BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Older iPhones with a Home Button

Touch ID, the Home button, updates, batteries and hand-me-downs — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for every Home-button iPhone owner

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone SE, 8, 7 & 6s · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to the iPhones with a round Home button on the front: the iPhone SE (all three generations), the iPhone 8 and 8 Plus, the iPhone 7 and 7 Plus, and the iPhone 6s and 6s Plus. It explains Touch ID, every Home-button move, which models still get updates, how to set up a hand-me-down safely, the battery, carriers, and an honest word on when it's time to upgrade. Read it in any order and at your own pace.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Your Home-Button iPhone

Which model you have, the buttons, charging, Touch ID and your passcode. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you're holding an iPhone with a round button at the bottom of the screen, this guide is for **you**. Maybe it's the phone you've had for years and like just fine. Maybe a son, a daughter or a grandchild handed it down when they got something newer. Either way, you have a capable little phone, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. I've spent 30+ years helping people make sense of their technology, and I serve folks right here in Portage County, Ohio. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain things at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, and with no jargon left unexplained.

Who this guide is for

Every iPhone in this guide has a **Home button** and **Touch ID**, the fingerprint sensor built into that button. That covers the **iPhone SE** (first, second and third generation), the **iPhone 8** and **8 Plus**, the **iPhone 7** and **7 Plus**, and the **iPhone 6s** and **6s Plus**. Newer iPhones without a Home button work differently; Bill's iPhone manual covers those.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this guide does for you

It shows you exactly how a Home-button iPhone works, tells you honestly whether your model still gets security updates, walks you through setting up a hand-me-down so it's truly yours, and helps you decide whether to keep it, fix the battery, or move on to something newer.

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

Tapping around, opening apps and pressing the Home button to see what happens is how everyone learns. And on these phones there's a wonderful safety net: **press the Home button once and you're back on the Home Screen**, no matter where you were. It works every time.

I'll be honest where it matters, though. A few steps in this guide are serious, like erasing a phone or signing out of an account. When we get to those, I'll slow down and tell you exactly what happens, so nothing surprises you.

You're never stuck alone

This guide will carry you a long way. If you get stuck, call or text me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together. There's no such thing as a silly question.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Which Home-Button iPhone Do You Have?

Apple made several iPhones with a Home button, and they look a lot alike. Knowing exactly which one you have matters, because it decides which updates you get, what accessories fit, and how a few buttons work. The good news: your iPhone will simply tell you.

Let your iPhone tell you

1. Open **Settings** (the gray gear icon).
2. Tap **General**, then tap **About**.
3. Look at the line called **Model Name**. It will say something like **iPhone SE (2nd generation)** or **iPhone 8**.
4. Next to **Model Number** you'll see a part number. Tap it once and it changes to a model number that starts with the letter **A**, such as **A2595** for a US iPhone SE (3rd generation).

The Home-button family at a glance

Model	Came out	Home button	Headphone jack
iPhone 6s / 6s Plus	2015	Physically clicks	Yes
iPhone SE (1st generation)	2016	Physically clicks	Yes
iPhone 7 / 7 Plus	2016	Solid button (a tap you feel)	No
iPhone 8 / 8 Plus	2017	Solid button (a tap you feel)	No
iPhone SE (2nd generation)	2020	Solid button (a tap you feel)	No
iPhone SE (3rd generation)	2022	Solid button (a tap you feel)	No

Telling the look-alikes apart

- **The small SE (1st generation)** is the smallest of the group, with squared-off edges and a 4-inch screen.
- **iPhone 8 and the SE (2nd and 3rd generation)** look almost identical from the front. The Model Name line in Settings is the surest way to tell them apart.
- **The Plus models** (6s Plus, 7 Plus, 8 Plus) are noticeably bigger, with a larger screen that many people find easier to read.

- **Only the iPhone SE (3rd generation)** in this family can use 5G cellular networks. All the others use 4G LTE.

> **TIP**
>
> **Write it down**
>
> Once you know your model, write the Model Name in the "Keep this handy" table in Chapter 36, *Your Older iPhone Cheat-Sheet*. You'll need it when you look up updates, buy a case, or ask a repair shop for a price.

CHAPTER 3

The Home Button & the Other Buttons

These iPhones have only a handful of physical controls, and each one has a simple job. Once you know them, you can do almost anything with a press or two.

The Home button

The round button under the screen is your **Home button**. Press it once to wake the phone or to go back to the Home Screen from anywhere. It also reads your fingerprint, which we'll set up in Chapter 5, *Touch ID: Your Fingerprint Key*.

On the **iPhone 6s** and the **SE (1st generation)**, the button physically moves and clicks. On the **iPhone 7, 8, and SE (2nd and 3rd generation)** it doesn't move at all. It senses your press and gives a little tap you feel, which feels just like a click. Because that solid button needs to sense your press, it doesn't respond while the phone is turned off.

Control	What it does
Side button (or top button)	Press to lock the screen or wake the phone. Hold it to turn the phone off. On the SE (1st generation) it's on the top edge; on the others it's on the right side.
Volume up and down	The two buttons on the left side. Press to make calls, music and videos louder or softer.
Ring/Silent switch	The little switch above the volume buttons. Push it toward the back (you'll see orange) to silence ringing and alerts; push it toward the screen to turn sound back on.
Lightning port	The charging opening on the bottom edge.
Headphone jack	The round hole for wired headphones, on the iPhone 6s and SE (1st generation) only.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why my calls are silent

If calls suddenly don't ring, look for orange on the Ring/Silent switch on the left edge. That switch silences the ringer no matter what else you set. Flip it back toward the screen and the ring returns.

TIP

No headphone jack?

For the iPhone 7 and later in this family, wired headphones need either a Lightning plug or a small Lightning-to-headphone adapter. Wireless earbuds such as AirPods also work.

CHAPTER 4

Charging, Turning Off & Restarting

Every iPhone in this guide charges through the same kind of plug, called **Lightning**. That's worth knowing, because newer iPhones and most new gadgets use a different plug called USB-C. If a family member hands you a charger, check that the small end is the flat, narrow Lightning plug.

Charging

- Plug the Lightning cable into the bottom of the phone and the other end into a wall adapter or computer.
- A lightning-bolt symbol appears next to the battery icon at the top of the screen while it charges.
- The **iPhone 8, 8 Plus and SE (2nd and 3rd generation)** can also charge by simply resting on a Qi wireless charging pad. The 7, 6s and SE (1st generation) can't.

Turning it off and on

1. Press and hold the **side button** (or top button on the SE 1st generation) until **slide to power off** appears. On the iPhone 8, 8 Plus and SE (2nd and 3rd generation), holding the side button can also bring up Emergency SOS options; just drag the **power off** slider.
2. Drag the slider to the right. The screen goes dark in a few seconds.
3. To turn it back on, press and hold the same button until you see the Apple logo, then let go.
4. You can also turn it off from **Settings > General > Shut Down**.

When it freezes: the force restart

If the screen freezes and nothing responds, a **force restart** usually fixes it. It doesn't erase anything. The button combination depends on your model:

Your model	Force restart
iPhone 8, 8 Plus, SE (2nd and 3rd gen)	Quickly press and let go of **volume up**, then **volume down**, then press and hold the **side button** until the Apple logo appears.
iPhone 7 and 7 Plus	Press and hold **volume down** and the **side button** together until the Apple logo appears.
iPhone 6s, 6s Plus, SE (1st gen)	Press and hold the **Home button** and the **side (or top) button** together until the Apple logo appears.

