BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 14

Home Wi-Fi & Routers

What Wi-Fi really is, how to set it up, keep it fast, and keep it safe — explained in plain English

The backbone of everything in your home

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For home internet in 2026 · Wi-Fi 6, 6E & 7 · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your home Wi-Fi manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it by the router and reach for whatever you need. Every part explains what a feature does *for you*, with slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. Wi-Fi apps and router screens change their wording from year to year; when yours looks a little different, the idea underneath is still the same.

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PART 1

What Wi-Fi Actually Is

Before we touch a single button: what Wi-Fi is, what all that equipment in your home does, and why it matters. Plain words, no jargon. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe the internet in your home has been acting up and you're tired of feeling at its mercy. Maybe you just got a new router in the mail and the little setup card may as well be written in another language. Or maybe everything works fine and you'd simply like to understand the box with the blinking lights that the whole house seems to depend on. Wherever you're starting from, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped folks feel at home with their technology, and Wi-Fi is one of the things I'm asked about most. I wrote this book the same way I'd explain it sitting at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, with no rushing and no showing off. Any time I use a word you might not know, I'll stop and explain it right then. You won't have to look anything up.

Why Wi-Fi is worth understanding

Thirty years ago the internet lived in one computer in the den. Today it runs your television, your phone, your doorbell, your thermostat, the speaker on the counter, and the tablet you read the news on. Nearly every one of those things reaches the internet through your Wi-Fi. When Wi-Fi is healthy, all of it just works and you never think about it. When Wi-Fi is cranky, *everything* seems broken at once — and it's hard to know where to even start. That's exactly what this book fixes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll know what each piece of your equipment does, how to connect anything to your Wi-Fi, how to make it faster and reach farther, and how to keep strangers and scammers out. You'll stop dreading the blinking box and start treating it like the simple appliance it really is.

The big promise: you can't break it by looking

Here's the most important thing in the whole book, so I'll say it plainly. **You will not break your internet by opening a settings screen and looking around.** You can't wear out your router by restarting it. The worst that usually happens is you change something you didn't mean to — and nearly everything can be undone, often by the one trick I'll teach you again and again in these pages: turn it off, wait, turn it back on. Curiosity is safe here.

So relax your shoulders. And remember you're never stuck alone — if you ever want a hand, you can call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question about any of this.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Wi-Fi in One Minute

Let's start with the simplest possible picture, then fill in the details through the rest of the book.

Wi-Fi is just radio

Wi-Fi is a way for your devices to talk to a little box in your home *without a cable* — using radio waves, the same invisible kind of signal that carries a car radio station or a cordless phone. That little box, called a **router**, is connected to the internet. Your phone, TV and tablet talk to the router over the air; the router passes their requests out to the internet and brings the answers back. That back-and-forth is happening hundreds of times a second while you read a web page or watch a show, and you never feel a thing.

The word "Wi-Fi" doesn't actually stand for anything — it's just a friendly name a marketing group made up years ago because it sounded good. Don't let anyone tell you it means "wireless fidelity." It means "the wireless internet in your house," and that's all you need to carry with you.

Wi-Fi is not the same as the internet

This trips up almost everyone, so it's worth a moment. **Wi-Fi** is the wireless signal *inside your home*. **The internet** is the worldwide service that comes *into* your home from a company you pay every month. They are two different things, and either one can have a problem while the other is fine.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **The restaurant way to picture it**
>
> Think of the internet as the city's water main out in the street, and Wi-Fi as the plumbing inside your house. If the city shuts off the main, every faucet goes dry no matter how good your pipes are. But a leak under your own sink is your plumbing — the main is still running fine. Knowing which one is the trouble is half of every fix, and this book will teach you to tell them apart.

The three things you'll hear about most

- **The router** — the box that broadcasts your Wi-Fi. The heart of your home network.

- **The modem** — the box that connects your home to your internet company's line. Sometimes it's built into the router as one unit; sometimes it's separate. We'll untangle this in Chapter 4.
- **Your network name and password** — the name your Wi-Fi shows up as on a phone or TV, and the password that lets a device join. You'll learn to find, use and change both.

Everything else in this book hangs off those three ideas. Let's take them one at a time.

CHAPTER 3

Meet Your Router

The router is the star of the show, so let's get properly acquainted with it before we ask it to do anything.

What a router is, in plain terms

A **router** is a small computer whose only job is to move internet traffic between your devices and the outside world, and to hand out your Wi-Fi signal around the house. The name comes from the word "route" — it *routes* information to the right place, like a traffic officer at a busy intersection, making sure the show you asked for goes to your TV and not to your neighbor's phone.

Most routers are a flat box or a small tower with one or more little antennas, and a row of lights on the front. Around the back you'll find a handful of sockets and a power connector. It needs to be plugged into the wall for power and — unless your internet comes through the air or a built-in modem — connected to your internet line by a cable. That's the whole machine.

The lights on the front, decoded

Those blinking lights look mysterious but they're just a status report. Every brand is a little different, so treat this as the general idea rather than gospel — but most routers follow this pattern:

Light	What it's telling you
Power light	Solid = the router has power and has finished starting up. Blinking = still waking up, give it a minute or two.
Internet light	Often labeled with a little globe or the letters WAN. Solid (usually white, blue or green) = connected to the internet. Red, orange, or off = no internet; this is your first clue when things go dark.
Wi-Fi light	Shows the wireless signal is switched on and broadcasting.
A light that's a color you've never seen	Nearly always means "something needs attention." Red or orange is the universal "look at me" color. Jot down what it's doing before you call for help — it tells the helper a great deal.

TIP

Take a 'healthy' photo today

Right now, while everything is working, take a photo of your router's lights with your phone. The next time something goes wrong, you can glance at the photo and instantly see which light has changed. It's the simplest troubleshooting tool there is, and it costs you nothing.

The sockets on the back

Turn the router around and you'll see a cluster of connections. Here's what each one is for:

Socket	What plugs in here
The power socket	Where the power cord from the wall plugs in. Usually off on its own.
The internet socket (WAN)	Usually one port set apart from the others, often a different color (blue or yellow) and labeled Internet or WAN. This is the cable that brings the internet *in*, from your modem or wall jack.
The LAN ports	A group of identical sockets, often numbered 1, 2, 3, 4. These let you connect a device directly with a cable — a TV, a desktop computer, a game console — for the most rock-solid connection of all. Most homes leave these empty, and that's fine.
A reset pinhole	A tiny recessed button you can only press with a paperclip. Holding it wipes the router back to factory-new. Powerful, and occasionally a lifesaver — but don't press it casually; Chapter 28 explains exactly when and how.

