BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Notes Apps

Lists, scans, shared grocery lists and lost notes — explained in plain English, one tap at a time

A plain-English guide to Apple Notes, Google Keep, Samsung Notes and OneNote

Take your time — deleted notes wait in the trash for a while

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For Apple Notes, Google Keep, Samsung Notes & OneNote · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the notes apps on your phone and computer: Apple Notes, Google Keep, Samsung Notes and Microsoft OneNote. Read it in any order and at your own pace; there's no test, and you can't fall behind. Every chapter explains what something does *for you*, with slow, step-by-step directions. Facts are current as of November 2026. If a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Notes Apps

What a notes app is, the handful of words worth knowing, which one is already on your phone or computer, and how to pick one and stick with it.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Somewhere on your phone there's a little app for notes. Maybe you've never opened it. Maybe it's full of grocery lists, a few phone numbers and a recipe your sister read to you over the phone. Either way, it's one of the most useful tools you own, and it costs nothing.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped people make sense of their technology, and notes apps come up all the time: "How do I share the grocery list with my wife?", "Where did my note go?", "Is it safe to keep my passwords in here?" (Short answer to that last one: no, and I'll show you a better place.) I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time.

What this guide covers

- **Apple Notes** on iPhone, iPad, Mac and iCloud.com: notes, checklists, folders, pinning, scanning, locking, sharing, Quick Note, audio recordings and Math Notes.
- **Google Keep** on Android, iPhone and the web: notes, lists, labels, colors, sharing, photos, voice notes, and what happened to Keep reminders.
- **Samsung Notes** on Galaxy phones and tablets, briefly.
- **Microsoft OneNote** and **Sticky Notes** on Windows.
- **Everyday jobs**: a grocery list you share with your spouse, scanning a receipt or a medical form, and what you should never keep in a note.
- **Rescue**: finding a lost or deleted note, moving notes to a new phone or another app, and backups.
- **Scams and privacy**, and when it's worth a call.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll have one notes app you trust, with your lists, receipts and reminders in it. You'll be able to share a list that updates on both phones as you shop, scan a paper in seconds, lock a private note, and get back a note you deleted by mistake.

The honest "can't break it" promise

Opening a notes app, typing, making a list, adding a photo: none of that can hurt a thing. Deleted notes even wait in a trash folder for a while before they're gone for good. There are

only a few moments that deserve a pause, and I'll flag each one: **emptying the trash** (that really is permanent), **deleting a note you've shared** (it can disappear for everyone), **turning off syncing** on a phone, and **making up a separate Notes password** (if you forget it, nobody can get those notes back).

GOOD TO KNOW

Facts current as of November 2026

The menus and settings in this guide were checked against Apple, Google, Microsoft and Samsung's own help pages in November 2026. These apps get small updates often, so if a button on your screen looks a little different, the idea is still the same.

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll sort it out together. There's no such thing as a silly question about your own phone.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Notes App Is, and Words Worth Knowing

A notes app is a digital notepad. You open it, tap to start a new note, and type, or talk, or take a picture. The note is saved as you go; there's no Save button to forget. Most notes apps also keep a copy online, so the same notes show up on your phone, your tablet and your computer, and they survive if a phone is lost or broken.

Here are the words you'll meet in this guide, in plain English.

Word	What it means
Note	One page of writing. It can hold text, a checklist, photos, a scanned paper or a recording.
Checklist (or list)	A note with little circles or boxes you tap to check items off, like a grocery list.
Folder	In Apple Notes and Samsung Notes, a way to group notes, such as "Recipes" or "Medical."
Label	Google Keep's version of a folder. One note can have several labels.
Pin	Keeps a note at the top of the list so you can always find it.
Sync	Keeping the same notes up to date on every device you sign in to. It happens by itself in the background.
Account	Where the online copy lives: your **Apple Account** (iCloud), your **Google Account**, your **Samsung account** or your **Microsoft account**.
Share or collaborate	Letting someone else see a note, and usually change it too. Both of you see the changes.
Scan	Using the camera to make a flat, clean picture of a paper, like a photocopy.
Recently Deleted / Trash	Where deleted notes wait for a while before they're gone for good.
Transcript	The written words of a recording, typed out automatically by your phone.

TIP

A note isn't a document

Notes are for quick, everyday things: lists, reminders, a phone number, a scanned receipt. For a long letter you'll print or a family history you'll share, a word processor like Word or Google Docs is a better fit. My Microsoft 365 and Google Drive manuals cover those.

CHAPTER 3

Which Notes App You Already Have

You almost certainly have a notes app already. Which one depends on your phone and computer. Find yours in this table.

If you have…	Your built-in notes app	Where the online copy lives
iPhone, iPad or Mac	**Notes** (Apple Notes): a yellow-and-white notepad icon	iCloud, with your Apple Account
Samsung Galaxy phone or tablet	**Samsung Notes** (often Google Keep too)	Your Samsung account, or OneNote
Other Android phone (Pixel, Motorola…)	**Google Keep**: a yellow light-bulb icon	Your Google Account
Windows computer	**OneNote** and **Sticky Notes**	Your Microsoft account (OneDrive)
Any computer, any web browser	Apple Notes at **icloud.com**; Keep at **keep.google.com**	Same as above

Can I use a different one?

Yes. Google Keep and OneNote are free in the App Store for iPhone and iPad, and OneNote is free in the Google Play Store for Android. Apple Notes is the one exception: it only runs on Apple devices, though you can read and edit it in a web browser at icloud.com on any computer.

HEADS UP

Get apps only from the official store

Search the App Store or Google Play for the app by name, and check that the maker is **Google LLC** for Keep or **Microsoft Corporation** for OneNote. Copycat "notes" apps with ads and subscriptions are common. None of the apps in this guide charge for basic note-taking.

CHAPTER 4

Choosing One, and Sticking With It

The best notes app is the one you'll actually open. The second-best rule: **use one, not three**. Notes scattered across several apps are how things get "lost." Here's my honest guide to picking.

Your household	My suggestion	Why
Everyone has an iPhone (or iPad or Mac)	**Apple Notes**	Already there, syncs through iCloud, scans papers, locks private notes, and shares lists between Apple devices.
Everyone has Android	**Google Keep**	Already there, simple, syncs through your Google Account.
A mix: one iPhone, one Android	**Google Keep** for shared lists	Apple Notes sharing only works with people who have an Apple device. Keep works on both.
You live on a Windows computer	**OneNote**	Free with a Microsoft account, and organized like a ring binder.
You have a Samsung Galaxy	**Samsung Notes** or **Keep**	Samsung Notes is great on the phone itself; Keep is easier if you also want your notes on a non-Samsung computer or phone.

TIP

It's fine to use two for different jobs

Plenty of couples keep their private notes in Apple Notes and use Google Keep just for the shared grocery list, because one of them has an Android phone. That's sensible. What causes trouble is the *same* kind of note ending up in different places.

