BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 16

Instagram

Keeping up with the grandkids and younger family — explained in plain English, one gentle step at a time

A warm, plain-English guide for every Instagram user

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For the Instagram app on phones and tablets · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Instagram manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it nearby and reach for whatever you need. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. Instagram leans more toward photos and short videos than words, and a lot of younger family live there — so I'll take extra care to start from the very beginning. Instagram moves its buttons around from time to time, so if something sits in a slightly different spot on your screen, don't worry — I'll always tell you what to look *for*, and the idea stays the same.

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PART 1

Welcome to Instagram

What Instagram is, how it's related to Facebook, how to get an account, and the gentle ground rules. If you've never touched it before, start right here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe your grandchildren are always saying "it's on my Instagram, Grandma," and you've nodded along without quite knowing what they meant. Maybe your daughter set it up on your phone and you've never felt sure what to touch. Maybe you just want to see the pictures the younger ones post, without worrying you'll do something wrong. Wherever you're starting from, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

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

Why Instagram is worth your time

Here's the honest truth: a great many of the younger people in your family have drifted over to **Instagram**. It's where the grandkids post their photos, their little videos, and the goings-on of their week. If you've felt a step removed from all that, Instagram is how you step back in. It's a window into their everyday lives — the dog, the new apartment, the game, the baby's first steps — and once you're comfortable, it's a real joy.

You don't have to post a thing yourself to get all of this. Plenty of folks use Instagram purely to *watch* — to keep up with their people — and that's perfectly fine. We'll go at whatever pace suits you.

This book is yours — read it any way you like

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

The big promise: you truly can't break it

Here is the most important thing in this whole book, so I'll say it plainly. **You cannot break Instagram by tapping around and exploring.** You can't delete your account by looking at a menu. You can't accidentally post a photo just by reading. Nearly everything can be undone, taken back, or hidden — and I'll show you how as we go. Tapping, swiping, and poking at the screen to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns, myself included.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When you stop worrying about breaking something, you start actually using it — and that's when Instagram becomes genuinely lovely: seeing the grandkids grow up week by week, catching the little moments between the big visits, and feeling close to your younger family even when they're busy and far away.

A word about safety, right up front

I'll be honest with you, because that's how I do things. Instagram is wonderful for staying close to family, but it is also a place where scammers go fishing — fake prize accounts, sweet-talking strangers in your messages, pretend "celebrities." I'm not telling you this to frighten you. I'm telling you because a little know-how makes you nearly scam-proof, and this book has a whole part (Part 7) devoted to it. You can enjoy Instagram *and* be safe. The two go together.

And I'm only a phone call away

This book will carry you a long way on your own. But if you ever get truly stuck, you are never stuck alone — that's not how I do things. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question. The only bad question is the one you talked yourself out of asking.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Instagram Actually Is

Before we touch a single button, let's answer the simplest question of all: what *is* this thing the grandchildren keep talking about?

A scrapbook of photos and little videos

The easiest way to picture Instagram is as a giant, shared **photo scrapbook**. People post pictures and short videos of their lives — a meal, a sunset, the children, a trip — and you scroll through, looking at the ones from the people you've chosen to follow. Where Facebook is often a lot of *words*, Instagram is mostly *pictures*. That's the single biggest difference, and for many folks it's what makes Instagram the nicer, gentler place to visit.

Instagram is run by a company called **Meta** — the very same company that owns Facebook and WhatsApp — and it's free to use. You don't pay anything to have an account. (The company makes its money by showing advertisements mixed in among the photos. More on those later.)

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **"Social media" is just people, online**
>
> You'll hear Instagram called "social media." Don't let the term put you off — it simply means a place on the internet where people share things with each other. Instagram is one of the most popular, and it's especially where *younger* family tend to gather, which is exactly why it's worth learning.

Why younger folks love it

It helps to know what you're walking into. Instagram skews younger than Facebook — your grandchildren and their friends are far more likely to be here than on Facebook these days. It moves quickly, it's very visual, and it has its own little words (Stories, Reels, DMs) that we'll unpack one at a time. None of it is hard. It's just unfamiliar, and unfamiliar is a thing that fades fast once someone walks you through it — which is exactly what this book is for.

It mostly lives on your phone

Instagram was built first and foremost for the **phone** (or a tablet, like an iPad). That's where nearly everyone uses it, and it's what I'll describe throughout this book. There is a version you can look at on a computer too, and we'll touch on that near the end, but the phone is home base. Look for the app's picture-button: a **colorful square** with a simple white **camera**

outline on it, in shades of purple, pink, and orange.

TIP

Same account, every device

Your Instagram account isn't stored on any one gadget — it lives up on the internet. So you can look at it on your phone in the morning and a tablet in the afternoon, and it's the very same account, with all the same people and photos, in both. Nothing to copy over.

CHAPTER 3

Instagram and Facebook: How They're Related

A lot of folks come to Instagram already knowing a little Facebook, so let's clear up how the two fit together — because they're cousins, owned by the same company, and that can be handy (and occasionally confusing).

Same owner, two separate places

Both Instagram and Facebook are owned by **Meta**. They're separate apps with separate screens, but behind the scenes Meta lets you tie them together if you wish. Think of them as two shops owned by the same family — you can shop at one, or both, and the family keeps a single guest book (called the **Accounts Center**) that remembers you across them.

The two cousins	What each is
Facebook	More words and longer posts; tends to be where older family and friends gather. The "family bulletin board."
Instagram	More photos and short videos; tends to be where younger family gather. The "photo scrapbook."
What they share	The same owner (Meta), and an optional shared sign-in through the Accounts Center. Your messages and friends are still kept separate.

You can link them — or not

If you already have a Facebook account, Instagram will happily let you use it to sign in and get started quickly. You can also skip Facebook entirely and set Instagram up on its own. Neither choice is wrong, and you can change your mind later. I'll show both ways in the next chapter.

GOOD TO KNOW

Linking is a convenience, not a requirement

Tying Instagram to your Facebook lets you sign in once and, if you like, share a post to both at the same time. But you do *not* have to link them. If keeping them completely separate feels tidier to you, that's perfectly fine — Instagram works wonderfully all on its own.

HEADS UP

A change coming in 2026

Meta has said that during 2026 it is making accounts in the same Accounts Center able to sign into one another more easily. The exact details may shift, so if something about signing in looks different from this book, don't fret — the ideas here still hold, and you can always call me to walk through your particular screen.

CHAPTER 4

Getting In: Creating Your Account

To use Instagram you need an **account** — your own personal spot on it. If a family member already set one up for you, wonderful; skip ahead to the next chapter on logging in. If not, here's how it works, step by slow step. Take your time; there's no rush.

First, get the app

On a phone or tablet, you get Instagram from your device's **app store** — the **App Store** on an Apple iPhone or iPad, or the **Play Store** (the **Google Play** store) on an Android phone or tablet. Search for **Instagram**, look for that colorful camera square, and tap **Get** or **Install**. It downloads itself; when it's done, tap **Open**.

> TIP
>
> **Not sure which phone you have?**
>
> If your phone is an iPhone, the app store is a blue icon with a white "A" made of drawing tools, called the App Store. If it's any other kind (Samsung, Google, Motorola and so on), it's an Android, and the store is a colorful triangle called Play Store. If you'd rather not fuss with this part, this is a perfect little job to hand to a grandchild — or to me.

Creating a brand-new account

1. Open the Instagram app. On the first screen, look for **Create new account** (you may first see a choice to continue with Facebook — more on that below).
2. Enter your **mobile phone number** or **email address**. Instagram sends a short **code** there to make sure it's really yours; type that code in when asked.
3. Create a **password** — something only you would know. Write it down somewhere safe (Part 7 shows you how to choose a strong one).
4. Add your **name**, and your **birthday** when asked.
5. Choose a **username** — this is your public nickname on Instagram, like "mary_in_ohio." Instagram may suggest one; you can keep it or change it. That's it — you have an account.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your username vs. your name

Instagram asks for two different things. Your **name** (say, Mary Johnson) is how you're known. Your **username** (say, mary_johnson_oh) is a one-word handle with no spaces, used for your web address and for people to find you. If a username is taken, you'll add a number or an underscore. Keep it simple and close to your real name so family can find you.

Using your Facebook account to sign up (optional)

If you already have Facebook, the first screen may offer **Continue with Facebook**. Tapping it lets you set up Instagram quickly using your Facebook sign-in, and ties the two together in the Accounts Center. If you'd rather keep them separate, simply tap **Continue without Facebook** (or "Create new account") instead, and sign up with your email or phone number as above. Both are fine.

HEADS UP

Use your own email or phone, not a relative's

If someone helps you set up the account, make sure it's tied to *your* email or phone number, not theirs — otherwise Instagram's "forgot password" messages go to the wrong person, and getting back in becomes a muddle. Jot your username, email, and password on a card and keep it somewhere private at home (not stuck to the device).

CHAPTER 5

Logging In, Passwords & Staying Signed In

Once you have an account, you'll rarely need to log in again on your own phone — it remembers you, which is exactly what you want. But it's good to know how, for the times you get a new phone or help a friend.

To log in

1. Open the Instagram app.
2. Type your **username** (or the email or phone number tied to the account) and your **password** in the two boxes.
3. Tap **Log In**. You're in.

If you forget your password

It happens to everyone — no shame in it. On the login screen, tap **Forgot password?** Instagram will send a reset link or code to your email or phone (this is why having it tied to *your* own email matters so much). Follow the steps to pick a new password, and write the new one down.