HEADS UP

Heat is the enemy of an older battery

Charge where air can move, not under a pillow or on a sunny dashboard. If the phone gets hot while charging, take it out of a thick case. Heat ages a battery faster than anything else. There's more on battery care in Chapter 27, *Getting More from an Older Battery*.

CHAPTER 5

Touch ID: Your Fingerprint Key

Touch ID lets your fingerprint unlock the phone instead of typing your passcode every time. The sensor is built into the Home button. It's quick, it's private, and once it's set up you'll barely think about it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What Touch ID does for you

One touch unlocks your phone, approves App Store downloads, fills in saved passwords and pays with Apple Pay, all without typing a code in a store line or with shaky hands.

Adding a fingerprint

1. First make sure you have a passcode. Touch ID won't work without one (see Chapter 6, *Your Passcode*).
2. Open **Settings** and tap **Touch ID & Passcode**. Type your passcode.
3. Tap **Add a Fingerprint**.
4. Rest your finger on the Home button, **without pressing**, until you feel a quick vibration or the screen asks you to lift. Lift and rest it again, over and over, moving it slightly each time.
5. When asked to **adjust your grip**, use the edges of your fingertip so the sensor learns the outer parts.
6. Tap **Continue** when it's done.

Good habits

- You can add up to **five fingerprints**. Many people add both thumbs and a forefinger, so either hand works.
- A trusted helper's finger can be added too, but remember that anyone with a saved fingerprint can open the phone.
- Rename a fingerprint by tapping it in the list (for example, "Right thumb"). Swipe left on it to delete it.
- In the same screen, choose what Touch ID is used for: **iPhone Unlock**, **iTunes & App Store**, **Wallet & Apple Pay** and **Password AutoFill**.

When Touch ID won't read your finger

- Make sure your finger and the button are **clean and dry**. Lotion, water and sweat get in the way.
- Cover the whole button with the pad of your finger, touching the metal ring around it.
- Dry or worn fingertips can be harder to read. Try enrolling the same finger a second time as another fingerprint.
- The phone asks for your passcode instead after a restart, after 48 hours without unlocking, or after several failed tries. That's normal and is there to protect you.

TIP

Unlock without pressing

If pressing the button to unlock feels like work, you can have the phone open just by resting your finger on it. That setting, **Rest Finger to Open**, is in Chapter 13, *Tuning the Home Button to Suit Your Hands*.

CHAPTER 6

Your Passcode

Your **passcode** is the number you type to unlock the phone. It's also the master key behind Touch ID, Apple Pay and some of the phone's strongest protections. It matters more than most people realize.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why a passcode matters

With a passcode on, the phone scrambles (encrypts) what's stored on it. A lost phone with a passcode is a locked box; a lost phone without one is an open diary of your photos, messages and accounts.

Setting or changing it

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Touch ID & Passcode**.
2. If you have no passcode yet, tap **Turn Passcode On**. If you do, tap **Change Passcode** and type the old one.
3. Type a new **six-digit** passcode, then type it again to confirm.
4. Tap **Passcode Options** if you'd rather use a four-digit code or letters, but six digits is the sensible default.

Choosing a good one

- Avoid birthdays, anniversaries, addresses and patterns like 123456 or 111111.
- Pick something you'll remember, and write it down somewhere safe at home, not in the phone case.
- Don't share it with anyone who calls, texts or emails asking for it. Apple won't ask for it that way.

HEADS UP

Too many wrong tries

After several wrong passcodes in a row, the iPhone makes you wait longer and longer before trying again. Keep going wrong and it can lock you out entirely, and getting back in means erasing the phone. If you've forgotten your passcode, stop guessing and call for help.

GOOD TO KNOW

Passcode versus Apple Account password

They are two different things. The **passcode** unlocks this one phone. Your **Apple Account password** unlocks your Apple account everywhere, including iCloud and the App Store. There's more about the account in Chapter 24, *Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup*.

PART 2

The Home-Button Moves

No swiping up from the bottom to go home: on these phones the Home button does the work. Here's every press, double-press and triple-press, and how to tune them to suit your hands.

CHAPTER 7

Every Home-Button Move in One Place

If you've ever watched someone use a newer iPhone, you've seen them swipe up from the bottom of the screen to go home or switch apps. **Your phone doesn't work that way.** On a Home-button iPhone, the button does those jobs. This is the single biggest difference, and the reason instructions written for newer phones can be confusing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the Home button does for you

A real button you can feel is easier for many people than an invisible swipe. One press always takes you home, so you're never more than a press away from familiar ground.

I want to…	Do this
Go to the Home Screen	Press the Home button once.
Wake the phone	Press the Home button or the side button.
Unlock	Rest your finger on the Home button (Touch ID) and press, or type your passcode.
See your open apps	**Double-click** the Home button (two quick presses). See Chapter 8, *Going Home & Switching Between Apps*.
Bring the top of the screen down	**Lightly double-tap** the Home button (touch, don't press). See Chapter 10, *Reachability: Bring the Top of the Screen Down*.
Talk to Siri	**Press and hold** the Home button. See Chapter 11, *Siri: Press and Hold the Home Button*.
Accessibility Shortcut	**Triple-click** the Home button. See Chapter 12, *The Triple-Click: Your Accessibility Shortcut*.
Open Control Center	Swipe **up** from the bottom edge of the screen. See Chapter 9, *Control Center & Notifications*.
See your notifications	Swipe **down** from the top edge of the screen.
Search your phone	On the Home Screen, swipe **down** from the middle of the screen.
Take a screenshot	Press the Home button and the side (or top) button at the same time. See Chapter 14, *Screenshots, Emergency SOS & Other Button Combos*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reading instructions for newer iPhones

When a website or a family member says "swipe up from the bottom to go home," that's for a Face ID iPhone. On yours, press the Home button instead. When they say "swipe up and hold to see your apps," double-click the Home button instead.

TIP

Press, double-click, triple-click

Most Home-button tricks come down to how many times you press. If double- and triple-clicks don't register because you're pressing a little slowly, you can give yourself more time. See Chapter 13, *Tuning the Home Button to Suit Your Hands*.

CHAPTER 8

Going Home & Switching Between Apps

When you open an app and then press the Home button, the app doesn't close. It waits in the background, right where you left it. The **App Switcher** shows you those waiting apps, so you can hop back to one without hunting for its icon.

Opening the App Switcher

1. **Double-click** the Home button: two quick presses, like a double-click on a computer mouse.
2. Your recent apps appear as large cards. Swipe **left or right** to look through them.
3. Tap a card to jump straight back into that app.
4. Press the Home button once to leave the App Switcher without choosing anything.

Closing an app that's misbehaving

1. Double-click the Home button to open the App Switcher.
2. Find the app that's stuck or acting strangely.
3. Put your finger on its card and **swipe it up** off the top of the screen. It's closed.
4. Open it again from the Home Screen. A fresh start often fixes the problem.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need to close apps every day

It's tempting to swipe away every card to "save battery," but the iPhone manages waiting apps well on its own. Close an app only when it's frozen or misbehaving. Reopening apps from scratch all day can actually use more battery, not less.