Three questions to settle it

1. **What phone do I have, and what does my spouse or helper have?** If you both have Apple devices, Apple Notes. If not, Google Keep for anything you share.
2. **Do I want my notes on my computer too?** Apple Notes is on a Mac and at icloud.com; Keep is at keep.google.com; OneNote is on Windows, Mac and the web.
3. **Do I already use Gmail or iCloud every day?** Pick the notes app that signs in with the account you already know. One less password to remember.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why one app is worth it

When everything lives in one place, you only ever look in one place. Search finds it, the trash can bring it back, and a new phone gets all of it the moment you sign in.

PART 2

Apple Notes: The Everyday Basics

Writing your first note on an iPhone or iPad, making a checklist, keeping things tidy with folders and pins, scanning a paper, and adding photos.

CHAPTER 5

Your First Apple Note

Apple's notes app is simply called **Notes**. Its icon is a white page with a yellow strip across the top. These steps are for an iPhone; an iPad is the same, just with more room on the screen.

Start a note

1. Open **Notes**. If you see a list of folders, tap **Notes** or **All iCloud** to see your notes.
2. Tap the **New Note** button at the bottom right. It looks like a square with a pencil.
3. Type. The **first line** becomes the note's title in your list, so start with something like "Grocery list" or "Dr. Patel's questions."
4. Tap **Done** at the top right (or a check mark) to put the keyboard away. Your note is already saved.
5. Tap **Back** (the arrow at the top left) to return to your list of notes.

> TIP
> **Talk instead of typing**
> Tap the **microphone** on the keyboard and say what you want written. Say "period" or "comma" for punctuation. Tap the microphone again to stop. It's a great way to jot something down when your hands are full or the keys feel small.

Make the words easier to read

With the note open, tap the **Aa** button above the keyboard to choose a **Title** or **Heading** style, bold, or a bulleted list. If the writing is too small everywhere on your phone, make it bigger for every app in **Settings** > **Display & Brightness** > **Text Size**.

Delete a note you don't need

In your list of notes, swipe left across the note and tap the red **trash** button. Don't worry: it goes to **Recently Deleted** first, where you can get it back for 30 days (Chapter 26).

GOOD TO KNOW

On a Mac

Open **Notes** from the Dock or Launchpad. Click the **New Note** button (a square with a pencil) at the top of the window, or press **Command-N**. Everything you write on the Mac appears on your iPhone too, as long as both use iCloud for Notes (Chapter 14).

CHAPTER 6

Checklists in Apple Notes

A checklist turns a note into a list with little circles you tap as you go. It's perfect for groceries, packing for a trip, or the things to ask the doctor.

Make a checklist

1. Start a new note, and type a title such as "Groceries" on the first line. Tap **return**.
2. Tap the **Checklist** button above the keyboard. It looks like a circle with a check mark next to lines.
3. Type the first item, then tap **return** to start the next one. Keep going.
4. Tap **return** twice in a row (on an empty line) to stop the list and go back to plain text.
5. At the store, tap the circle next to each item as you put it in the cart. It fills in with a check mark.

Tidy up a list

Tap anywhere in the list, then look for the **Checklist** options in the menu that appears. There you can choose **Check All**, **Uncheck All** (handy for a list you reuse every week), **Delete Checked**, or **Move Checked to Bottom**.

To have checked items slide to the bottom by themselves, open the **Settings** app, tap **Apps** > **Notes** (on older iPhones, just **Notes**), tap **Sort Checked Items**, and choose **Automatically**.

TIP

A list you reuse every week

Make one "Staples" checklist with everything you usually buy. Before each trip, use **Uncheck All**, then check off what you already have at home. What's left unchecked is your shopping list.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rearranging items

Touch and hold an item, then drag it up or down to a new spot. Swipe right on an item to indent it under the one above, which is a nice way to group "Produce" or "Pharmacy."

CHAPTER 7

Folders, Pinning and Search

After a few months you might have dozens of notes. Three simple tools keep them easy to find: **folders**, **pins** and **search**.

Make a folder

1. In Notes, go back to the list of folders (tap **Back** at the top left until you see them).
2. Tap the **New Folder** button at the bottom left (a folder with a plus sign).
3. If asked where, choose **iCloud**, so the folder appears on all your devices.
4. Type a name, such as "Recipes," "Medical" or "House," and tap **Done**.

Move a note into a folder

In the list of notes, touch and hold the note, then choose **Move** and pick the folder. Or open the note, tap the **More** button (three dots in a circle) and look for **Move Note**.

Pin the notes you use most

Swipe right across a note in the list and tap the yellow **pin**. Pinned notes stay at the top of the list in their own **Pinned** section. Swipe right again to unpin it. Pin your grocery list and your list of medications, and they'll always be one tap away.

Search for anything

At the top of any list of notes there's a **Search** box (pull the list down a little if you don't see it). Type a word you remember from the note, such as "furnace" or "Linda." Notes searches the words you typed, and it can also find words in scanned papers and handwriting, and in the transcripts of recordings.

> **TIP**
>
> **Search before you panic**
>
> Most "lost" notes aren't lost: they're in a different folder or a different account. Search looks through all your folders at once. If that doesn't find it, Chapter 26 has the full checklist.

CHAPTER 8

Scanning a Document, Receipt or Form

Your iPhone can make a clean, flat copy of a piece of paper: a receipt, a warranty card, a page of instructions, the form from the doctor's office. Notes trims the edges and straightens it, so it looks like a photocopy instead of a crooked snapshot.

Scan a paper into a note

1. Lay the paper flat on a table with some contrast, such as white paper on a dark table, in good light.
2. Open a note (or start a new one), and tap the **Attachment** button above the keyboard (a paper clip on newer iPhones, a camera on older ones).
3. Tap **Scan Documents**.
4. Hold the phone above the paper. In **Auto** mode, the phone takes the scan by itself once the page is in view. Otherwise, tap the round **shutter** button or press a volume button.
5. If needed, drag the corners so the frame fits the page, then tap **Keep Scan**.
6. Scan more pages if the paper has them, then tap **Save**. The scan is now in your note.

GOOD TO KNOW

Sign a form you scanned

Apple's Notes can also let you add a signature to a scanned document: open the scan, tap the **Share** or **Markup** option, and look for **Signature**. It's handy for a form you need to email back. Chapter 24 covers which papers are and aren't wise to keep.

TIP

Name it so search can find it

Change the note's first line to something you'll remember, such as "Furnace receipt, Oct 2026." Notes can often find words printed on a scan too, but a clear title is the surest way.

On a Mac

A Mac doesn't have a document camera, but it can borrow your iPhone's. In a Mac note, choose **File** > **Insert from iPhone or iPad** > **Scan Documents**, then scan with your iPhone. The scan lands in the note on your Mac.

CHAPTER 9

Photos, Attachments and Drawings

A note can hold more than words. A photo of the car's tire size, a picture of the paint can label, a quick sketch of where the shut-off valve is: all of these belong in a note.

