BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

HP Laptops & Desktops

Setup, HP's own apps, updates, warranty, recovery and scams — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for HP computer owners and their families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For HP laptops, desktops & all-in-ones with Windows 11 · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your HP computer guide. It starts with the first day: switching on, signing in and the handful of jobs worth doing right away. Then it sorts out HP's own apps (there are several, and their names have changed), keeping the computer updated, checking your warranty, clearing out trial software, the special keys on an HP keyboard, and what to do when something goes wrong. Read it in any order and at your own pace. For everyday Windows skills, Bill's Windows 11 guide goes deeper; this guide covers what's special about HP.

Part 1 — Getting to Know Your HP

1 A Note from Bill
2 Which HP Do You Have?
3 Before You Switch It On

Part 2 — Your First Day

4 Turning It On for the First Time
5 Signing In: Your Account, PIN and Face or Fingerprint
6 The HP Screens You'll Meet Along the Way
7 Your First-Afternoon Checklist

Part 3 — HP's Own Apps, Sorted Out

8 Which HP App Is Which in 2026
9 The HP App (and the Older myHP)
10 HP Support Assistant
11 HP AI Companion (Only on Some Newer Laptops)
12 Printing: HP Smart and the HP App

Part 4 — Updates, Warranty & Getting Help from HP

13 Windows Update: The First Kind of Update
14 HP Drivers and BIOS Updates
15 Checking Your Warranty
16 Getting Help from HP: Free and Paid

Part 5 — Clearing Out the Extras

17 What Came Preinstalled, and What You Can Remove
18 Removing an Antivirus Trial (Such as McAfee)
19 HP Pieces to Keep, and Taming the Notifications

Part 6 — The Keyboard & the Hidden Startup Menu

20 The Keys on an HP Keyboard
21 The Esc Startup Menu (HP's Hidden Toolbox)

22 HP's Built-In Hardware Tests

Part 7 — When Something Goes Wrong

23 The Fix-It Ladder: Start Small
24 Resetting Windows (Reset This PC)
25 HP Cloud Recovery: A Fresh Start from a USB Drive
26 Fake HP Support Scams: How to Spot Them

Part 8 — When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

27 When to Call Bill
28 Your HP Computer Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting to Know Your HP

Who this guide is for, how to tell exactly which HP computer you have, and what to do before you switch it on for the first time.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe you've just unpacked a shiny new HP laptop. Maybe a family member handed you their old HP desktop, or you've had your HP all-in-one for years and it has started acting up. Wherever you're starting from, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. With 30+ years of professional experience, I've helped a lot of folks here in Portage County feel at home with their computers, and HP is one of the brands I see most often on kitchen tables. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain things sitting beside you: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time. Any word you might not know, I'll stop and explain.

What makes an HP different

Your HP runs **Windows 11**, the same as computers from Dell, Lenovo and the rest. Most of what you do every day is plain Windows. What HP adds is its own layer on top: a few HP apps for settings, support and updates, HP's driver and BIOS updates, HP's warranty and recovery tools, and some special keys on the keyboard. That HP layer is what this guide is about. It's also where people get confused, because HP has renamed and combined its apps more than once.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

By the end you'll know which HP apps you actually need, how to keep the computer updated and safe, how to look up your warranty, how to clear out trial software you never asked for, and how to put things right if Windows ever stops working. Most of all, you'll know how to spot a fake "HP support" caller, which is the single most expensive mistake I see HP owners make.

The big promise: you can't break it

You won't hurt your computer by clicking around in Settings or in HP's apps. Nearly everything can be changed back. The few places to slow down are the ones I'll flag clearly: updating the **BIOS** (the computer's built-in startup software), resetting Windows, and anything that asks for money or for someone to take control of your screen.

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

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Which HP Do You Have?

HP makes a lot of computers, and the names change every year or two. You don't need to memorize any of them. What you *do* need, any time you look up a driver, check a warranty or call for help, are two numbers: the **serial number** and the **product number**.

The main kinds of HP computer

Type	What it is
Laptop (notebook)	A folding computer with a built-in keyboard and screen. HP's home laptops have carried names like Pavilion, Envy, Spectre and, on newer models, OmniBook.
Gaming laptop or desktop	Names like Victus and OMEN. Powerful, often with colorful lights. Everything in this guide still applies.
Desktop tower	A box that sits on or under the desk, with a separate screen, keyboard and mouse.
All-in-one	A desktop where the computer is built into the back of the screen. One cable for power, and usually a wireless keyboard and mouse.
Business models	Names like EliteBook, ProBook and ZBook. Often handed down from an employer. They may have a few extra security programs, but they work the same way.

GOOD TO KNOW

A new word: model name vs. product number

The **model name** is the friendly one on the box, like "HP Laptop 15". Lots of slightly different computers share that name. The **product number** (a code with letters and numbers) and the **serial number** pin down your exact machine. Those are what HP's website and HP's support staff ask for.

Find your serial and product numbers in seconds

HP built a shortcut that shows a small window with your computer's details:

- On most **HP laptops**: hold **Fn** and press **Esc**.
- On most **HP desktops and all-in-ones**: hold **Ctrl** and **Alt**, then press **S**.

If the shortcut doesn't work on your model, look for the printed label. It's usually on the bottom of a laptop, or on the back or side of a desktop. On an all-in-one, check the back of the screen or the stand.

TIP

Write them down once

Copy the serial number and product number into the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28. A phone photo of the label works too. Then you'll never have to turn the laptop over or crawl under the desk again.

Is it a Copilot+ PC or an "AI PC"?

Some newer HP laptops are sold as **AI PCs** or Copilot+ PCs. They have an extra chip that runs some artificial-intelligence features on the computer itself instead of over the internet. HP's newest models also come with an app called **HP AI Companion**, explained in Chapter 11. If yours didn't say AI on the box, don't worry: nothing in the rest of this guide depends on it.

CHAPTER 3

Before You Switch It On

A few minutes of preparation makes the first day much smoother. None of this is complicated.

Have these ready

- **Your Wi-Fi name and password.** They're often printed on a sticker on your internet router.
- **Your Microsoft account email and password**, if you already have one (for example an Outlook.com or Hotmail address, or the account you use for Microsoft 365). If you don't have one, you can make one during setup.
- **Your phone**, because Microsoft may text or email a code to confirm it's you.
- **About an hour**, with the laptop plugged in. Setup plus the first round of updates takes a while.