TIP

The double-click on the Lock Screen

If you double-click the Home button while the phone is **locked**, your Apple Pay cards may appear instead. That's a Wallet setting, not a mistake. Press the Home button once to go back.

CHAPTER 9

Control Center & Notifications

Control Center is a panel of quick switches: Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, the flashlight, screen brightness, volume and more. On a Home-button iPhone you open it from the **bottom** of the screen, which is the opposite of newer models.

Opening and closing Control Center

1. Put your finger on the very bottom edge of the screen, just above the Home button.
2. Slide it **up**. Control Center rises into view.
3. Tap a switch to turn it on or off. Touch and hold a tile, such as brightness, for more choices.
4. To close it, press the Home button, tap an empty spot, or swipe back down.

Handy Control Center tiles

Tile	What it does
Flashlight	Turns the camera light on and off. Touch and hold it to pick a brightness.
Brightness slider	Slide up or down to make the screen brighter or dimmer.
Airplane mode	Turns off cellular and wireless radios in one tap. Tap again to turn them back on.
Do Not Disturb or Focus	Quiets calls and alerts, for example overnight.
Screen rotation lock	Stops the screen turning sideways when you tilt the phone.

Notifications

Messages, missed calls and app alerts collect in one place. Swipe **down from the top edge** of the screen to see them, and press the Home button to close the list. Tap a notification to open it, or swipe left on it to clear it.

TIP

Wi-Fi and Bluetooth taps are temporary

Tapping Wi-Fi or Bluetooth off in Control Center only disconnects for a while; they come back on their own later. To turn them fully off, use **Settings > Wi-Fi** or **Settings > Bluetooth**.

CHAPTER 10

Reachability: Bring the Top of the Screen Down

On the bigger Plus models especially, the top of the screen can be a long stretch for your thumb. **Reachability** slides the whole screen down halfway, so the top is within reach of the hand that's holding the phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What Reachability does for you

You can tap a back button or a search box at the top of the screen one-handed, while your other hand holds a cane, a grocery bag or a railing.

Turning it on

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Accessibility**.
2. Tap **Touch**.
3. Turn on **Reachability** (the switch turns green).

Using it

1. **Lightly double-tap** the Home button. Touch it twice, the way you'd tap a shoulder, without pressing it in.
2. The top half of the screen slides down toward your thumb.
3. Tap what you need. To put the screen back, tap the empty area at the top or just wait a moment.

HEADS UP

Tap, don't click

The difference between a **double-tap** (Reachability) and a **double-click** (the App Switcher) is just how hard you press. If the App Switcher keeps appearing when you want Reachability, touch the button more lightly. If Reachability keeps popping up by accident, you can turn it off in the same place.

CHAPTER 11

Siri: Press and Hold the Home Button

Siri is the iPhone's voice assistant. You ask a question or give an instruction out loud, and it answers or does it. On a Home-button iPhone, the button is Siri's doorbell.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What Siri does for you

Calling someone, setting a reminder to take a pill, or checking the weather becomes a matter of saying it, no tiny buttons or typing required.

Talking to Siri

1. **Press and hold** the Home button. Keep holding until you see Siri appear at the bottom of the screen.
2. Let go and speak naturally: "Call my daughter," "Remind me to take my pill at 8 tonight," or "What's the weather tomorrow?"
3. Siri answers on screen and, usually, out loud.
4. Press the Home button once to put Siri away.

If Siri doesn't come when you hold the button

- Siri may be turned off. Look in **Settings > Siri** (on older versions, **Settings > Siri & Search**) and turn on the option to press the Home button for Siri.
- On iPhones with newer software, the option is also in **Settings > Accessibility > Home Button**, where **Press and Hold to Speak** controls what a long press does.
- You can also set Siri to listen for "Hey Siri" in the same Siri settings, so you don't need the button at all.

GOOD TO KNOW

No Apple Intelligence on these phones

You may hear about Apple Intelligence and a smarter Siri. Those features need much newer iPhones; none of the Home-button models can run them. Your Siri still handles calls, reminders, timers, texts and everyday questions.

CHAPTER 12

The Triple-Click: Your Accessibility Shortcut

Apple builds in features that make the iPhone easier to see, hear and touch. The **Accessibility Shortcut** lets you turn your favorite one on or off instantly with a **triple-click** of the Home button: three quick presses.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the triple-click does for you

Your most helpful feature is always three presses away, whether that's a magnifying glass for a pill bottle, a zoomed-in screen, or a reading voice.

Setting it up

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Accessibility**.
2. Scroll to the bottom and tap **Accessibility Shortcut**.
3. Tap one or more features to check them. Good choices include **Magnifier**, **Zoom**, **Smart Invert** and **Color Filters**.
4. Press the Home button to leave Settings.

Using it

- Triple-click the Home button. If you chose one feature, it turns on (or off) right away.
- If you chose several, a small menu appears; tap the one you want.
- Triple-click again to turn it off.

HEADS UP

Careful with VoiceOver

VoiceOver is a screen reader for people who are blind, and it changes how every tap works. If it gets turned on by accident and the phone starts talking and tapping feels strange, triple-click the Home button again to turn it off. If triple-click isn't set up for it, say to Siri, "Turn off VoiceOver."

CHAPTER 13

Tuning the Home Button to Suit Your Hands

If double- and triple-clicks don't always work for you, or pressing the button to unlock feels like effort, a few settings make the Home button more forgiving.

Give yourself more time between clicks

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Accessibility**.
2. Tap **Home Button**.
3. Under **Click Speed**, choose **Slow** or **Slowest**. Your phone gives a small demonstration of each.

Rest Finger to Open

Normally you rest your finger on the button *and* press to unlock. With **Rest Finger to Open** turned on, simply resting a saved finger on the button opens the phone. Find it on the same **Settings > Accessibility > Home Button** screen.

How the click feels (iPhone 7, 8 and SE 2nd and 3rd generation)

The solid Home button on these models makes its "click" with a little vibration, and you can choose how strong it feels: option 1 is the lightest, 3 the firmest. On current software it's listed as Home Button haptic in **Settings > Accessibility > Home Button**; on some older versions you'll find it in **Settings > General > Home Button** instead. Pick one, try it, and press **Done**.

> TIP
>
> **If the Home button stops working**
>
> A Home button can fail with age or a drop. Until it's repaired, **AssistiveTouch** puts a floating on-screen button that can do everything the Home button does. Turn it on in **Settings > Accessibility > Touch > AssistiveTouch**, or ask Siri to "Turn on AssistiveTouch."

CHAPTER 14

Screenshots, Emergency SOS & Other Button Combos

A few useful things happen when you press two buttons together, or one button several times. These are the combinations worth knowing on a Home-button iPhone.

Taking a screenshot

1. Press the **Home button** and the **side button** (top button on the SE 1st generation) at the same time, then let go quickly.
2. The screen flashes white and a small picture appears in the corner.
3. Tap it to mark it up or share it, or ignore it. It's saved in the **Photos** app either way.