> **STAY SAFE**
>
> **Never log in through a link someone sent you**
>
> Always open Instagram the way you normally do — your own app. If an email, text, or message says "log in here to fix your account" with a button to press, **don't**. That's the single most common trick for stealing passwords. Real Instagram never needs you to log in through a link in a message. We'll cover this fully in Part 7.

Staying signed in, and logging out

On your own private phone, staying logged in is normal and safe — that's how it's meant to be. You generally don't need to log out. But if you ever use someone else's device or a public computer, always log out when you're done: go to your **profile**, open the **menu** (the three lines in the corner), scroll to the very bottom, and tap **Log out**.

TIP

Two-factor is worth turning on later

There's an extra lock called **two-factor authentication** that texts you a code whenever someone tries to sign in on a new device — so even a crook with your password can't get in. It's one of the best things you can do for safety. We set it up together in Part 7, and it's simpler than it sounds.

CHAPTER 6

Getting Comfortable: Taps, Swipes & Nothing to Fear

Instagram runs on the very same finger-moves as the rest of your phone or tablet. If you've used your phone at all, you already know these — and if Instagram is your first real adventure, these few moves are all you'll ever need. Let's name them so nothing feels mysterious.

The handful of moves

- **Tap** — one light touch to choose or open something. You never need to press hard; the glass feels the gentlest touch.
- **Scroll** — rest a finger on the screen and slide it up to move down a list (or down to go back up). This is how you move through the photos.
- **Double-tap** — two quick taps on a photo. On Instagram this is the quick way to "like" it (a little heart pops up). Good to know, so you're not surprised.
- **Swipe** — a quick slide of the finger left or right, or up and down. Instagram uses swipes a lot — to move between photos and to flip through Stories.
- **Press and hold** — touch and keep your finger there a moment to bring up extra choices.

TIP

There's no wrong tap you can't walk back from

If you tap something and the screen changes in a way you don't recognize, don't panic and don't start pressing everything. Look for the **back arrow** (a < or an arrow) in the top-left corner, or tap the little **house** at the bottom to go Home. You'll retrace your steps. Curiosity is rewarded here; you really can't hurt a thing by exploring.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Confidence is the real skill

The folks who get the most from Instagram aren't the ones who memorized the most — they're the ones who relaxed and started tapping around. Once you believe you can't break it (and you can't), the whole thing opens up. That belief is worth more than any single instruction in this book.

CHAPTER 7

Making Instagram Easier to See & Hear

If the writing on Instagram feels small, or the brightness bothers your eyes, you have more control than you might think — and nothing here is permanent, so feel free to try things and change them back.

Bigger text

The simplest fix lives in your *phone's* own settings, and it makes text bigger everywhere, Instagram included. On most phones, open your phone's **Settings**, look for **Display** or **Accessibility**, and find **Text Size** — then drag the slider until the words are comfortable. (My iPhone and Android manuals walk through this in detail if you'd like one.)

A note about the videos and sound

Instagram is full of short videos, and they often start playing on their own, sometimes with sound. If a sudden noise startles you, don't worry — just turn your phone's **ringer or volume down** with the buttons on the side, or tap the little **speaker** symbol on a video to mute it. Many folks keep the sound off most of the time and only turn it up for something they want to hear.

Captions on videos

If hearing the words in a video is hard, many videos now show **captions** — the words written along the bottom as they're spoken. You can often turn these on in Instagram's settings under **Accessibility**. It's a real help for following along in a quiet room or a noisy one.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Set it up for your eyes, not someone else's

There's no prize for squinting. A minute spent making the text larger and the screen comfortable means every photo and video from your family is a pleasure instead of a strain. Make it yours.

PART 2

Finding Your Way Around

The handful of buttons that run everything, the main screen where the photos live, and how to look around. Learn these five buttons and you can go anywhere.

CHAPTER 8

The Five Buttons Along the Bottom

When Instagram opens, there's a lot on the screen, and that can feel busy. Let's slow right down. Nearly everything is run by a row of **five little buttons along the very bottom** of the screen. Learn these five and you can get anywhere on Instagram. That's the whole secret, and it's a small one.

The five buttons, left to right

Button	What it does
House	**Home** — your main screen, the running stream of photos and videos from the people you follow. Your "front porch."
Magnifying glass	**Search / Explore** — find people by name, and browse a gallery of popular photos and videos.
Play / film clapper	**Reels** — a stream of short, full-screen videos you flip through one after another.
Little round photo	**Your profile** — your own page: your picture, your posts, your settings. It shows your profile photo, or a plain person-shape until you add one.
Plus sign (+)	**Create / Post** — make a new post, Story, or Reel. Often along the bottom, sometimes at the top. You never need this if you only want to watch.

Along the **top** of the Home screen you'll also find two more friendly faces: a **heart** (your notifications — the little alerts about likes and comments) and a **paper airplane** or speech bubble (your **Direct Messages**, the private notes). We'll meet both properly soon.

TIP

The house always takes you home

Just like on your phone's Home Screen, if you ever tap something and feel lost on Instagram, look for the little **house** button at the bottom-left and tap it. It carries you straight back to your main screen — safe, familiar ground. You can always start over from there.

HEADS UP

Instagram moves these buttons around now and then

Instagram sometimes rearranges its bottom row — a recent change, for instance, tucked the messages button down there too on some phones. If your buttons sit in a slightly different order than this book shows, don't worry. The *pictures on the buttons* stay the same (house, magnifying glass, and so on), and so does what each one does. Look for the picture, not the spot.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Five buttons and you can run the whole thing

You don't need to memorize anything else. If you know the **house** (home), the **magnifying glass** (search), the **little round photo** (your profile), and the **heart** up top (notifications), you can get anywhere on Instagram. Everything else you'll pick up naturally as you go.

CHAPTER 9

The Home Feed: Your Main Screen

The screen you land on when you open Instagram is the **Home feed** (or just "feed"). This is where you'll spend most of your time, so let's get cozy with it.

What the feed is

The feed is a running stream of photos and videos, stacked one above the other, from the people and accounts you **follow**. You move through it by resting a finger on the glass and **sliding up**, the way you'd unroll a long scroll of paper. Newer things tend to sit nearer the top. Each photo shows who posted it at the top, the picture in the middle, and a row of little buttons underneath for liking and commenting.

The row of circles along the very top

Across the top of the feed you'll see a row of small **circles**, each with a little face or photo in it. These are **Stories** — short photos and clips that vanish after a day. A colorful ring around a circle means that person has posted something new. Tap a circle to watch; we give Stories their own chapter in Part 4, so don't worry about them yet.

Advertisements in the feed

Mixed in among your family's photos you'll see **advertisements** — posts from businesses trying to sell something. They carry a small word like **Sponsored** just under the name. They're how Instagram stays free. You can simply scroll past any you don't care for; nothing happens if you ignore them. Just never buy anything in a hurry from one, and we'll talk more about that in Part 7.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **The order isn't always newest-first**
>
> Instagram decides what to show you using what it guesses you'll enjoy, so the feed isn't a strict newest-to-oldest list like a diary. Don't let that throw you — if you're looking for a particular person's latest, you can always go straight to *their* profile (we'll learn how), where their posts sit neatly in order.

TIP

To refresh the feed, pull down

If you want to check for anything new, rest your finger near the top of the feed and gently **pull down**, then let go. You'll see a little spinning circle for a second, and the feed freshens with the latest. It's the Instagram equivalent of fetching the new mail.

CHAPTER 10

Search & Explore: Looking Around

The **magnifying glass** button (second from the left along the bottom) does two jobs in one, and both are handy.

Searching for a person or thing

Tap the magnifying glass, then tap the **Search** box at the top and type. You can look for a grandchild's name or username, a business, a town, or a topic. As you type, Instagram offers matches underneath — tap the right one to go to it. This is the fastest way to find the family members you want to follow, which is exactly what we'll do in the next part.

Explore — a gallery of things you might like

Before you type anything, the magnifying-glass screen shows a **grid of photos and videos** from all over Instagram — not just the people you follow. This is called **Explore**. Instagram fills it with things it guesses you'll enjoy, based on what you've looked at. Tap any picture to see it full-size; tap the back arrow to return to the grid.

GOOD TO KNOW

Explore learns from what you tap

Explore is a bit like a helpful shop clerk who remembers what you liked last time. The more you tap on, say, gardening or quilting or old cars, the more of that it shows you. If it ever starts showing things you don't care for, just stop tapping those, and it drifts back toward what you enjoy. You're always steering, even when it doesn't feel like it.

The hashtag — a label for a topic

You'll notice words with a # sign in front, like #sunset or #grandkids. That little symbol is called a **hashtag**, and it's simply a label people attach to a post so others can find it. You can tap a hashtag to see other posts with the same label, or type one into Search. It's nothing to master — just handy to recognize so it doesn't look like a riddle.

TIP

Searching is safe — you're just looking

Searching for someone or something doesn't tell them anything, doesn't follow them, and doesn't post a thing. You're simply browsing the shelves of a very large library. Look all you like; nothing happens until you deliberately tap a button that says so.

CHAPTER 11

The Heart: Notifications & Little Alerts

Near the top-right of your Home screen sits a **heart** symbol. This is your **notifications** — the running list of little things happening around you on Instagram. It's the equivalent of someone tapping you on the shoulder to say, "look, something happened."

What the heart tells you

Tap the heart and you'll see a list, such as:

- Someone **liked** a photo you posted.
- Someone left a **comment** on your post, or replied to a comment.
- Someone new started **following** you.
- Someone sent you a **follow request** (if your account is private — more in Part 3).
- A person you follow **posted** something new, if you've asked to be told.

A little red dot means something's new

When there's something you haven't looked at yet, a small **red dot or number** appears on the heart. Tap it to see what's new; the dot clears once you've looked. There's nothing you *must* do about any notification — it's just Instagram keeping you in the loop. Tap one to go straight to whatever it's about.