Unpacking

1. Keep the box and receipt until the store's return window has passed. Note the last day for returns on your calendar.
2. Take out the charger. Many newer HP laptops charge through a **USB-C** port (a small oval port); older ones use a round barrel plug. Use the charger that came in the box.
3. Peel off any protective film from the screen and the bottom.
4. Plug the charger into the wall and into the laptop. A small light near the port usually shows it's charging.
5. For a desktop or all-in-one, plug in the power cord, then the keyboard and mouse if they're wired. Wireless ones may need batteries put in, or a tiny USB receiver plugged into the computer.

HEADS UP

Leave the sticker on the bottom

The label with the serial number is how you, the store and HP identify this exact computer. Don't peel it off, even if it's ugly.

Where's the power button?

On a laptop it's usually at the top right of the keyboard, or along one side. Some HP laptops build the power button and a fingerprint reader into the same key. On a desktop it's on the front; on an all-in-one it's often on the back or underneath the bottom edge of the screen. Press it once and let go.

FROM BILL

If a family member is setting it up for you

That's a lovely thing to do. Ask them to use *your* Microsoft account, not theirs, and to write your password down for you somewhere safe. A computer set up on a grandchild's account causes real headaches later.

PART 2

Your First Day

Windows 11 setup screen by screen, signing in the easy way, the HP screens you'll meet along the way, and a short checklist for the first afternoon.

CHAPTER 4

Turning It On for the First Time

The first time you press the power button, Windows 11 walks you through a series of questions. Microsoft calls this the setup or "out-of-box" experience. It's a bit like filling in a form, one page at a time. Read each page, answer, and select **Next**.

What you'll be asked, roughly in order

1. **Country or region**: choose United States.
2. **Keyboard layout**: choose US. When it offers a second keyboard layout, select **Skip**.
3. **Connect to a network**: pick your Wi-Fi name from the list, type the Wi-Fi password, and select **Connect**.
4. Windows may check for updates and restart. That's normal; let it work.
5. **Sign in with your Microsoft account**: type your email address and password, or select the option to create a new account. (More on this in Chapter 5.)
6. **Create a PIN**: a short code you'll use to unlock the computer each day.
7. **Privacy settings**: a series of switches about location, diagnostics and advertising. You can read each one; turning the optional ones off is perfectly fine and won't stop anything important from working.
8. **Offers and extras**: Windows and HP may suggest trials, backups, phone linking and more. Each one has a skip or "No thanks" choice. See Chapter 6.

Yes, you need the internet and a Microsoft account

Microsoft says Windows 11 Home needs an internet connection and a Microsoft account to finish setting up a new computer. Most HP computers sold for home use come with Windows 11 Home. Windows 11 Pro also needs an internet connection during setup.

GOOD TO KNOW

What about the tricks to skip the account?

You may read online about ways to set up Windows without a Microsoft account. Microsoft has been closing those workarounds, and they change from one Windows update to the next. For most people, a Microsoft account is worth having anyway: it backs up your settings, helps you get back in if you forget your PIN, and keeps your drive's recovery key safe (Chapter 7).

TIP

Stuck on a page?

If a page seems frozen, give it five minutes before doing anything. Updates and account checks can be slow on the first day. If the Wi-Fi page doesn't show your network, check that the router is on and you're in the same room as it.

CHAPTER 5

Signing In: Your Account, PIN and Face or Fingerprint

There are three things that unlock your computer, and people often mix them up. Here they are side by side.

What	What it does
Microsoft account	Your email address and password. It's your identity with Microsoft, the same one you'd use for Outlook.com, OneDrive or Microsoft 365. You'll rarely type it once setup is done.
PIN	A short code that unlocks *this* computer only. It's the everyday way in. Because it only works on this machine, it's safer than typing your full password.
Windows Hello (face or fingerprint)	If your HP has a special camera or a fingerprint reader, you can unlock it just by looking at the screen or touching the sensor. Your PIN still works as a backup.

Write down what matters

- Your Microsoft account **email address** and **password**.
- Your computer **PIN**.
- Keep them somewhere safe at home, like the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28 kept in a drawer, not on a sticky note on the laptop.

Setting up face or fingerprint later

If you skipped it during setup, you can add it any time: open **Settings** (the gear icon in the Start menu), select **Accounts**, then **Sign-in options**. Choose **Facial recognition** or **Fingerprint recognition** and follow the steps. If neither appears, your HP doesn't have the right hardware, and the PIN is all you need.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

With a PIN or Windows Hello, opening the computer takes a second, and you never have to type a long password while someone looks over your shoulder.

SCAM ALERT

Your PIN and password are for you alone

No one from HP or Microsoft will ever phone you and ask for your PIN, your Microsoft password or a code that was texted to you. Anyone who does is a scammer. Hang up.

CHAPTER 6

The HP Screens You'll Meet Along the Way

Once Windows is set up, HP adds a few screens and pop-ups of its own. None of them are required to use the computer. Here's what they are, so you can decide calmly.

"Register" or "Sign in to your HP account"

HP will invite you to create an **HP account** (separate from your Microsoft account) and register your computer. HP says you don't need an HP account to use the HP App, but signing in unlocks its full features, such as support chat and your device details. It's free. It's up to you; many people find it handy for warranty and support later.

Offers and trials

You may see offers for antivirus trials, cloud storage, Microsoft 365, games, or extended warranties. Read each one. Saying no to a trial never harms the computer. If you said yes to something by mistake, Chapter 17 and Chapter 18 show how to remove it.

HEADS UP

A trial that wants a card number

If a trial asks for a credit card "just to start", it will usually start charging automatically when the trial ends. Only enter a card if you've decided you really want to pay for it, and put the end date on your calendar.

"Your privacy" and "HP analytics" pages

HP may ask whether it can collect information about how the computer is used, to improve products or show you offers. These are choices, not requirements. Choosing the minimum doesn't stop updates or support from working.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, choose "Skip" or "Not now"

Almost every one of these screens can be revisited later. There's no prize for saying yes on day one, and a lot less to tidy up if you don't.

CHAPTER 7

Your First-Afternoon Checklist

Once you reach the desktop, these few jobs set the computer up for a long, trouble-free life. Do them in this order, and don't try to do them all in ten minutes.