Add a photo

1. Open the note and tap where you want the picture to go.
2. Tap the **Attachment** button above the keyboard.
3. Choose **Choose Photo or Video** to pick one you already took, or **Take Photo or Video** to use the camera right now.
4. Tap the photo, then tap **Add** (or **Use Photo**).

Draw or handwrite

Tap the **Markup** button above the keyboard (a pen tip in a circle). Pick a pen and draw with your finger, or with an Apple Pencil on an iPad. Tap **Done** when finished.

Add a link or a file

From Safari or most other apps, tap the **Share** button (a square with an arrow pointing up), then tap **Notes**. You can choose which note to add it to. It's an easy way to save a recipe web page or a PDF someone emailed you.

HEADS UP

Photos use up iCloud space

Photos, scans and recordings in Notes count against your iCloud storage. Apple gives every Apple Account 5 GB free, shared with your backups and photos. Text notes take almost no room, but hundreds of photos in notes add up. My Apple Photos manual explains iCloud storage and its prices.

PART 3

Apple Notes: Sharing, Locking and Extras

Sharing a note with your spouse so you both see changes, locking a private note, jotting a Quick Note, recording with a transcript, Math Notes, and how iCloud keeps it all in step.

CHAPTER 10

Sharing a Note with Your Spouse or Family

When you **collaborate** on a note, you and the other person both see the same note, and changes show up on both phones. If your husband adds "coffee" to the grocery list from home, it appears on your phone in the store.

Before you start

- The other person needs an **Apple device** (iPhone, iPad or Mac) signed in to their own Apple Account.
- The note must be in your **iCloud** account, not "On My iPhone."
- A **locked** note can't be shared, and neither can a folder with locked notes in it.
- Up to 100 people can collaborate on a note, which is plenty for any family.

Invite someone

1. Open the note you want to share.
2. Tap the **Share** button at the top (a square with an arrow pointing up).
3. Make sure **Collaborate** is chosen (not "Send Copy"), and tap the line underneath it to see **Share Options**.
4. Choose **Can make changes** (so they can add to the list) or **View only**. If you choose Can make changes, you can also decide whether they may invite others.
5. Choose how to send the invitation, such as **Messages** or **Mail**, pick the person, and send it.
6. When they open the invitation on their Apple device, the note appears in their Notes app too.

TIP

Share a whole folder instead

If you share a **folder** in iCloud, everyone you invite sees every note in it, including new ones you add later. A shared "Household" folder with the grocery list, the to-do list and the gift ideas saves sharing each note one by one.

HEADS UP

Shared means shared

Anyone you invite with **Can make changes** can edit or delete what's in the note. Share lists and plans, not private things. And if your spouse uses an Android phone, Apple Notes sharing won't work; use Google Keep for the shared list instead (Chapter 18).

Stop sharing

Open the shared note, tap the **Collaborate** button at the top (it shows a person or a check mark), then **Manage Shared Note**. From there you can remove one person, or choose **Stop Sharing** to remove everyone.

CHAPTER 11

Locking a Private Note

You can lock a note so it needs your Face ID, Touch ID or a passcode to open. In the list it shows only its title and a little padlock. It's good for things like a list of account numbers for your executor, or a private health note on a shared iPad.

Two ways to lock, and which to pick

Option	What it means
Your iPhone passcode (recommended)	Since iOS 16 you can lock notes with the same passcode you use to unlock your iPhone, plus Face ID or Touch ID. Nothing new to remember.
A separate Notes password	A password used only for locked notes. Extra privacy if others know your phone passcode, but **if you forget it, Apple can't help you get those notes back**.

Lock a note

1. Open the note.
2. Tap the **More** button (three dots in a circle) at the top, then tap **Lock**.
3. The first time, your iPhone asks which method to use. Choose **Use iPhone Passcode** unless you have a good reason for a separate password.
4. Tap the **padlock** at the top of the note to lock it now. Notes also locks it again on its own after a little while, or when you close the app.
5. To open it later, tap the note and look at the phone (Face ID), touch the button (Touch ID) or type your passcode.

HEADS UP

What can't be locked

Apple says you can't lock notes that have **tags**, **PDFs**, **audio**, **video**, or Keynote, Pages or Numbers documents, or notes in an email account that syncs by IMAP. Quick Notes and notes you've shared can't be locked either; move a Quick Note to another folder first. If the Lock choice is missing, that's why.

You can also change how locking works later in **Settings** > **Apps** > **Notes** > **Password**.

STAY SAFE

Don't rely on Face ID alone

Apple advises not to rely on Face ID or Touch ID as the only way into your locked notes. If you chose a separate Notes password, write it down and keep it somewhere safe at home, or store it in your password manager. A forgotten Notes password means those notes stay locked for good.

TIP

Better still for passwords

A locked note is fine for a few private notes. But for your logins, a password manager is safer and fills them in for you. Chapter 25 explains why.

CHAPTER 12

Quick Note: Jot Something Down Fast

A **Quick Note** is a little note you can open on top of whatever you're doing, without leaving the app you're in. It's made for the moment the pharmacy reads you a refill number and you need somewhere to put it, right now.

Device	How to start a Quick Note
iPad	Swipe up from the **bottom-right corner** of the screen with your finger or an Apple Pencil. With an Apple keyboard, press **Globe-Q**.
Mac	Press **Fn-Q** (or **Globe-Q**). You can also set a **Hot Corner** in System Settings > Desktop & Dock > Hot Corners, so moving the pointer into that corner opens a Quick Note.
iPhone	Add the **Quick Note** button to Control Center, then swipe down from the top-right corner and tap it. The Share button in many apps also offers **Add to Quick Note**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Where Quick Notes end up

Every Quick Note is saved in the **Quick Notes** folder in the Notes app, and it appears on your other Apple devices too. Move it to another folder if you want to keep it with related notes or lock it.

TIP

Grab a web page

On a Mac in Safari, highlight some text, Control-click it and choose **New Quick Note**. The note keeps a link back to the page, which is handy for a recipe or a store's phone number.

CHAPTER 13

Recording Audio, Transcripts and Math Notes

Since iOS 18, Notes can record sound right inside a note and type out what was said. It's a real help at a doctor's appointment (ask first; most doctors are glad you're paying attention), a family story from Grandpa, or a long phone message you want to keep.

Record in a note

1. Open a note and tap the **Attachment** button (the paper clip) above the keyboard.
2. Tap **Record Audio**.
3. Tap the red **Record** button to start. Tap it again to pause or stop.
4. Tap **Done**. The recording is saved in the note.
5. Tap the recording, then the **Transcript** button, to read the words. You can search them, copy them, or add them to the note as text.

GOOD TO KNOW

What you need

Recording works on iPhones with iOS 18 or later. Transcripts work in supported languages, English included. A short written **summary** of the recording needs Apple Intelligence, which needs an iPhone 15 Pro or newer. Transcripts aren't perfect, so double-check names and numbers. Deleting a recording deletes its transcript too.

