This is how most people use a printer today.

Think of Wi-Fi like a party line everyone in the house shares. Once the printer joins that line, your phone, your tablet, and your computer can all reach it. The whole trick to wireless printing is getting the printer onto your Wi-Fi *once* — after that, it just works.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Your printer and device must be on the same Wi-Fi**
>
> Here's the rule that explains most "it won't find my printer" moments: your phone or computer and your printer need to be on the **same Wi-Fi network**. If your home has two network names (some do — one may end in "-5G" or "-Guest"), make sure both the printer and your device are joined to the same one. Mixing them up is the single most common connection snag.

What you'll need handy

- Your **Wi-Fi network name** (also called the SSID) — the name you pick from the list when a new gadget joins your internet.
- Your **Wi-Fi password** — often printed on a sticker on your router/modem if you've never changed it. Have it written down before you start; typing it on a printer screen is fiddly.
- Your phone or tablet, for the maker's app.

CHAPTER 11

The Maker's App: HP Smart, Canon PRINT & Epson Smart Panel

The easiest way — by far — to set up and run a modern printer is the free app from the company that made it. It holds your hand through Wi-Fi setup, shows ink levels, and lets you print and scan right from your phone. Install the right one for your brand:

Your brand	The app to install
HP printers	**HP Smart**
Canon printers	**Canon PRINT** (some newer models use **Canon Inkjet Smart Connect**)
Epson printers	**Epson Smart Panel**
Brother printers	**Brother iPrint&Scan** or **Brother Mobile Connect**

Installing the app on your phone or tablet

1. Open the **App Store** (on an iPhone or iPad) or the **Play Store** (on an Android phone or tablet) — the app for getting new apps.
2. Tap the search box and type the app's name exactly (for example, "HP Smart").
3. Look for the one published by the real company (it'll say "HP Inc.," "Canon," or "Seiko Epson"). Tap **Get** or **Install** and wait for it to download.
4. Open the app. The first time, it may ask permission to use Bluetooth, your location, or your local network — say **yes/allow**; the app needs these only to find and talk to your printer nearby.

SCAM ALERT

Install only the real app — mind the imitators

Search the stores for "printer app" and you'll see dozens of look-alikes with names like "Smart Printer" and official-looking logos. Many are junk that nag you to pay. Install only the app named above, published by the actual maker (HP Inc., Canon, Seiko Epson). If you're not sure which is real, the maker's own website links straight to it — or call me and I'll point you to the right one.

Connecting the printer to Wi-Fi through the app

With the app installed and your printer turned on nearby, setup is mostly tapping "next." The exact words differ by brand, but the shape is always the same:

1. In the app, tap **Add Printer** (or the plus sign). It searches for printers nearby — make sure your printer is on and not buried behind a wall.
2. When your printer's name appears in the list, tap it.
3. The app asks which Wi-Fi network to join and for the password. Pick your network and type the password carefully. Tap to continue.
4. Wait a minute while the printer joins the network. A light on the printer often turns a steady color (frequently blue) when it's connected.
5. The app confirms success, may install a little update, and offers a test print. Do it — a page coming out is your proof it all worked.

TIP

If the app can't find the printer

Three quick things fix most "no printer found" moments: (1) make sure your *phone* is on your home Wi-Fi, not just cellular; (2) move closer to the printer for setup; and (3) turn the printer off and on, wait a minute, and search again. If it still hides, there's a "restore network settings" or Wi-Fi setup button on the printer itself — or just call me.

CHAPTER 12

Printing from an iPhone or iPad (AirPrint)

Apple builds printing right into every iPhone and iPad, using a feature called **AirPrint**. If your printer is on your Wi-Fi, you usually don't need any app at all to print — it just appears as a choice. This is wonderfully simple once you've seen it.

Printing a document, email, or web page

1. Open whatever you want to print — a photo, an email, a web page, a document.
2. Find the **Share** button. It's a square with an arrow pointing up out of it, usually at the bottom or top of the screen. Tap it.
3. In the menu that slides up, scroll down and tap **Print**.
4. At the top it says **Printer** — tap **Select Printer** and choose yours from the list (it finds AirPrint printers on your Wi-Fi automatically).
5. You can change the number of copies or which pages here if you like. Then tap **Print** in the corner. Off it goes.

GOOD TO KNOW

No setup, no app — if it's on your Wi-Fi

AirPrint needs nothing installed. As long as your printer is a recent model on the same Wi-Fi as your iPhone, it simply shows up when you tap Print. Nearly every printer made in the last decade supports AirPrint. The HP Smart or Epson app is still handy for scanning and ink levels, but for plain printing from an iPhone, you may never need it.

CHAPTER 13

Printing from an Android Phone or Tablet

Android phones and tablets (Samsung, Google Pixel, Motorola, and the rest) print just as easily, using a built-in system called **Mopria** — you'll rarely see that name; it just works much like AirPrint does on an iPhone.

The everyday way to print

1. Open what you want to print.
2. Tap the **menu** — usually three dots in a corner — and look for **Print**. (From a photo or the Files app, tap **Share** first, then **Print**.)
3. At the top, tap where it names a printer and choose **All printers** or your printer's name. Your Wi-Fi printer should appear.
4. Adjust copies or color if you wish, then tap the **print** icon (often a little printer or a circle). Done.

If your printer doesn't appear, open the maker's app (Part 11) once — it switches on the right printing service in the background. On many Samsung phones you can also add the free **Mopria Print Service** from the Play Store, and then every app's Print button will find your printer.

> **TIP**
>
> **Same Wi-Fi, same rule**
>
> Just like with an iPhone, an Android device finds your printer only when both are on the same home Wi-Fi. If the printer won't show up, that's the first thing to check — is your phone on Wi-Fi (not just cellular data), and is it the same network the printer joined?

CHAPTER 14

Printing from a Windows PC or a Mac

Printing from a computer is the most familiar kind, and once your printer is added, it's a two-click affair from any program.