Calling for help: Emergency SOS

Your model	How to call for help
iPhone 8, 8 Plus, SE (2nd and 3rd gen)	Press and hold the **side button** and either **volume** button until the Emergency SOS slider appears, then drag it. Keep holding instead and the phone counts down and calls emergency services.
iPhone 7, 6s and SE (1st gen)	Rapidly press the **side (or top) button five times**, then drag the Emergency SOS slider.

STAY SAFE

Set this up before you need it

Open **Settings > Emergency SOS** to see which shortcuts are on for your phone, and add emergency contacts who get a text with your location after an SOS call. Also fill in your **Medical ID** in the Health app so responders can see allergies and medications from the Lock Screen.

GOOD TO KNOW

Locking the screen

One press of the side button locks the screen and puts the phone to sleep. Your iPhone also locks by itself after a minute or two; change how long in **Settings > Display & Brightness > Auto-Lock**.

PART 3

Updates & Security Support

Which Home-button iPhones still get the newest software, which get only occasional security fixes, what that really means for you, and how to stay as protected as your model allows.

CHAPTER 15

Which Models Still Get Updates

Apple keeps improving the iPhone's software, called **iOS**, and gives each yearly edition a number. Each new edition works on fewer older phones. So the most important question about any older iPhone is simple: **how current is the software it can run?** Here's the honest answer for every Home-button model, as of November 2026.

Model	Newest iOS it can run	What that means
iPhone SE (3rd generation)	iOS 27, the current version	Fully supported: new features and regular security updates
iPhone SE (2nd generation)	iOS 27, the current version	Fully supported: new features and regular security updates
iPhone 8 / 8 Plus	iOS 16 (latest: 16.7.16, May 2026)	No new features; only occasional fixes for serious security problems
iPhone 7 / 7 Plus	iOS 15 (latest: 15.8.8, May 2026)	No new features; only occasional fixes for serious security problems
iPhone 6s / 6s Plus	iOS 15 (latest: 15.8.8, May 2026)	No new features; only occasional fixes for serious security problems
iPhone SE (1st generation)	iOS 15 (latest: 15.8.8, May 2026)	No new features; only occasional fixes for serious security problems

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this table does for you

If you have an **iPhone SE (2nd or 3rd generation)**, relax: your phone runs the same current iOS as a brand-new iPhone, with Apple's regular security updates. If you have an **iPhone 8, 7, 6s or SE (1st generation)**, your phone still works, but it's living on older software, and the rest of this part explains how to use it wisely.

Checking which version you have

1. Open **Settings** and tap **General**, then **About**.
2. Look at **iOS Version** (on some versions it says **Software Version**). You'll see a number such as 15.8.8 or 27.
3. Compare it with the table above. If your number is lower than the newest your model can run, update it (see Chapter 17, *Installing Updates Safely*).

GOOD TO KNOW

Apple doesn't announce an end date

Apple doesn't publish how long a model will keep getting updates. Phones on iOS 15 and 16 have still received a few security fixes in 2026, but no one outside Apple knows when the last one will come. Plan as if each one could be the last.

CHAPTER 16

What "No More Updates" Really Means

When an iPhone stops getting the newest iOS, it doesn't stop working. Calls, texts, the camera and your photos carry on just as before. What changes is slower and quieter, and it's worth understanding.

Three things that change over time

- **Security.** Criminals look for weaknesses in phone software. Phones on the current iOS get those holes patched regularly. Phones on iOS 15 and 16 get only the occasional fix for the most serious problems, so smaller holes may stay open.
- **Apps.** App makers eventually require a newer iOS. One day an app you rely on may refuse to update or stop opening (see Chapter 18, *Apps on an Older iPhone*).
- **Websites.** Safari on an older iOS doesn't learn new tricks. Over time, more websites may look odd, load slowly, or warn that your browser is out of date.

Recent examples of fixes for older iPhones

In **March 2026**, Apple released iOS 15.8.7 and iOS 16.7.15 to fix serious flaws in how the phone handles web content, saying the update "brings that fix to devices that cannot update to the latest iOS version." In **May 2026**, iOS 15.8.8 and 16.7.16 fixed a privacy problem with notifications. These are exactly the updates you want to install the day they arrive.

HEADS UP

Older doesn't mean doomed, but it does mean careful

An iPhone 8 or 7 can still be a perfectly good phone for calls, texts, photos and a few trusted apps. Where I'd be more cautious is using it as your main device for banking, shopping and email when a supported phone is an option. The habits in Chapter 30, *Staying Safe on an Older iPhone* help a lot either way.

GOOD TO KNOW

The SE (2nd and 3rd generation) are in a different place

These two run iOS 27 today and get the same security updates as the newest iPhones. Because the SE (2nd generation) came out in 2020, it's reasonable to expect it to be among the next phones Apple drops someday, but Apple hasn't said when.

CHAPTER 17

Installing Updates Safely

Installing the newest update your iPhone can run is the single best thing you can do to keep it safe. It's free, it keeps your photos and apps where they are, and it usually takes 15 to 30 minutes.

Before you start

- Connect to your home **Wi-Fi**.
- Plug the phone into its charger. Updates need plenty of battery.
- Make a fresh backup first. It's rare for an update to go wrong, but a backup means it wouldn't matter (see Chapter 24, *Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup*).

Updating

1. Open **Settings**, tap **General**, then tap **Software Update**.
2. Wait a moment while it checks. If an update is listed, tap **Update Now** or **Download and Install**.
3. Type your passcode if asked and agree to the terms.
4. Leave the phone plugged in. It restarts on its own, shows the Apple logo and a progress bar, then comes back.

Let it update itself

1. In **Settings > General > Software Update**, tap **Automatic Updates**.
2. Turn on the options to download and install updates (the names vary a little by version).
3. Your iPhone will then install updates overnight while it's charging and on Wi-Fi.

HEADS UP

Seeing an offer to upgrade to iOS 26 or 27 on an SE?

On an SE (2nd or 3rd generation), Software Update may show the newest iOS as an upgrade, and sometimes a security update for your current version too. Either keeps you protected. The full upgrade adds new features and takes longer; set aside an evening for it.

SCAM ALERT

Updates only come from Settings

Real iPhone updates arrive only through **Settings > General > Software Update**. A website, text or pop-up that says "Your iOS is out of date, tap here to update" is a scam. Close it and check Settings yourself.

CHAPTER 18

Apps on an Older iPhone

Every app in the App Store lists the oldest iOS it supports. As years pass, app makers raise that bar. On an iPhone stuck at iOS 15 or 16, sooner or later an app you like will stop updating or ask for a newer iOS. Here's how to handle it calmly.

A real example: WhatsApp

WhatsApp, the popular messaging app, has announced that from **November 30, 2026** it will work only on iPhones running **iOS 15.5 or newer**. Every Home-button iPhone in this guide can reach at least iOS 15.8.8, so the fix is simply to update. Phones left on an earlier version of iOS 15 will lose WhatsApp until they're updated.

When an app says it needs a newer iOS

1. First update your iPhone to the newest iOS your model can run (see Chapter 17, *Installing Updates Safely*).
2. Try the App Store again. If you've downloaded the app before, it may offer "the last compatible version"; tap **Download** to accept it.
3. If that doesn't work, check whether the service has a website you can use in Safari instead.
4. For banking and medical apps, call the company and ask which iPhones they still support. Don't download look-alike apps that promise to work on old phones.