HEADS UP

Recordings take space, and can't be locked

Long recordings use iCloud storage, and Apple says notes with audio can't be locked. For a private medical conversation, consider copying the transcript into a separate note you can lock, then deleting the recording.

Phone calls saved to Notes

Since iOS 18.1 you can record a phone call or FaceTime audio call on an iPhone. The recording and its transcript are saved in Notes, in a folder called **Call Recordings**. Everyone on the call hears an announcement that it's being recorded, so nobody is taken by surprise.

Math Notes, briefly

Notes can also do arithmetic as you write. Type something like **Electric 112.40 + Gas 86.15 + Water 41.30 =** and the total appears after the equals sign. Change a number and the total updates. The Calculator app's **Math Notes** button opens the same thing, and those notes are kept in a **Math Notes** folder in Notes. It's a pleasant way to add up the monthly bills.

CHAPTER 14

iCloud Sync, iCloud.com and "On My iPhone"

Your Apple notes usually live in **iCloud**: a copy is kept safely online with your Apple Account, and that copy shows up on your iPhone, iPad, Mac and at icloud.com. That's what lets a note survive a lost or broken phone.

Check that Notes is syncing with iCloud

1. Open **Settings** and tap **your name** at the top.
2. Tap **iCloud**. (If you don't see Notes in the list, tap **See All**.)
3. Tap **Notes** and make sure syncing is turned **on** for this iPhone.
4. Do the same on your iPad and Mac (on a Mac: **System Settings** > your name > **iCloud**).

STAY SAFE

Think before you turn iCloud Notes off

If you switch iCloud Notes off on a phone, the iCloud notes are removed from *that phone*. They're still safe in iCloud and on your other devices, but this phone won't show them. If someone tells you to switch it off to "fix" something, ask why first.

Your notes on any computer: icloud.com

On any computer, including a Windows PC or the library's computer, open a web browser and go to **icloud.com**. Sign in with your Apple Account and choose **Notes**. You can read, write and recover notes there. Sign out when you're done if it isn't your own computer.

"On My iPhone" notes

There's also an **On My iPhone** account, which you can turn on in **Settings** > **Apps** > **Notes**. Notes kept there stay only on that phone: they don't sync, can't be shared, and are only as safe as your iPhone backup. If you see an "On My iPhone" section in your folder list, consider moving those notes into iCloud.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Default Account

If you have more than one account in Notes (for example iCloud and Gmail), **Settings** > **Apps** > **Notes** > **Default Account** decides where new notes from Siri and the Notes widget go. Choose **iCloud** so everything lands in one place.

PART 4

Google Keep

Google's simple notes app for Android phones, iPhones and any web browser: notes, lists, labels, colors, sharing a list, photos and voice, and what happened to Keep reminders.

CHAPTER 15

Your First Google Keep Note

Google Keep is Google's notes app. Its icon is a yellow square with a white light bulb. It comes on most Android phones, it's free in the App Store for iPhone and iPad, and it works in any web browser at **keep.google.com**. Your notes are saved in your **Google Account**, the same account you use for Gmail, so they show up everywhere you sign in.

Start a note

1. Open **Google Keep**. If it asks, sign in with your Google Account (your Gmail address and password).
2. On an Android phone, tap the **Create** button (a plus sign) at the bottom right, then tap **Text**. On an iPhone or iPad, use the new note button at the bottom of the screen.
3. Type a **Title** on the top line if you like, then type your note underneath.
4. Tap **Back** (the arrow at the top left). Keep saves the note by itself and shows it as a card on the main screen.

> TIP
> **Cards, not a list**
> Keep shows your notes as little cards, a bit like sticky notes on a corkboard. Tap any card to open it.

On a computer

Go to **keep.google.com** and sign in. Click the box that says **Take a note…** at the top, type, and click **Close**. The same notes appear on your phone within moments.

Delete or archive a note

Keep gives you two ways to clear a note off the main screen, and they're quite different:

Choice	What it does
Archive	Tucks the note away out of sight but keeps it forever. Good for things you're done with but might want again, like last year's Christmas list. Find it later under **Menu** > **Archive**.
Delete	Moves the note to **Trash**. Google says you have **seven days** to get it back. After that it's gone.

HEADS UP

Seven days is short

Apple Notes and Samsung Notes keep deleted notes much longer than Keep does. If you're not sure you're done with a Keep note, **archive** it instead of deleting it. Archiving costs nothing and can be undone any time.

CHAPTER 16

Lists in Google Keep

A Keep list has a little box next to each item. Tap the box as you go, and checked items move down out of the way so you can see what's left.

Make a list

1. Open Google Keep.
2. On an iPhone or iPad, tap **New list** at the bottom. On an Android phone, tap **Create** (the plus sign) at the bottom right, then tap **List**.
3. Type a title, such as "Groceries."
4. Type the first item and tap the return or next key to start a new line. Keep going until the list is done.
5. Tap **Back**. The list is saved.

Turn a note into a list

Already typed a few lines as plain text? Open the note, tap **Add** (the plus sign at the bottom left) and choose the **checkboxes** option. Each line becomes an item you can check off.

GOOD TO KNOW

New items at the top or the bottom

In Keep's **Settings**, under **Display options**, you can choose whether new items are added at the bottom of a list or the top. Pick whichever feels natural.

TIP

Let Gemini start the list, if you have it

On some Android phones, **Create** > **Help me create a list** asks Google's Gemini to write a list for you, such as "packing list for a week at the lake." Google says this needs a Pixel phone or a paid Google AI Pro or Ultra plan. Typing your own list works just as well.

CHAPTER 17

Labels, Colors, Pins and Search in Keep

Keep doesn't have folders. Instead it gives you three easy ways to sort notes: **labels**, **colors** and **pins**. Use as many or as few as you like.

Tool	What it's for	How to do it on a phone
Label	A name tag like "Recipes" or "Medical." One note can have several labels. You can have up to 50.	Open the note, tap the **Action** menu (three dots, bottom right), then **Labels**.
Color	A quick visual cue, like yellow for shopping and blue for health.	Open the note and tap the palette button at the bottom, then pick a color.
Pin	Keeps a note at the top of your Keep screen.	Open the note and tap the **Pin** at the top.

See everything with one label

Tap the **Menu** (three lines at the top left). Your labels are listed there. Tap one, such as "Medical," and Keep shows only those notes.

Search

Tap the **Search** bar at the top of Keep and type a word from the note. Keep looks through titles, text and list items. On a computer, the search box is at the top of keep.google.com.

TIP

On a computer

At keep.google.com, hover the mouse over a note card and small buttons appear underneath it, including the color palette. Click **More** (three dots) and choose **Add label** to label it. The pin appears at the top right of the card.