1. **Run Windows Update** until it says you're up to date. It may take two or three rounds. See Chapter 13.
2. **Let HP check for HP updates** with HP Support Assistant or the HP App. See Chapter 14.
3. **Look up your warranty** and write down the end date. See Chapter 15.
4. **Remove trials you don't want**, especially an antivirus trial you won't pay for. See Chapter 18.
5. **Check that your recovery key is saved** (below).
6. **Turn on a backup** so your photos and files are copied somewhere safe. Bill's Windows 11 guide covers OneDrive and Windows Backup step by step.
7. **Make your text bigger** if you'd like: **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Text size**.

Your drive's recovery key

Most new Windows computers quietly **encrypt** the drive, which means scrambling everything so only your computer can read it. It's good protection if the laptop is ever stolen. The catch: if something ever goes wrong with the startup, the computer may ask for a long **recovery key**, a 48-digit number.

When you sign in with a Microsoft account, the key is normally saved to that account. To check, go to **aka.ms/myrecoverykey** on any device, sign in with the same Microsoft account, and make sure this computer appears in the list. Write the key down and keep it with your important papers.

HEADS UP

Microsoft can't make a new key

If the key isn't saved anywhere, there's no way to recover it later, and the only way forward would be erasing the computer. Checking now takes two minutes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this checklist does for you

An updated computer is safer and runs better. A known warranty date means you won't pay for a repair HP should cover. And with a backup and a saved recovery key, a bad day with the computer never becomes a lost-photos day.

PART 3

HP's Own Apps, Sorted Out

HP has several apps with similar names, and some have been renamed or combined. This part tells you which is which in 2026, which ones you need, and which you can ignore.

CHAPTER 8

Which HP App Is Which in 2026

If you've been confused by HP's apps, you're in good company. Over the years HP has had myHP, HP Support Assistant, HP Smart and more, and in 2025 it began combining some of them into one new app simply called the **HP App**. Depending on when your computer was made, you may have any mix of these.

App	What it's for	Do you need it?
HP App	HP's newer all-in-one app. It combines features of myHP and HP Smart: your device details, settings, support and shortcuts.	Useful. It comes already installed on newer HP computers.
myHP	The older control panel for audio, camera, display and performance settings, plus links to manuals and warranty info.	Fine to keep on older computers. Being replaced by the HP App.
HP Support Assistant	Checks for HP driver and BIOS updates, runs checks, and shows warranty information.	Worth keeping. HP was still releasing new versions in 2026.
HP Smart	For HP *printers*: setup, printing, scanning and ink.	Only if you have an HP printer. See Chapter 12.
HP AI Companion	An AI assistant on HP's newer "AI PC" laptops.	Optional. Only on certain models. See Chapter 11.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why it changed

HP says the HP App "combines features from both HP Smart and myHP into one app." The idea is one place for all your HP devices, computers and printers alike. The switch is happening gradually, so on Windows you may still see the older apps for a while.

How to see which ones you have

1. Select the **Start** button (the Windows logo at the bottom of the screen).
2. Select **All** (or **All apps**) to see the full list.
3. Scroll to the letter **H** and look for anything beginning with "HP". (Some may be listed under "myHP" at M.)

FROM BILL

Don't go on an uninstalling spree

HP's own support and update apps are the good kind of preinstalled software: they deliver fixes for your exact hardware. Remove trials and games if you like (Chapter 17), but leave HP Support Assistant and the HP App alone.

CHAPTER 9

The HP App (and the Older myHP)

The **HP App** is HP's main app going forward. HP describes it as the place to track your devices, get support and find shortcuts. On a newer HP computer it's already installed; HP's own page tells Windows owners "the HP app for Windows is already on your device."

What you can do in it

- See your computer's details, such as the model and serial number, in one place.
- Adjust settings HP adds, such as audio, camera and display options, on models that support them.
- Get help: HP says you can message live experts, make a quick call, or browse help articles right in the app. Availability varies by country and business hours.
- Add your HP printer, if you have one, so everything HP is in one app.

Opening it

1. Select **Start**, then type **HP** on the keyboard.
2. Select **HP** (or **HP App**) in the results. On older computers you'll see **myHP** instead; it works much the same way.
3. If it asks you to sign in, you can use your HP account, create one, or skip for now.

> TIP
>
> **Good to know: cost and sign-in**
>
> The HP App is free. HP says you don't need an HP account to use it, but signing in is required for its full features. HP also says it reserves the right to charge for select features in the future, so if a screen ever asks for payment, stop and think before you agree. As of November 2026, the basics are free.

The older myHP app

On HP computers from the last several years, **myHP** is the control panel for things like audio settings, camera features, privacy options and performance modes (for example, a quieter mode that keeps the fan down). HP notes that some camera features, such as appearance filters and Auto Frame (which keeps you centered on a video call), need the myHP app. If you have myHP, it's fine to keep using it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One app holds your computer's details, its settings and a way to reach HP. When something's wrong, you won't be hunting for a phone number online, which is exactly where the fake support sites wait (Chapter 26).

CHAPTER 10

HP Support Assistant

HP Support Assistant is the HP app most worth keeping. Its main job is to find and install HP's updates for your exact computer: drivers (the small programs that make the hardware work), BIOS updates and HP software. It also shows warranty details and links to help. HP was still publishing new versions of it in 2026.

What it does on its own

HP says Support Assistant automatically scans in the background about once a week for new messages and updates. It sorts updates into **important**, **recommended** and **optional**. Important ones are worth installing; optional ones can usually wait.

Checking for updates yourself

1. Select **Start**, type **HP Support Assistant**, and open it.
2. At the top of the window, select **My devices**, then find your computer.
3. Select **Updates**. Support Assistant checks for anything new.
4. If updates are listed, tick the ones marked important or recommended and choose to download and install them.
5. Plug a laptop into its charger first, and restart when asked.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Menus differ a little between versions**
>
> HP Support Assistant has looked slightly different over the years. If you don't see **My devices**, look for a tile or button called **Updates** or **Check for updates and messages**. They do the same job.

If it isn't on your computer

Some computers don't have it, or it was removed. You can get it again free from HP's own support website, **support.hp.com**. Type "HP Support Assistant" into the search box there. Only download it from HP; never from a site that came up in an ad.

SCAM ALERT

HP Support Assistant never asks for money

The real HP Support Assistant doesn't put up red warning screens with phone numbers, and it never asks you to pay to "fix" errors. If something that looks like HP does, it's fake. See Chapter 26.