CHAPTER 4

Modem vs. Router: The Great Confusion

If there is one thing that confuses good people more than any other, it's the difference between a modem and a router. Let's clear it up for good — it genuinely helps when something breaks.

Two jobs, sometimes two boxes, sometimes one

A **modem** is the box that connects your home to your internet company. The line from the street — whether it's a cable line, a phone line, or a fiber-optic line — plugs into the modem, and the modem translates that outside signal into something your home equipment can use. One modem, one internet connection. By itself, a modem gives internet to exactly one device by cable and broadcasts no Wi-Fi at all.

A **router**, as we've said, takes that one internet connection and shares it with your whole home over Wi-Fi. So the two work as a team: the modem brings the internet into the house, and the router spreads it around.

The all-in-one 'gateway'

Here's the part that causes the confusion: many internet companies now give you a **single box that is both a modem and a router combined**. The industry calls this a **gateway**, though your provider might just call it "your equipment" or "the modem." If you have one box from your internet company with Wi-Fi coming out of it, you have a gateway. There's nothing wrong with that — it's one less thing to think about.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **How to tell what you have**
>
> Count the boxes connected to your internet line. **One box** with Wi-Fi = an all-in-one gateway. **Two boxes** (one plugged into the wall line, a second plugged into the first) = a separate modem and router. Either setup is perfectly normal; knowing which you own tells you how many things to restart when the internet acts up — and this book will remind you.

Rented vs. bought — a word that can save you money

Most internet companies rent you their equipment for a monthly fee, often somewhere around ten to fifteen dollars a month, tucked quietly into your bill. Over a few years that adds up to far more than buying your own would cost. You are usually allowed to buy your own modem and router and return theirs to stop the fee — but not always, and the compatible

models vary by company, so it's worth a careful look before you buy anything. We cover the money side properly in the companion guide *Internet & Modems Explained*; for now, just know that rental fee is often optional.

FROM BILL

I'm happy to check your bill with you

Working out whether buying your own equipment will actually save you money — and whether your provider allows it — is exactly the kind of thing I help folks with. If you'd like a second pair of eyes on your internet bill, give me a call at (330) 200-8042. No pressure, no sales pitch.

PART 2

Getting Connected

Your network name and password, how to join any device to Wi-Fi, the two (or three) 'lanes' your signal travels in, and what to do when a device won't connect.

CHAPTER 5

Your Network Name & Password

To join anything to your Wi-Fi you need two things: the **network name** and the **password**. Let's find yours and understand them, because you'll use them for the rest of your life with this router.

The network name (the 'SSID')

When your phone or TV looks for Wi-Fi, it shows a list of nearby network names. Yours is one of them. The proper term for a Wi-Fi network name is an **SSID** — it simply stands for the name your network broadcasts. You don't need the jargon; just know that "SSID" and "network name" mean the exact same thing whenever you see it on a screen.

Straight from the factory, your network name is often something unfriendly like **NETGEAR47** or **ATT-WiFi-a3F9** — the brand plus a jumble of letters. That's fine to leave as-is, or you can change it to something you'll recognize, like **Smith Family**. Chapter 10 shows you how. The one thing I'd gently warn against: don't put your house number, your last name alone, or anything that tells a stranger exactly whose network it is. "The Oaks" is friendlier and safer than "14 Maple St."

Where your name and password are printed

On almost every router and gateway, the factory network name and password are printed **on a sticker on the bottom or back of the box.** Tip it up and look. You'll usually see:

- **Network / SSID / Wi-Fi Name** — the name to look for in the Wi-Fi list.
- **Password / Passphrase / Wi-Fi Key / WPA Key** — the password to type in. On newer boxes this is sometimes a long but memorable string of real words.
- A square **QR code** on many recent models — point your phone's camera at it and it offers to join the Wi-Fi for you automatically, no typing at all. We'll use this trick in the next chapter.

HEADS UP

Don't confuse the two passwords

The password on the sticker is the **Wi-Fi password** — the one devices use to join. There is often a *second*, different password called the **admin password**, used only to change the router's own settings. They are not the same thing. If a screen asks for one and your usual Wi-Fi password is refused, you're being asked for the admin password instead — see Chapter 9.

Write it down somewhere you'll find it

Stickers rub off and routers get tucked behind furniture. Do yourself a favor today: copy your network name and Wi-Fi password onto the card at the back of this book, or into a little notebook you keep in a known spot. You'll thank yourself the next time a grandchild visits and asks for the Wi-Fi, or you buy a new gadget that needs to connect.

CHAPTER 6

Connecting Any Device, Step by Step

Joining a device to Wi-Fi follows the same rhythm on everything — a phone, a tablet, a TV, a printer, a smart speaker. Once you've felt the pattern a couple of times, you'll do it without thinking.

The universal pattern

1. Find the device's **Settings**, then look for **Wi-Fi** (sometimes under "Network" or "Network & Internet").
2. The device shows a list of nearby network names. Tap **your** network name — the one from your sticker or the one you renamed.
3. When it asks for the password, type your Wi-Fi password *exactly* — capital letters, small letters and numbers all matter. Tap the little eye icon, if there is one, to see what you've typed.
4. Tap **Join**, **Connect**, or **OK**. After a few seconds the device shows it's connected, often with a little fan-shaped Wi-Fi symbol at the top of the screen.

> **TIP**
>
> **The password is almost always the problem**
>
> Nine times out of ten, a device that won't join is simply getting the password slightly wrong — an O instead of a zero, a capital letter typed small, or a stray space at the end. Slow down and type it once more, carefully, using the "show password" eye to check each character.

The no-typing shortcut: the QR code

If your router's sticker has a square QR code, joining a phone or tablet can be almost magical. Open the **Camera** app and simply point it at the code — don't take a picture, just hold it steady. A little banner slides down offering to **Join the network**. Tap it, and you're on. No password typing at all. This also works beautifully for guests: let them scan the code and they never see or keep your password.