CHAPTER 18

Sharing a Keep Note or List

This is Keep's best trick for families. Share a list with someone, and you both see the same list. When one of you checks off "milk," it's checked off on the other phone too. It works between Android phones, iPhones and computers, so it's the one to use when one of you has an iPhone and the other has Android.

Before you start

- The other person needs a **Google Account** (any Gmail address works) and the Keep app or keep.google.com.
- Have their email address handy, or make sure they're in your contacts.

Share from a phone

1. Open the note or list you want to share.
2. Tap the **Action** menu (three dots, bottom right).
3. Tap **Collaborator**.
4. Type the person's name or email address, then tap their name when it appears.
5. Tap **Save** (on some phones, **Done**). They'll get an email, and the note appears in their Keep.

Share from a computer

At keep.google.com, open the note and click the **Collaborator** button (a person with a plus sign). Type the name or email address, choose the person, click **Done**, then **Save**.

Share with your whole Google family group

If you've set up a **Google family group** (often used for sharing Google One storage or YouTube Premium), Android phones can share a note with everyone in it at once: open the note, tap **Action** > **Collaborator** > **Family group**.

HEADS UP

What collaborators can do

Anyone you share with can **change the words** of the note. Each person can also give it their own label, color or archive it without changing how it looks for anyone else. But if **you** own the note and delete it, Google says it's deleted for everyone.

Stop sharing with someone

Open the note and tap the person's picture (or initial) at the bottom of the note. Tap **Remove** next to their name, then **Save**.

CHAPTER 19

Photos, Drawings and Voice in Keep

A Keep note can hold a photo, a quick drawing or a voice recording, alongside or instead of typed words.

Add a photo or drawing

1. Open a note, or tap **Create** to start one.
2. Tap **Add** (the plus sign at the bottom left of the note).
3. Choose **Take photo** to use the camera now, **Add image** to pick one you already have, or **Drawing** to sketch with your finger.

Record your voice (Android)

1. Open a note on your Android phone.
2. At the bottom left of the note, tap **Add**, then **Recording**.
3. When the microphone appears, speak your note. The recording is added to the note.

GOOD TO KNOW

Talking to Keep

Google has added a newer feature on some Android phones that lets you speak to Keep, such as "add milk and eggs to my grocery list," and it sorts what you said into the right note. If you see a microphone button at the bottom right of Keep, that's it. If you don't, the **microphone on your keyboard** types whatever you say, in Keep or any other app.

TIP

Photos of labels and serial numbers

Take a picture of the model number sticker on the furnace, the water heater or the TV, and keep it in a note labeled "House." When the repair person asks, you'll have it in seconds.

CHAPTER 20

Keep Reminders Now Live in Google Tasks

For years you could set a reminder on a Keep note, and Keep would pop up an alert at the right time. Google has changed this. Keep reminders **moved to Google Tasks** during the second half of 2025.

What that means for you

- Your old reminders weren't lost. Google moved them to **Google Tasks** with their details, and they still show on the original Keep note.
- **Keep no longer sends the alert.** To be reminded on your phone, you need the **Google Tasks** app or **Google Calendar** app.
- You can still change a reminder's date and time from Keep, Tasks or Calendar. The title can only be changed in Tasks or Calendar.
- **Location reminders are gone** ("remind me when I get to the pharmacy"). You can only set reminders for a date and time now.
- Very old, one-time reminders (more than a year old) were put in a list called **Old Google Keep Reminders** in Tasks.

Set up reminders the new way

1. On your phone, open the **Play Store** (Android) or **App Store** (iPhone) and search for **Google Tasks**. Check that the maker is **Google LLC**, then install it.
2. Open Tasks and sign in with the same Google Account you use for Keep.
3. If the phone asks whether Tasks may send notifications, tap **Allow**. That's what makes the reminder pop up.
4. To add a reminder, tap **New task** (or the plus sign), type what to remember, tap the date and time button, pick them, and save.

TIP

Medication and appointment reminders

For something that repeats every day, like a pill at 8 a.m., the phone's own clock alarm or a repeating Calendar event is often the simplest and most dependable. On an iPhone, the **Reminders** app does the same job.

PART 5

Samsung Notes, OneNote and Sticky Notes

The notes app that comes on Galaxy phones, Microsoft's free digital ring binder, and the little yellow notes on a Windows computer.

CHAPTER 21

Samsung Notes, Briefly

If you have a Samsung Galaxy phone or tablet, **Samsung Notes** is already on it. Look for it by name among your apps, or swipe down and search for "Notes." It does everything you'd expect: typed notes, checklists, photos, voice recordings, and handwriting with the S Pen on phones and tablets that have one.

The basics

- **New note:** open Samsung Notes and tap the **New note** button (a pencil with a plus sign) at the bottom right.
- **Folders:** tap the **Menu** (three lines) at the top left to see and create folders.
- **Trash:** deleted notes go to **Trash**, also in the Menu. Open a note there and choose **Restore** to bring it back.

Make sure your notes are saved online

Samsung Notes keeps its online copy in your **Samsung account**. Without it, your notes live only on the phone. To check:

1. Open **Samsung Notes** and tap the **Menu** (three lines) at the top left.
2. Tap the **Settings** gear.
3. Tap **Sync with Samsung Cloud** (on some phones it says **Sync with Samsung account**) and turn it on. Allow any permissions it asks for.
4. Tap **Sync using** to choose Wi-Fi only, or Wi-Fi and mobile data.

HEADS UP

Samsung Cloud clears data you don't use

Samsung says data in Samsung Cloud that hasn't been used for more than 12 months may be deleted, and that syncing keeps it from being removed. Leaving sync turned on takes care of that. You also can't read your notes on the Samsung Cloud website; it only shows a summary. Your notes open in the Samsung Notes app on a Galaxy phone, tablet or Samsung computer.

TIP

Samsung Notes or Google Keep?

Samsung Notes is lovely on the phone, especially with an S Pen. But it doesn't run on an iPhone or on most non-Samsung computers. If you share lists with someone who doesn't have a Galaxy, or you want your notes in a web browser, use Google Keep for those notes.

CHAPTER 22

Microsoft OneNote and Sticky Notes

OneNote is Microsoft's notes app. It's **free** with a Microsoft account, on Windows, Mac, iPhone, iPad, Android and the web at **onenote.com**. It also comes with a Microsoft 365 subscription. Where Apple Notes and Keep are like a pile of index cards, OneNote is organized like a **ring binder**.

OneNote word	Think of it as
Notebook	The whole binder, such as "Household" or "Family History."
Section	A colored tab inside the notebook, such as "Recipes," "Medical" or "Taxes."
Page	One sheet in a section. Click anywhere on a page and type; you can put text, pictures and lists anywhere on it.

Getting started

1. On a Windows computer, open the Start menu and type **OneNote**. If it isn't there, get it free from the **Microsoft Store**; check that the maker is Microsoft Corporation. On a phone, get **Microsoft OneNote** from the App Store or Google Play.
2. Sign in with your Microsoft account (the email you use for Outlook.com, Hotmail or Windows). Your notebooks are saved in your OneDrive.
3. Create a notebook, add a section, and start a page. Everything saves automatically.