Adding your printer on Windows

1. Click the **Start** button (bottom-left) and open **Settings** (the little gear).
2. Click **Bluetooth & devices**, then **Printers & scanners**.
3. Click **Add device**. Windows searches your Wi-Fi for printers.
4. When yours appears, click **Add device** next to it and let Windows set it up. It may fetch a small driver (the helper software) on its own.

If it doesn't appear, installing **HP Smart** (for HP) from the Microsoft Store, or the maker's software for Canon/Epson, adds it reliably.

Adding your printer on a Mac

1. Click the **Apple menu** (top-left) and choose **System Settings**.
2. Click **Printers & Scanners** in the list.
3. Click **Add Printer, Scanner, or Fax**. Your Wi-Fi printer appears in the list — select it and click **Add**. Macs include most printer software already.

Actually printing, in any program

1. With your document, photo, or web page open, press **Ctrl+P** on Windows (or **Command+P** on a Mac), or choose **File > Print** from the menu.
2. A print window opens. Check that **your printer** is chosen at the top.
3. Set copies, color or black-and-white, and which pages. Click **Print**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One printer, every device in the house

Once your printer is on Wi-Fi and added to your computer, the whole household is set: the recipe from your tablet, the boarding pass from your phone, the tax form from the computer — all land in the same tray. That's the real payoff of a few minutes of setup, and it lasts for years.

CHAPTER 15

Printing by Email & from the Cloud

A few handy extras are worth knowing, though you may never need them. Many HP and Epson printers can be given their own **email address** — you email a document to that address and it prints out, even if you're miles away. HP calls this **HP ePrint**; Epson calls it **Epson Email Print**, part of **Epson Connect**.

This is genuinely useful for one thing in particular: letting a far-away relative print to your machine — say, a grandchild emailing a school picture straight to Grandma's printer. It's set up in the maker's app under a "Print Anywhere" or "ePrint" section. If that appeals to you, it's a nice afternoon project we can do together over the phone.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need this for everyday printing

Email and cloud printing are bonuses, not necessities. If your printer is on your Wi-Fi and you can print from your phone and computer, you already have everything most people ever use. Think of this chapter as "nice to know," not "must do."

PART 4

Printing Day to Day

Everyday documents, photos worth framing, envelopes and labels, double-sided pages, and taking charge of the print queue when something's stuck.

CHAPTER 16

Everyday Printing & the Print Window

The little **print window** that pops up when you print is where you make a few quick choices. It looks busy, but you only ever touch a handful of things. Let's demystify it.

The choices that actually matter

Setting	What it does
Printer	Which machine prints this. Make sure it's yours, especially if you ever see a "Save as PDF" option — that makes a file, it doesn't print paper.
Copies	How many. Leave it at 1 unless you want duplicates.
Pages	Print everything, or just a range like "1-3," or just the page you're looking at. Great for printing one recipe out of a long web page.
Color / Black & white	Choose black-and-white (grayscale) to save color ink when you don't need color.
Two-sided	On or off — print on both sides of the paper to use half as much.

TIP

"Save as PDF" is not a printer

In the printer list you may spot choices like **Save as PDF** or **Microsoft Print to PDF**. Those don't make paper — they make a computer file. Useful sometimes, but if you want a page in your hand, be sure your real printer's name is the one selected, not a "PDF" option.

When nothing comes out

If you click Print and the printer sits silent, don't click Print five more times (that just stacks up five copies waiting to pour out later). Instead: check the printer is on and has paper, check it's the right printer in the window, and peek at the print queue (next chapter). Calm and orderly beats clicking in frustration every time.

CHAPTER 17

Printing Photos Worth Keeping

Printing a good photo is one of the real joys of owning a printer — the grandkids on the refrigerator, a landscape for a frame. A few small choices make the difference between a dull print and one you're proud of.

For the best results

- **Use photo paper**, not plain paper. Glossy for bright, snappy color; matte for a softer, no-glare look. Load it in the photo tray if you have one.
- **Choose the right paper in the print settings** — tell the printer you're using "photo paper, glossy" so it lays down ink correctly. This single setting matters a lot.
- **Pick a higher quality setting** ("Best" or "High") for photos, even though it's slower and uses more ink.
- **Let it dry a minute** before handling, so you don't smudge it.

From a phone, the maker's app (HP Smart, Canon PRINT, Epson Smart Panel) has a lovely photo mode that lets you pick a picture, choose the size (like 4x6), and print it in a few taps. It's often the easiest route for photos.

FROM BILL

When to print at home and when not to

Home photo printing is wonderful for everyday snapshots and quick gifts. But for a big batch, or a large print you'll frame, a drugstore or online photo service is often cheaper and sharper than using up your own ink and paper. There's no shame in using both — the right tool for the job. I'm glad to help you decide for a particular project.

CHAPTER 18

Envelopes, Labels & Double-Sided Pages

Printing an envelope

Addressing an envelope by machine looks tidy and saves your hand. In most programs you choose **Envelopes** under a "Mailings" or "Print" menu, type the addresses, and the program arranges them. The fiddly part is simply loading the envelope the right way:

1. Look for a small envelope icon in your paper tray or feeder — it shows which way to lay the envelope (which edge first, flap up or down).
2. Load one envelope, snug the paper guides against it.
3. In the print window, choose the envelope size (usually "No. 10" for a standard business envelope). Print one as a test before doing a stack.

Printing labels

Sheets of sticker labels (for return addresses or mailing) print much like paper, but go slowly and feed them from the straightest paper path (often the rear tray) so they don't peel and jam. Buy labels in your printer's size, and use the template the label maker provides so the text lands on each sticker.

Printing on both sides (duplex)

Double-sided printing saves paper and makes documents feel more finished. Many printers do it automatically — just tick **Print on both sides** (or "Two-Sided," "Duplex") in the print window. If yours can't do it on its own, it will print the odd pages, then prompt you to flip the stack and put it back in to print the even pages. Follow the on-screen diagram for which way to flip; it's the one slightly tricky bit, and a test of two pages teaches you the pattern.

> **TIP**
>
> **Do a two-page test first**
>
> Before printing a long double-sided document the manual-flip way, run a quick two-page test so you learn exactly how your printer wants the paper turned. Mark the top of page one with a pencil. Once you've seen it work once, you'll never puzzle over it again.