Connecting the trickier gadgets

Some devices have no keyboard of their own — a smart plug, a video doorbell, a security camera. Those almost always connect through a **companion app on your phone**: you install the maker's app, it walks you through holding your phone near the gadget, and it hands over your Wi-Fi details for you. The pattern varies by brand, but the app always leads

the way. If you ever feel lost in one of those setups, that's a fine moment to call me.

Connecting a TV or streaming box

A smart TV or a streaming device (a Roku, say) asks for Wi-Fi during its first setup and remembers it forever after. You navigate with the remote's arrow buttons to spell out your password on an on-screen keyboard — slow, but you only do it once. Our companion *Roku* manual walks through that exact screen if you'd like the hand-holding.

CHAPTER 7

The Two Lanes: 2.4 and 5 GHz (and 6)

Sooner or later you'll notice your Wi-Fi seems to have more than one name — maybe one ending in "-2G" and one ending in "-5G" — or you'll hear someone mention "bands." Here's the whole story, without the engineering.

Think of them as two lanes on the same road

Your router actually broadcasts on two different radio frequencies at once, and they behave like two lanes with different strengths:

Band	What it's good for
2.4 GHz — the slow, long-reach lane	Travels farther and pushes through walls and floors better, but carries data more slowly and gets crowded (your microwave and old cordless phones share this lane). Best for faraway or simple gadgets: a smart plug in the garage, a thermostat down the hall.
5 GHz — the fast, short-reach lane	Much faster, but doesn't reach as far or punch through walls as well. Best for the things that need speed and are reasonably near the router: your TV, your laptop for video calls, your phone when you're streaming.
6 GHz — the newest, fastest, shortest lane	Found only on the latest routers (called Wi-Fi 6E and Wi-Fi 7) and newest phones and laptops. Blazing fast, very short reach. A bonus lane for brand-new equipment in the same room; older gadgets simply won't see it, and that's fine.

The good news: you usually don't have to choose

Most modern routers are smart enough to use **one network name** for all the lanes and quietly put each device in the best one for where it's standing. This is sometimes called "band steering" or a "smart connect." If your Wi-Fi shows up as a single name, this is already happening and you can forget this chapter entirely — the router is doing the thinking.

GOOD TO KNOW

When you DO see two names

If you see two network names ending in something like "-2.4" and "-5," your router is letting you pick the lane by hand. For a phone or laptop you carry around, join the **5** one when you're near the router and the **2.4** one when you're far away. For a stationary gadget that keeps dropping off, try joining it to the **2.4** name — the longer reach often cures the drop-outs.

Why a smart gadget sometimes demands the 2.4 lane

Here's a quirk worth knowing because it causes real frustration. Many simple smart-home gadgets — doorbells, plugs, older cameras — can *only* use the 2.4 GHz lane. During setup they'll fail mysteriously if your phone is sitting on the 5 GHz lane. The cure is to temporarily join your phone to the 2.4 name (or, on an all-in-one network, to move closer to the router), finish the gadget's setup, then carry on as normal. If a new gadget stubbornly won't set up, this is the first thing I check.

CHAPTER 8

When a Device Won't Connect

Before we go further, let's bank a short list of fixes for the single most common Wi-Fi headache: one device won't get on, or keeps falling off. Work down the list and stop as soon as it's fixed.

1. **Re-check the password.** Carefully, with the "show password" eye. This alone solves most cases.
2. **Forget and rejoin.** On the stubborn device, go to its Wi-Fi settings, tap your network name, and choose **Forget This Network**. Then join it fresh as if it were new. This clears out a stale, scrambled memory of the connection — a surprisingly common culprit.
3. **Turn the device off and on.** Fully — not just the screen. Phones and tablets especially benefit from a complete restart.
4. **Move closer to the router.** If it connects fine up close but not in the far bedroom, your trouble is reach, not the password — Part 4 is all about fixing reach.
5. **Restart the router.** Unplug it from the wall, count to thirty, plug it back in, and wait two or three full minutes for all the lights to settle. This is the "turn it off and on" cure, and it fixes an astonishing share of all Wi-Fi problems.
6. **Check whether it's just this one device or all of them.** If every device is off, the trouble is the router or the internet itself — jump to Part 7. If it's only one device, the trouble is on that device.

FROM BILL

The thirty-second rule

When you unplug a router to restart it, really wait the full thirty seconds before plugging it back in. That pause lets the box fully power down and lets your internet company's end notice you've stepped away, so it greets you fresh when you return. Plugging straight back in often doesn't give the same clean start. It feels silly to stand there counting — do it anyway.

PART 3

Setting Up or Replacing a Router

Unboxing a new router, where to put it, the setup app, and getting your whole house back online without a cold sweat. Even if someone else set yours up, read Chapter 11 on placement.

CHAPTER 9

The Setup App & the Admin Screen

Every router has a "control room" where its settings live. Reaching it used to mean typing a cryptic web address; today most brands give you a friendly phone app instead. Let's demystify both.

The modern way: a phone app

Nearly every router sold today — eero, Google Nest Wifi, TP-Link Deco, Netgear Orbi, Linksys, and the gateways from the big internet companies — is set up and managed through a **free app** you install on your phone. The box tells you the app's name, or you search your phone's app store for the brand. The app walks you through setup in plain steps and, afterward, becomes your remote control for the whole network: change the password, see what's connected, pause a device, run a speed test.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why the app is a gift to you

The app means you never have to remember a technical web address or a second password. It also lets a trusted family member be added as a helper so they can check on things from their own home — a quiet comfort if you'd like a son or daughter able to lend a hand remotely.

The older way: the web address

Some routers — especially older ones and some provider gateways — are managed by typing an address into a web browser instead. The address is usually printed on the same sticker as your Wi-Fi details, and it's almost always one of a small handful of number-strings or a simple word address. You type it into the browser's address bar (not a search box), and a login screen appears asking for the **admin** username and password — also on the sticker, often "admin" and "password" if nobody changed them.

STAY SAFE

Change the admin password if it's still 'admin'

If your router's control room still opens with "admin" and "password," change that admin password to something only you know. It's the lock on the control room door. Leaving it as the factory default is like leaving a key under the mat with a sign pointing to it. This is separate from your Wi-Fi password — write both on the card at the back of this book.

CHAPTER 10

Changing Your Wi-Fi Name & Password

Two of the handiest things you can do in the control room are rename your network and change its password. Here's the why and the how.