Getting back a deleted page

Microsoft says deleted pages and sections wait in the **Notebook Recycle Bin** for **60 days**. On Windows, click the **History** tab, then **Notebook Recycle Bin**, and look under **Deleted Notes**. Right-click the page and use **Move or Copy** to put it back. On a Mac, use **View** > **Deleted Notes**. If you just deleted something a second ago, **Ctrl+Z** undoes it.

STAY SAFE

Deleting a whole notebook is permanent

The recycle bin holds pages and sections, not whole notebooks. Microsoft says that once you delete a notebook, you won't be able to recover it. Before deleting one, be very sure, or move the pages you want into another notebook first.

GOOD TO KNOW

Is OneNote right for me?

OneNote is wonderful for big, organized projects: a family history, a house binder with every appliance's manual, or a caregiver's notebook. For a quick grocery list, it's more than you need. Many people use OneNote for the binder and Apple Notes or Keep for the everyday jottings.

Sticky Notes on Windows

Sticky Notes are the little yellow notes you can leave on your Windows desktop, just like the paper ones on the fridge. Open the Start menu and type **Sticky Notes** to find it. Click the plus sign to start a new note and type.

- **Sign in** with your Microsoft account and your sticky notes are saved online. Without signing in, they stay on that computer only.
- Once signed in, you can read them in a web browser at **onenote.com/stickynotes**, and in the **Notes** folder in Outlook.com.
- If notes seem missing, open the Sticky Notes list, click **Settings** (the gear) and choose **Sync now**. Make sure you're signed in with the same account you used before.

TIP

Don't leave private things on the desktop

Sticky Notes are right there on the screen for anyone who walks past. They're perfect for "Call pharmacy Tuesday," and the wrong place for a password or an account number.

PART 6

Everyday Jobs, Start to Finish

A grocery list the two of you share, scanning a receipt or a medical form so it's there when you need it, and why your passwords belong somewhere else.

CHAPTER 23

A Shared Grocery List That Works on Both Phones

This is the job most people want a notes app for: one grocery list that both of you can add to, from anywhere, and check off in the store. Here's the whole thing, start to finish.

Step 1: pick the right app for your household

If…	Use	Why
You both have an iPhone, iPad or Mac	**Apple Notes**	Already on both phones; sharing is built in (Chapter 10).
One of you has Android, or you're not sure	**Google Keep**	Keep sharing works between iPhone, Android and computers (Chapter 18).
You both have Samsung Galaxy phones	**Google Keep** is simplest	Keep's sharing is the easiest to set up and works if either of you changes phones later.

Step 2: make the list once

1. Make a checklist (Apple Notes, Chapter 6) or a list (Keep, Chapter 16) called "Groceries."
2. Add the things you buy most weeks. It's fine if it's long.
3. **Pin** it so it's always at the top (Chapter 7 for Apple Notes, Chapter 17 for Keep).

Step 3: share it

1. **Apple Notes:** open the list, tap **Share**, choose **Collaborate** with **Can make changes**, and send the invitation by Messages.
2. **Google Keep:** open the list, tap the **Action** menu (three dots), tap **Collaborator**, add the person's email address and tap **Save**.
3. Ask the other person to open the invitation on their phone. Check that the list now shows on both phones.

Step 4: use it

- At home: whoever notices the coffee is low adds "coffee." It appears on the other phone in a moment.
- In the store: check items off as they go in the cart.
- After the trip: in Apple Notes, use **Uncheck All** to reuse the list, or **Delete Checked** to clear it. In Keep, uncheck the items you'll need again next time.

TIP

If a change doesn't show up

Both phones need an internet connection, Wi-Fi or cellular, for changes to pass back and forth. In a store with poor signal, your checks are saved on your phone and catch up when the signal returns. If the other person still doesn't see the list, check that they accepted the invitation with the account you sent it to.

HEADS UP

Don't both delete it

If the person who started the list deletes it, it disappears for everyone. If you're the one who wants out, remove yourself or just stop using it, rather than deleting the whole list.

CHAPTER 24

Scanning a Receipt or a Medical Form

A phone scan is the easiest filing cabinet you'll ever own. A receipt for the new furnace, the warranty card for the refrigerator, your insurance card, the list of medicines from the hospital: scan it once and it's in your pocket whenever someone asks.

How to scan, by app

App	How to scan
Apple Notes (iPhone or iPad)	In a note, tap the **Attachment** button (paper clip) > **Scan Documents**. Full steps are in Chapter 8.
Google Drive (iPhone or Android)	Tap **Add** (the plus sign) > **Scan** (or **Camera**), then save it as a PDF. My Google Drive manual has the full steps.
Google Keep	Take a photo in a note (Chapter 19). It's a picture rather than a cleaned-up scan, but it's fine for a receipt.

Good habits for scans

1. **Lay it flat** in good light, on a dark surface, so the phone can find the edges.
2. **Name it clearly**: "Furnace receipt, Oct 2026" beats "Scan 14."
3. **Keep like with like**: an Apple Notes folder or a Keep label called "Receipts" or "Medical."
4. **Front and back**: scan both sides of an insurance card. Most scanners let you add a second page before you save.
5. **Keep the paper** when it matters. A scan is a handy copy, not a replacement for an original will, title or tax document.

Medical forms and private papers

A scan of your medication list or a doctor's form is exactly the sort of thing that's useful at an appointment. It's also private. Here's how to keep it safe in Apple Notes:

- Apple says a note with **scanned documents** can be locked, so scan the form into its own note, then lock it (Chapter 11).
- A note with a **PDF**, **audio** or **video** attached, or with **tags**, can't be locked. If Lock is missing, that's the reason.
- Don't share a folder that holds medical scans.

STAY SAFE

Papers not to keep in a notes app

Some papers are better kept in a locked drawer, not on your phone: your **Social Security card**, a full **credit card** front and back, **bank account and PIN** details, and anything with a password on it. If your phone or account were ever taken over, these are what a thief wants most. For important ID that you really need on the go, a locked note or a password manager's secure notes is the place.

TIP

For the executor folder

If you're making a list of accounts and papers for your family or executor, write *where* things are ("the will is in the fire safe; the lawyer is Smith & Co.") rather than copying every number into a note.

CHAPTER 25

Passwords Belong in a Password Manager

It's very common to keep a note called "Passwords." I understand why: it's right there, and it beats the sticky note on the monitor. But a notes app isn't built for passwords, and there's a free tool on your phone that is.

Why a notes app is the wrong place

- Anyone who picks up your unlocked phone or iPad can open an ordinary note.
- Notes are easy to **share by mistake**, for example by adding the wrong note to a shared folder.
- Notes sync to every device you sign in to, including an old iPad in the drawer or a shared family computer.
- A notes app can't **fill in** a password for you, so you end up copying and pasting, or reading it aloud.
- A note won't warn you that a password was leaked or used on a fake website.