HEADS UP

Not every notification is friendly — read before you tap

Most notifications are warm and real: a grandchild liked your photo. But scammers sometimes send fake ones ("you've won!", "your account has a problem"). A good habit: read what a notification actually says before tapping, and never tap one that asks you to log in, pay, or "verify" urgently. Part 7 makes you an expert at spotting these.

TIP

Too many dings? You're in charge

If Instagram's little buzzes and dings are too much, you can turn them down. On your phone, open **Settings**, find **Notifications**, scroll to **Instagram**, and switch off the kinds you don't want. Or, inside Instagram, look under its own settings for **Notifications**. You decide how quiet or chatty it is.

CHAPTER 12

Your Profile at a Glance

The button at the far-right of the bottom row — the **little round photo** (or a plain person-shape until you add one) — takes you to **your own profile**. This is your personal page: your corner of Instagram. Let's take a gentle look so it's not a mystery.

What's on your profile

On your profile	What it is
Your photo & name	A round profile picture and your name and username at the top.
Your numbers	Three counts: how many **posts** you've made, how many **followers** you have, and how many people you're **following**.
Your bio	A line or two about yourself, if you choose to add one. Entirely optional.
Your posts	A grid of little squares — every photo and video you've shared, newest first. Empty to start, and that's fine.
Edit & menu	An **Edit profile** button, and the **menu** (three lines) in the corner that holds Settings and Log out.

The menu (three lines) is your control room

On your profile, in the top corner, is a button made of **three stacked lines** — often called the "hamburger" menu because it looks a little like one. Tapping it opens the master list: **Settings and privacy**, your saved items, your archive, the **Help** center, and **Log out** right at the bottom. Whenever this book says "open the menu," this is the button I mean, and it lives on your profile.

GOOD TO KNOW

An empty profile is perfectly normal

If you've just started, your profile will be nearly blank — no posts, a plain grey person-shape where the photo goes, zeros across the numbers. That's exactly how everyone begins. You don't have to fill any of it in to enjoy Instagram. If and when you'd like to add a photo and a word about yourself, Part 3 walks you through it, slowly.

TIP

Looking at your own profile is private

Peeking at your own profile, tidying your settings, or checking your numbers tells no one anything and posts nothing. It's your private dressing room. Poke around it freely — it's one of the safest corners of the whole app to get comfortable in.

PART 3

Following Family & Friends

How Instagram connects people, the difference between public and private accounts, follow requests, and the happy business of finding your own family and setting up your page.

CHAPTER 13

Following vs. Friending: How Instagram Connects People

If you know a little Facebook, here's an important difference to get straight, because it trips up a lot of newcomers. On Facebook you "friend" someone, and it's a two-way handshake. On Instagram, the usual word is **follow**, and it can be a one-way street.

Following, in plain terms

To **follow** someone means you've chosen to see their posts in your feed. You tap a button that says **Follow** on their profile, and from then on, their new photos appear among yours. That's it. They don't have to follow you back, and following them doesn't force them to see *your* posts.

Following	What it means
You follow them	Their posts show up in your feed. You're keeping up with them.
They follow you	Your posts show up in *their* feed. They're keeping up with you.
You both follow each other	You each see the other's posts — the closest thing to being "friends." Common with family.

Followers and Following — the two lists

On every profile, including your own, you'll see two numbers: **Followers** (the people who've chosen to see your posts) and **Following** (the people whose posts *you've* chosen to see). With family, these usually end up matched — you follow your granddaughter, and she follows you. But they don't have to be, and there's no rule about numbers. A handful of the right people beats a crowd.

GOOD TO KNOW

Following is not the same as being friends in real life

Someone following you online hasn't been given any special key to your life. They simply see the posts you choose to make public (or, if your account is private, the posts you let your approved followers see). You stay fully in charge of what you share and with whom — Part 7 is all about that.

TIP

Unfollowing is quiet and reversible

If you follow someone and later decide you'd rather not see their posts, you can **unfollow** them: go to their profile and tap the button (now reading **Following**) to switch it off. They aren't told, no fuss is made, and you can follow them again anytime. Nothing on Instagram is as permanent as it feels.

CHAPTER 14

Public vs. Private Accounts & Follow Requests

Every Instagram account is set one of two ways: **public** or **private**. Which one a person chooses decides who can see their photos, and it's worth understanding clearly — both for the accounts you'll follow and for your own, which we'll set up in Part 7.

Public accounts

A **public** account can be seen by anyone. If someone's account is public, you can look at their photos and follow them straight away — tap **Follow** and you're following, no permission needed. Many businesses, public figures, and plenty of ordinary folks keep their accounts public.

Private accounts and follow requests

A **private** account is more guarded, like a locked garden gate. You can see the person's name and profile picture, but not their photos — not until they let you in. When you tap **Follow** on a private account, it becomes a **follow request** that waits for them to approve. Once they tap **Confirm**, you're a follower and can see their posts. Until then, you can't.

1. You tap **Follow** on a private account. The button changes to **Requested**.
2. The person gets a notification that you'd like to follow them.
3. They tap **Confirm** to let you in — or **Delete** to decline. (If declined, nothing embarrassing happens; you simply stay un-followed.)
4. Once confirmed, their posts appear in your feed like anyone else's.

Handling requests that come to YOU

If *your* account is private (which I recommend, and we'll set up in Part 7), then when someone wants to follow you, their request lands in your notifications (the heart) or a **Follow requests** list. You decide: tap **Confirm** to let someone you know in, or **Delete** to turn away a stranger. You are the gatekeeper, every time.

STAY SAFE

A private account is the gentlest, safest setting

For most folks — especially if you're here mainly to keep up with family — I suggest setting your own account to **private**. It means only people you've personally approved can see your photos, and strangers can't slide into your life uninvited. It's the single biggest thing you can do for your peace of mind, and it takes ten seconds. Part 7 shows you.

GOOD TO KNOW

How to tell which kind an account is

If you open someone's profile and can see a grid of their photos right away, it's public. If instead you see a little padlock and a line like "This account is private," it's private, and you'll need to send a follow request and wait to be let in. Simple as that.

CHAPTER 15

Finding Your Family & Friends

Now the happy part — tracking down the people you actually came here for. There are a few easy ways, and you don't need all of them; any one will do.

The surest way: ask them for their username

The simplest, most reliable method is to ask the grandchild or family member directly: "What's your Instagram username?" Then tap the **magnifying glass**, tap the Search box, type that username, and their account pops up. Tap it, check it's really them (the photo and name should match), and tap **Follow**.

Searching by name

If you don't have the username, type their **name** into Search instead. You may see several people with the same name, so look at the little profile photos to spot the right one. When unsure, it's fine to ask them, "Is this you?" before following — no harm in being sure.

Letting Instagram suggest people you may know

Instagram can suggest people to follow, often under a heading like **Suggested for you** or **Discover people** (look on your profile or when you follow someone new). If you've connected your contacts or your Facebook, it may recognize family and offer them up. Tap **Follow** beside anyone you know and want to keep up with.

TIP

Start with just a few of the right people

You don't need to follow dozens of accounts on day one. Start with your closest few — the grandchildren, your children, a sister. A small, warm feed full of people you love is far nicer than a crowded, noisy one. You can always add more as you go, one at a time.

HEADS UP

Make sure it's really them before you follow

Scammers sometimes make fake copies of real people's accounts (we cover this in Part 7). Before following, glance at the account: does the photo match, are there real posts, does the username look right? If a "second" account appears for someone you already follow, be cautious — it may be a fake. When in doubt, ask the real person.

CHAPTER 16

Setting Up Your Own Profile & Photo

You don't have to decorate your profile to enjoy Instagram — plenty of folks leave theirs nearly blank and just watch. But adding a photo and a word or two helps family recognize you, especially when you send a follow request. Here's how, gently.

Adding a profile photo

1. Tap your **profile** (the far-right button), then tap **Edit profile**.
2. Tap **Edit picture** or the circle where a photo would go.
3. Choose **New profile photo**, then pick a picture from your phone — a nice one of your face is friendliest — or take a fresh one with the camera.
4. Adjust it in the little circle if you like, then tap **Done** or **Save**.

Adding your name and a short bio

On the same **Edit profile** screen you can type your **name** (so family recognize you) and a one-line **bio** — a friendly note about yourself, such as "Grandmother of six, lover of gardens and Ohio sunsets." It's entirely optional and you can change it anytime. Keep it light; nothing personal like your address or phone number belongs here.

STAY SAFE

Keep private details off your public bio

Your bio and profile can be seen by others (everyone, if your account is public). So never put your home address, phone number, birth year, or anything a stranger could misuse. A first name and a cheerful line is plenty. Think of it like a name tag at a gathering — friendly, but not your whole life story.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A face and a name help family find you

When your granddaughter gets a follow request from "a profile with no photo and a funny username," she may not realize it's you and could ignore it. A clear profile picture of your face and your real name means your people recognize you at a glance and welcome you right in.

CHAPTER 17

Managing Who You Follow (and Who Follows You)

Over time you'll follow more people, and some may follow you. It's good to know how to tidy both lists, so your Instagram stays full of the people you actually want and nobody you don't.

Seeing who you follow

On your profile, tap the **Following** number to see the full list of accounts you follow. Beside each one is a button; tap it to **unfollow** if you'd rather not see their posts anymore. Quiet and reversible, as always — they aren't notified.

Seeing who follows you

Tap the **Followers** number to see who follows you. If you spot someone you don't know or don't want following you, you have options — on a private account you'd never have approved them in the first place, but you can also **remove a follower** (tap the three dots beside their name, then **Remove**) or block them entirely. Part 7 covers blocking in full.