Renaming your network

Changing your network name to something you recognize makes life easier for everyone who visits. In the app or control room, look for **Wi-Fi settings** or **Network name**, type the new name, and save. Every device that was connected will briefly drop off and need to rejoin under the new name — so pick a time when a few minutes of fuss is fine, and have your devices handy to reconnect.

When and why to change your Wi-Fi password

- You shared it widely — with contractors, a short-term guest, a vacation renter — and want a clean slate.
- You suspect a neighbor or stranger is using your Wi-Fi without permission.
- It was never strong to begin with (see Part 5 on what makes a password strong).

To change it, find **Wi-Fi password** or **Security** in the app, type the new password twice, and save. The same thing happens as with renaming: every device drops off and must rejoin with the new password. Keep your list of devices in mind so none get forgotten — the TV, the printer, the thermostat, the doorbell.

HEADS UP

Changing the password logs everything out

This is the one catch worth planning for. After a password change you'll walk the house rejoining each device once. It's not hard, just a chore — so budget twenty quiet minutes and keep the new password written in front of you. If a smart-home gadget is hard to reconnect, its companion app is the place to re-enter the new password.

CHAPTER 11

Where to Put Your Router

This is the chapter I wish everyone would read, because moving a router three feet can do more for your Wi-Fi than any setting on earth — and it costs nothing. Wi-Fi is radio, and radio cares a great deal about where the broadcaster sits.

The golden rules of placement

- **Central and open.** The signal radiates outward in all directions, so a router in the far corner of the house wastes half its range on the back yard. Nearer the middle of your living space is better.
- **Up high and out in the open.** On a shelf or table beats on the floor or inside a cabinet. Closed cabinets, especially ones with glass doors or metal, muffle the signal badly.
- **Away from thick walls and big metal.** Brick, stone, and the metal of refrigerators, filing cabinets and large mirrors block Wi-Fi the most. A clear line through drywall is ideal.
- **Away from the microwave and the cordless phone base.** Both can interfere with the 2.4 GHz lane. A few feet of separation is plenty.
- **Antennas (if it has them) standing up.** For most homes, pointing the antennas straight up spreads the signal outward across your floor, which is usually what you want.

TIP

The 'one more room' test

If there's a room where Wi-Fi is always weak, before buying anything, try simply moving the router toward that room — even onto a different shelf — and test again the next day. I've fixed many a "dead" bedroom for free this way. Only when placement truly can't reach does it become time for the coverage tools in Part 4.

A note on the gateway you can't move

If your internet company's box is bolted to the wall where their line enters — often a basement or a closet — you may not be able to move it far. That's the single most common reason a home has weak Wi-Fi: the broadcaster is stuck in the worst possible spot. The fix isn't to fight the wiring; it's to add coverage out where you live, which is exactly what Part 4 is about. Don't blame yourself for a problem the wiring handed you.

PART 4

Coverage: Reaching the Whole House

Dead zones, extenders, and mesh systems — what actually fixes weak Wi-Fi in the back bedroom, and how to choose without overspending.

CHAPTER 12

Why Some Rooms Are Dead Zones

A **dead zone** is a spot where your Wi-Fi is weak or gone entirely. Before you spend a dime fixing one, it helps to understand why it's there — because the cause points to the cure.

The three usual culprits

- **Distance.** Every router has a range, and past it the signal simply fades, the way a radio station turns to static as you drive out of town.
- **Walls and floors.** Each wall the signal crosses steals some strength. A couple of interior walls are fine; a brick chimney, a tiled bathroom, or a concrete floor between stories can stop it nearly dead.
- **A badly placed router** — which we just covered. Always rule this out first; it's the free fix.

How to map your own dead zones

You don't need any special gadget. Walk slowly through your home with your phone, watching the Wi-Fi symbol at the top of the screen, or run a free speed test (Chapter 20) in each room. Note where the bars drop or a video starts to stutter. That map tells you exactly where you need more coverage — and whether it's one weak room (a simple fix) or a whole wing (a job for mesh).

CHAPTER 13

Extenders, Mesh & How to Choose

When placement alone can't reach, you add equipment that carries the signal farther. There are two broad approaches, and the difference matters for how happy you'll be.

Wi-Fi extenders (the budget patch)

A **Wi-Fi extender** (also called a "range extender" or "repeater") is a small plug-in box you put about halfway between your router and the dead zone. It catches the router's signal and rebroadcasts it farther. Extenders are inexpensive, but they have a real drawback: they often create a *second* network name you have to switch to by hand, and they usually cut the speed roughly in half because they're repeating everything. They can be a fine, cheap fix for one stubborn room — a garage, a porch — but they're a patch, not a cure.

Mesh systems (the proper cure)

A **mesh system** is a set of two or three (or more) matching units that work together as a single team. You place one where your internet comes in and scatter the others around the house. They share **one network name**, and your phone hands off from unit to unit as you walk around, the way a cell phone passes between towers — you never notice, never switch anything. For a larger or multi-story home, this is the modern answer, and it's what I install most often.

Your situation	What usually fits
A single modern router is usually enough when…	You have a smaller or single-floor home — roughly under 2,000 to 2,500 square feet with an open layout — and no stubborn dead zones.
A mesh system is worth it when…	Your home is larger, has two or more floors, has thick walls, or has dead zones a well-placed single router can't reach. Mesh is also the easiest kind to manage from a phone, which many folks appreciate.
An extender can do when…	You just need to nudge the signal into one nearby room cheaply, and you don't mind a separate name and slower speed there.

GOOD TO KNOW

A word on brands and 'Wi-Fi 6 / 6E / 7'

Popular, easy-to-manage mesh brands include eero, Google Nest Wifi, TP-Link Deco and Netgear Orbi. You'll also see them labeled Wi-Fi 6, Wi-Fi 6E, or Wi-Fi 7 — these are just newer generations, each a bit faster than the last. For most homes a Wi-Fi 6 or 6E system is plenty; Wi-Fi 7 is worth the extra only if you pay for a very fast internet plan (over a gigabit) or want a system to last many years. Don't let a salesman talk you into the top of the line out of fear of missing out.

FROM BILL

Let me spare you the guesswork

Choosing and placing coverage equipment is one of the most common reasons folks call me, because getting it right the first time saves money and frustration. If you'd like, I can look at your home's layout, test where the weak spots really are, and recommend the smallest thing that will fix it — then set it up for you. Call (330) 200-8042 whenever you're ready.