CHAPTER 19

Taking Charge of the Print Queue

When you print, your job joins a **queue** — a waiting line of things to print. Usually it empties in seconds and you never think about it. But when something jams up, knowing how to open the queue and clear it is one of the most useful tricks in this whole book.

Opening the queue

- **On Windows:** Settings > Bluetooth & devices > Printers & scanners, click your printer, then **Open print queue**. (Or click the little printer icon that appears near the clock while printing.)
- **On a Mac:** click the printer's icon in the Dock while it's printing, or open System Settings > Printers & Scanners, select your printer, and click the queue.
- **In the maker's app** on your phone, there's often a jobs or queue view too.

The one move that fixes a stuck printer

Sometimes a single bad job gums up the works and everything after it waits forever. The cure is to clear the whole line and start fresh:

1. Open the print queue as above.
2. **Cancel** each waiting job (right-click it and choose Cancel on Windows; click it and press delete on a Mac). Clear them all out.
3. Turn the printer **off, wait ten seconds, and turn it on**.
4. Try printing one page again. Nine times out of ten, it flows right away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never again stab at 'Print' in frustration

Knowing the queue exists changes everything. When a page won't come, you no longer click Print over and over (and then get surprised by ten copies later). You calmly open the line, clear it, restart the printer, and try once. That one skill prevents a great deal of wasted paper, ink, and patience.

PART 5

Scanning, Copying & Faxing

Turning paper into files you can email and keep, making quick copies, and sending a fax on the rare day you still need to.

CHAPTER 20

Making a Copy

Copying is the simplest thing an all-in-one does, and it needs no computer at all — just the printer and the page you want to duplicate. If you can work the copier at the library, you can work yours. Nothing you do here can harm the machine or the original page, so copy freely.

A basic copy

1. Lift the lid and lay your page **face-down** on the glass, lined up with the arrow or corner mark etched in the glass. Close the lid gently.
2. On the printer's screen or buttons, choose **Copy**.
3. Set the number of copies and, if you like, color or black-and-white. For plain documents, black-and-white is faster and cheaper, and looks just as good.
4. Press the **Copy** or **Start** button. Out comes your duplicate in a few seconds.

That's the whole thing. The original stays unharmed on the glass, ready for another copy if you want one. Lift the lid and take it back out when you're done.

Handy copy adjustments

Every copier can do more than a plain duplicate. You won't need these often, but they're worth knowing about for the day you do:

- **Lighter or darker** — darken a faint pencil note or a pale receipt so it's readable, or lighten a page with a distracting gray background.
- **Enlarge or reduce** — blow a small map or a bit of fine print up to a comfortable size, or shrink two pages down onto one sheet.
- **Number of copies** — need ten copies of the church bulletin? Set the number and press once, rather than copying ten times.
- **Multiple pages at once** — if your printer has a **document feeder** (that slot on top), stack the pages there and it copies them all in one go, instead of one-at-a-time on the glass.

TIP

Copy your important cards — both sides

A wonderful use for the copier: make a single sheet with your insurance card, Medicare card, and driver's license copied onto it (both sides), and tuck it in a safe place at home. If a wallet ever goes missing, you'll have every number you need to make the calls. Just don't carry that sheet with you — keep it home and private, where only you can reach it.

GOOD TO KNOW

The copy is only as clean as the glass

If your copies have specks, streaks, or a shadow down one side, the culprit is almost always a smudge or a bit of dust on the scanner glass — not a fault in the printer. Lift the lid and wipe the glass with a soft, dry (or barely damp) cloth, let it dry, and copy again. Clean glass, clean copies.

CHAPTER 21

Scanning: Turning Paper into a File

Scanning is copying's more useful cousin: instead of making another piece of paper, it makes a *picture or file* of your document that lands on your computer or phone. From there you can email it, save it, text it, or print it later. This is how you send a signed form to an office without leaving the house, or keep a tidy digital copy of important papers that can never be lost in a flood or a move.

The easiest way: scan with your phone's app

The maker's app (HP Smart, Canon PRINT, Epson Smart Panel) makes scanning delightfully simple, and the file ends up right on your phone where it's easy to email or text to someone:

1. Lay your page face-down on the glass and close the lid (or load it in the document feeder on top).
2. Open the app and tap **Scan**.
3. Tap **Scan** or **Preview**; the page appears on your phone in a few seconds.
4. Crop or straighten it if the app offers to, then tap **Save** or **Share** — from Share you can email it, text it, or save it to your files immediately.

Scanning to a computer

You can also scan straight to a computer. On Windows, open the **Windows Scan** app (free from the Microsoft Store) or the maker's software and click Scan. On a Mac, open **Image Capture** or the Printers & Scanners settings, select your printer, and click Scan. Many printers also have a **Scan** button right on the machine that sends the page to your waiting computer with a single press — the fastest route of all once it's set up.

Color, black-and-white, and quality

When you scan, you'll often be offered a few choices. A good rule of thumb: scan documents in **black-and-white** or grayscale (smaller files, perfectly clear text) and scan photos or anything colorful in **color**. For a document you'll just read or email, the standard quality is plenty; raise it only for a photo you want to look its best.

Where your scan goes, and what to name it

A scan is saved as a file in a folder (often "Pictures," "Documents," or "Scans"). Give it a clear name right away — "2026 Medicare card" beats "Scan_0049" when you go looking a

year from now. A minute of naming saves an hour of hunting. We'll talk more about keeping your scanned paperwork organized in Part 6.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A filing cabinet that fits in your pocket

Once you can scan, your paperwork stops being a shoebox of loose pages. Warranties, medical records, tax documents, a signed lease — scan them, name them, and they're searchable, emailable, and safe from coffee spills and house moves. It's one of the quiet superpowers of owning an all-in-one, and once you've done it a few times it becomes second nature.

CHAPTER 22

Scanning to PDF & Multi-Page Documents

When you scan something you'll send to an office — a form, a contract, several pages of records — you almost always want it as a **PDF**. A PDF is simply the standard kind of document file that opens the same on any computer or phone, and it can hold many pages in one tidy file. When a doctor's office or a bank says "email us the form," a PDF is what they expect.