HEADS UP

The last compatible version won't stay current

An app frozen at an old version still runs, but it no longer gets that company's fixes either. That's fine for a flashlight or a game; think twice for a banking app.

TIP

A sign it may be time

When the apps you rely on, like your bank, pharmacy or doctor's portal, stop supporting your phone, that's one of the clearest signs it's time to move to a newer model. See Chapter 33, *When It's Time to Upgrade (Honestly)*.

CHAPTER 19

Extra Protections on the SE (2nd & 3rd Generation)

Because the iPhone SE (2nd and 3rd generation) run the current iOS, they get two protections the older Home-button phones can't: **Stolen Device Protection** and **Background Security Improvements**.

Stolen Device Protection

If a thief watches you type your passcode and then steals your phone, they could try to change your Apple Account password. **Stolen Device Protection** blocks that: when you're away from familiar places like home, sensitive changes need your **fingerprint**, not just the passcode, and some need a one-hour wait.

1. Make sure Touch ID is set up (see Chapter 5, *Touch ID: Your Fingerprint Key*) and that **Find My** is on.
2. Open **Settings** and tap **Touch ID & Passcode**. Type your passcode.
3. Scroll down and turn on **Stolen Device Protection**. It may already be on.

Background Security Improvements

Starting with iOS 26.1, Apple can send small security fixes for Safari and other parts of the system **between** regular updates. Check that they install automatically: open **Settings > Privacy & Security > Background Security Improvements** and make sure **Automatically Install** is on.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Why the older models miss out**
>
> Stolen Device Protection needs iOS 17.3 or later, and Background Security Improvements need iOS 26.1 or later. The iPhone 8, 7, 6s and SE (1st generation) can't run those versions, so these protections aren't available on them. That's part of the honest picture in Chapter 33, *When It's Time to Upgrade (Honestly)*.

PART 4

Setting Up a Hand-Me-Down

Passing an iPhone along to a parent, a grandchild or a friend? Here's how to do it so the old owner's life is wiped clean and the new owner's phone is truly theirs.

CHAPTER 20

Before You Hand It Down (for the Giver)

If you're the one **giving** the phone away, a few minutes of preparation protect your photos, messages and accounts, and save the new owner a big headache. Do these steps in order.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your personal information leaves with you, your new phone gets everything from the old one, and the person receiving it gets a clean phone that isn't tied to your account.

1. **Move your things to your new phone first**, or make a fresh iCloud backup (see Chapter 24, *Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup*). Once the old phone is erased, anything not saved elsewhere is gone.
2. If you have an **Apple Watch** paired to this phone, unpair it in the Watch app.
3. **Sign out of your Apple Account**: open **Settings**, tap your name at the top, scroll down and tap **Sign Out**. Type your Apple Account password if asked. This turns off Find My and Activation Lock.
4. **Erase the phone**: **Settings > General > Transfer or Reset iPhone > Erase All Content and Settings**. The full steps are in Chapter 22, *Erasing an iPhone the Right Way*.
5. Take out the **SIM card** if your carrier gave you a new one for your new phone, or ask your carrier what to do with it.
6. Hand it over only after you see the **Hello** screen in several languages. That means it's ready for its new owner.

HEADS UP

Don't just delete your photos and hand it over

Deleting apps or photos one by one isn't enough. Your Apple Account, saved passwords, Apple Pay cards and messages stay behind until you sign out and erase. Always do the full erase.

TIP

Already gave it away without erasing?

Sign in at **icloud.com/find** on a computer, choose the old iPhone, and erase it remotely and remove it from your account. Then change your Apple Account password to be safe.

CHAPTER 21

Checking for Activation Lock

Activation Lock is a theft-protection feature. While an iPhone is still linked to someone's Apple Account with Find My turned on, nobody else can set it up and use it, even after it's been erased. That's wonderful against thieves, and a real problem if a family phone is handed down without being released.

Signs a phone is still locked to someone else

- It shows the previous owner's **passcode screen** or Home Screen. It hasn't been erased yet.
- During setup it shows **Activation Lock** and asks for someone else's Apple Account email and password.
- It says **iPhone Locked to Owner** when it turns on (on iOS 15 and later).

How to clear it

1. If the giver is with you, have them type their Apple Account email and password on the Activation Lock screen, then finish the erase.
2. If they aren't with you, ask them to sign in at **icloud.com/find**, select this iPhone, and remove it from their account. Then restart the phone and set it up again.
3. If the owner has passed away or can't be reached, Apple has an Activation Lock support process that requires proof of ownership. It's worth calling Apple Support directly.

SCAM ALERT

Never pay for a locked phone

A seller who says "it just needs to be unlocked," or offers to send their password later, may be selling a stolen phone. Apple's advice is clear: don't take ownership of a used iPhone until it has been erased and shows the Hello screen. More in Chapter 32, *Buying a Used Home-Button iPhone*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Activation Lock isn't the same as a carrier lock

Activation Lock ties a phone to a **person's Apple Account**. A carrier lock ties a phone to one **cell phone company**. They're separate; Chapter 29, *Will It Work with My Carrier?* explains how to check the carrier side.

CHAPTER 22

Erasing an iPhone the Right Way

Erasing, sometimes called a factory reset, returns the iPhone to the way it left the factory: no accounts, no photos, no apps. It's the only safe way to pass a phone along.

HEADS UP

This is the one step you can't undo

Erasing removes everything on the phone, including photos, messages, contacts and Apple Pay cards. What's already in iCloud stays in iCloud, but anything only on the phone is gone. Back up first if there's any doubt.

1. Make sure the phone is charged or plugged in.
2. Open **Settings** and tap **General**.
3. Scroll to the bottom and tap **Transfer or Reset iPhone**.
4. Tap **Erase All Content and Settings**, then tap **Continue**.
5. Type the phone's passcode, then the Apple Account password if asked. This also turns off Find My and Activation Lock.
6. If the phone uses an **eSIM** (only the SE 2nd and 3rd generation can), you'll be asked whether to erase it too. If the phone is leaving your family for good, ask your carrier first.
7. Wait. The phone restarts, shows the Apple logo, and finally the **Hello** screen.

TIP

Don't know the passcode?

If nobody remembers the passcode, the phone can still be erased using a computer, but the Apple Account password is still needed afterward to get past Activation Lock. This is a good moment to ask for help rather than guess.

GOOD TO KNOW

What erasing does not do

Erasing doesn't change the phone's carrier, doesn't fix a worn battery, and doesn't make an iPhone 8 run a newer iOS than it's able to. It just gives you a clean, safe starting point.

CHAPTER 23

Setting It Up Fresh (for the New Owner)

Once the phone shows **Hello**, it's ready to become yours. Setup takes 15 to 30 minutes. Have your Wi-Fi password handy, and your own Apple Account email and password if you have one.

1. Press the **Home button** to begin and choose your language and country.
2. When asked about **Quick Start**, choose **Set Up Without Another Device** unless you're copying from another iPhone of your own.
3. Join your home **Wi-Fi**.
4. Set up **Touch ID** when offered, then create a six-digit **passcode** you'll remember.
5. On the **Transfer Your Apps & Data** screen, choose **Don't Transfer Anything** for a fresh phone, or **From iCloud Backup** if you're restoring *your own* backup. Never restore the previous owner's backup.
6. Sign in with **your own Apple Account**, or tap the option for having forgotten it or not having one to create one (see Chapter 24, *Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup*).
7. Work through the remaining screens: Location Services, Siri, Screen Time and so on. You can change any of them later in Settings.
8. When the Home Screen appears, go straight to **Settings > General > Software Update** and install anything waiting.