PART 5

Keeping It Safe

A strong password, the newest security setting, a guest network for visitors, and how to spot the scams that pretend to be about your internet. The part that protects you.

CHAPTER 14

A Password Strangers Can't Guess

Your Wi-Fi password is the front door to your home network. A weak one lets a neighbor or a passerby borrow your internet — slowing it down and, worse, putting a stranger inside your network alongside your devices. The good news: a strong password is easy to make and you only set it once.

What makes a password strong

- **Long beats clever.** Length matters more than anything. A passphrase of a few unrelated words — like **purple-canoe-breakfast-lamp** — is both very strong and easy to read aloud to a guest.
- **Avoid the obvious.** No "password," no "12345678," no your street name or birth year.
- **It doesn't need to be a jumble.** Forget the old advice about cramming in symbols you'll never remember. Four random words are stronger than "P@ss1!" and far kinder to type.

> TIP
> **The sticky-note test**
> A good Wi-Fi password is one you'd be comfortable writing on a card for a trusted guest but that a stranger parked outside could never guess. Four plain words hits that mark perfectly.

WPA3 and WPA2: the lock on your Wi-Fi

Deep in your router's settings is a choice called the **security type**, with names like WPA2 and WPA3. Think of it as the *kind* of lock on your door — and newer is stronger. The simple rule:

Setting	What to do
WPA3	The newest and strongest. Choose it if your router offers it.
WPA2	Still perfectly safe and very common. Fine to use if WPA3 isn't available.
WPA3/WPA2 'mixed' or 'transition'	A friendly middle setting that uses WPA3 for newer devices and WPA2 for older ones. A great default — pick this if you see it.
WEP or 'open' / no password	Old and unsafe, or no lock at all. If you ever see your network set to WEP or with no password, that's worth changing right away — or calling me about.

Most routers are already set to a safe option out of the box, so this is more a thing to check once than to fuss over. If poking through security settings makes you nervous, it's a perfect

little job to hand to me over a quick call.

CHAPTER 15

A Guest Network for Visitors

One of the nicest features hiding in most routers is the **guest network** — and almost nobody uses it. It's worth two minutes to turn on.

What a guest network is and why you want one

A guest network is a **separate Wi-Fi name with its own password** that gives visitors internet but keeps them walled off from your own devices — your computer, your printer, your files, your cameras. Guests can get online; they can't wander into the rest of your home network, by accident or otherwise.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a guest network does for you

You can hand out the guest password freely — to grandkids, the house cleaner, a repair technician, a weekend visitor — without ever revealing your *real* Wi-Fi password or exposing your personal devices. If a guest's phone happens to carry something nasty, the wall keeps it away from your things. It's good manners and good protection at the same time.

Turning it on

1. Open your router's app or control room and look for **Guest Network** or **Guest Wi-Fi**.
2. Switch it on. Give it a friendly name ("Smith Guest") and an easy password you won't mind sharing.
3. Save. Now you have two networks: your private one and the guest one. Put your own devices on the private one; point visitors to the guest one.

TIP

Perfect for smart-home gadgets, too

Many folks put their chattier smart-home gadgets — the ones made by companies they've never heard of — on the guest network, keeping them away from the computer where the important things live. A tidy extra layer of safety for no extra cost.

CHAPTER 16

Scams That Pretend to Be About Your Internet

I have to include this chapter because these scams are relentless and they specifically target people who'd rather not deal with technology. Read it twice. Knowing the shapes of these tricks is the single best protection there is — better than any gadget.

The 'your router is infected' call or pop-up

You get a phone call, or a frightening pop-up fills your screen, warning that your router or computer is "infected," "hacked," or "sending out a virus," and urging you to call a number or let someone connect to your device to fix it. **It is always a scam.** Your internet company will not call you out of the blue about a virus. Microsoft and Apple will never put a phone number in a pop-up. Nobody legitimate works this way.

SCAM ALERT

The one rule that defeats this scam

Never call a number in a pop-up, and never let anyone who contacted *you* connect to your computer or router remotely. If a message or caller created urgency and fear and then asked for remote access, money, or gift cards, it is a scam — hang up, close the screen, and if you're shaken, call me or a family member you trust. You will never be in trouble for hanging up.

Fake 'internet provider' callers

Another common one: someone calls claiming to be from your internet or cable company, offering a "discount" or warning of an "outage," and asking you to confirm your account details, make a payment a certain way, or read back a code. Real companies don't operate like this. Hang up, find your provider's number on a real bill (not one the caller gives you), and call them directly to check. You'll almost always find there was no problem at all.

The 'free Wi-Fi' trap in public

Out in the world — a coffee shop, an airport — you'll see lists of open Wi-Fi networks. Crooks sometimes set up a fake one with an inviting name to peek at what people do. The simple safe habits: ask a staff member for the real network name, avoid doing your banking on public Wi-Fi, and when in doubt use your phone's own cellular connection instead. At home, none of this applies — your own locked Wi-Fi is your safe harbor.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, it costs you nothing to ask me

I would far rather get a two-minute call that turns out to be nothing than hear later that someone was talked out of their money. If anything about a call, pop-up, or email makes your stomach tighten, stop and ring me at (330) 200-8042 before you do what it's pushing you to do. That pause is your best friend.

PART 6

Speed & Performance

What internet speed really means, how to test yours, what quietly slows Wi-Fi down, and how to tell whether it's your Wi-Fi or your internet plan that's the problem.

CHAPTER 17

What 'Speed' Actually Means

Speed is the thing everyone complains about and almost nobody has explained to them. Let's fix that so the numbers on your bill and on a speed test finally make sense.

Megabits: the water-pressure picture

Internet speed is measured in **megabits per second**, written **Mbps**. The bigger the number, the more can flow at once. Picture it as the width of a water pipe: a wider pipe lets more households run a faucet at the same time without the pressure dropping. Your internet plan buys you a pipe of a certain width, and everything in your home shares it.

Download vs. upload

- **Download** speed is how fast things come *to* you — web pages, streaming shows, email. This is the big number providers advertise, and it's what matters most day to day.
- **Upload** speed is how fast things go *from* you — sending a photo, your face and voice on a video call, backing up to the cloud. Usually a smaller number, which is normal.

How much speed do you actually need?