Picture file or document file — which to choose

File type	When to use it
PDF	Best for documents and multi-page papers. Opens anywhere, holds many pages together, and looks like the original. Choose this for forms, letters, and records.
JPEG (or JPG)	Best for a single photo or one picture. It's the everyday photo file. Not ideal for multi-page documents.

Making a multi-page PDF

1. In the maker's app or scan software, choose **PDF** as the file type (not JPEG).
2. Scan the first page. When it asks **Add another page?** (or shows a plus sign), say yes and scan the next. Repeat for all your pages.
3. When you've scanned the last page, finish. All the pages are now saved together in one PDF, in the order you scanned them.
4. Name it clearly and save or email it. You've just created the same kind of document a busy office uses every day.

> **TIP**
>
> **Feeder = fast; glass = careful**
>
> For a stack of ordinary pages, the document feeder on top scans them all into one PDF automatically — the fast way. For anything delicate, stapled, odd-sized, or precious (old photos, a passport, a fragile certificate), use the **glass** instead, one page at a time, so nothing gets pulled through and creased. When in doubt, use the glass.

Sending your scan on its way

Once you have the PDF, sending it is just like sending any file. From your phone's app, tap **Share** and choose Mail or Messages, type the address or pick the person, and send. From a

computer, start a new email, click **Attach** (a paperclip), and pick the PDF from where it was saved. If attaching a file to an email feels uncertain, that's a common thing to practice together on a call — it's easier than it sounds.

CHAPTER 23

Faxing, If You Still Need To

Faxing is rare now, but some doctors' offices and government forms still ask for it, and many all-in-ones can do it if they're plugged into a telephone line. Don't let the word worry you — a fax is just a phone call that carries a page instead of a voice. If yours has a **Fax** button and you have a landline, here's the gist:

1. Plug a phone cord from the wall jack into the printer's **Line** port (not the one marked "Ext," which is for a handset).
2. Lay the page(s) on the glass or in the feeder.
3. Choose **Fax**, type the fax number (just like dialing a phone, with the area code), and press **Start**.
4. Wait for the screechy tones — that odd sound is normal, it's the two machines greeting each other — and watch for a message that it sent successfully.

GOOD TO KNOW

No landline? You can still fax

If you don't have a phone line, you don't need a fax machine at all. Free and low-cost online fax services let you send a scanned document as a fax from your computer or phone. For the once-a-year fax most people send, that's far simpler than keeping a phone line just for the printer. Call me if you need to send one and we'll get it done together in a few minutes.

STAY SAFE

Faxing sensitive papers

A fax goes to whatever number you dial — so double-check the fax number before you press Start, especially for anything with your Social Security number, bank details, or medical information on it. One wrong digit sends your private paper to a stranger. Read the number back twice, then send.

PART 6

Going Further & Everyday How-To

Printing the real-life things you actually need, making pages easy on the eyes, sharing one printer around the house, and keeping your paperwork in order.

CHAPTER 24

Printing the Things You Actually Need

Most of the printing people do falls into a handful of real-life errands. Let's walk through the common ones, because each has one small trick that makes it come out right the first time.

Boarding passes

When you check in for a flight on the airline's website or email, you'll be offered a boarding pass to print. Look for a **Print** button or a PDF, and print it on plain paper at normal size — don't shrink it, because the square barcode has to scan at the gate. If you'd rather not print, the same pass can live on your phone, but a paper copy is a fine backstop that never runs out of battery.

Shipping labels and return labels

Returning an online order usually means printing a label the store emails you. Print it at full size on plain paper, tape it over the old address on the box (covering any old barcodes), and drop it off. The barcode must be crisp and uncovered by tape glare, so avoid shrinking it.

Forms you fill in and sign

For a form you need to complete by hand, print it, fill it in with pen, then **scan it back** (Chapter 21) to send it on as a PDF. If you'd rather not print at all, many forms can be filled in on the computer before printing — but for most folks, print-sign-scan is the dependable path.

Recipes, coupons, and one page from a long web page

- **Recipes:** look for a "Print" link on the recipe itself — it strips away the ads and comments and prints just the recipe. Failing that, use "Reader view" in your web browser first.
- **Coupons:** print at full size on plain paper so the barcode scans at the register.
- **One page out of many:** in the print window, set **Pages** to just the page you want (like "2") instead of printing the whole twelve-page article.

TIP

Use Print Preview to avoid the 'ten pages of ads' surprise

Before printing from the internet, glance at the preview in the print window. It shows exactly how many pages will come out and what's on them. That's where you catch the web page that wants to print nine sheets of advertisements to give you one recipe — and trim it down to just the page you need.

CHAPTER 25

Making Everything Easy on the Eyes

A printer is a marvelous tool for making the world more readable. If small print is a strain, you don't have to live with it — you can print things larger, clearer, and in your own comfort.

Printing in larger text

- **Enlarge on the copier.** Lay a page with small print on the glass, choose Copy, and set the enlargement to 150% or 200%. Out comes the same page in big, comfortable type.
- **Zoom before you print.** On a computer or phone, make the text bigger on screen first (often by holding Ctrl and pressing + on a computer), then print — what you see is what prints.
- **Scale to fit.** In the print window, "Fit to page" and custom scaling let you blow a document up to fill the sheet.

Clearer, higher-contrast pages

Faint or low-contrast pages are easier to read reprinted darker. On the copier, nudge the contrast darker. When printing from a computer, choosing a crisp black-and-white print of a document often reads better than a gray, washed-out one. Little adjustments, big comfort.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your printer as a magnifier for daily life

Prescription instructions, a contract's fine print, a hymn you want to sing along to, the crossword — all of it can be printed in a size that's a pleasure rather than a squint. That's not a frill; it's your printer doing one of the kindest things it can do for you.

CHAPTER 26

Sharing One Printer Around the House

The beauty of a Wi-Fi printer is that the whole household can use it — your computer, your spouse's tablet, a visiting grandchild's phone. Here's how to make that smooth and civil.