Muting without unfollowing

Sometimes you don't want to *unfollow* someone (you'd rather not offend a relative) but you're tired of seeing their posts. Instagram lets you **mute** them: their posts quietly stop appearing in your feed, but they're never told, and you still technically follow them. Open their profile, tap **Following**, and look for **Mute**. A tactful little tool.

TIP

You're allowed to keep it small and pleasant

There's no prize for following hundreds of accounts, and no rule that you must follow back everyone who follows you. Keep your Instagram the way you'd keep a quiet sitting room — only the people and things you actually enjoy. Trim it anytime. It's yours.

GOOD TO KNOW

Removing or muting someone is private

If you remove a follower or mute someone, they are not sent any announcement. There's no "Mary unfollowed you" message. So you can tidy your lists freely without worrying about hurting feelings — these tools are designed to be quiet on purpose.

PART 4

Looking Around: Posts, Stories & Reels

The three kinds of things people share on Instagram, explained one at a time — and the happy news that you can enjoy every bit of it just by watching, without ever posting a thing.

CHAPTER 18

Posts: The Everyday Photos & Videos

The bread and butter of Instagram is the **post** — a photo or a short video that someone shares to their profile, where it stays for good (until they choose to remove it). These are what fill your feed, and they're the easiest thing to understand.

The parts of a post

- **At the top**: a small round photo and the username of whoever posted it. Tap the name to visit their profile.
- **In the middle**: the photo or video itself — the main event.
- **Just below**: a row of little buttons — a **heart** (to like), a **speech bubble** (to comment), a **paper airplane** (to share privately), and a **bookmark/ribbon** (to save it for later).
- **The caption**: the words the person wrote beneath, if any — a note about the photo.

Albums: more than one photo in a post

Sometimes a post holds *several* photos, not just one — a little set, like a handful of snaps from one day. You'll know because small **dots** appear under the picture, and you **swipe left** (slide your finger from right to left across the photo) to see the next one. These little bundles are sometimes called **carousels** or albums. Swipe through to see them all; swipe back the other way to return.

GOOD TO KNOW

A video post plays on its own

If a post is a video, it usually starts playing by itself as you scroll to it, often without sound. Tap it once to pause or play; tap the little **speaker** symbol (often bottom corner) to turn sound on or off. If you scroll past, it simply stops. Nothing to manage.

TIP

Tap a person's name to see all their posts in order

Your feed jumbles everyone together. If you want to catch up on one particular grandchild, tap their **name** at the top of any post (or search them) to open their profile. There, all their posts sit in a tidy grid, newest first — a lovely way to see what they've been up to lately, all in one place.

CHAPTER 19

Stories: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Stories are one of Instagram's most-loved features, and a favorite of younger folks. They can seem puzzling at first, so let's make them plain.

What a Story is

A **Story** is a photo or a short clip that a person shares for just **24 hours** — then it quietly disappears on its own. It's meant for the little, everyday, in-the-moment things: a cup of coffee, a quick hello, the view out the window. Because it vanishes, people post Stories more casually and more often than regular posts. It's where a lot of the daily life of your family actually happens.

How to watch a Story

1. At the top of your Home feed, look for the row of **circles** with little faces in them. A colorful ring means a new Story is waiting.
2. **Tap a circle** to start watching. The Story plays full-screen.
3. It advances on its own after a few seconds. To hurry to the next, **tap the right side** of the screen; to go back, tap the **left side**.
4. To leave at any time, **swipe down** or tap the **X** in the corner. You're back at your feed.

HEADS UP

Watching a Story lets the person know you saw it

Here's one thing worth knowing, so it's never a surprise: unlike scrolling the feed, when you watch someone's Story, *they can see that you watched* — your name appears on a little "viewers" list only they see. There's nothing wrong with this; it just means Stories are a touch less anonymous than posts. Watch your family's freely; they'll be glad you did.

GOOD TO KNOW

Stories don't clutter anything up

Because Stories vanish after a day, you never have to "clean them up" or worry they pile on. If you miss one, it's simply gone — no harm done, and there'll be more tomorrow. Think of them like a wave to you across the yard: lovely in the moment, and gone by evening.

CHAPTER 20

Reels: The Short Videos

Reels (said "reels," like reels of film) are Instagram's **short videos** — usually under a minute, often set to music, played one after another full-screen. They've become a huge part of Instagram, so let's get comfortable with them.

Watching Reels

Tap the **Reels** button along the bottom (the little play symbol or film clapper). A video fills the screen and starts playing. To see the next one, **swipe up** — slide your finger upward — and a fresh video appears. Keep swiping up to keep watching; swipe down to go back to the one before. It's an easy, restful way to pass a little time.

What the buttons on a Reel do

Down the right-hand side of a Reel you'll see the familiar little buttons stacked vertically: a **heart** to like it, a **speech bubble** to comment, a **paper airplane** to send it to someone, and **three dots** for more choices. Along the bottom is who posted it. You don't have to touch any of them — you can simply watch and swipe.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reels come from everyone, not just people you follow

Unlike your feed, the Reels you see aren't only from family — Instagram mixes in popular videos from all over, picked to match what it thinks you'll enjoy. That's why you'll see strangers here. It's harmless browsing, like channel-surfing. If a video isn't to your taste, just swipe up and it's gone.

TIP

Sound often comes on with Reels — be ready

Reels usually play *with* sound, often music, so if you open them in a quiet room they may startle you. Turn your phone's volume down with the side buttons before you start, or look for a little speaker symbol to mute. Many folks watch Reels with the sound off entirely — perfectly fine.

CHAPTER 21

How to Just Watch, Without Ever Posting

Here's a chapter I'm especially glad to write, because it lifts a worry off a lot of shoulders. You can enjoy *everything* on Instagram — your family's photos, their Stories, their Reels — purely by watching, and never post a single thing yourself. Loads of people use Instagram exactly this way, and there's nothing lesser about it.

Watching leaves almost no trace

Scrolling your feed, browsing Explore, and watching Reels are all private — no one is told you looked. The one gentle exception, as we learned, is **Stories**: watching someone's Story adds your name to a viewers' list only they can see. That's it. Everything else you watch, you watch quietly.

You never have to post, comment, or like

There is no rule, no pressure, and no penalty for being a quiet watcher. You don't owe anyone a like, a comment, or a post of your own. If you'd like to join in — and it is lovely to let the grandkids know Grandma saw their photo — we'll cover exactly how in Part 5, one easy step at a time. But it's always your choice, never a must.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

"Just watching" is a wonderful way to use Instagram

Many of the happiest Instagram users I know never post a thing. They open it with their morning coffee, scroll through the grandchildren's week, smile, and set the phone down. That's a complete and perfectly good way to use it. You're keeping up with your people, which was the whole point. Don't let anyone tell you that you must do more.

TIP

When you're ready for more, it'll be here

If down the road you fancy trying a comment or sharing a photo of your own, the how-to is waiting for you in Parts 5 and 6, written just as gently as this. There's no clock on it. Walk before you run, and only if and when *you* want to.

CHAPTER 22

Watching Videos & Live Broadcasts

Beyond regular videos and Reels, you'll now and then come across **live video** on Instagram — someone broadcasting in real time, right as it happens. It's less common for everyday family, but worth recognizing so it isn't a mystery.

What "Live" means

When someone goes **Live**, they're showing video *as it happens*, like a little television broadcast — a concert, a church service, a grandchild showing off something new. You'll spot it by a **Live** label, often a colorful ring around their Story circle with the word "LIVE" on it. Tap to join in and watch.

Watching a live video

- Tap the **LIVE** circle or notification to join. The video plays, and you'll see little comments from other viewers floating up the screen.
- You can simply watch, or type a quick hello in the comment box at the bottom if you like.
- To leave, tap the **X** in the corner. The person broadcasting won't mind — people come and go freely during a live video.

GOOD TO KNOW

Live video isn't saved the same way

A live broadcast is a one-time thing — once it ends, it may disappear, though the person can choose to save it to their Stories or profile afterward. So if you catch a loved one going live, it's a nice moment to tune in while it's happening. No pressure, though; there's always the next one.

CHAPTER 23

A Plain Tour of the Three Kinds of Sharing

We've now met the three things people share on Instagram, and it's easy to muddle them at first. So let's lay all three side by side in one simple table you can come back to. Once these three click into place, the whole app makes sense.

Kind	What it is	How long it lasts	Where you find it
Post	A photo or video on someone's profile	Stays until removed	Your Home feed; their profile grid
Story	A casual photo or clip	Disappears after 24 hours	The circles at the top of your feed
Reel	A short, full-screen video	Stays until removed	The Reels button at the bottom

How to tell them apart on the screen

- If you're **scrolling up and down** through a tall stream of photos, you're in your **feed**, looking at **posts**.
- If you **tapped a circle** at the top and the screen went full and started playing by itself, that's a **Story** — tap the sides to move, swipe down to leave.
- If you **swipe up** and a whole new video jumps in full-screen each time, you're in **Reels**.

TIP

Don't worry about the names at first

You truly don't need to memorize which is which to enjoy them. Tap around, and if a screen surprises you, swipe down or tap the back arrow and you're home. The names (post, Story, Reel) will settle into place on their own after a week or two of gentle use. Everyone finds them confusing at the start — it's not you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Three simple ideas, and now you know all three

Posts, Stories, and Reels are the whole of what people share on Instagram. If you understand these three — and you now do — there is nothing left on Instagram that should feel strange. The rest is just details, and we'll take them as gently as these.