What you're doing	Rough speed that's plenty
Email, web, social media	A little goes a long way — even a modest plan handles these easily.
Streaming one TV show in HD	Roughly 5 to 10 Mbps while it's playing.
A video call (one person)	Roughly 3 to 5 Mbps up and down.
A busy household, several screens at once	Comfortable on plans in the 100–300 Mbps range for most families.
Very large households / heavy use / future-proofing	Gigabit plans (1,000 Mbps) exist, but many homes never come close to needing them. Don't overpay for a pipe you can't fill.

GOOD TO KNOW

More speed won't fix bad Wi-Fi

This is the costly mistake I see most: a family in a dead zone pays their provider for a faster plan, and nothing improves — because the bottleneck was weak Wi-Fi in that room, not the size of the pipe coming into the house. Paying for more speed only helps if your Wi-Fi can actually deliver it to where you're sitting. Fix coverage first.

CHAPTER 18

Running a Speed Test

A speed test is a free, two-minute check that tells you how fast your internet is reaching a particular spot. It's the single most useful number when something feels slow.

How to run one

1. On a phone, tablet or computer connected to your Wi-Fi, open a web browser and search for **speed test**, or use a well-known free tester. Your router's own app often has one built in, which is the easiest of all.
2. Tap the big **Go** or **Start** button and hold still for about thirty seconds.
3. Note the **download** and **upload** numbers, in Mbps.

Making the test tell you something useful

One test by itself is just a number. The trick is to *compare*:

- **Test right next to the router,** then test again in the slow room. If it's fast at the router and slow in the room, your trouble is Wi-Fi coverage — Part 4. If it's slow even at the router, your trouble is the internet plan or the provider — call them.
- **Compare the result at the router with the speed you pay for** (it's on your bill). If you're getting far less than you pay for even standing at the router, that's worth a call to your provider.
- **Test at a quiet hour and a busy hour.** If evenings crawl, the neighborhood may be congested — again, a provider conversation.

> **TIP**
>
> **Write down a 'good day' number**
>
> Just like the photo of your router's healthy lights, jot down the speed you get on a good day at the router. When things feel slow later, a fresh test compared against your "good day" number instantly tells you whether something really changed or it's just in your head.

CHAPTER 19

What Quietly Slows Wi-Fi Down

When Wi-Fi feels sluggish and the internet plan isn't the cause, one of these everyday things is usually behind it. None require an expert to address.

The quiet culprit	What helps
Distance and walls	The farther and more walls between you and the router, the slower it gets. Move closer, or add coverage (Part 4).
Too many devices at once	A houseful of phones, TVs and gadgets all working hard shares one pipe. Usually fine; occasionally the reason an evening feels slow.
An old router	Routers age. One more than about five or six years old can be the whole problem — it simply can't go as fast as modern ones, no matter your plan.
A device that needs a restart	Phones, streaming boxes and the router itself all run better after an occasional restart. The humble fix that cures so much.
Interference on the 2.4 lane	Microwaves, baby monitors and old cordless phones can muddy the 2.4 GHz lane. Move the router a few feet from them.
A paused update finishing in the background	Sometimes a device is simply busy downloading a big update, which hogs the pipe for a while and then clears on its own.

FROM BILL

The honest truth about old equipment

If your router is many years old, no setting and no faster plan will make it keep up with today's homes — it's like asking a garden hose to fill a pool. Replacing it is often the cheapest real fix. I'll always tell you honestly whether yours is the problem, and I'll never push you toward equipment you don't need.

PART 7

Everyday Fixes & Maintenance

The restart that cures most things, keeping your router healthy, reading the lights when the internet goes down, and the short routine that keeps trouble away.

CHAPTER 20

The Restart That Fixes Almost Everything

If you remember only one fix from this entire book, make it this one. A huge share of all home internet trouble — slow speeds, devices that won't connect, Wi-Fi that's "there but not working" — clears up the moment you restart your equipment. It's not a trick; it genuinely lets the boxes clear their heads and start fresh.

The right way to restart

1. Find your equipment. Remember: **one box** (a gateway) or **two boxes** (separate modem and router)?
2. Unplug the power from **all** of it at the wall. If you have two boxes, unplug both.
3. Wait a full **thirty seconds**. Count it out — this pause is what makes the restart work.
4. Plug the **modem** (or gateway) back in first. Wait two or three minutes for its lights to settle and the internet light to come on solid.
5. If you have a separate router, plug it in next and give it another two or three minutes.
6. Test. Nine times in ten, you're back in business.

HEADS UP

Restart is not the same as reset

Restart means unplug and plug back in — it changes nothing about your settings and is always safe. **Reset** means holding that pinhole button to wipe the router back to factory-new, which erases your network name and password and makes everything disconnect. Never press the pinhole button to fix a everyday slowdown. When in doubt, just unplug and replug — and call me before you reach for a paperclip.

CHAPTER 21

When the Internet Goes Out

Everything's dark — no Wi-Fi, no internet on anything. Don't panic, and don't assume it's your fault. Walk this calm checklist.

1. **Look at the router's lights.** Is the internet light off, or red/orange? That points to the internet coming in, not your Wi-Fi. (This is where that "healthy lights" photo earns its keep.)
2. **Check whether it's just you.** Peek at your phone — if it still works on cellular but nothing works on Wi-Fi, the trouble is at home. A neighbor's Wi-Fi being down too suggests an area outage.
3. **Do the full restart** from the last chapter. This alone brings most outages back.
4. **Check for an area outage.** Many providers have a status page or a recorded line; on your phone's cellular connection you can often see "outage in your area" reported. If so, there's nothing to fix but wait.
5. **Check the physical cables** — did a cable get bumped loose by a vacuum or a curious pet? Reseat any cable that's loose.
6. **Call your provider** if the internet light stays dark after a restart and there's no reported outage. The trouble is likely on their end or in their equipment.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep your provider's number where you can reach it offline

When the internet's out you can't look things up — so keep your internet company's phone number and your account number written on the card at the back of this book or taped inside a cupboard. A little preparation turns an outage from a crisis into a minor annoyance.

CHAPTER 22

Keeping Your Router Healthy

A router asks very little of you, but a few good habits keep it running smoothly for years and quietly keep you safer.

Let it update itself

Routers get **firmware updates** — the maker's improvements and, importantly, security patches. Most modern routers install these automatically overnight, which is exactly what you want. If your router's app has a setting for **automatic updates**, make sure it's switched on and then forget about it. An up-to-date router is a safer router.