CHAPTER 11

HP AI Companion (Only on Some Newer Laptops)

If you bought one of HP's newer "AI PC" laptops, you may see an app called **HP AI Companion**. It's an assistant you can type questions to, and it can help you find information in your own documents. If your computer doesn't have it, you're not missing anything you need.

The facts, according to HP

- On computers that include it, it appears on the taskbar after the first start-up.
- You need to create or sign in to an HP account to use it.
- HP says there is no fee to use HP AI Companion today.
- It's also listed in the Microsoft Store, but only for HP's newer AI PCs.
- Using its on-computer (offline) mode needs a laptop with 32 GB of memory and up to 4.5 GB of storage. Lesser models use HP's online service instead.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's not the same as Copilot

Windows 11 has its own assistant, **Copilot**, from Microsoft. Some HP keyboards have a Copilot key (Chapter 20). HP AI Companion is a separate app from HP. You can use either, both, or neither.

HEADS UP

Think before you share

As with any AI assistant, don't paste in bank details, passwords, or your Social Security number. Ask it general questions, and double-check anything important, because AI assistants can be confidently wrong.

FROM BILL

Curious but cautious?

That's the right attitude. If you'd like to see what it can do with someone beside you, I'm happy to show you.

CHAPTER 12

Printing: HP Smart and the HP App

If you also have an HP printer, you'll meet **HP Smart**, HP's printer app. Here's how it fits with the new HP App on a Windows computer as of November 2026.

Which one prints?

The HP App is meant to replace HP Smart for printers too, and on phones, tablets and Macs it already prints and scans. On **Windows** computers, HP's U.S. page says printing and scanning in the HP App are "coming soon", and in the meantime you can keep using the HP Smart app for printing and scanning. HP's U.S. page also says HP Smart is still available and fully supported on Windows.

TIP

The simple rule

If HP Smart is already on your computer and printing works, leave it alone. You don't need to switch until HP finishes moving printing into the HP App.

Printing without any HP app

Windows can print to most HP printers on its own. Once the printer is on the same Wi-Fi, select **File** > **Print** in almost any program and pick it from the list. The HP app adds extras such as scanning, ink levels and printer settings.

SCAM ALERT

The real printer setup address

HP's printer setup site is **123.hp.com**, with a dot between 123 and hp. Look-alike addresses without the dot, and sites found through ads, have been used by scammers who ask for money or remote access to "install" a printer. Setting up an HP printer never costs money.

GOOD TO KNOW

More on printers

Bill's separate guide, **HP Printers**, covers setup, ink, HP+ and Instant Ink, scanning and printer troubleshooting in detail.

PART 4

Updates, Warranty & Getting Help from HP

Two kinds of updates and how they fit together, how to look up your warranty in a minute, and HP's real support options, including the paid ones.

CHAPTER 13

Windows Update: The First Kind of Update

Your HP gets updates from two places. **Microsoft** sends Windows updates: security fixes and improvements for Windows itself, plus many drivers. **HP** sends updates for HP's own hardware and software (Chapter 14). Both matter. Start with Windows Update, because it does the most.

Check for Windows updates

1. Select **Start**, then **Settings** (the gear icon).
2. Select **Windows Update** in the list on the left.
3. Select **Check for updates**.
4. Let everything download and install. If it asks you to restart, choose **Restart now**, or let it restart overnight.
5. Come back and check again. A brand-new computer often needs two or three rounds.

> TIP
> **Plug in and leave it overnight**
> Updates go fastest on a plugged-in laptop that's left alone. Starting them in the evening and letting them finish overnight is perfectly fine.

Optional updates, including drivers

Windows keeps some updates in a separate list that it doesn't install automatically. You'll find it under **Settings** > **Windows Update** > **Advanced options** > **Optional updates**. Driver updates there are usually safe, but if everything works, you don't need to install them. HP Support Assistant (Chapter 14) is the better place to get HP drivers.

Which version of Windows do I have?

Open **Settings** > **System** > **About** and look under **Windows specifications**. In late 2026 you'll most likely see version 25H2 or newer. You don't need to do anything about it; Windows Update moves you to new versions when they're ready for your computer.

SCAM ALERT

Real updates come from Settings

Windows updates arrive through **Settings** > **Windows Update**. A website pop-up, email or phone call saying "your HP needs an urgent update, click here" or "call this number" is not Microsoft and not HP. Close it.

CHAPTER 14

HP Drivers and BIOS Updates

HP makes the hardware: the keyboard, touchpad, camera, speakers, battery and the circuit board inside. Now and then HP releases fixes for them. There are two kinds you'll hear about.

Kind	What it is
Drivers	Small programs that let Windows talk to a piece of hardware, like the touchpad or the sound. A driver update can fix a touchpad that's jumpy or sound that crackles.
BIOS (or UEFI)	The built-in startup software that runs before Windows, stored on a chip inside the computer. HP updates it to fix bugs, improve battery behavior and close security holes.

The easy way: let HP Support Assistant do it

HP Support Assistant checks for both kinds about once a week and lists them by importance (Chapter 10). When it shows an **important** or **recommended** update, it's generally a good idea to install it.

The manual way: HP's website

1. In your web browser, go to **support.hp.com**. Type the address yourself rather than clicking an ad.
2. Choose **Software and Drivers** (sometimes shown as "Software, Drivers and Firmware").
3. Let the site identify your computer, or type in the serial number from Chapter 2.
4. Pick your version of Windows if asked, then look through the list. Updates are grouped by type, such as BIOS, Audio and Network.
5. Download only what you need, open the downloaded file, and follow the steps.

HEADS UP

BIOS updates: the one update to treat with care

A BIOS update rewrites the startup chip. While it runs, the screen may go black, the computer may restart more than once, and fans may roar. That's normal. **Keep a laptop plugged in, and never turn the computer off during a BIOS update.** Losing power halfway through is one of the few ways to seriously harm a computer. If the computer works well and the update isn't marked important, it's fine to let it wait until you have an unhurried hour.

SCAM ALERT

"Driver updater" programs are not needed

Ads and pop-ups offer programs that promise to "update all your drivers" or "fix 1,284 errors" for a fee. You don't need them. Windows Update and HP Support Assistant are free and come from the companies that made your computer.