PART 5

Joining In

When you're ready to do more than watch — liking, commenting, private messages, sharing, and saving. All optional, all gentle, all easy to undo.

CHAPTER 24

Likes & Reactions: The Heart Button

The simplest way to join in — and the one I'd start with — is the **like**. It's a quiet little way of saying "I saw this, and I liked it," without having to find any words. The grandchildren love getting them.

Two ways to like a photo

1. **Tap the heart** just below the photo. It fills in (usually turns red), and that's a like. Tap it again to un-like — it empties back out. Easy to undo.
2. Or, **double-tap the photo itself** — two quick taps right on the picture. A big heart flashes over it for a second, and it's liked. This is the quick way most folks use.

What happens when you like something

The person who posted it gets a little notification that you liked their photo — a small, warm hello. That's the whole effect. Liking doesn't cost anything, doesn't share the photo anywhere, and can always be taken back by tapping the heart again. It's the gentlest, lowest-stakes button on all of Instagram.

TIP

Careful with the double-tap while scrolling

Because a double-tap means "like," you can accidentally like a photo if you tap it twice while reading. No harm done — if you spot a heart you didn't mean, just tap the heart button below the photo once to un-like it, and it's as if it never happened. Truly nothing to worry about.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A like is a little hug from across the miles

Don't underestimate how much a simple like means to a grandchild who posted a photo. It tells them Grandma or Grandpa saw it and cared — without either of you having to type a word. If liking is the only thing you ever do on Instagram, you're still staying beautifully connected.

CHAPTER 25

Comments: Joining the Conversation

A **comment** is a step up from a like: a few words you write underneath someone's post for them (and others who can see the post) to read. "What a beautiful sunset!" "Look how big he's gotten!" It's conversation, right there under the photo.

How to leave a comment

1. Tap the **speech-bubble** symbol just below the photo (or tap where it says "Add a comment").
2. The keyboard slides up. **Type** your few words.
3. Tap **Post** or the little send arrow. Your comment appears under the photo with your name beside it.

Replying, and deleting a comment

To reply to someone else's comment, tap **Reply** under it and type. And if you ever change your mind about something you wrote, you can delete it: press and hold your own comment (or swipe it), and a **trash can** or **Delete** choice appears. Tap it, and the comment is gone. So there's no such thing as being stuck with a comment you regret.

GOOD TO KNOW

Comments under a public post can be seen by others

A comment isn't private — anyone who can see the post can read your comment and your name beside it. That's fine for warm, friendly notes (which is nearly all of them). But if you want to say something just between you and the person, use a **Direct Message** instead — that's the next chapter, and it's genuinely private.

TIP

Keep it kind, and you'll never go wrong

The golden rule online is the same as off it: if you wouldn't say it warmly at the dinner table, don't type it. Comments are public and they stick around. Happily, kindness is free and always in good taste — a cheerful word or an emoji heart is always welcome and never wrong.

CHAPTER 26

Direct Messages (DMs): Private Notes

Direct Messages — nearly always shortened to **DMs** — are Instagram's private messages, just between you and the person (or a small group) you're writing to. Think of them as the text messages of Instagram: nobody else sees them. This is how a lot of real family chatting happens.

Finding your messages

Look for the **paper airplane** symbol at the top-right of your Home screen (on some phones it sits along the bottom row instead). Tap it to open your messages — a list of your conversations, newest at the top. A red dot or number means someone has written to you.

Sending a message

1. Open your messages (the paper airplane), then tap the **pencil/compose** button, or tap an existing conversation.
2. To start a new one, type the person's name, tap them to select, and tap **Chat**.
3. Type your message in the box at the bottom. Tap the **send arrow**. Off it goes.
4. You can also tap the little **camera** or **photo** symbol to send a picture, or the **microphone** to send a short voice note (more on that soon).

STAY SAFE

DMs are a favorite tool of scammers — be a little wary of strangers

Messages from people you know and follow are the whole joy of DMs. But a message from a **stranger** — especially one that's unusually flattering, mentions money or prizes, or pushes you to move the chat elsewhere — deserves real caution. You owe no stranger a reply. You can ignore, delete, or block them. Part 7 shows exactly how, and what the scams look like.

GOOD TO KNOW

A message request folder holds notes from strangers

When someone you don't follow messages you, Instagram often tucks it into a separate **message requests** area, so it doesn't mix with your family chats. You can look, and then **Accept**, **Delete**, or **Block**. Until you accept, the sender can't tell whether you've read it. A tidy, safe way to handle the unknown.

CHAPTER 27

Sharing Posts & Sending Things to Family

When you come across a photo, Reel, or post you think a particular person would love, you can **send it to them privately** — a lovely way to say "this made me think of you." It lands in their Direct Messages.

How to send a post to someone

1. Under the post (or on the side of a Reel), tap the **paper airplane** symbol.
2. A list of your people appears. **Tap the name(s)** you want to send it to.
3. You can add a few words if you like ("saw this and thought of you!").
4. Tap **Send**. The post appears in their messages, from you.

The difference between sharing and posting

Sending a post to someone's DMs is **private** — only they receive it. This is different from making a post of your *own* (which we cover in Part 6) and different from sharing to your *Story*. For keeping up with family, private sending is the friendliest and safest kind of sharing: a quiet gift from you to them.

TIP

Sending is a gentle way to start a conversation

If you're shy about writing a message out of the blue, sending a photo or a funny Reel is a warm, easy opener — the picture does the talking, and a chat often grows from there. Many a nice back-and-forth with a grandchild starts with "this reminded me of you."

HEADS UP

Think before sharing something publicly

Sending privately to family is wonderfully safe. Sharing something to your own Story or profile, though, puts it where more people can see it — so give it a moment's thought first, the way you would before pinning something to a public bulletin board. When in doubt, send it privately instead.

CHAPTER 28

Saving Posts to Look at Later

Sometimes you see something you'd like to come back to — a recipe, a craft idea, a photo you want to admire again. Instagram lets you **save** posts into your own private collection, like tucking a clipping into a scrapbook drawer.

How to save a post

1. Under the post, look for the **bookmark** symbol (a little ribbon or flag shape) on the right side of the button row.
2. **Tap it.** It fills in to show it's saved. That's all.
3. To un-save, just tap the bookmark again.

Finding your saved posts again

Go to your **profile**, open the **menu** (three lines), and look for **Saved**. There you'll find everything you've tucked away, in one place. You can even sort them into named **collections** ("Recipes," "Garden ideas") if you enjoy being tidy — but you don't have to.

GOOD TO KNOW

Saving is completely private

Here's the nice part: saving a post tells *no one*. The person who posted it has no idea you saved it. Your saved collection is for your eyes only — a private drawer of things you liked. So save as freely as you please; it's one of the most private, worry-free features on Instagram.

TIP

Saving beats trying to remember

If you've ever scrolled past something lovely and then couldn't find it again, saving is the cure. One tap on the bookmark and it's waiting for you in your Saved drawer whenever you want it. Far easier than hunting back through the whole feed.

CHAPTER 29

Video Calls & Voice Notes in Messages

Your Direct Messages can do more than type. You can **hear** a loved one's voice, or even **see their face**, right from within Instagram. For keeping close to family, these are little treasures.

Sending a voice note

A **voice note** is a short spoken message — you talk, and they hear your actual voice whenever they open it. In a message conversation, look for the **microphone** symbol near the message box. Press and hold it, speak your message, then let go to send (or follow the on-screen prompt). Lovely for folks who'd rather talk than type.

Making a video call

1. Open a conversation with the person in your Direct Messages.
2. Look at the top of the screen for a **video-camera** symbol.
3. Tap it to start a video call. When they answer, you'll see each other's faces.
4. To end, tap the red **hang-up** button, just like any phone call.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Seeing a face is the next best thing to a visit

A typed message is grand, but a video call lets you watch the baby wave and hear the grandchildren laugh in real time — from your own armchair, however many miles away they are. If you do one "advanced" thing on Instagram, let it be learning to answer a video call from family. It's worth every minute.

TIP

Only answer calls from people you know

A video call from a grandchild is a joy. A video or voice call from a **stranger**, though, you should simply decline — tap the red button and ignore it. There's no obligation to answer anyone you don't recognize, and declining is the safe, sensible thing to do.

PART 6

Posting Your Own (If You'd Like To)

Entirely optional — but if you'd enjoy sharing a photo of your own, here's how, taken slowly. Who will see it, how to post it, and a gentle word on sharing pictures of family.

CHAPTER 30

Before You Post: Who Will See This?

Everything in this part is optional. You can be a perfectly happy Instagram user and never post a thing. But if you'd like to share a photo of your own — the garden in bloom, a nice day out — the first thing to understand, before any button, is **who will see it**. Get this clear and the rest is easy.

Your account setting decides your audience

This comes straight back to public versus private (Part 3). When you make a post, who can see it depends on how your account is set:

Your setting	Who sees your post
If your account is private	Only your approved **followers** can see your post. This is the safe, cozy setting I recommend — you know exactly who's looking.
If your account is public	**Anyone** on Instagram can see your post, follower or stranger. Fine for some, but think twice before sharing anything personal.

The simple rule I'd follow

Set your account to **private** (Part 7 shows you — it takes ten seconds), follow and approve just the family and friends you want, and then anything you post is seen only by that warm little circle. That's the arrangement I'd set up for my own mother, and it lets you share with real peace of mind.

STAY SAFE

Once something's public, treat it as out of your hands

You can always delete a post, but you can never be sure someone didn't already see it or save a copy. So the real protection is *before* you post: keep your account private, and don't post anything — an address, a travel plan, a child's school — you'd mind a stranger knowing. Share the joys; keep the private details private.