Give it air and an occasional restart

- Keep it out in the open where air can move around it — routers run warm, and a hot router in a closed cabinet can get flaky.
- A restart every month or two, even when nothing's wrong, keeps it fresh. Some folks put it on a cheap outlet timer to reboot in the small hours automatically.
- Dust it now and then. That's genuinely about all the physical care it needs.

Know what's connected

Your router's app can show you a **list of every device on your network**. It's worth a look now and then — partly out of curiosity (so *that's* the thermostat), and partly for peace of mind. If you ever see a device you can't account for, changing your Wi-Fi password (Chapter 10) kicks everything off and makes them all rejoin with the new one, locking out anything that shouldn't be there.

TIP

A yearly five-minute check-up

Once a year, do a quick round: confirm automatic updates are on, confirm your security is WPA2 or WPA3, glance at the connected-devices list, and make sure your written-down passwords still match reality. Five minutes a year keeps nearly all Wi-Fi trouble at bay. Put it on your calendar near a birthday so you remember.

PART 8

Going Further

The useful extras: connecting every kind of gadget, pausing the internet at bedtime, wired connections, Wi-Fi away from home, and a plain-English glossary and FAQ.

CHAPTER 23

Connecting Every Kind of Gadget

We covered the universal pattern back in Chapter 6. Here's a quick field guide to the specific gadgets folks ask me about most, because each has a small wrinkle worth knowing.

A printer

Most home printers connect to Wi-Fi through their own little screen (look for a Wi-Fi or Network setup menu) or through the printer maker's phone app. Once the printer is on your Wi-Fi, your computer and phone can find and print to it from anywhere in the house — no cable. If a printer keeps dropping off, it's often sitting in the far 2.4 GHz lane and struggling with reach; moving it closer or improving coverage usually settles it.

A smart TV or streaming box

These ask for your Wi-Fi during first setup and remember it forever. You spell out the password with the remote on an on-screen keyboard — slow but one-time. If a TV loses its connection often, it's usually reach again; a streaming stick tucked behind a big metal TV can be starved of signal, and a small extension so the stick hangs in open air can work wonders.

A voice assistant or smart speaker

Speakers like these set up entirely through a phone app that hands over your Wi-Fi for you. Keep the app that came with the speaker; it's how you'll change the Wi-Fi later if you ever get a new router.

A video doorbell or camera

These are the fussiest, because they lean on the 2.4 GHz lane and need a decent signal out at the door — often the farthest, most wall-blocked spot in the house. Set them up with the maker's app, and if one won't connect or keeps going offline, suspect reach first. A doorbell is frequently the gadget that finally justifies a mesh unit near the front of the house.

TIP

Keep the app, note the gadget

Every smart gadget has a companion app, and that app is where you re-enter your Wi-Fi password if you ever change it or replace your router. Keep a short list — on the card at the back — of which gadgets connect to your Wi-Fi, so none get forgotten on the day you swap equipment.

CHAPTER 24

Pausing the Internet & Parental Controls

A feature many folks love once they discover it: with a tap in your router's app you can **pause the internet** — for one device, a group, or the whole house.

Why you might pause

- Calling the grandkids to the dinner table without a fight — pause their tablets for an hour.
- A peaceful bedtime — schedule the kids' devices to go offline at nine and come back at seven.
- A quiet evening — pause everything but the TV so notifications stop buzzing.

How it works

In the router's app you'll see your connected devices, often grouped into "profiles" you can name ("the kids," "the den TV"). Tap a profile and you'll find a **pause** button and usually a **schedule** for regular downtime. Some routers also offer basic **content filtering** to keep youngsters away from grown-up corners of the internet. These tools vary a lot by brand; the newer mesh systems have the friendliest versions.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If grandchildren visit or live with you, these controls give you a gentle, no-argument way to manage screen time from your own phone — no standing over anyone, no confrontation. Just a quiet schedule that does the job for you.

CHAPTER 25

Wired Connections: When a Cable Beats Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is wonderful, but for a few things in the home a plain cable is still the champion — rock-solid, fast, and never affected by walls or distance. It's worth knowing when to reach for one.

What a wired connection is

An **Ethernet cable** is a cable a little thicker than a phone cord, with a clip-in plug, that runs from one of the numbered LAN ports on your router straight to a device. It gives that device its own private, full-speed connection that never has to compete over the air.

When it's worth running one

- A **desktop computer** or a **TV** that sits right near the router — plug it in and forget about Wi-Fi trouble for that device entirely.
- A **game console** or anything where a steady connection matters more than being tidy.
- A **mesh unit** — connecting mesh units to each other with cable (called a "wired backhaul") makes the whole system noticeably faster, if you happen to have cable runs between rooms.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to wire anything

This is strictly optional. The vast majority of homes run beautifully on Wi-Fi alone. Think of a cable as a tool in your back pocket for the one stubborn device near the router — not a chore you're obligated to take on.

CHAPTER 26

Wi-Fi Away From Home

The same ideas travel with you. Here's how to stay connected and safe on the road — at a hotel, a relative's house, or anywhere out in the world.

Joining someone else's Wi-Fi

It's the same universal pattern: find their network name, type their password, done. At a hotel you may also see a sign-in page open in your browser asking for your room number or a code — that's normal, just follow its prompts. Your phone and tablet will remember networks you've joined before and rejoin them automatically next visit.

Your phone as a hotspot — Wi-Fi in your pocket

Here's a trick worth its weight in gold. Your cell phone can share its own internet connection with your laptop or tablet, creating a little private Wi-Fi network wherever you have cell signal. It's called a **personal hotspot** (or "mobile hotspot"), and it lives in your phone's settings. It's perfect when a hotel's Wi-Fi is poor, when you're traveling, or as a backup when your home internet goes out. (Heavy use can eat into your phone plan's data, so it's best for light tasks — but for checking email on a laptop in a pinch, it's a lifesaver.)

STAY SAFE

Public Wi-Fi: a little caution goes a long way

On any Wi-Fi you don't control, skip your banking and anything with a password you care about, or use your phone's own cellular connection for those. Confirm the real network name with a staff member so you don't join a lookalike set up by a crook. At home on your own locked Wi-Fi, you can relax — this caution is only for networks out in the world.

CHAPTER 27

Plain-English Glossary

Every Wi-Fi word you're likely to meet, in one place, explained the way I'd say it to you.