CHAPTER 15

Checking Your Warranty

Every new HP comes with a limited warranty from HP that covers defects. The length depends on the model and where you bought it, and some people have added extra years. Knowing the end date means you won't pay for a repair HP should handle.

Look it up on HP's website

1. Find your serial number: **Fn** + **Esc** on most laptops, **Ctrl** + **Alt** + **S** on most desktops, or the label underneath (Chapter 2).
2. Go to **support.hp.com** and choose the warranty check.
3. Select the country or region where you bought the computer.
4. Type in the serial number and select **Check Warranty**.
5. Your warranty type and end date appear on the screen. Write the end date in Chapter 28.

Or see it in HP's apps

HP Support Assistant can also show warranty information for your registered computer, including the end date. In the newer HP App, signing in to your HP account shows your device details and support options.

GOOD TO KNOW

What a warranty usually doesn't cover

Manufacturer warranties cover things that fail on their own. They usually don't cover drops, spills or a cracked screen. Those need a separate accident-protection plan, if you bought one. Your warranty lookup shows exactly what you have.

SCAM ALERT

"Your HP warranty is about to expire" calls

Calls, letters and emails pushing an "HP warranty extension" often come from companies with no connection to HP. HP itself doesn't call people out of the blue. Hang up, and check your warranty yourself on support.hp.com.

CHAPTER 16

Getting Help from HP: Free and Paid

When something goes wrong that's HP's job to fix, such as hardware that fails under warranty, here's how to reach the real HP.

The safe ways in

- **The HP App** on your computer: HP says you can message live experts, make a quick call or browse help articles there. Availability varies by country and business hours.
- **support.hp.com**, typed into the address bar yourself. It has troubleshooting articles, drivers, warranty checks and contact options for your exact model.
- **HP Support Assistant** on the computer, which has links to help for your model.

HEADS UP

Never search for "HP phone number"

The top results for "HP support phone number" are often paid ads, and some of them belong to fake support companies. Start from the HP App or from support.hp.com typed in yourself.

HP SmartFriend: HP's paid help service

HP sells a subscription called **HP SmartFriend**: tech support by phone and remote session from HP for your computer and other tech. HP offers it as a monthly plan or as 6-month and 1-year plans. HP's pages say the longer plans renew automatically for another year unless canceled, and the monthly plan charges your card every 30 days. HP says you can cancel online through its **My Subscriptions** page or by phone.

TIP

Good to know: price

Prices vary and HP often shows sale prices, so check the current price on hp.com before you buy. It's an honest, legitimate service from HP. Whether it's worth it depends on how often you need help; put the renewal date on your calendar either way.

GOOD TO KNOW

Real HP never cold-calls you

HP's fraud page says plainly that HP never contacts customers to offer unsolicited technical support. If you didn't contact HP first, the caller isn't HP.

PART 5

Clearing Out the Extras

Trials, offers and shortcuts that came with the computer: what's safe to remove, how to remove it, and the HP pieces you should keep.

CHAPTER 17

What Came Preinstalled, and What You Can Remove

Like most new computers, an HP arrives with extra programs already on it. People call them **bloatware**. Some are useful, some are harmless shortcuts, and a few are trials that will nag you to pay. You can remove the ones you don't want, calmly and safely.

Usually safe to remove

- Antivirus trials you don't plan to pay for (Chapter 18). Windows has free protection built in.
- Games and game-store shortcuts you don't play.
- Shopping, travel booking or "deals" shortcuts.
- Trial versions of programs you'll never use, such as photo or video editors.
- "PC cleaner", "optimizer" or "driver updater" programs that ask for money.

How to uninstall a program

1. Select **Start**, then **Settings**.
2. Select **Apps**, then **Installed apps**.
3. Find the program. You can type part of its name in the search box at the top of the list.
4. Select the three dots (**More**) to the right of it, then **Uninstall**.
5. Confirm, and follow any screens the program shows. Restart if it asks.

TIP

If Uninstall is grayed out or doesn't work

Microsoft says some apps are part of Windows and can't be uninstalled. For older-style programs that won't remove from Settings, try the classic way: type **Control Panel** in the Start search, open it, choose **Programs** > **Programs and Features**, right-click the program and choose **Uninstall**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer pop-ups asking for money, a tidier Start menu, and less confusion about which program is which. A cleaner computer is simply easier to live with.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, leave it

If you don't recognize a name, don't remove it just because you don't recognize it. Chapter 19 lists the HP pieces that keep your computer working properly.

CHAPTER 18

Removing an Antivirus Trial (Such as McAfee)

Many new Windows computers, HP included, can arrive with a free trial of a paid antivirus program. McAfee is a common one. After a few weeks it starts warning that your protection is "about to expire" and asks for payment. If you don't want to pay, it's perfectly safe to remove it.

Why it's safe

Windows 11 has free antivirus protection built in, called **Windows Security** (its antivirus part is Microsoft Defender). When a third-party antivirus is installed, Windows Security steps aside. When you remove the trial, Windows Security switches itself back on.

Removing it

1. Open **Settings** > **Apps** > **Installed apps**.
2. Type **McAfee** (or the name of your trial, such as Norton) in the search box.
3. Select the three dots next to it, then **Uninstall**, and confirm.
4. The program will show its own screens. It may ask if you're sure, or offer a discount. Choose to remove it.
5. Restart the computer.
6. Search the list again. Some security suites install more than one piece; remove each one with the same company name.

Then make sure Windows Security is on

1. Select **Start**, type **Windows Security**, and open it.
2. Look at **Virus & threat protection**. A green check mark means you're protected.
3. If it asks you to turn something on, select **Turn on**. If it still isn't on, restart once more.

> **TIP**
>
> **If the uninstall won't finish**
>
> Now and then a security program doesn't remove cleanly. The big antivirus companies offer their own removal tools on their official websites for exactly this. Download such a tool only from the company's own site (for McAfee, mcafee.com), never from a site found through an ad. Or call me and I'll take care of it.

SCAM ALERT

The fake renewal email

A very common scam is an email or text saying you've just been charged hundreds of dollars for a McAfee, Norton or "HP" renewal, with a phone number to call to cancel. Don't call it. Look at your card or bank statement yourself. If there's no charge, it's a scam; delete the message.

CHAPTER 19

HP Pieces to Keep, and Taming the Notifications

Not everything with "HP" in the name is bloat. Some HP programs quietly make your keyboard keys, sound and updates work. Here's how to tell the difference.