HEADS UP

Don't share an Apple Account between two people

It's tempting to sign the hand-me-down in with the giver's account so purchases carry over. Please don't. Shared accounts mean shared messages, shared photos and a phone the new owner can't fully control. **Family Sharing** is the right way to share purchases and subscriptions between separate accounts.

TIP

Put in the SIM card

Insert the new owner's SIM card (the tray is on the right side; a paper clip opens it) or have the carrier set it up. Calls and texts won't work over the cellular network until the phone has a working line. See Chapter 29, *Will It Work with My Carrier?*.

GOOD TO KNOW

Make it comfortable next

Before you hand the phone over, spend five minutes on Chapter 25, *Making It Comfortable for the New Owner*: bigger text, louder ringer and the new owner's fingerprints. It makes the first week much easier.

CHAPTER 24

Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup

Your **Apple Account** is your membership with Apple. It's what lets you download apps, back up to iCloud, use Find My and receive iMessages. Each person should have their own.

GOOD TO KNOW

Apple ID or Apple Account?

Apple renamed the **Apple ID** to **Apple Account** in 2024. iPhones on iOS 15 and 16, which covers the iPhone 8, 7, 6s and SE (1st generation), never got that update, so their screens still say **Apple ID**. It's the same thing, with the same email and password.

Signing in after setup

1. Open **Settings**. At the top, tap **Sign in to your iPhone** (or **Apple Account** on newer versions).
2. Type your Apple Account email or phone number and password.
3. If you use two-factor authentication, type the six-digit code sent to your trusted phone number or device.

Turning on iCloud Backup

1. Connect to Wi-Fi.
2. Open **Settings**, tap your name, then tap **iCloud**.
3. Tap **iCloud Backup** and turn on **Back Up This iPhone**.
4. Tap **Back Up Now** to make the first backup right away, and stay on Wi-Fi until it finishes.

From then on, the iPhone backs itself up each day while it's charging, locked and on Wi-Fi.

TIP

If iCloud says it's full

Every Apple Account includes 5 GB of free iCloud storage, which fills up fast with photos. In the US, iCloud+ costs **$0.99 a month for 50 GB**, **$2.99 a month for 200 GB** or **$9.99 a month for 2 TB**. For many people, 50 GB is plenty for one phone.

CHAPTER 25

Making It Comfortable for the New Owner

A few small changes make a hand-me-down far friendlier, especially for someone new to iPhones or whose eyes and fingers aren't what they were. None of these are permanent; change them back anytime.

Bigger, bolder text

1. Open **Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size**.
2. Tap **Larger Text** and drag the slider to the right until text is comfortable to read.
3. Back on the previous screen, turn on **Bold Text** if letters look thin.

A few more comfort settings

I want to…	Do this
Make everything bigger	**Display Zoom**, in **Settings > Display & Brightness**, enlarges icons and buttons too, not just text.
Louder ringer	**Settings > Sounds & Haptics**: drag the Ringer and Alerts slider up.
Easier double-clicks	**Settings > Accessibility > Home Button**: Click Speed to Slow (see Chapter 13, *Tuning the Home Button to Suit Your Hands*).
Their fingerprints	Add the new owner's thumbs in **Settings > Touch ID & Passcode**; delete any others.
Important contacts	Add family as Favorites in the Phone app for one-tap calling.

TIP

Too large to tap?

Very large text can push buttons off the screen. If something seems to be missing, nudge the text size down one step.

FROM BILL

This is what Device Training is for

Setting up a hand-me-down and showing its new owner the ropes is exactly the kind of visit my Device Training service covers. See Chapter 35, *When to Call Bill* for how to reach me.

PART 5

The Battery

Batteries wear out with age, and on an older iPhone the battery is often the whole story. Here's how to check it, make it last, and decide whether a replacement is worth it.

CHAPTER 26

Checking Your Battery's Health

Every phone battery slowly holds less charge as it ages. On a phone that's five or more years old, a tired battery is usually why it dies by mid-afternoon or shuts off unexpectedly in the cold. Your iPhone can tell you how worn its battery is.

Finding the battery health screen

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Battery**.
2. Tap **Battery Health & Charging**. On iOS 15 it's simply called **Battery Health**.
3. Read the **Maximum Capacity** percentage and the line under **Peak Performance Capability**.

What the numbers mean

You see	What it means
Maximum Capacity	How much charge the battery holds compared with when it was new. 100% is new; lower numbers mean shorter battery life between charges.
Peak Performance Capability	Whether the battery can still deliver bursts of power. If it says performance management has been applied, the phone has slowed itself a little to avoid sudden shutdowns.
A service message	If you see a message that the battery is significantly degraded, Apple recommends a replacement. Apple says the message doesn't mean it's unsafe.

GOOD TO KNOW

The 80 percent guideline

Apple designs batteries in the iPhone 14 and earlier, which includes every phone in this guide, to keep about **80 percent** of their original capacity after **500 full charge cycles** in normal use. Below roughly 80 percent is when most people start to notice, and when a replacement usually makes a big difference.

HEADS UP

Sudden shutdowns at 20 or 30 percent

If the phone switches off while the battery icon still shows charge left, especially outdoors in winter, the battery can no longer deliver enough power. That's a worn battery, not a broken phone. A new battery usually cures it.

CHAPTER 27

Getting More from an Older Battery

You can't make an old battery young again, but you can make each charge last longer and slow further wear. These habits cost nothing.

Low Power Mode for long days

1. Open **Settings > Battery**.
2. Turn on **Low Power Mode**. The battery icon turns yellow.
3. The phone cuts back on background activity and visual effects until you charge it again.

Optimized Battery Charging

If you charge overnight, **Optimized Battery Charging** learns your routine and holds the battery at 80 percent, then finishes charging shortly before you usually unplug. Less time sitting at 100 percent means less wear. Check it's on in **Settings > Battery > Battery Health & Charging** (or **Battery Health** on iOS 15).

Everyday habits that help

- **Keep it cool.** Don't leave it in a hot car or charge it under a pillow. Heat is the biggest battery killer.
- **Turn the screen down.** Lower brightness, or turn on Auto-Brightness in Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size.
- **See what's using power. Settings > Battery** lists which apps used the most battery. If one you rarely use is near the top, check its settings or remove it.
- **Charge whenever it suits you.** You don't need to run it down to zero first. Topping up during the day is fine.

TIP

Keep a small battery pack

If your battery is tired but you're not ready to replace it, a pocket-size battery pack with a Lightning cable gets you through a long day out. Buy it from a store or brand you know; very cheap no-name packs are best avoided.

CHAPTER 28

Replacing the Battery: Cost & Choices

A new battery can make an older iPhone feel like it did years ago: a full day on a charge and no more surprise shutdowns. It's often the best money you can spend on a phone you plan to keep.