Letting another device print

Each new phone, tablet, or computer only has to be introduced to the printer once. For phones and tablets, that's simply making sure they're on your home Wi-Fi — then the printer shows up under Print all on its own (Parts 12-13). For another computer, add the printer the same way you added yours (Chapter 14). After that first introduction, it just works.

A guest who wants to print

If a visitor wants to print one thing, the easiest path is to connect their phone to your Wi-Fi for the afternoon, after which their Print button will find your printer. If you'd rather not share your Wi-Fi password, you can print the item for them from your own device, or they can email it to you to print.

GOOD TO KNOW

Everyone prints to the same tray

There's no taking turns or logging in and out. Several people can send pages to one Wi-Fi printer; the printer simply does them in the order they arrive, and each page comes out the same front tray. If two people print at once, no harm done — one just waits a moment for the other.

A note on children and grandchildren visiting

Kids love to print, and that's fine — remember they can't break the printer by sending pages. If you'd like to keep a lid on paper and ink during a long visit, just keep the paper tray stocked lightly and let them use draft mode. It's a lovely way to spend an afternoon printing coloring pages together.

CHAPTER 27

A Simple Home Filing System for Scanned Papers

Once you can scan, you can finally tame the paperwork that piles up in every home. You don't need special software — just a little order and good names. Here's a system that has served many folks well.

A folder for the big categories

On your computer or phone, make a handful of plainly named folders inside your Documents, such as: **Medical**, **Insurance**, **Taxes**, **Home**, **Warranties & Manuals**, and **Important IDs**. When you scan something, drop it into the folder it belongs to. That's the whole structure — simple enough to keep up with.

Naming so you can find it later

Name each scan with the **year first, then what it is**: "2026 — Furnace warranty," "2025 — Tax return," "2026 — Homeowners policy." Starting with the year makes your files line up in order automatically, and spelling out what it is means you (or a family member helping you) can find anything in seconds.

What's worth scanning

- Anything you'd be upset to lose in a fire or flood: deeds, titles, wills, Social Security and Medicare cards, passports.
- Warranties and receipts for big purchases, so you can prove the date if something breaks.
- Medical records, test results, and a current list of your medications.
- Tax returns and their supporting papers (keep these a good number of years).

STAY SAFE

Keep private scans private

Scans of your IDs and financial papers are exactly what a thief would love. Keep them in your own device or computer, protected by your passcode or password, and think twice before storing them anywhere a stranger might reach. Never email them over a public coffee-shop Wi-Fi. If you'd like help setting up a safe, backed-up place for these, that's right up my alley.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind in a drawer and in a file

There's real comfort in knowing that if a document goes missing — or a family member one day needs to help with your affairs — the important papers are scanned, named, and findable. It's one of the most loving, practical things an afternoon with your printer can accomplish.

CHAPTER 28

Understanding the Words on the Box & Screen

Printer makers love their jargon. Here's a plain-English glossary of the terms you'll meet buying, setting up, and using a printer, so none of them trips you up.

Term	What it means in plain English
All-in-one (AIO)	A printer that also scans and copies (and sometimes faxes).
Inkjet	A printer that sprays liquid ink. Most home printers.
Laser	A printer that fuses powder (toner) to the page. Fast, crisp text.
Toner	The powder a laser printer uses instead of liquid ink.
Cartridge	A replaceable pod of ink (inkjet) or powder (laser).
Tank / EcoTank / MegaTank	A printer you refill from ink bottles instead of cartridges.
Duplex	Printing on both sides of the paper automatically.
DPI	Dots per inch — how fine the print is. Higher looks sharper; you rarely need to touch it.
ADF	Automatic Document Feeder — the slot on top that pulls a stack through for scanning.
AirPrint	Apple's built-in way for iPhones and iPads to print with no extra app.
Mopria	The equivalent built-in printing for Android phones and tablets.
Driver	The small helper software a computer uses to talk to a printer.
Spooler / queue	The waiting line of print jobs on your computer.
SSID	The name of your Wi-Fi network — the one you pick when a gadget joins the internet.

TIP

You don't need to memorize any of this

Think of this page as a dictionary, not a quiz. When a box, a screen, or a salesperson throws a word at you, flip here. Knowing what the words mean is what keeps anyone from talking you into something you don't need — and that alone can save you money.

CHAPTER 29

Buying Your Next Printer Wisely

Whether you're replacing an old workhorse or buying your first printer in years, a little knowledge keeps you from the two classic traps: paying too much for the machine, or paying far too much for the ink it quietly demands forever after.

Match the printer to how you print

If you mostly…	Look at…
Mostly documents, print often	A **laser** or a **tank** printer. Cheap per page, toner and bottles last ages, no dried-up ink.
Mostly documents, print rarely	A simple **laser** — toner never dries, so it's ready months later when you finally need it.
Lots of color photos	A good **inkjet** (or tank inkjet) with separate color inks and a photo tray.
A bit of everything, modest amounts	A mid-range **inkjet all-in-one**, ideally with XL cartridges available or a subscription if it pays off for you.

Look past the sticker price

The cheapest printer on the shelf is often the most expensive to own, because it's sold cheaply to hook you on pricey little cartridges. Before you buy, look up what a set of replacement ink or toner costs for that exact model — that number tells you the real price of owning it. A printer that costs a bit more up front but sips inexpensive ink can save you a great deal over the years.

Features worth having (and ones you can skip)

- **Worth having:** Wi-Fi, a document feeder for scanning stacks, automatic two-sided printing, and a model whose app your phone supports.
- **Nice but not essential:** a color touchscreen, a dedicated photo tray, extra paper trays.
- **Skip unless you truly need it:** fax, unless an office in your life still demands it.

FROM BILL

Happy to help you choose — with no sales pitch

Picking a printer is exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to help with before you spend a dime. Tell me what you print and roughly how much, and I'll steer you to a sensible machine with affordable ink — not whatever a store is pushing this week. A ten-minute call can save you years of overpaying. That's **(330) 200-8042**.

CHAPTER 30

Recycling, Disposal & Being Kind to the Planet

Printers and their supplies shouldn't just go in the trash — and a little care here is good for your conscience and often your wallet too.