Keep these

- **HP Support Assistant** and the **HP App** (or **myHP**): updates, settings and support.
- Anything with **driver**, **audio**, **graphics**, **touchpad**, **Bluetooth** or **Wi-Fi** in the name.
- Programs with **Intel**, **AMD**, **Realtek** or **NVIDIA** in the name: they run the chips inside the computer.
- **HP Smart**, if you have an HP printer.
- Anything you don't recognize. Look it up, or ask, before removing it.

HEADS UP

Removed something you needed?

If a key, the sound or the touchpad stops behaving after an uninstall, don't panic. Run HP Support Assistant or Windows Update; they usually put the missing driver back. You can also download it from support.hp.com (Chapter 14).

Fewer pop-ups from HP and others

If an HP app, or any app, keeps popping up messages in the corner of the screen, you can quiet it without removing it.

1. Open **Settings** > **System** > **Notifications**.
2. Scroll to the list of apps.
3. Turn off the switch next to any app whose messages you don't want.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The computer keeps everything it needs to run well, and it stops interrupting you. Important Windows and security messages still get through.

PART 6

The Keyboard & the Hidden Startup Menu

The special keys on an HP keyboard, the secret menu that appears when you press Esc at startup, and HP's built-in hardware tests.

CHAPTER 20

The Keys on an HP Keyboard

Most of the keyboard is the same on any computer. What's different on an HP laptop is mostly the top row, and one key called **Fn**.

The top row: action keys

Look closely at the keys along the top of an HP laptop keyboard. Each has a little picture: a sun for screen brightness, a speaker for volume, a crossed-out speaker for mute, an airplane for airplane mode, and so on. HP calls these **action keys**. On most HP laptops, pressing one does the pictured action straight away. You don't need to hold anything else.

Picture on the key	What it usually does
Sun, small and large	Screen dimmer or brighter
Speaker, with or without waves	Volume down, up, or mute (a light on the key often shows mute is on)
Microphone with a line through it	Mutes the microphone for video calls (on many newer models)
Airplane	Airplane mode: turns Wi-Fi and Bluetooth off and on
Keyboard with rays	Keyboard backlight on, brighter, or off (on models that light up)
Two rectangles (screens)	Switches between the laptop screen and a TV or second monitor
Camera with a line through it	Turns off or covers the camera (on some models)

GOOD TO KNOW

Pictures vary by model

HP puts different action keys on different laptops. The pictures on *your* keys are the final word. Press one and watch what happens; nothing here can harm anything.

The Fn key, and getting F1 through F12

The top-row keys also carry the labels F1, F2 and so on. Some programs use those "function keys". On most HP laptops, to get F5 (for example) instead of the picture action, hold **Fn** (bottom left of the keyboard) and press the key.

On many HP laptops you can flip this around with **Fn lock**: hold **Fn** and press the **left Shift** key. A small light on the Fn key comes on, and the top row now gives F1 to F12 without holding Fn. Do the same again to switch back. On other models the switch lives in the BIOS settings as **Action Keys Mode**.

TIP

"My volume keys stopped working!"

If the top row suddenly types F-keys instead of changing the volume or brightness, Fn lock has probably been turned on by accident. Press **Fn** + **left Shift** and try again, and watch whether the small light on the Fn key goes off.

Other keys worth knowing

Key	What it does
Windows key	The key with the Windows logo. Press it to open the Start menu.
Copilot key	On newer keyboards, a key with a small colorful ribbon symbol. It opens Microsoft's Copilot assistant.
Fn + Esc	On most HP laptops, shows your model and serial number (Chapter 2).
Delete and Backspace	Backspace erases to the left of the blinking cursor; Delete erases to the right.
Print Screen (prt sc)	Takes a picture of the screen. In Windows 11 it usually opens the Snipping Tool.
Num Lock (desktop keyboards)	If the number keys on the right side don't type numbers, press Num Lock once.

CHAPTER 21

The Esc Startup Menu (HP's Hidden Toolbox)

HP computers have a small menu that appears *before* Windows starts. You'll rarely need it, but when Windows won't start properly, it's where HP keeps its tools. It's also what HP's support staff (and I) will ask you to open.

How to open it

1. Turn the computer completely off. (Hold the power button for about 5 seconds if it won't shut down normally.)
2. Press the power button to turn it on.
3. Immediately start tapping the **Esc** key, about once a second, until the **Startup Menu** appears.

What the menu offers

Key	What it opens	When you'd use it
F1	System Information	To read your model, serial number and BIOS version
F2	System Diagnostics (HP's hardware tests)	To test the battery, memory or drive (Chapter 22)
F9	Boot Device Options	To start from a recovery USB drive (Chapter 25)
F10	BIOS Setup	To change startup settings. Rarely needed; look but don't change things you don't understand
F11	System Recovery	To reach Windows recovery tools when Windows won't start (Chapter 24)
Enter	Continue startup	To carry on into Windows normally

GOOD TO KNOW

The mouse doesn't work here

In this menu and the screens it opens, you use the keyboard: the arrow keys to move, Enter to choose, and Esc to go back. On some models the menu looks a little different, but the letters F1 to F11 next to each choice tell you what to press.

HEADS UP

Leave the BIOS settings alone

BIOS Setup (F10) controls deep startup settings. Looking is harmless. Changing things you don't understand can stop the computer from starting. If you change something by accident, choose **Exit** and the option to discard or not save changes.

TIP

If tapping Esc doesn't work

Windows sometimes starts so fast that it skips past the menu. Shut down using **Restart** instead, and start tapping Esc as soon as the screen goes dark. On a desktop with a wireless keyboard, a wired USB keyboard sometimes responds sooner.

CHAPTER 22

HP's Built-In Hardware Tests

HP builds a set of hardware tests into its computers, called **HP PC Hardware Diagnostics**. They check whether the battery, memory, drive and other parts are healthy. They're a great way to answer the question "Is it the computer, or is it Windows?" They don't change or erase anything.

Running a quick test

1. Plug a laptop into its charger.
2. Open the Startup Menu: turn the computer off, turn it on, and tap **Esc** (Chapter 21).
3. Press **F2** for System Diagnostics.
4. Choose **System Tests**, then a quick or fast test. It takes a few minutes.
5. Read the result. "Passed" means the parts tested are fine.
6. If a test fails, write down or photograph the **failure ID** code shown on the screen. HP support uses it to arrange a repair.