What to use instead

You have…	Free password manager that's already there
iPhone, iPad or Mac	Apple's **Passwords** app
Android phone, or Chrome on any computer	**Google Password Manager**, at passwords.google.com or in Chrome
A mix of devices	Either of those, or a separate app such as Bitwarden or 1Password (check current prices; Bitwarden has a free plan)

Moving your passwords out of a note

1. Open your password manager (on an iPhone, the **Passwords** app).
2. Tap the **plus sign** to add a new password. Type the website, your user name and the password from your note. Save.
3. Do the same for each account. Start with your email, bank and Apple or Google account.
4. Once they're all in, delete the passwords note, then empty it from Recently Deleted or Trash too.

TIP

What about the account numbers?

A **locked** Apple note (Chapter 11) is a reasonable place for things like a library card number or a list of which bank holds which account. Password managers also have a place for secure notes. Just keep the actual passwords in the password manager.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why it's worth the half hour

Once your passwords are in a password manager, your phone fills them in for you, warns you about weak or leaked ones, and they're protected by your Face ID or fingerprint. My Passwords and Password Managers guide walks through it in detail.

PART 7

Lost Notes, New Phones and Backups

Finding a note that's gone missing, bringing a deleted one back, taking your notes to a new phone or a different app, and keeping a copy of the ones that matter.

CHAPTER 26

Finding a Lost or Deleted Note

Take a breath. A note that seems to have vanished is usually just somewhere you aren't looking. Work down this checklist in order; most people find it by step 3.

The checklist

1. **Search for it.** Type one word you're sure was in the note into the search box at the top of the app. Search looks in every folder or label at once.
2. **Check the folder list.** In Apple Notes, tap **Back** until you see all your folders and accounts (iCloud, On My iPhone, Gmail). The note may be in another folder or account. In Keep, open the **Menu** and look under each label.
3. **Check Archive (Keep).** In Keep, an archived note disappears from the main screen. Open **Menu** > **Archive**.
4. **Check the trash.** Apple Notes: **Recently Deleted** folder. Keep: **Menu** > **Trash**. Samsung Notes: **Menu** > **Trash**. OneNote: **History** > **Notebook Recycle Bin**.
5. **Check your other devices and the web.** Look at icloud.com (Apple), keep.google.com (Keep) or onenote.com (OneNote) on a computer. If the note is there, the problem is your phone's sync, not the note.
6. **Check you're signed in to the right account.** If you have two Google Accounts or used a different Apple Account on an old phone, your notes may be in the other one.

How long deleted notes wait

App	Where deleted notes go	How long
Apple Notes	Recently Deleted folder	30 days
Google Keep	Trash	7 days
OneNote	Notebook Recycle Bin	60 days (pages and sections)
Samsung Notes	Trash	A limited time; check soon

Bring back an Apple note

1. In Notes, tap **Back** until you see the list of folders, then tap **Recently Deleted**.
2. Tap **Edit** at the top right and tap the note you want.
3. Tap **Move** and choose a folder, such as **Notes**. It's back where it belongs.

On a computer you can also do this at **icloud.com/notes**: open **Recently Deleted**, select the note and choose **Recover**.

Bring back a Keep note

1. Open Keep and tap the **Menu** (three lines at the top left).
2. Tap **Trash** (on some phones it's called **Bin**).
3. Tap the note to open it, then tap the **Action** menu (three dots) and tap **Restore**.

HEADS UP

Emptying the trash is for keeps

Once a note is deleted from Recently Deleted or Trash, the app can't bring it back. If a note matters, don't empty the trash until you've found it.

TIP

Notes gone from one device only

If notes are missing on your phone but are fine at icloud.com or keep.google.com, they're safe. Check that the app is still syncing (Chapter 14 for Apple Notes) and that the phone has an internet connection.

CHAPTER 27

Taking Your Notes to a New Phone

Good news: if your notes are syncing online, moving them to a new phone is mostly a matter of signing in. The one thing to do **before** you trade in or give away the old phone is make sure every note is really in the online account.

Moving…	What to do
iPhone to a new iPhone	Sign in to the new iPhone with the **same Apple Account** and make sure **Notes** is turned on under Settings > your name > iCloud. Your iCloud notes appear by themselves. Notes in **On My iPhone** only come across if you restore a backup or move them to iCloud first.
Android to a new Android	Sign in with the **same Google Account** and open Keep. Your notes are there.
Galaxy to a new Galaxy	Sign in to your **Samsung account** and turn on sync in Samsung Notes, or use Samsung's Smart Switch when you set up the new phone.
Any phone, OneNote	Install OneNote and sign in with your Microsoft account. Your notebooks come back from OneDrive.

Before you hand over the old phone

1. On a computer, open icloud.com, keep.google.com or onenote.com and check that your important notes are there.
2. On the old iPhone, look for any notes still under **On My iPhone** and move them to an iCloud folder.
3. Only then erase the old phone. My iPhone and Android manuals cover erasing a phone safely.

HEADS UP

Switching between iPhone and Android

Apple Notes doesn't run on Android, and Samsung Notes doesn't run on an iPhone. If you're changing to a different kind of phone, read the next chapter first: you'll want to move your notes to an app that works on both, or copy them out.

CHAPTER 28

Moving Notes Between Apps

There isn't one button that moves everything from Apple Notes into Google Keep, or the other way. For most people that's fine, because only a handful of notes really matter. Here are the honest options.

For a few notes: copy and paste

1. Open the note in the old app. Touch and hold a word, choose **Select All**, then **Copy**.
2. Open the new app, start a new note, touch and hold in it and choose **Paste**.
3. Check it came across, then move on to the next one. Photos may need to be added again.

Out of Apple Notes

- **Export as Markdown:** open the note, tap **Share**, then **Export as Markdown** (if you don't see it, tap **View More**). This makes a plain text file most notes apps can read.
- **Save as a PDF:** open the note, tap **Share** > **Markup**, then **Done**, to save a PDF copy you can keep in Files or email to yourself. Only the first page of a multi-page scan comes along.
- **Print it:** tap **Share** > **Print** for a paper copy.
- **On an Android phone or a Windows PC:** you can still read and copy your Apple notes at **icloud.com**.

Out of Google Keep

Google lets you download a copy of all your Keep notes with **Google Takeout**. It's best done on a computer.

1. On a computer, go to **takeout.google.com** and sign in.
2. Click **Deselect all**, then scroll down and tick **Keep**.
3. Click **Next step**, choose to have a download link emailed to you, and create the export.
4. When the email arrives, download the file and open it. It includes your notes, lists, pictures, drawings and recordings, plus their colors and labels. Deleted notes aren't included.

TIP

Let it be two apps for a while

When you switch phones, it's perfectly fine to keep reading your old notes at icloud.com or keep.google.com, and start new notes in the new app. Move the old ones over as you need them.