Empty cartridges and toner

Most office-supply stores take back empty ink and toner cartridges free, and some give a small store credit for each. HP, Canon, and Epson also offer prepaid recycling envelopes you can request — you drop the empties in the mail at no cost. Never toss toner in a fire or cut it open; just recycle it whole.

Retiring an old printer

When a printer finally reaches the end, don't put it at the curb. Electronics-recycling drop-offs — at many hardware and office stores, and at county collection events — take old printers and keep their metals and plastics out of the landfill. Your county in Ohio likely holds periodic electronics-recycling days; a quick call to the county or a search online will tell you when and where.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wipe the memory first on a networked printer

Before you give away or recycle a printer that was on your Wi-Fi, use its menu to "Restore Factory Settings" or "Reset Network." That clears your Wi-Fi password and any stored scans or fax numbers from its little memory, so nothing of yours leaves the house with it. If you're unsure how, it's a two-minute job we can do together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A clean handoff, nothing wasted

Recycling your empties and retiring an old machine responsibly means the useful materials get another life and your private information stays home. It's a small, satisfying way to close the loop — and it often costs nothing but a short errand.

CHAPTER 31

Printing from Email & Text-Message Attachments

A great deal of what people need to print arrives as an **attachment** — a document or photo clipped to an email or a text message. Boarding passes, appointment letters, order receipts, photos from the grandkids: they come to you this way. Let's make printing them second nature.

Printing an email attachment

1. Open the email and find the attachment — usually shown at the bottom as a little file with a name, or a thumbnail picture.
2. **Tap or click it to open it.** Don't try to print from the shrunken preview; open it to full size first so it prints clearly.
3. Once it's open, use **Share** → **Print** on a phone, or **Ctrl+P / Command+P** on a computer (the ways you learned in Part 4).
4. Pick your printer, check the settings, and print.

Printing a photo someone texted you

1. Open the text message and tap the photo so it fills the screen.
2. Tap the **Share** button (a square with an arrow, or three dots).
3. Choose **Print**, pick your printer, and — for a photo — choose photo paper and a good quality if you want it to look its best.

STAY SAFE

Open attachments only from people you know

Attachments are also a favorite trick of scammers, who send official-looking emails with a "bill" or "delivery notice" attached that's really harmful. Before you open or print an attachment, make sure you actually know and trust who sent it, and that you were expecting it. If an attachment seems odd, out of the blue, or pushy about money, don't open it — call me and we'll check it together at **(330) 200-8042**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything that lands in your inbox, in your hand

Once printing attachments feels easy, the whole flow of modern life — the e-ticket, the e-bill, the photo, the form — stops being trapped on a screen. You can hold it, file it, carry it, and share it, exactly the way paper has always served you.

CHAPTER 32

A Simple Maintenance Calendar

You don't need to fuss over your printer, but a few habits on a loose schedule keep it happy for years. Here's an easy rhythm — pin it near the printer and you'll never think about it again.

How often	What to do
Every week or two	Print at least one page (any page) to keep inkjet nozzles from drying. A single color photo or a test page does the trick.
Monthly	Wipe the scanner glass and the outside with a soft cloth. Glance at ink or toner levels in the maker's app so a low cartridge never surprises you.
When prints look off	Run Clean Print Head, then Align Print Head, from the Maintenance menu (see Part 7). Usually that's all it takes.
A few times a year	Make sure the printer's software is up to date in the maker's app, and restock paper and a spare cartridge so you're never caught empty.
Before a trip or a gap	If the printer will sit unused for weeks, that's fine — just expect to run a head cleaning when you return, and it'll spring back to life.

TIP

A spare cartridge is cheap insurance

Keep one spare set of the right ink or toner in a drawer. Cartridges don't go bad quickly if left sealed, and having one on hand means a "low ink" warning the night before you need to print something important becomes a two-minute swap instead of an emergency trip to the store.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Small habits, a printer that just works

This is the whole secret to a trouble-free printer: print a little regularly, wipe it now and then, keep a spare cartridge, and let it update. Do those, and the dramatic printer meltdowns that make people despair simply never happen to you. That's peace of mind for the price of a few minutes a month.

PART 7

Care, Troubleshooting & When to Call Bill

Keeping your printer healthy, fixing the handful of problems that actually happen, and knowing — honestly — when it's worth a call.

CHAPTER 33

Keeping Your Printer Healthy

A printer that's looked after barely ever acts up. None of this takes long, and it heads off the very problems that make people want to throw the thing out the window. Think of it like a car: a little regular attention prevents the roadside breakdown.

The healthy-printer habits

- **Print a little, regularly.** For inkjets especially, printing even one page every week or two keeps the ink moving and the nozzles from drying and clogging. A printer that sits unused for months is the one that gives trouble.
- **Keep it covered and dust-free.** Close the trays when not in use. Dust and crumbs are no friend of moving paper.
- **Use decent paper, kept dry.** Damp, curled paper is the number-one cause of jams. Store your paper flat, in its wrapper, away from damp basements and radiators.
- **Turn it off properly** with its own button so inkjets can cap their print heads and keep the ink from drying.
- **Let updates install.** When the maker's app offers a printer update now and then, allow it — they fix bugs and keep connections smooth.

Cleaning the print heads

If prints come out streaky, faded, or with missing lines of color, the fix is usually a **head cleaning** — a built-in routine that flushes the nozzles. Find it under **Maintenance** or **Tools** on the printer's screen or in the maker's app, and run "Clean Print Head," then print a test page. If one pass doesn't fully fix it, run it once more, and perhaps a third time if it's close. It uses a little ink, so don't run it needlessly — but it rescues a great many "my prints look terrible" moments without any fuss.

Aligning the print heads

If straight lines look doubled or text looks slightly fuzzy, run **Align Print Head** from the same Maintenance menu. The printer prints a sheet of patterns and either reads it back automatically or asks you which patch looks best. It's quick and it sharpens everything up.