Testing a laptop battery

From the same diagnostics menu, look for **Component Tests**, then **Power**, then **Battery**. The check takes a couple of minutes. If it says the battery is working but needs **calibration**, the battery is healthy; its charge meter just needs resetting, which the test can walk you through and which takes a few hours.

GOOD TO KNOW

Menus vary with the version

Older computers have an older version of the diagnostics, and the menu names may differ slightly. If you don't see a battery test, HP Support Assistant or support.hp.com can update the diagnostics tool.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Before paying for any repair, you'll know whether the hardware is really faulty. And if it is, and you're still under warranty, the failure ID gets HP's repair process moving much faster.

FROM BILL

A failed test isn't the end of the world

A failing drive or battery can often be replaced. Back up your files first (or ask me to), then contact HP if you're under warranty, or give me a call if you're not.

PART 7

When Something Goes Wrong

A calm, step-by-step ladder for fixing problems, from a simple restart to a full reset and HP's own recovery drive, plus how to spot the fake "HP support" that preys on worried owners.

CHAPTER 23

The Fix-It Ladder: Start Small

When your HP misbehaves, start with the smallest, gentlest fix and work up only if you need to. Most problems are solved on the first or second rung.

The rungs, in order

1. **Restart.** Select **Start** > the power icon > **Restart**. Not Shut down: Restart. It clears out more and fixes a surprising amount.
2. **Check the simple things.** Is the laptop charged? Is Wi-Fi on (no airplane on the screen)? Is the volume muted? Is the mouse battery flat?
3. **Update.** Run Windows Update (Chapter 13) and HP Support Assistant (Chapter 14), then restart.
4. **Test the hardware.** Run HP's diagnostics from the Esc menu (Chapter 22). If a part fails, it's a repair, not a Windows problem.
5. **Repair Windows without losing anything** with "Fix problems using Windows Update" (below).
6. **Reset Windows**, keeping your files (Chapter 24).
7. **Recover from a USB drive** with HP's Cloud Recovery Tool (Chapter 25). This is the last rung.

Fix problems using Windows Update

This is the gentlest way to repair Windows itself. Microsoft says it reinstalls the version of Windows you already have and repairs system files, while **keeping your apps, files and settings**. It needs the computer connected to power and the internet the whole time.

1. Plug the laptop in and make sure it's on Wi-Fi.
2. Open **Settings** > **System** > **Recovery**.
3. Next to **Fix problems using Windows Update**, select **Reinstall now**.
4. Confirm, and let it download and install. It can take an hour or more and will restart on its own.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Many problems that seem to need a full reset, like a Start menu that won't open or settings that crash, can be fixed this way with nothing lost. Your programs, photos and settings stay just as they were.

HEADS UP

Back up before any big fix

Even the gentle fixes are safer with a fresh backup. Copy your Documents and Pictures to OneDrive or a USB drive before you climb past rung 4.

CHAPTER 24

Resetting Windows (Reset This PC)

Reset this PC reinstalls Windows from scratch. It's the right step when Windows is badly broken and the gentler fixes in Chapter 23 haven't worked, or when you're passing the computer on to someone else.

Your two big choices

Choice	What happens
Keep my files	Reinstalls Windows and keeps your personal files (documents, photos and so on). **Your installed apps and settings are removed**, so you'll reinstall programs like Microsoft 365 or Quicken afterward.
Remove everything	Erases everything: files, apps and settings. Use this before you give away, sell or recycle the computer.

Then Windows asks where to get a fresh copy of Windows:

Option	What it means
Cloud download	Downloads a fresh copy of Windows from Microsoft. Needs good internet; usually the more reliable choice.
Local reinstall	Rebuilds Windows from files already on the computer. It may not include the latest updates.

Resetting from Settings

1. Back up your files first, even if you'll choose Keep my files.
2. Make a list of the programs you use, and find any license keys or sign-ins you'll need to reinstall them.
3. Plug the laptop in.
4. Open **Settings** > **System** > **Recovery**.
5. Next to **Reset this PC**, select **Reset PC**.
6. Choose **Keep my files** or **Remove everything**, then **Cloud download** or **Local reinstall**.
7. Read the summary and select **Reset**. The computer will restart several times. Allow an hour or two.

If Windows won't start at all

Turn the computer on and tap **Esc**, then press **F11** for System Recovery (Chapter 21). Windows' blue recovery screens open. Choose **Troubleshoot**, then **Reset this PC**, and follow the same choices.

HEADS UP

Have your recovery key ready

After a reset, or when recovery tools open, the computer may ask for the 48-digit recovery key from Chapter 7. Look it up at aka.ms/myrecoverykey on a phone or another computer.

TIP

After a reset

Run Windows Update and HP Support Assistant again (Chapter 13 and Chapter 14), then reinstall your programs. Expect to sign in to things again, like your email and web browser.

CHAPTER 25

HP Cloud Recovery: A Fresh Start from a USB Drive

If Windows is so damaged that even Reset this PC fails, or the drive inside has been replaced, HP has one more tool: the **HP Cloud Recovery Tool**. It downloads HP's factory software for your exact model and puts it on a USB flash drive. You then start the computer from that drive and reinstall everything as it came from the factory.

What you'll need

- A **USB flash drive of 32 GB or larger**. **Everything on it will be erased**, so use an empty one.
- A working **Windows computer** with a good internet connection to make the drive. If your HP won't start, use a family member's computer.
- Your HP's **serial number or product number** (Chapter 2).
- Time: the download is large. An hour or more is normal.

GOOD TO KNOW

Which HP computers it works with

HP says the Cloud Recovery Tool supports HP consumer (home) computers made in 2016 or later. Business models have their own version of the process.

Making the recovery drive

1. On the working computer, go to **support.hp.com** and search for **HP Cloud Recovery Tool**. Download and install it from HP.
2. Plug in the empty USB flash drive.
3. Open the HP Cloud Recovery Tool and enter your HP's product or serial number when asked.
4. Choose the USB drive, and follow the on-screen steps to create the recovery media.
5. Wait for it to finish, then eject the USB drive.

Using it on your HP

1. Plug the laptop in, and plug the recovery USB drive into it.
2. Turn the computer on and tap **Esc**, then press **F9** for Boot Device Options (Chapter 21).
3. Use the arrow keys to choose the USB drive, and press Enter.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to recover the computer.