GOOD TO KNOW

Posting is never automatic

You will never post anything by accident just by tapping around. A post only goes out when you deliberately choose a photo *and* tap a final button that clearly says **Share** or **Post**. Right up to that last tap, you can back out and nothing happens. So explore the posting screens freely — looking isn't sharing.

CHAPTER 31

Posting Your First Photo, Step by Step

Let's do it together, slowly. We'll share one photo that's already on your phone. Read it through once, then try it with a photo you don't mind your family seeing.

The steps

1. Tap the **plus sign (+)** — along the bottom row, or at the top of your profile. It's the "create" button.
2. Choose **Post** if asked (as opposed to Story or Reel).
3. Your phone's photos appear. **Tap the one** you'd like to share. (You can also tap the camera to take a fresh photo.)
4. Tap **Next** (top corner). You may see simple tools to brighten or crop the photo — you can ignore these and tap **Next** again.
5. In the box, type a short **caption** if you like — a few words about the photo. This is optional.
6. When you're happy, tap **Share** (or **Post**). That's it — your photo is up, and your followers will see it.

Changing your mind, and deleting a post

Before that final **Share**, you can back out anytime with the **back arrow** — nothing is posted. And *after* posting, if you'd rather take it down, open the post, tap the **three dots** in its corner, and choose **Delete**. Gone. So even a post you regret is never permanent.

TIP

Practice on a harmless photo first

For your very first post, pick something low-stakes and cheerful — a flower, a sunset, the cat. That way you can walk through every step with no worry about who sees it, and get the feel of the buttons. Once you've done one, you've done them all; the next is easy.

GOOD TO KNOW

A caption is optional, and editable later

You don't need to write anything to post a photo — a picture alone is a fine post. And if you do write a caption and spot a typo later, you can fix it: tap the three dots on the post and choose **Edit**. No need to delete and start over.

CHAPTER 32

Captions, Tags & Locations in Plain English

When you post, Instagram offers a few extras you can add — or happily ignore. Let's demystify the three you'll see most, so none of them looks like a trick question.

Captions

A **caption** is simply the words under your photo — a little note: "Tomatoes finally ripe!" Keep it as short or as chatty as you like. You can add one of those little picture-symbols (**emoji**) too, like a smiling face or a heart, from the emoji button on your keyboard. Captions are the friendliest extra and the only one most folks use.

Tagging people

Tagging means linking a person's name to your photo, so it's clear who's in it and they're told they've been tagged. On the posting screen, look for **Tag people**, tap the photo where the person is, and type their username. Handy for family photos — but only tag people you know, and remember they'll be notified.

Adding a location

Add location lets you label where a photo was taken — "Cuyahoga Valley," a restaurant, a park. It's optional, and here I'll urge a little caution: adding a location tells people where you are or were.

STAY SAFE

Don't tag your own home, and be careful with real-time locations

A fun location on a day trip is harmless. But never label your **home**, and think twice before posting a location while you're *away* from home — it quietly tells folks your house may be empty. When in doubt, skip the location. A lovely photo needs no address attached.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can ignore every one of these

Captions, tags, and locations are all optional seasonings, not required ingredients. A plain photo with nothing added is a perfectly good post. If these extras ever feel like too much to think about, leave them all blank and just tap Share. You lose nothing.

CHAPTER 33

Sharing Your Own Story

Just as you can watch other people's Stories (Part 4), you can share one of your own — a casual photo or clip that your followers can see for 24 hours, then it quietly vanishes. Because it disappears, a Story feels lower-stakes than a permanent post. Many folks find it the easiest, breeziest way to share.

Posting a Story

1. Tap the **plus sign (+)**, or tap your own profile circle with the little "+" at the top-left of your feed, and choose **Story**.
2. Take a photo right then with the camera, or tap to pick one already on your phone.
3. You'll see playful extras — text, stickers, a pen to doodle. Add them or skip them entirely.
4. Tap **Your Story** (or **Share**) to post it. It's now up for 24 hours.

Who sees your Story, and seeing who watched

The same audience rule applies: on a private account, only your approved followers see your Story. You can also check who's watched it — open your own Story and **swipe up** (or tap the viewers' count) to see the list of names. And if you want an even smaller audience, there's a **Close Friends** option we'll meet in Part 7.

TIP

A Story is a gentle way to dip a toe in

If a permanent post feels like too much commitment, a Story is a kinder place to start — it politely disappears after a day, so there's nothing to "clean up" and no pressure for it to be perfect. Share a quick hello, a snap of your supper, the view out the window. Easy come, easy go.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can delete a Story early too

Don't care for a Story you posted? You don't have to wait the 24 hours. Open it, tap the **three dots**, and choose **Delete**. It's removed right away. As always on Instagram, very little is truly permanent, and you're always in control of your own things.

CHAPTER 34

A Gentle Word on Posting Photos of Family

This one isn't about buttons — it's about kindness and good sense, because photos of family (especially children and grandchildren) deserve a little extra thought. Nothing here should worry you; it's just the courteous, careful way to share the people you love.

Ask before you post the grandchildren

Parents today often have strong feelings about where their children's photos appear online — and it's their call to make. Before you post a picture of a grandchild, it's thoughtful (and keeps the peace) to **ask their mom or dad first**. Most will happily say yes, especially if your account is private. A quick "may I share this darling photo?" goes a long way.

Keep the account private for family photos

If you're going to share family and especially children, a **private account** isn't just nice — it's the responsible choice. It means only the handful of people you've approved can ever see those photos, not the whole wide internet. Pair "private account" with "ask the parents" and you're sharing the way everyone can feel good about.

STAY SAFE

Avoid details that could identify or locate a child

When you do share a child's photo, skip anything that pins down where they are or will be: the name of their school, a sports schedule, your home location, their full birthdate. Share the smile, not the specifics. This small habit protects the little ones while you enjoy showing them off.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, send it privately instead

Here's my honest advice, from years of helping families: if you're ever unsure whether to post a photo of the grandchildren, don't post it at all — **send it privately** in a Direct Message to the people who'd love it (Part 5). They get the joy, the photo stays between you, and nobody has to wonder who else is looking. It's the warm, worry-free choice.

PART 7

Privacy & Safety: Staying Safe on Instagram

The most important part of this book. We'll lock your account down so it's comfortable and safe, and make you nearly scam-proof — calmly, clearly, and with no fear-mongering.

CHAPTER 35

How Scammers Think (So You Can See Them Coming)

Before the specific tricks, let me hand you the master key. Nearly every scam, however it's dressed up, works the same way underneath. Once you can feel that pattern, you'll spot trouble a mile off — and you won't need to memorize a hundred different schemes.

The three feelings scammers reach for

- **Urgency** — "Act now! Your account will be deleted in 24 hours!" They rush you so you don't stop to think. Real companies don't threaten you into hurrying.
- **Fear** — "Your account has been hacked," "You've broken a rule," "There's a problem with your payment." Fear makes good people do things they'd never normally do.
- **Something for nothing** — a prize, a giveaway you've "won," a sweetheart, a can't-miss investment. If it seems too good to be true, it is. Every single time.

FROM BILL

My one rule that stops nearly every scam

Here it is, plain: **Slow down, and never send money, codes, or personal information because of a message.** Scams only work when they rush you. The moment you pause, step away, and check with a real person — me, your bank, your family — the spell breaks. There is no emergency on Instagram so urgent that you can't take ten minutes to make a phone call first.

Things no honest person or company will ever ask

- Your Instagram **password**, or a **verification code** texted to you.
- Payment by **gift cards** (Apple, Amazon, Google Play), **wire transfer**, **cryptocurrency**, or a money app — to someone you've only met online. These are the scammer's favorites because they can't be undone.
- **Secrecy** — "don't tell anyone," "keep this between us." Honest dealings are never secret.

STAY SAFE

Gift cards and crypto are giant red flags

Burn this into memory: **no real business, government office, or utility is ever paid in gift cards or cryptocurrency.** Not the IRS, not Instagram, not Microsoft, not your bank. If anyone — ever — tells you to buy gift cards and read them the numbers, or to send "crypto," it is 100% a scam. Stop messaging, and call me if you'd like a second opinion.

CHAPTER 36

Making Your Account Private

This is the single most valuable thing in the whole book, and it takes about ten seconds. Setting your account to **private** means only people you personally approve can see your photos and Stories, and strangers can't wander into your life. If you do one thing from this part, do this.

Turning on Private account

1. Go to your **profile** (the far-right button), and open the **menu** (the three lines in the corner).
2. Tap **Settings and privacy**.
3. Look for **Account privacy** (sometimes just "Privacy").
4. Find the **Private account** switch and tap it so it turns on (it slides over and changes color).
5. That's it. From now on, new people must send a **follow request** that you approve before they see anything.

What private does and doesn't change

Going private hides your posts and Stories from everyone except your approved followers. The people already following you stay as they are — you don't lose family. Your name and profile picture are still visible to anyone searching (that's how family find you to request), but your actual photos are now behind the gate. You can switch back to public anytime, though I doubt you'll want to.

GOOD TO KNOW

The menu names move around — look for the ideas

Instagram relabels and rearranges its settings menus fairly often, so the exact words ("Account privacy," "Who can see your content") may differ a little on your screen. Don't let that stump you. You're hunting for the word **Private** and a switch to turn on. If you can't find it, call me and we'll locate it together in a minute.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Private is peace of mind

Once your account is private, a great many worries simply fall away. No stranger can see your grandchildren. No scammer can study your photos. You get all the joy of keeping up with family, inside a fence that only lets in the people you've chosen. That's the whole point, and it's yours in ten seconds.