HEADS UP

Never pour water or spray cleaner inside

To clean the outside, wipe it with a barely-damp cloth. But never spray cleaner into the printer, pour anything into it, or scrub the print heads or rollers with force. The built-in cleaning routine is the safe way to clean the insides. When in doubt, leave the insides alone and call me — it's cheaper than a new print head.

CHAPTER 34

Clearing a Paper Jam

A paper jam sounds alarming and almost never is. A sheet has simply stopped partway through. Cleared gently and correctly, it leaves no harm behind. Cleared by yanking, it can tear and leave scraps that cause the next jam — so the whole art is patience.

The right way to clear it

1. **Turn the printer off** first, if you can — it stops the rollers and is safer for your fingers and the machine.
2. Open the doors the screen points you to (often a front or rear door, and the ink area). Many printers have a rear door exactly for reaching jams.
3. Find the stuck paper. **Pull it slowly and steadily in the direction the paper normally travels** — usually straight out the way it was heading — using both hands and even pressure.
4. Look carefully for any small torn pieces left behind and remove them; a scrap is the usual cause of a jam that "won't clear."
5. Close the doors, turn the printer back on, and try one page. It should feed normally.

> HEADS UP
>
> **Pull with the paper, never against it**
>
> The one rule that prevents damage: pull the jammed sheet the way it was already going, slowly and straight, never backwards against the rollers and never in a sharp yank. If a sheet won't budge gently, stop and look for what's holding it rather than forcing it. Forcing is what turns a two-minute jam into a repair bill.

If it keeps jamming

Repeated jams almost always trace to one of three things: paper that's damp, curled, or poor quality; a tray overfilled or with guides set wrong; or a stray scrap still hiding inside from the last jam. Work through those three and you'll solve nearly every chronic jammer. Try a fresh ream of good paper, load less of it, snug the guides, and shine a light inside to hunt for scraps. If it still won't behave, that's a fair time to call.

CHAPTER 35

"It Was Working Yesterday" — Connection Fixes

The most common call I get about printers isn't about ink or paper — it's "it says offline" or "my computer can't find it anymore," often after it worked fine for months. Take heart: this is almost never a broken printer, and the fixes are quick and safe.

The five-minute checklist

1. **Is the printer on and awake?** Press a button to wake it. Check for error messages or blinking lights asking for paper or ink.
2. **Restart the printer.** Off, wait ten seconds, on. This alone fixes a surprising share of "offline" messages.
3. **Restart your Wi-Fi.** Unplug your router/modem for 30 seconds, plug it back in, wait two minutes for it to fully wake. Printers sometimes lose their place when the internet hiccups.
4. **Check it's still on the Wi-Fi.** On the printer's screen, look at the Wi-Fi or Network menu — is it connected to your network? If not, reconnect it (Chapter 11).
5. **Same network?** Make sure your phone or computer is on the *same* Wi-Fi name as the printer, not a guest network or a cellular connection.

> TIP
> **"Offline" usually means "can't hear each other"**
> When Windows or your phone says the printer is "offline," it rarely means anything is broken — it means the two briefly can't find each other on the Wi-Fi. Restarting the printer, then the router, and making sure both are on the same network reconnects them the vast majority of the time. Work the checklist calmly, top to bottom, and resist the urge to change settings you don't understand.

The 'print as PDF' trap

Now and then someone tells me "it printed, but nothing came out." The usual cause: the job went to a "Save as PDF" or "OneNote" option in the printer list instead of the real printer, so it quietly made a file instead of paper. Check the printer window and pick your actual printer's name before you print.

When a reset is warranted

If the printer has truly forgotten your Wi-Fi, there's a "Restore Network Settings" or "Wi-Fi Setup Wizard" option in its Network menu. Running it lets you reconnect from scratch using the maker's app. It's safe — it only clears the network memory, not your other settings — but if it feels like a lot, this is a perfect moment to call me and do it together.

CHAPTER 36

Common Messages & Quick Fixes

A quick reference for the messages and symptoms you're most likely to meet. Keep a finger here — it covers the great majority of everyday printer troubles:

What you see	What to try
"Out of paper" (but there is paper)	Reload it: fan, tap even, snug the guides, push the tray in fully. A stack sitting crooked or too far back reads as empty.
"Paper jam"	Turn off, open the doors, pull the sheet gently the way it was going, check for scraps (Chapter 34).
Streaky or faded prints	Run Clean Print Head from Maintenance; check ink isn't actually empty; use the right paper setting (Chapter 33).
Blurry or doubled text	Run Align Print Head from Maintenance (Chapter 33).
"Cartridge missing / not recognized"	Reseat it; make sure you peeled the tape and didn't touch the contacts; if third-party, that brand may not be accepted (Chapters 7-8).
Prints are too light / draft-looking	Turn off draft/economy mode and raise the quality in the print window; check ink levels.
Printer "offline"	Restart printer, then router; confirm same Wi-Fi network (Chapter 35).
Nothing comes out at all	Check it's the right printer (not "Save as PDF"); clear the print queue; restart the printer (Chapters 19, 33).
Everything prints a weird size	In the print window, set paper size to "Letter" and "Fit to page," and make sure the tray's paper matches.
Printing very slowly	Normal for photos and "Best" quality; use Normal or Draft for everyday pages. A restart also helps.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A calm checklist beats a panicked guess

Notice the pattern in this whole book: almost every printer trouble comes back to one of four things — paper, ink, the connection, or a quick restart. When something goes wrong, you now have an orderly way to check each, instead of guessing. That turns most "disasters" into a two-minute fix you do yourself, with your blood pressure intact.

CHAPTER 37

Should You Fix It or Replace It?

Printers don't last forever, and there comes a day when pouring money into an old one stops making sense. Here's how I think about it honestly, with no one trying to sell you anything.

Lean toward replacing when…

- The printer is many years old, slow, and no longer gets updates for your phone and computer.
- A set of replacement ink or toner costs a large fraction of what a brand-new printer costs (this is sadly common with cheap inkjets).
- It jams or fails constantly despite good paper and care.
- You've changed how you print — gone mostly to documents, or started printing lots of photos — and a different type of printer would serve you far better (see Chapter 29).