Your options

Where	What to expect
Apple Store	Genuine Apple battery, installed by Apple. Make an appointment through the Apple Support app or support.apple.com. Often done the same day.
Apple Authorized Service Provider	Genuine parts, installed by an approved local repair shop. These shops set their own prices.
Mail-in repair from Apple	Apple sends a box; the phone is gone for several days.
Independent repair shop	Often quicker and nearby. Ask whether the battery is a genuine Apple part or an aftermarket one, and what warranty they give.

Getting an exact price

1. On a computer or phone, go to **support.apple.com/iphone/repair** and choose battery service.
2. Use **Get an estimate** and pick your exact model (from Chapter 2, *Which Home-Button iPhone Do You Have?*).
3. Note the price for an out-of-warranty battery replacement, plus any tax or shipping.
4. Compare it with a quote from a local shop if you like, asking about genuine parts and warranty.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Why there's no price printed here**
>
> Apple's battery prices for these models have changed over the years and differ by model, so I'd rather you get today's figure straight from Apple's estimate tool than rely on a number that may be out of date.

Is a new battery worth it?

- **Yes, usually**, for an **iPhone SE (2nd or 3rd generation)**. It still gets full updates, so a fresh battery can add years of good use.

- **Maybe**, for an **iPhone 8**. Fine if it's a backup phone or used for calls and photos; less sensible as your main phone for banking, since it's on iOS 16.
- **Usually not**, for an **iPhone 7, 6s or SE (1st generation)** as a main phone. The money may be better put toward a phone that still gets full updates. See Chapter 33, *When It's Time to Upgrade (Honestly)*.

STAY SAFE

A swollen battery needs attention now

If the screen starts lifting away from the case, or the phone no longer lies flat, the battery may be swelling. Stop charging it, don't press on it, and take it to a repair shop or Apple soon.

PART 6

Carriers, Safety, Upgrading & Getting Help

Will it work with your cell phone company, how to stay safe on older software, how to buy a used one wisely, an honest word on when to upgrade, and how to reach me.

CHAPTER 29

Will It Work with My Carrier?

A hand-me-down iPhone needs a working phone line from a carrier such as Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile or one of the smaller companies that use their networks. Most Home-button iPhones still work fine, but there are three things to check: the SIM card, whether the phone is locked to a carrier, and the carrier's own approval.

SIM card or eSIM?

Your model	What kind of SIM it uses
iPhone SE (2nd and 3rd gen)	A physical **nano-SIM** card *or* an **eSIM**, a digital SIM the carrier sets up over the air.
iPhone 8, 7, 6s and SE (1st gen)	A physical **nano-SIM** card only. No eSIM.

HEADS UP

Coming from a newer iPhone?

US iPhones from the iPhone 14 onward have no SIM tray and use eSIM only. To move a phone number from one of those to an iPhone 8, 7 or 6s, you'll need the carrier to give you a **physical SIM card**. Call or visit them; it's usually quick.

Is it locked to one carrier?

1. Open **Settings > General > About**.
2. Look for **Carrier Lock**. **No SIM restrictions** means it's unlocked and can be used with any compatible carrier.
3. If it names a carrier or says it's locked, the carrier that sold it can unlock it once it's paid off. Call them and ask.

Check with the carrier before you count on it

1. Find the phone's **IMEI** number in **Settings > General > About** (or dial ***#06#**).
2. Enter it in your carrier's "bring your own phone" checker on their website, or read it to them on the phone.
3. They'll tell you whether it works on their network today, including calling over 4G LTE, which every carrier now requires.

GOOD TO KNOW

4G, 5G and the old networks

The old 3G networks in the US shut down in 2022. Every iPhone in this guide can make calls over 4G LTE, which is what carriers use now. Only the **iPhone SE (3rd generation)** can also use 5G; the others stay on 4G, which is fine for calls, texts and everyday browsing.

CHAPTER 30

Staying Safe on an Older iPhone

An older iPhone can stay reasonably safe if you're thoughtful about it, and these habits matter most on the iPhone 8, 7, 6s and SE (1st generation), which no longer get regular security updates.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What these habits do for you

Most real-world trouble comes through a link, a fake app or a caller, not through clever hacking. Careful habits close those doors, whatever iOS your phone is on.

The short list

1. **Install every update your phone offers**, the day it arrives (see Chapter 17, *Installing Updates Safely*).
2. **Use a six-digit passcode** and Touch ID (see Chapter 6, *Your Passcode*).
3. **Get apps only from the App Store.** Never install anything a website or caller tells you to.
4. **Don't tap links in unexpected texts or emails**, even if they look like your bank, Apple or a delivery company. Go to the company's app or website yourself.
5. **Turn on two-factor authentication** for your Apple Account in **Settings >** your name **> Password & Security** (or **Sign-In & Security** on newer versions).
6. **Keep Find My turned on** in **Settings >** your name **> Find My**, so a lost phone can be located or erased.
7. **Do your banking at home on Wi-Fi you trust**, not on free public Wi-Fi.

HEADS UP

On iOS 15 or 16, be choosier

Because older iOS versions get fewer fixes, I'd keep sensitive tasks to a minimum on the iPhone 8, 7, 6s and SE (1st generation). Using it for calls, texts, photos and a few trusted apps is very reasonable. Making it your only device for banking, shopping and email for years to come is where the risk adds up.

TIP

A good job for a retired iPhone

An older iPhone that's no longer your main phone can still be a handy Wi-Fi-only music player, a bedside clock, a camera for the grandkids, or a backup phone in the car for emergencies.

CHAPTER 31

Scams Aimed at Older iPhones

Scammers know many people worry about older phones, and they use that worry. These are the tricks to recognize. The rule behind all of them: **you decide when to act, not a pop-up or a caller.**

SCAM ALERT

"Your iPhone is infected" or "Your iOS is out of date"

A web page that suddenly flashes a warning, plays an alarm, or says your phone has a virus is a fake. It wants you to call a number, install an app or pay for "protection." Close the Safari tab, or press the Home button and ignore it. Real updates come only from Settings > General > Software Update.

SCAM ALERT

A call from "Apple Support"

If someone calls saying they're from Apple and your account or phone has a problem, hang up. Don't give them your passcode, Apple Account password or a verification code. If you're worried, contact Apple yourself through support.apple.com or the Apple Support app.

SCAM ALERT

"Trade in your old iPhone for top dollar"

Texts and ads promising huge trade-in prices for old iPhones can be bait to collect your personal details or get you to mail a phone that's never paid for. Get trade-in quotes only from Apple, your carrier or a well-known store you approach yourself.

If you already tapped or called

- Don't panic. Stop the conversation and hang up or close the page.
- If you gave out your Apple Account password, change it right away in Settings.
- If you gave a card number or bank details, call your bank using the number on the back of your card.
- If you installed something at a stranger's request, delete it, and get help checking the phone.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, ask first

If something about a message, call or pop-up feels off, stop and call me at **(330) 200-8042** before you do anything. A two-minute check is always worth it.

CHAPTER 32

Buying a Used Home-Button iPhone

Some people love the Home button so much they want another one, and Apple no longer sells a new iPhone with a Home button. A used or refurbished iPhone SE can be a sensible choice, as long as you buy carefully.

Which one to look for

- **iPhone SE (3rd generation)** is the best pick: the newest Home-button iPhone, current iOS, and 5G.
- **iPhone SE (2nd generation)** also runs the current iOS, but it's older and may be dropped from updates sooner.
- I wouldn't buy an **iPhone 8, 7, 6s or SE (1st generation)** as a main phone today, because they're no longer on current software.