CHAPTER 37

Controlling Comments, Tags, Messages & Close Friends

Beyond the big Private switch, Instagram gives you finer dials for who can comment, tag, and message you. You don't need all of them, but a few are worth knowing — they live in **Settings and privacy**, under headings like **Comments**, **Tags and mentions**, and **Messages**.

The dials worth setting

Dial	What it does for you
Who can comment	You can limit comments to people you follow, so strangers can't leave remarks on your posts.
Who can tag you	Set it so only people you follow can tag your name in their photos — or so tags wait for your approval.
Who can message you	Messages from people you don't follow can be routed to a separate "requests" folder, away from family chats.
Hide offensive comments	Instagram can automatically hide rude or spammy comments before you ever see them. A kind setting to turn on.

Close Friends: an inner circle for your Stories

Close Friends is a lovely, gentle tool. It lets you make a small, private list of your nearest people, and then share a Story with *only* them instead of all your followers. Perhaps a photo you'd share with your children but not your wider circle. Set up the list in **Settings** under **Close Friends**, then, when posting a Story, choose **Close Friends** (it shows a little green star) instead of "Your Story."

TIP

You don't have to set every dial today

If all these controls feel like a lot, here's the shortcut: turn your account **private** (last chapter) and you've handled most of this in one move, because strangers can't see, comment, or tag in the first place. Come back to these finer dials later, or set them up with me on a call. Private alone carries you a very long way.

GOOD TO KNOW

Close Friends is one-way and private

Being on someone's Close Friends list — or putting someone on yours — isn't announced with any fanfare, and it's not mutual unless you both choose it. It's simply your own quiet little list. People can't see who else is on it, and you can add or remove anyone anytime without a fuss.

CHAPTER 38

Blocking, Restricting & Reporting

If someone bothers you — a stranger who won't quit, a rude commenter, a suspected scammer — you are never stuck putting up with it. Instagram gives you three tools, from gentle to firm. Let's learn all three.

The three tools

Tool	What it does
Restrict	The gentlest. Quietly limits someone — their comments on your posts only show to them, and their messages go to a request folder. They aren't told. Good for an awkward acquaintance.
Block	The firm one. The person can no longer see your profile, posts, or message you at all — as if you've vanished from each other. They aren't notified. Use it on strangers and scammers without hesitation.
Report	Tells Instagram that an account is a scam, fake, or abusive, so they can investigate and remove it. Helps protect others too.

How to block or report someone

1. Go to the person's **profile** (or open their message or comment).
2. Tap the **three dots** in the corner.
3. Choose **Block** to shut them out, **Restrict** to quietly limit them, or **Report** to flag them to Instagram.
4. Follow the simple prompts. It's done in a few taps, and you can unblock later if you ever change your mind.

STAY SAFE

You never owe a scammer or a stranger politeness

Some kind folks hesitate to block someone because it feels rude. Please let that go. Blocking a stranger or a scammer is not rudeness — it's good sense, like locking your front door. They are not owed your time, your reply, or your patience. Block freely, and don't give it a second thought.

FROM BILL

When someone won't leave you alone, call me

If anyone is harassing you, impersonating you, or you're being bothered in a way that frightens or upsets you, don't wrestle with it alone. Block and report them, and then call me at (330) 200-8042. We'll make sure everything's locked down properly and that you feel safe again. That's exactly the sort of thing I'm here for.

CHAPTER 39

Fake Giveaways & Fake Celebrity/Brand Accounts

Now the specific scams — starting with two of the most common on Instagram: the fake giveaway, and the fake "celebrity" or brand account. Both prey on excitement and trust. Once you know the shape of them, they're easy to sidestep.

The fake giveaway

You'll see posts promising something wonderful for free — "Win an iPhone!", "We're giving away $500 to 10 lucky followers!" Often a scammer copies a real company's or celebrity's account (same photo, a nearly-identical username) and then messages people to say they've **won**. The catch always comes: to "claim" your prize, you must pay a small "fee," "shipping," or "taxes," or hand over bank details. There is no prize.

The fake celebrity or brand

A scammer sets up an account pretending to be a famous person or a well-known brand, then messages fans — warmly, flatteringly — and eventually asks for money, a "membership fee," or help with some invented trouble. Real celebrities do not slide into ordinary folks' messages asking for money. Ever.

- The username is *almost* right but a little off — extra letters, numbers, underscores, or words like "official," "backup," or "fanpage."
- The account is new, with few posts or followers, despite claiming to be famous.
- You're told you "won" something you never entered — and must pay to collect it.
- A "brand" contacts *you* out of the blue and wants payment or bank details up front.

SCAM ALERT

Look for the blue check — but don't trust it blindly

Real famous accounts and big brands often have a small **blue checkmark** beside the name, meaning Instagram confirmed who they are. A fake usually won't have a genuine one. But scammers paste a fake check *into* their photo or name to fool you, so the surest test stays the same: you did not win a contest you didn't enter, and no real company or star asks you to pay to receive a prize. Delete, block, and move on.

CHAPTER 40

Romance & Crypto DM Scams

These two scams arrive in your **Direct Messages**, and they're among the costliest, because they build trust slowly before they ever ask for a thing. Knowing the pattern is your shield.

The romance scam

- A charming stranger (often claiming to work far away — the military overseas, an oil rig, a doctor abroad) starts messaging you, perhaps after liking your posts or replying to a Story.
- They're warm and attentive very quickly, and always have a reason they can't meet or video-call clearly.
- Over weeks, a bond forms — then comes a crisis: a medical bill, a stuck shipment, a plane ticket home. And a request for money, gift cards, or crypto. The requests keep coming.

The crypto / investment DM

A friendly new "friend" or sweetheart mentions how well they've done with **cryptocurrency** or a "trading platform," and offers to help you do the same. They show screenshots of profits. They coach you to put money into a particular app or website — then press for more, and invent fees you must pay to "withdraw" your winnings. The money was gone the moment you sent it.

STAY SAFE

If you've only met them online, never send money

A plain, protective rule that defeats both scams: **no one you've only met online should ever receive money from you** — no matter how real the feelings seem, no matter the emergency, no matter the promised profits. A genuine person understands and won't pressure you. Pressure for money *is* the proof it's a scam.

FROM BILL

There's no shame here — and it's never too late to stop

These scammers are professionals who do this all day; being targeted says nothing bad about you, and plenty of sharp, sensible people have been fooled. If you ever worry you're caught up in one, the kindest thing you can do is talk to someone — family, or me. No lecture, no judgment. We just help you stop it and get you safe.

CHAPTER 41

Phishing, Fake "Instagram Support" & Impersonation

This last cluster of tricks aims to steal your **account** itself — your password and your login — often by pretending to be Instagram. Once you see how they work, you'll dodge them every time.

Phishing: the fake login page

"Phishing" (said "fishing," and that's just what it is) is a bait message hoping you'll tap a link and type your password into a fake page. You get a message or email — "Your account will be disabled," "Someone tried to log in," "You've been mentioned" — with a **link**. The link leads to a page that looks exactly like Instagram's login, but it's a counterfeit. The moment you type your password there, the crook has it.

Fake "Instagram Support"

A message or email claims to be from "Instagram Support," "Meta Security," or a "copyright team": your account broke a rule and will be deleted unless you "verify" by clicking a link and logging in. Instagram delivers real notices *inside* the app, in a special **Emails from Instagram** area in your settings — never by demanding you log in through a message link.

Impersonation: someone pretending to be you

Sometimes a scammer copies *your* photos and name to make a fake "you," then messages your family and friends asking for money or spreading scams in your name. If you discover a fake of yourself (or of a loved one), **report** it to Instagram right away and warn your people — a quick call or text: "If a second me messages you asking for anything, it isn't me."

STAY SAFE

Beat phishing with one unbreakable habit

Never log in through a link someone sent you. If you get a message about your account, don't tap its link — instead, open the Instagram app yourself, the normal way, and check. If there's a real problem, it'll show up there. This single habit defeats nearly every account-stealing scam on Instagram.

TIP

Turn on two-factor authentication for a second lock

Set up **two-factor authentication** (in Settings, under Security or Accounts Center): then even if a crook somehow learns your password, they still can't log in without a code sent to *your* phone. It's the strongest lock Instagram offers, and I'm glad to walk you through turning it on.

CHAPTER 42

If You've Already Been Caught: What to Do Now

If you're reading this because something has already happened — you sent money, shared a code, tapped a bad link, or lost your account — take a slow breath. You are not foolish, and you are not alone; this happens to sharp, careful people every single day. What matters now is acting calmly to limit the damage. Here's exactly what to do.

Right away

1. **Stop all contact** with the scammer. Don't send another cent, and don't believe promises that paying "one more fee" will get your money back — it won't.
2. **Change your Instagram password** at once (and your email password too, if it may be exposed), and turn on two-factor authentication.
3. **Call your bank or card company** if money or card details were involved. Tell them it's fraud; they can often stop or reverse recent charges.
4. If you paid by **gift card**, call the card's company (the number is on the back) right away — occasionally funds can still be frozen if you act fast.

If you've lost access to your account

If a crook has changed your password and locked you out, go to Instagram's login screen and use **Get help logging in** / **Forgot password**, which can send a recovery code to your email or phone. Instagram also has a **hacked account** recovery page. This can be fiddly — it's a very good moment to call me, and we'll work through it together.

Then

- **Report it** to Instagram (three dots → Report), and to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**. Reporting helps investigators and may help others.
- **Tell someone you trust** — family, or me. Talking about it is not weakness; it's how you get help and stop it going further.
- **Watch for follow-up scams.** Once scammed, you may be targeted by a fake "recovery service" promising to get your money back for a fee. That's another scam. Real help never works that way.