HEADS UP

This erases the computer

HP recovery from a USB drive returns the computer to how it left the factory. Anything on the computer that isn't backed up elsewhere will be lost. If you can't get your files off first, call me before you start; there are often ways to rescue them.

TIP

If the tool doesn't list your drive

HP's community advice is that a "disk not selectable" message usually means the USB drive is too small, or not fully pushed in. Try a 32 GB or larger drive in a different port.

CHAPTER 26

Fake HP Support Scams: How to Spot Them

This is the most important chapter in this guide. Fake tech support costs people far more than any repair. Scammers love to pretend to be HP, because so many people own HP computers and printers.

SCAM ALERT

The golden rule

HP's own fraud page says **HP never contacts customers to provide unsolicited technical support** or to ask you to return a product. If someone calls, emails or pops up out of nowhere claiming to be HP, it isn't HP.

The usual tricks

- **The scary pop-up.** A web page suddenly fills the screen, maybe with a loud voice or beeping, saying your HP is infected or "locked" and to call "HP Support" right now.
- **The search ad.** You search for "HP support number" and the top result is an ad for a company that only pretends to be HP.
- **The cold call.** Someone phones saying they're from HP (or Microsoft) and your computer is sending errors.
- **The renewal email.** A message says you've been charged for an "HP protection plan" and to call to cancel.
- **The printer setup site.** A look-alike setup website wants money or remote access to "install" your printer.

Signs it's a scam

- They want to **connect to your computer** remotely, or ask you to install a program so they can "see" it.
- They ask for **payment** by gift card, wire transfer, cryptocurrency, or a payment app.
- They get **pushy or aggressive**, or tell you not to hang up or not to tell anyone.
- They ask you to **call back later** to "complete" a support case they opened.
- They want your **bank login**, or to "refund" you by having you sign in to your bank while they watch.

If a scary pop-up appears

1. Don't call the number, and don't click anything inside the message.
2. Close the browser. If it won't close, hold **Ctrl** + **Shift** and press **Esc** to open Task Manager, select the browser, and choose **End task**.
3. If that doesn't work, hold the power button until the computer turns off, then turn it back on.
4. When the browser reopens, don't restore the old tabs.

If you already called, or let someone in

1. Hang up or close the connection. Turn off Wi-Fi or unplug the internet if they're still on the screen.
2. Call your bank or card company using the number on the back of your card. Tell them what happened.
3. From a different, safe device, change your email password and any passwords you typed while they were connected.
4. Have the computer checked before you do any banking on it. Remote-control programs they installed need to come off.
5. Report it to the Federal Trade Commission at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

FROM BILL

Please call me first

If anything about a call, pop-up or email feels off, call me at (330) 200-8042 before you do anything else. You won't be bothering me, and you'll never be embarrassed: these scams fool smart, careful people every day.

PART 8

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and one page that sums up the whole guide.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I wrote this guide so you can handle most of your HP yourself. But some jobs are simply easier, faster or less stressful with someone experienced beside you. Here's my honest advice on when a call is worth it.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Setting up a new HP**: accounts, updates, trial removal, backup and the recovery key, all done in one sitting.
- **Moving from an old computer**: getting your photos, email, passwords and programs across safely.
- **BIOS updates and recovery**: if HP Support Assistant suggests a BIOS update and you'd rather not do it alone, or you need Reset this PC or the HP Cloud Recovery Tool.
- **A slow or misbehaving computer** where the fix-it ladder in Chapter 23 hasn't helped.
- **A failed hardware test**: deciding between a repair, a warranty claim or a new computer.
- **Anything that smells like a scam**, or if you've already given someone access. Call right away.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, either in your home here in Portage County or over a secure remote session that you start and can end any time. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly when something is better handled by HP under your warranty. I've been doing this for more than 30 years, and I offer this kind of help through my **Computer Help** service.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My Computer Help is $49 remote · $99 in your home. This guide is yours to keep and share, and no question is too small.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you may be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

SCAM ALERT

How to tell it's really me

I'll never call you out of the blue about a problem with your computer, and I'll never ask for gift cards. If someone claims to be from Bill's Home Tech and that doesn't add up, hang up and call (330) 200-8042 yourself.

Thank you for reading, and for taking good care of your HP. Go at your own pace, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your HP Computer Cheat-Sheet

The whole guide on one page. Print it and keep it in a drawer near the computer.

The essentials

What	Where
Serial number	**Fn** + **Esc** (most laptops) or **Ctrl** + **Alt** + **S** (most desktops), or the label underneath.
HP's apps	**HP App** (or older **myHP**): settings and support. **HP Support Assistant**: HP updates. **HP Smart**: printers.
Windows updates	**Settings** > **Windows Update** > **Check for updates**.
HP updates	HP Support Assistant > **My devices** > **Updates**, or support.hp.com > Software and Drivers.
Warranty	support.hp.com warranty check, with your serial number.
Remove a trial	**Settings** > **Apps** > **Installed apps** > three dots > **Uninstall**.
Startup Menu	Power on, tap **Esc**. F1 info, F2 tests, F9 boot from USB, F10 BIOS, F11 recovery.
Fn lock	**Fn** + **left Shift** on many models swaps the top row between actions and F1 to F12.
Repair, keep everything	**Settings** > **System** > **Recovery** > **Fix problems using Windows Update**.
Reset Windows	**Settings** > **System** > **Recovery** > **Reset PC**.
Recovery key	**aka.ms/myrecoverykey**

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Model name	_____
Serial number	_____
Product number	_____
Warranty ends	_____
Microsoft account email	_____
Where my passwords and PIN are kept	_____
Recovery key is saved (yes / where)	_____
Date bought, and where	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Restart (not Shut down).
2. Check charger, Wi-Fi, volume and mouse batteries.
3. Run Windows Update and HP Support Assistant, then restart.
4. Run HP's hardware tests: Esc, then F2.
5. Fix problems using Windows Update (keeps everything).
6. Reset this PC, keeping your files, after a backup.
7. HP Cloud Recovery Tool from a USB drive (erases everything).
8. Unsure at any step? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

SCAM ALERT

The golden rule

HP never calls you to offer tech support. Never let a stranger connect to your computer, and never pay anyone with gift cards. When in doubt, hang up and call a number you looked up yourself.