Before you hand over any money

1. Meet in a busy public place, or buy from a store that offers returns and a warranty.
2. Check the phone shows the **Hello** setup screen. If it shows a passcode screen or **Locked to Owner**, walk away.
3. Have the seller let you start setup far enough to confirm there's no **Activation Lock** (see Chapter 21, *Checking for Activation Lock*).
4. Check **Settings > General > About** for the Model Name and Carrier Lock, and **Settings > Battery** for battery health.
5. Ask your carrier to check the **IMEI**, which shows whether it's compatible and not reported lost or stolen.

SCAM ALERT

Too-good prices and pressure

A "barely used" iPhone for far below the going price, a seller who wants payment by gift card, wire transfer or payment app before you see the phone, or someone who won't let you check the setup screen: those are signs to walk away.

TIP

Refurbished can be the safer bet

Refurbished phones from Apple, your carrier or a large retailer usually come tested, with a fresh battery or a warranty. Read the return policy before you buy.

CHAPTER 33

When It's Time to Upgrade (Honestly)

I won't tell you to buy a new phone just because a newer one exists. A phone that does what you need, safely, is a good phone. But there are honest signs that an older iPhone has reached the end of the road.

Signs it's time

- **It's on iOS 15 or 16** (iPhone 8, 7, 6s or SE 1st generation) and it's your main phone for banking, shopping or email.
- **Apps you rely on**, like your bank, pharmacy or doctor's portal, have stopped supporting it.
- **The battery is worn** and the phone isn't worth putting a new one in (see Chapter 28, *Replacing the Battery: Cost & Choices*).
- **The Home button or screen is failing**, and repairs would cost a good share of a new phone.
- **Storage is always full**, so you can't take photos or install updates.

Signs you can keep it a while

- It's an **iPhone SE (2nd or 3rd generation)** on the current iOS, and the battery holds up.
- You mainly call, text and take photos, and it's still installing every update offered.
- It's a backup phone, not the one you rely on every day.

What a newer iPhone costs

Apple no longer sells any new iPhone with a Home button. Its lowest-priced model as of November 2026, the **iPhone 17e**, starts at **$599** and unlocks with **Face ID**, your face, instead of a fingerprint. Carriers often offer it, or other models, with monthly payments or deals.

GOOD TO KNOW

What's different on a Face ID iPhone

No Home button: you swipe up from the bottom to go home, and swipe up and pause to switch apps. It takes most people a week or so to get used to. Bill's iPhone manual covers those newer phones step by step.

TIP

Don't overbuy

For calls, texts, photos and video chats with family, you don't need the most expensive iPhone. Buy enough storage for your photos and stop there.

CHAPTER 34

Moving to a Newer iPhone

When the time comes, moving from a Home-button iPhone to a new one is easier than you might fear. Your photos, contacts, messages and apps can come along.

Bringing everything across

1. On the old phone, install any waiting update and make an **iCloud backup** (see Chapter 24, *Your Own Apple Account & iCloud Backup*).
2. Turn on the new iPhone and set it next to the old one. A **Quick Start** screen appears on the old phone.
3. Follow the prompts: point the old phone's camera at the pattern on the new one, then type your old passcode on the new phone.
4. Choose to transfer your data. Keep both phones close and plugged in until it's done; it can take an hour or more.
5. Check that your photos, contacts and messages arrived before you erase the old phone.

What to do with the old one

Option	What to know
Trade it in	Apple, carriers and large retailers give credit for some older iPhones. Expect a modest amount for these models.
Recycle it	If it has no trade-in value, Apple will recycle it for free.
Hand it down	Follow Chapter 20, *Before You Hand It Down (for the Giver)* so it goes to its new owner clean.
Keep it as a spare	Erase it or keep it signed in, charged and updated as an emergency backup.

HEADS UP

Erase before it leaves your hands

Whether it's traded in, recycled or given away, sign out and erase the old phone first, exactly as in Chapter 22, *Erasing an iPhone the Right Way*. Trade-in programs generally require it, and it protects you.

CHAPTER 35

When to Call Bill

This guide is meant to help you get the most from a Home-button iPhone on your own. But you never have to puzzle through something worrying alone. Here's when a call makes especially good sense.

Good reasons to call

- You've been handed down an iPhone and want it erased, set up and signed in to **your own** Apple Account properly.
- A phone is stuck on **Activation Lock** or asks for a passcode nobody remembers.
- You're not sure whether your model still gets updates, or an update won't install.
- An app you rely on says your iPhone is too old, and you want to know your options.
- You're deciding between a new battery and a new phone, and want an honest second opinion.
- You're moving to a newer iPhone and want your photos and contacts brought across safely.
- You'd like a patient, unhurried lesson on the Home button, Touch ID and the settings in this guide.

That last one is exactly what my **Device Training** service is for: we sit down with your phone and go through what you want to learn, at your pace.

SCAM ALERT

Call before you act on a scary message

If a pop-up, text or caller says your iPhone is infected, out of date or about to be locked, and wants money, a code or a call back, stop and call me first at **(330) 200-8042**. A quick check is always worth it.

How to reach me

I'm Bill, and Bill's Home Tech serves **Portage County, Ohio**. Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time online at **billshometech.com/book**. If you reach my assistant **Sophie** on the main line, she can answer simple questions and get you on my schedule. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. With 30+ years of professional experience, I promise there's no question too basic and no worry too small.

— Bill

CHAPTER 36

Your Older iPhone Cheat-Sheet

The things you'll reach for most, all in one place.

Home-button moves

I want to…	Do this
Go home	Press the Home button once.
See open apps	Double-click the Home button.
Close a stuck app	Double-click Home, then swipe the app's card up.
Reach the top of the screen	Lightly double-tap the Home button (turn on Reachability first).
Siri	Press and hold the Home button.
Accessibility Shortcut	Triple-click the Home button.
Control Center	Swipe up from the bottom edge.
Notifications	Swipe down from the top edge.
Screenshot	Press Home and the side (or top) button together.

Where to find things in Settings

I'm looking for…	Go to
Model and iOS version	Settings > General > About
Updates	Settings > General > Software Update
Fingerprints and passcode	Settings > Touch ID & Passcode
Home button speed	Settings > Accessibility > Home Button
Battery health	Settings > Battery > Battery Health & Charging (Battery Health on iOS 15)
Erase the phone	Settings > General > Transfer or Reset iPhone
Bigger text	Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size > Larger Text

Staying safe: the short list

1. Install every update your phone offers.
2. Use a six-digit passcode and Touch ID.
3. Get apps only from the App Store.

4. Don't tap links in unexpected texts or emails.
5. Never give a passcode, password or code to a caller.
6. Never buy a used iPhone that isn't on the Hello screen.
7. When unsure, pause and call Bill.

Keep this handy

Item	Write it here
My iPhone model	_____
Newest iOS it can run	_____
My carrier and account number	_____
Apple Account email	_____
Where my passwords are written down	_____
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FROM BILL

You've got this

A Home-button iPhone is a capable, friendly phone. Keep it updated, keep your habits careful, and reach out whenever you'd like a hand.