FROM BILL

No judgment — let's just get you safe

Please don't suffer in silence out of embarrassment. I have helped many good people through exactly this, and not once have I thought less of them — the scammers are professionals, and being targeted says nothing about you. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll go through it together, calmly, and lock everything back down. That's what I'm here for.

PART 8

Handy Extras & When to Call Bill

The useful odds and ends, Instagram on a bigger screen, a plain-English glossary, quick fixes, a cheat-sheet to keep by the chair — and an honest word about when to pick up the phone.

CHAPTER 43

Handy Extras: Muting, Archiving & Memories

A few small features make Instagram nicer to live with. None is essential, but each is a pleasant little convenience worth knowing.

Muting the noise

If a person or account posts too much, you can **mute** them — their posts quietly stop filling your feed, and they're never told (we met this in Part 3). Open their profile, tap **Following**, and choose **Mute**. You can mute just their posts, just their Stories, or both. A tactful way to turn down the volume without unfollowing anyone.

Archiving: hiding a post without deleting it

If you've posted something and want it off your profile but not gone forever, you can **archive** it: tap the three dots on the post and choose **Archive**. It vanishes from public view but waits safely in your private archive, where you can bring it back anytime. A gentler option than deleting.

Looking back at memories

Instagram quietly keeps your old Stories in an archive too, and now and then offers to show you "on this day" memories from years past — a sweet little surprise. You'll find your archive through the **menu** on your profile, under **Archive**. Nobody sees it but you.

> **TIP**
>
> **Keep your own copy of precious photos**
>
> The photos you post live on Instagram, but your originals should live safely on your own phone or a computer too. Instagram lets you download a copy of everything you've shared (look under Settings, in the Accounts Center, for **Download your information**). Worth doing once a year, so your memories are doubly safe.

CHAPTER 44

Instagram on a Computer vs. the Phone

Instagram was built for the phone, and that's where it shines. But you *can* look at it on a computer too, through an internet program (a "web browser" such as Safari, Chrome, or Edge) by going to **instagram.com**. Some folks like the bigger screen. Here's how the two compare.

Task	Phone vs. computer
Getting in	Phone: tap the colorful camera app. Computer: open your web browser and type instagram.com, then log in.
What works	On a computer you can scroll the feed, like, comment, send messages, and even post a photo. Most everyday things are there.
What's limited	A few features are trimmed on the computer, and the layout differs. The phone app always has the full set.
Typing	A computer keyboard is easier for longer messages; the phone is handier for photos and quick looks.
Photos	A larger screen can be lovelier for admiring the grandchildren's pictures.

TIP

Use whichever suits the moment

There's no need to choose one forever. Many folks check Instagram on the phone during the day and sit at the computer in the evening for a longer, comfier look on the big screen. It's the very same Instagram and the same account either way — pick whatever feels nice right now.

STAY SAFE

On a shared or public computer, always log out

On your own private phone, staying logged in is fine. But if you ever use a library computer or a friend's device, remember to **log out** when you're done (open the menu, then Log out) so the next person can't get into your account.

CHAPTER 45

A Plain-English Glossary of Instagram Words

Instagram has a vocabulary all its own, and the words can make simple things sound harder than they are. Here's a plain-English dictionary of the terms you'll meet. Keep it handy for the first few weeks; soon you won't need it.

Word	What it means
Account	Your personal spot on Instagram, opened with your username and password.
Profile	Your own page — your photo, your name, and the posts you've shared.
Username	Your one-word handle (no spaces), like "mary_in_ohio." How people find you.
Feed	The main Home screen; the running stream of posts from the people you follow.
Post	A photo or video shared to a profile, where it stays until removed.
Carousel / Album	A single post holding several photos — swipe left to see them all.
Story	A casual photo or clip that disappears after 24 hours.
Reel	A short, full-screen video; swipe up for the next one.
Follow	Choosing to see someone's posts in your feed. One-way; no permission needed if they're public.
Follower	Someone who has chosen to see your posts.
Follow request	A pending ask to follow a private account, waiting for approval.
Like	Tapping the heart (or double-tapping a photo) to show you enjoyed it.
Comment	Writing a public reply under a post.
DM (Direct Message)	A private message between you and someone — nobody else sees it.
Share / Send	Passing a post to someone privately in their messages.
Save	Tucking a post into your own private collection to see later.
Hashtag	A # label on a topic, like #sunset, used to find related posts.
Tag	Linking a person's name to a photo or post.
Explore	The gallery of suggested photos and videos behind the magnifying glass.
Close Friends	A private list you can share a Story with instead of all followers.
Private account	An account whose posts only approved followers can see.

Word	What it means
Verified (blue check)	A mark showing Instagram confirmed a notable account's identity.
Block	A wall that hides you from someone entirely.
Report	Telling Instagram something is a scam, fake, or abusive.

CHAPTER 46

Quick Fixes: When Something Won't Work

Now and then Instagram acts up — a photo won't load, the app freezes, you're logged out. Before you worry, try these simple fixes, which solve the great majority of everyday hiccups.

The five things to try, in order

1. **Check your internet.** Instagram needs Wi-Fi or data. If other things won't load either, that's the culprit — move nearer your router or check your connection.
2. **Close and reopen the app.** Fully close Instagram and open it fresh. This clears most little glitches.
3. **Restart the phone or tablet.** Turn it off and on again. It's the oldest fix in the book because it so often works.
4. **Update the app.** An out-of-date app can misbehave. Check your phone's app store for an Instagram update and install it.
5. **Give it a little time.** Sometimes the trouble is on Instagram's end, not yours. Try again in an hour.

TIP

"Have you tried turning it off and on again?" really is the answer

It sounds like a joke, but restarting the app — or the whole device — genuinely fixes most everyday problems. It's the first thing I try on a call, and nine times in ten it's all that's needed. Never deletes a thing, either.

FROM BILL

When the quick fixes don't do it, that's what I'm for

If you've tried the five steps and something's still not right, don't spend your whole afternoon wrestling with it. That's exactly the moment to call me at (330) 200-8042. A fresh pair of eyes often sorts it out in minutes, and you get your afternoon back.

CHAPTER 47

Your Instagram Cheat-Sheet

Tear this page out, or fold its corner. These are the everyday moves, all in one place.

Getting around

To do this…	Do this
Go back to the main screen	Tap the house (Home), bottom-left
Find a person or browse	Tap the magnifying glass (Search/Explore)
Watch short videos	Tap the Reels button (the play symbol)
See your own page & settings	Tap your little round photo (Profile)
See alerts and requests	Tap the heart (Notifications), top-right
Open private messages	Tap the paper airplane (Direct Messages)

Everyday actions

To do this…	Do this
Like a photo	Tap the heart below it, or double-tap the photo
Comment	Tap the speech-bubble below, type, send
Save a post for later	Tap the bookmark (ribbon) below the post
Send a post to family	Tap the paper airplane below it, pick a name, Send
Follow someone	Open their profile → tap Follow
Post a photo	Tap the plus (+) → Post → pick photo → Share
Delete your post	Three dots on the post → Delete

Staying safe

Situation	What to do
Make your account safe	Settings → Account privacy → turn on Private
A stranger messages or "friends" you	You can ignore, delete, or block — you owe no reply
"You've won!" a prize you didn't enter	It's a scam — don't pay, don't reply; delete it
Anyone asks for money, codes, gift cards, crypto	Stop. It's a scam. Send nothing. Call Bill if unsure
"Your account will be deleted" link	Don't tap — open Instagram yourself instead
Someone's bothering you	Block and Report (three dots → Block / Report)

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You know more than most now

If you've read this far, you are better prepared for Instagram — and for its scams — than a great many people half your age. You don't need to be afraid; you need to be *unhurried*, and now you are. Enjoy keeping up with your people, with a calm and confident eye.

CHAPTER 48

When to Call Bill

I built this book so you could do most things on Instagram yourself, at your own pace, with confidence. And you can. But part of doing things well is knowing when a task is worth handing to someone who does it every day — so you can spend your time enjoying the grandchildren's photos instead of wrestling with a setting. Here's my honest take on when to pick up the phone.

Good reasons to call

- You think your account may be **hacked**, or you're **locked out** and the recovery steps aren't working.
- You got a message or "offer" that feels off and you'd like a **second opinion** before you do anything — always a good call, never a bother.
- You want help setting your **privacy and safety** properly the first time, together, so you can stop worrying about it.
- You'd like to sit down and **learn** — following family, posting a photo, making a video call to the grandkids — with a patient person beside you.
- Something just isn't working the way this book describes, and you've tried once or twice.

What working with me is like

I'm Bill, and I run **Bill's Home Tech** right here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent **30+ years** helping people feel at home with their technology, and I treat every call the way I'd want my own parents treated: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing, no jargon, and never, ever any eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question with me.

How to reach me	
Call or text	(330) 200-8042
Book online	billshometech.com/book
Where I serve	Portage County, Ohio and nearby
What it costs	Fair, honest, and told to you up front — no surprises

FROM BILL

You're never a bother — that's the whole job

Some folks hesitate to call because they don't want to be a nuisance. Please don't feel that way. Helping you is not an interruption to my work — it *is* my work, and it's work I love. Whether it's a five-minute question or setting up everything from scratch, I'm glad to help. That's what I'm here for.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you reach my website, you may meet Sophie

When you visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my friendly assistant on the site. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time with me. She's there to make reaching me easier — but a real person (me) always does the actual help.

Thank you for letting me be your guide through Instagram. Take your time, enjoy seeing your people — especially those busy younger ones — stay safe, and remember: you really can't break it, and you're never stuck alone. I'm proud of you for learning something new.

— Bill