Word	What it means
Router	The box that broadcasts your home Wi-Fi and directs internet traffic.
Modem	The box that connects your home to your internet company's line.
Gateway	A single box that is a modem and router combined — common from internet companies.
Wi-Fi	The wireless internet signal inside your home.
Network name / SSID	The name your Wi-Fi shows up as in a device's list.
Wi-Fi password	The password a device needs to join your Wi-Fi.
Admin password	A separate password used only to change the router's own settings.
Band (2.4 / 5 / 6 GHz)	The 'lanes' your Wi-Fi travels in — longer reach vs. more speed.
WPA2 / WPA3	The kind of security lock on your Wi-Fi; WPA3 is newest, WPA2 is still safe.
Guest network	A separate Wi-Fi for visitors that keeps them away from your own devices.
Mesh system	A set of matching units that blanket a home in one seamless Wi-Fi network.
Extender / repeater	A plug-in box that rebroadcasts your signal into a weak spot.
Dead zone	A spot where Wi-Fi is weak or absent.
Mbps	Megabits per second — the unit of internet speed; bigger is faster.
Download / upload	Data coming to you / going from you.
Firmware	The router's internal software, updated by the maker for safety and improvements.
Ethernet cable	A cable that gives a device a full-speed wired connection to the router.
Hotspot	Using your phone's cell connection to make Wi-Fi for a laptop or tablet.
Restart	Unplug and replug — safe, changes nothing, fixes most trouble.
Reset	Wipe the router back to factory-new — erases your settings; use with care.

CHAPTER 28

Frequently Asked Questions

Will restarting my router delete anything or change my password?

No. A restart (unplug and replug) changes nothing — your network name, password and settings all stay exactly as they were. It's completely safe to do anytime. Only a *reset* (holding the pinhole button) wipes things, and you'd have to do that on purpose.

Is it safe to leave my Wi-Fi on all the time?

Yes, entirely. Routers are built to run continuously for years. Leaving it on is normal and expected; an occasional restart is all it needs.

Someone told me I need the fastest internet plan. Do I?

Almost certainly not. Most homes are comfortable well below the top plans, and extra speed does nothing if weak Wi-Fi is the real bottleneck. Fix coverage first, and buy only the speed your household actually uses. I'm glad to help you right-size it.

My Wi-Fi is fast in the living room but slow in the bedroom. Is my internet broken?

No — that's a classic coverage problem, not an internet problem. Run a speed test in both rooms: fast at the router and slow in the bedroom means you need better reach (Part 4), not a new plan.

Do I need antivirus or a VPN on my home Wi-Fi?

For most folks, a locked Wi-Fi (WPA2 or WPA3), a strong password, and healthy skepticism toward pop-ups and strange calls are the real protection. A VPN is a privacy tool some people choose for use on public Wi-Fi, but it's not something a typical home needs to stay safe. If a product is being sold to you with scary warnings, that's a reason to ask me before you buy, not to rush in.

Can my neighbor see what I do online through my Wi-Fi?

Not if your Wi-Fi is locked with a password and set to WPA2 or WPA3 — which blocks outsiders from joining and scrambles what travels over the air. That's exactly why a strong password and modern security matter.

FROM BILL

A question not answered here?

This can't cover every situation, and yours may be its own puzzle. That's what I'm for — call (330) 200-8042 and we'll work through your specific question together, no rush.

PART 9

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when it's worth getting a hand, what I can do, and a one-page summary you can keep by the router forever.

CHAPTER 29

When to Call Bill

I've written this book so you can handle an awful lot on your own, and I hope it gives you real confidence. But part of being genuinely helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, money, or worry — so here's my straight advice, with no pressure in it.

Times it's well worth a call

- **You're choosing or replacing equipment.** Picking the right router or mesh system — and not overpaying — is easy to get wrong alone. I'll match it to your home and your plan.
- **Your whole house has weak Wi-Fi** and moving the router hasn't fixed it. I can test exactly where the signal fails and fix it with the smallest solution that works.
- **Setting up a new router or mesh system from scratch** feels overwhelming. I'll do it with you, move all your devices over, and leave everything labeled and written down.
- **You think someone may be using your Wi-Fi,** or a security setting looks wrong, and you'd like it checked and locked down properly.
- **Anything smelled like a scam** — a pop-up, a call, a strange charge. Call me *before* you act on it, not after.
- **You simply don't want to deal with it.** That's a perfectly good reason, and no one will judge you for it.

What working with me is like

I come to your home, here in Portage County, and I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down to you, no leaving you with a mess of wires and a shrug. I explain what I'm doing in plain words as I go, so you understand your own home a little better when I leave. And I'll always tell you honestly when something *doesn't* need fixing or replacing. That's how I've worked for more than 30 years, and it's how I'd want someone to treat my own parents.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit online at **billshometech.com/book**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. There's no such thing as a question too small — if it's bothering you, it's worth a call.

Thank you for letting me be a small part of how you stay connected. Take your time with all of this. You truly can't break it, and you're doing just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 30

Your Wi-Fi Cheat-Sheet

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

Fill this in once

Keep this handy	Write it here
My network name (Wi-Fi name)	_____
My Wi-Fi password	_____
My router's admin password	_____
My guest network name / password	_____
Internet company & phone number	_____
My account number	_____
Speed I pay for / speed on a good day	_____

The fixes, in order, when something's wrong

1. **Re-type the password** carefully (it's usually this).
2. **Restart the device** that's misbehaving — off and fully on.
3. **Restart the router:** unplug everything, wait 30 seconds, plug the modem back first, wait, then the router. Give it 2–3 minutes.
4. **Check the lights** — internet light red or off points to the internet, not your Wi-Fi.
5. **Move closer** to the router to tell a reach problem from a password problem.
6. **Check for an area outage** with your provider before assuming it's your equipment.
7. **Call Bill** at (330) 200-8042 if it's not sorted — that's what I'm here for.

The safety rules, always

- Never call a number in a pop-up, and never let a stranger who contacted *you* connect to your devices.

- Your internet company won't call you out of the blue about a virus or demand gift cards — that's always a scam.
- Keep your Wi-Fi password long and private; use the guest network for everyone else.
- When something creates fear and urgency and then asks for money or access, stop and call someone you trust first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You now understand the box with the blinking lights, how to connect anything to it, how to make it reach and run well, and how to keep it safe. That's more than most people ever learn about the thing their whole home depends on. Keep this book handy, take your time, and remember I'm only a phone call away.