Lean toward keeping when…

- It prints well and the only trouble is an occasional connection hiccup (those are fixable).
- It's a tank or laser printer with cheap running costs and plenty of life left.
- The problem is a one-time thing — a jam, a dry cartridge — not a pattern.

FROM BILL

My honest promise on 'repair vs. replace'

When you ask me whether to fix or replace, I'll tell you straight — even when "replace" means I'm not selling you a repair. For most home inkjets, once they're several years old and acting up, a new one is cheaper and less aggravating than a fix. For a good tank or laser printer, it's usually worth keeping it going. I'm glad to look at yours and give you my plain opinion before you spend a cent.

CHAPTER 38

When to Call Bill

This book is meant to make you confident and independent with your printer, and most days it will. But you should never feel you have to wrestle alone with something frustrating. Calling for help is a smart move, not a failure — here's when it makes good sense.

Good reasons to call

- A new printer that simply won't get onto your Wi-Fi, no matter what you try.
- An "offline" or "can't find printer" problem that the checklist in Chapter 35 doesn't fix.
- A jam that won't clear, or a printer that keeps jamming after you've checked paper and guides.
- Deciding whether to repair or replace — and picking the right new printer for how you actually print, so you don't overspend on ink for years.
- Setting up something a bit fancier: printing from a far-away relative, scanning your paperwork into a tidy digital filing system, or getting an old printer talking to a new computer.
- Any time a "support" pop-up, email, or caller is pressuring you about your printer or ink — stop and call me instead (see the next note).

SCAM ALERT

Real printer help never cold-calls or demands remote access

No legitimate printer company will call you out of the blue about your printer, demand you install software so they can "take over" your computer to fix ink, or insist on a gift-card payment. Those are scams aimed squarely at older folks. If anyone pressures you like that about your printer, hang up or close the window and call me at **(330) 200-8042**. I'd much rather take a two-minute "is this real?" call than help undo a scam later.

How to reach me

I'm Bill, and I help folks right here in **Portage County, Ohio** with exactly this kind of thing. Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit online at **billshometech.com/book**. If you call the main line and reach my assistant **Sophie**, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule — she's there to help. With 30+ years of professional experience, there's very little about a home printer I haven't seen, and no question too small to ask.

— Bill

CHAPTER 39

Questions People Ask Me All the Time

Over the years, the same handful of printer questions come up again and again. Here are my plain answers to the ones I hear most — chances are good that whatever's on your mind is here.

Why does my printer use color ink when I only print in black?

Because inkjets run a little color ink through their nozzles now and then to keep them from clogging, even on black-only jobs. It's normal and it keeps the printer healthy. If it bothers you, a laser printer (which has no liquid color ink) may suit you better.

Do I really have to buy the expensive brand-name ink?

Not always. Genuine ink is the most reliable, especially for photos, but well-reviewed third-party cartridges are fine for everyday documents and cost far less. Just buy from a seller you trust, and know that very cheap ink is more hit-or-miss (Chapter 8).

My printer worked yesterday and now says it's offline. Is it broken?

Almost certainly not. "Offline" usually means the printer and your computer briefly can't find each other on the Wi-Fi. Restart the printer, then your router, and make sure both are on the same network (Chapter 35). That fixes it the great majority of the time.

Is it bad to leave my printer on all the time?

No — modern printers sip almost no power while idle and are ready when you need them. Leaving it on is fine. Just use its own power button (not the wall switch) if you do turn it off, so an inkjet can cap its print heads properly.

Should I turn the printer off between uses to save ink?

It makes little difference to ink, and turning an inkjet off and on a lot actually triggers more self-cleaning (which uses ink). For most folks, leaving it on or letting it sleep on its own is the easier, no-worse choice.

Why are my photos coming out dull or the wrong color?

Usually the paper setting. Tell the printer you're using photo paper (glossy or matte), pick a higher quality, and load real photo paper. If colors are off or streaky, run a head cleaning (Chapter 33). That combination fixes most disappointing photos.

Can my far-away grandchild print to my printer?

Yes, with a feature like HP ePrint or Epson Email Print — you give your printer an email address, and they email things straight to it (Chapter 15). It's a lovely thing to set up, and I'm

glad to help you do it over the phone.

FROM BILL

Still have a question? Just ask

If your question isn't here, that's exactly what I'm for. There's no such thing as a silly printer question, and I've heard — and answered — just about all of them in 30+ years. Call or text me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together.

CHAPTER 40

Your Everyday Printer Cheat-Sheet

Tear this page out, or fold the corner, and keep it by the printer. It's the whole book boiled down to the things you reach for most.

The four things to check when anything goes wrong

1. **Paper** — loaded, fanned, guides snug, tray pushed in.
2. **Ink/toner** — actually installed, tape peeled, not truly empty.
3. **Connection** — printer and your device on the *same* Wi-Fi.
4. **Restart** — turn the printer off and on; if needed, the router too.

Quick reference

I want to…	Do this
Print from iPhone/iPad	Share button → Print → pick your printer.
Print from Android	Menu (three dots) or Share, then Print, then pick your printer.
Print from computer	Ctrl+P (Windows) or Command+P (Mac) → check printer → Print.
Make a copy	Page face-down on glass → Copy on the printer → Start.
Scan to your phone	Maker's app → Scan → Share/email it.
Scan a form to send	Maker's app → Scan → choose PDF → Share → email.
Streaky prints	Maintenance → Clean Print Head → print a test.
Printer says offline	Restart printer, then router; confirm same Wi-Fi.
Save color ink	Print in black-and-white and draft mode for everyday pages.
Print bigger text	Copy at 150-200%, or zoom before printing.

Write these down and keep them here

Keep handy	Fill in
My printer brand & model	_____
My ink / toner numbers	_____
My Wi-Fi network name	_____
The maker's app on my phone	_____

Keep handy	Fill in
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book

FROM BILL

You've got this

A printer is only stubborn until you understand it — and now you do. Keep this book in the drawer, check the four things when something acts up, and remember I'm one phone call away for the rest. You can't break it, and you're not alone. — Bill, (330) 200-8042