CHAPTER 29

Backups: Keeping a Copy of What Matters

Here's something that surprises people: **syncing isn't the same as a backup**. Sync keeps every device the same. So if you delete a note on your phone, sync deletes it from your iPad and the website too. The trash folder is your safety net, and only for a limited time.

What already protects you

App	Built-in protection
Apple Notes	iCloud sync, plus Recently Deleted for 30 days. Notes in **On My iPhone** are protected only by your iPhone backup.
Google Keep	Your Google Account, plus Trash for 7 days.
Samsung Notes	Samsung Cloud sync when it's on, plus Trash.
OneNote	OneDrive, plus the Notebook Recycle Bin for 60 days. OneNote for Windows also keeps automatic backups for two weeks.

A simple backup habit

For the handful of notes you'd hate to lose, such as the medication list, the house list or Mom's recipes, keep a second copy somewhere else, a few times a year:

- **Apple Notes:** save the note as a PDF or export it as Markdown (Chapter 28) and keep it in Files, iCloud Drive or Google Drive.
- **Google Keep:** run a Google Takeout of Keep (Chapter 28) and save the file on your computer.
- **Anything:** print it. A printed medication list in the kitchen drawer works when the phone is dead.

STAY SAFE

Never turn off sync to "stop" a deletion

If notes start disappearing, don't switch sync off and on hoping to stop it. That can remove notes from the phone. Instead, check the trash and the website first (Chapter 26), and call for help if something still looks wrong.

PART 8

Scams, Privacy, Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

The tricks that use your notes and accounts as bait, keeping private notes private, an honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary.

CHAPTER 30

Notes Scams and Privacy

A notes app itself is safe. Scammers are after the **account** behind it, your Apple Account, Google Account or Microsoft account, because that same account holds your email, photos and passwords. These are the tricks worth knowing.

SCAM ALERT

"Your storage is full, your notes will be deleted"

An email or text says your iCloud or Google storage is full and your notes or photos will be erased unless you click a link and pay or "upgrade." The link leads to a fake sign-in page. Don't click. Check for yourself: on an iPhone, open **Settings** > your name > **iCloud**; for Google, type **one.google.com** into your browser.

SCAM ALERT

A shared note or document from a stranger

Scammers use real sharing features to send a note, list or document that says you've won something, owe money or must "verify" your account, with a link or phone number. Because the invitation comes through Google or Apple, it can look genuine. If you don't know the person, don't open the link or call the number. Delete it, or remove yourself from the shared note.

SCAM ALERT

The caller who wants a code or a look at your notes

Someone phones claiming to be Apple, Google, Microsoft, your bank or "tech support" and asks you to read out a code that just arrived, or to open your notes and read them a password. Real companies don't do this. Microsoft says it doesn't make unsolicited support calls, and Apple advises contacting it directly yourself. A code sent to your phone is for you alone. Hang up.

HEADS UP

Copycat notes apps

App stores have plenty of "notes" and "scanner" apps that push ads or ask for a weekly subscription. You don't need any of them: Apple Notes, Google Keep, Samsung Notes and OneNote are free. Check the maker before you install anything (Chapter 3).

Already clicked or typed your password?

1. Don't panic. From a device you trust, change the password of the account you typed it into (Apple, Google or Microsoft).
2. If you gave out a card number, call your bank using the number on the back of your card.
3. Forward Apple-themed phishing emails to **reportphishing@apple.com**, and report fraud at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.
4. If you let someone onto your computer, have it checked. Remote-control software may still be on it.

Keeping private notes private

- **Lock** the few notes that are truly private (Chapter 11), and keep passwords in a password manager (Chapter 25).
- **Check what you share.** In Apple Notes, shared notes show a person icon; in Keep, collaborators' pictures appear at the bottom of the note. Now and then, look and remove anyone who no longer needs it.
- **Mind shared devices.** A family iPad signed in to your Apple Account shows all your notes. Give grandchildren their own account, or sign out of Notes on devices you don't control.
- **Sign out** of icloud.com, keep.google.com or onenote.com when you use someone else's computer.
- **Before selling a phone**, check your notes are online (Chapter 27), then erase it.

GOOD TO KNOW

What about AI features?

Newer phones offer to summarize notes or recordings with Apple Intelligence or Google's Gemini. These are optional. If you'd rather not use them on private notes, simply don't tap the summary or Gemini buttons.

CHAPTER 31

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle your notes on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry, so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Notes have gone missing** and the checklist in Chapter 26 didn't find them. Don't keep trying things; some steps can make it worse.
- **Moving to a new phone**, especially from iPhone to Android or back, with years of notes to bring along.
- **Setting up a shared list** between your phone and a spouse's or helper's, when one of you has an iPhone and the other doesn't.
- **Getting passwords out of a note** and into a password manager, safely, in one sitting.
- **A forgotten Notes password**, to sort out what can and can't be done.
- **A message, call or shared note you're not sure about.** Ask before you click or call.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace: no rushing, no talking down, and no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money. I serve Portage County, Ohio, and I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. Help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. If I'm with another customer, my AI receptionist, Sophie, will answer and make sure I get back to you. No question is too small.

Thank you for letting me help you make sense of your notes. Now your lists, receipts and reminders are in one place you trust, and you know how to get them back.

— Bill

CHAPTER 32

Your Notes Apps Cheat-Sheet

Print just this page and keep it near your phone. The whole guide, boiled down.

Where things are

I want	Go here
Apple Notes on any computer	**icloud.com** > Notes
Google Keep on any computer	**keep.google.com**
OneNote on any computer	**onenote.com**
Windows Sticky Notes on the web	**onenote.com/stickynotes**
Apple Notes settings	Settings > Apps > Notes
Is Apple Notes syncing?	Settings > your name > iCloud > Notes
Download all Keep notes	**takeout.google.com** > Keep

Everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Make a checklist (Apple)	In a note, tap the **Checklist** button.
Make a list (Keep)	**New list** (iPhone) or **Create** > **List** (Android).
Share a note (Apple)	**Share** > **Collaborate** > Can make changes.
Share a note (Keep)	**Action** (three dots) > **Collaborator**.
Scan a paper (Apple)	**Attachment** (paper clip) > **Scan Documents**.
Lock a note (Apple)	**More** (three dots) > **Lock**.
Get a deleted note back	Apple: Recently Deleted (30 days). Keep: Trash (7 days). OneNote: Recycle Bin (60 days).

Keep handy

Item	
My notes app	_____
Account it uses (email)	_____

Item	
Who I share lists with	_____
Where my password manager is	_____

Safety, in three lines

- Passwords go in a password manager, not a note.
- Never click a "storage full" link or read a code to a caller. Check Settings yourself.
- Before emptying the trash or erasing a phone, make sure the notes you need are safe online.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You know how to write, list, share, scan, lock, find and move your notes. When you'd like a hand, call (330) 200-8042.