BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Outlook & Outlook.com

Outlook.com, Hotmail, new Outlook for Windows & the phone app
Folders, rules, junk, storage, security and scams

Your Microsoft email, explained in plain English

Take your time — you can't break it

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For Outlook.com, new Outlook for Windows and the Outlook app · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Outlook manual. It covers Outlook.com on the web (including old Hotmail, Live and MSN addresses), the new Outlook app for Windows that replaced the old Mail and Calendar apps, and the Outlook app on your phone. Read it in any order — jump straight to the chapter that answers today's question.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Outlook

What "Outlook" actually means, why your old Hotmail address still works, and what happened to the Mail and Calendar apps that used to come with Windows. Start here and the rest will make sense.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is reading this — this is for **you**. Maybe you've had a Hotmail address for twenty years and one day it started saying "Outlook" instead. Maybe your Windows computer used to have a simple Mail app and now there's something new called Outlook that looks different. Or maybe a family member set up an Outlook.com account for you and you'd like to finally feel at home in it. Wherever you're starting, you've come to the right place.

I'm Bill. With 30+ years of professional experience, I've helped a great many people get comfortable with their computers, phones and email, and I wrote this manual the way I'd explain things sitting beside you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time. When I use a word you might not know, I'll stop and explain it right then.

What this manual covers

- **Outlook.com** — Microsoft's free email website, which is where Hotmail, Live and MSN addresses live today.
- **The new Outlook for Windows** — the email app that replaced the old Windows Mail and Calendar apps, which Microsoft retired at the end of 2024.
- **The Outlook app on your phone** — for iPhone and Android.
- Everyday email, folders, the Focused Inbox, rules, junk mail, blocking, Sweep, storage space, what Microsoft 365 costs, keeping your account safe, spotting phishing, and fixing the common problems.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this manual does for you

By the end you'll know which Outlook you're using, keep your inbox tidy without effort, stop unwanted mail, understand your storage before it fills up, and keep scammers out of your account. Most of all, you'll feel in charge of your own email again instead of the other way around.

The big promise: you can't break it

Here's the most important thing in this guide. **You cannot break Outlook by clicking around and exploring.** Moving a message to the wrong folder? Drag it back. Deleted something by accident? It sits in Deleted Items, and even after that Outlook.com gives you a

second chance (Chapter 23). Changed a setting you didn't mean to? Change it back. Curiosity is how everyone learns, me included.

The one place to slow down is anything that asks for your password, your account details or money. That's where scammers set their traps, and Part 5 shows you exactly how to tell the real thing from a fake.

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, with no judgment. There's no such thing as a silly question.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What "Outlook" Means — Three Doors to One Mailbox

The word **Outlook** confuses almost everyone, because Microsoft uses the same name for several different things. Let's untangle it once, and it will stay untangled.

Your mailbox lives at Microsoft, not on your computer

Think of your email like a post office box at a big, safe post office. Your letters are kept **there** — on Microsoft's computers — not inside your laptop or phone. Outlook is simply the **door** you walk through to read them. There are several doors, but they all open onto the very same box. Read a message on your phone and it shows as read on your computer too. Delete it in one place and it's gone from all of them.

The three doors most people use

The door	What it is
Outlook.com (the website)	Open any web browser — Edge, Chrome, Safari — and go to **outlook.com**. Sign in, and there's your mail. Works on any computer, even a borrowed one. This is the free service that Hotmail turned into.
New Outlook for Windows (an app)	A program on your Windows computer, with a blue icon and a white letter O. It looks almost exactly like the website. It's the app Microsoft put in place of the old Mail and Calendar apps.
The Outlook app (phone or tablet)	A free app for iPhone, iPad and Android phones. Same mailbox, sized for a small screen, with handy swipe gestures.

Two more you might bump into

- **Classic Outlook** — the older, more complicated Outlook program that comes with paid Microsoft Office and Microsoft 365 desktop apps. Many offices use it. If yours has a ribbon of tiny buttons across the top and a **File** menu, that's classic Outlook. Microsoft says it will keep supporting it until at least 2029, so there's no rush to change.
- **Work or school Outlook** — if your employer or a club gives you an email address that runs on Microsoft, it opens in Outlook too, but it's managed by that organization. This guide is about your **personal** Outlook.com, Hotmail, Live or MSN address.

GOOD TO KNOW

It doesn't matter which door you use

People sometimes worry they're using "the wrong Outlook." There's no wrong one. The website, the Windows app and the phone app all show the same mailbox. Use whichever feels most comfortable — many folks use the phone app for a quick look and the computer for writing longer messages. Where the steps differ, this guide tells you.

And Outlook can open other email too

The new Outlook app on Windows and the Outlook phone app can also show a **Gmail**, Yahoo or iCloud address alongside your Microsoft one, so all your mail is in one place. Chapter 6 shows how. If Gmail is your main email, Bill's Email manual covers the general ideas for every service.

CHAPTER 3

Hotmail, Live and MSN Addresses: Still Yours

If your email address ends in **@hotmail.com**, **@live.com** or **@msn.com**, I have good news: it still works exactly as it always has. Microsoft simply moved those mailboxes into Outlook.com years ago. Same address, same password, same mail — just a new name on the front door.

Signing in with an old address

1. Open your web browser and go to **outlook.com**.
2. Click **Sign in**.
3. Type your full address — for example, **yourname@hotmail.com** — and click **Next**.
4. Type your password (or approve the sign-in on your phone, if you've set that up), and your inbox opens.

There's no separate "Hotmail website" to find any more. Outlook.com *is* Hotmail now. If someone offers to "upgrade" or "migrate" your Hotmail account for a fee, that's a scam — there's nothing to upgrade.

Your address is also your Microsoft account

Your Outlook.com or Hotmail address does double duty. It's your **Microsoft account** — the single sign-in Microsoft uses for Windows, OneDrive, Microsoft 365, Xbox and more. That makes it the most important password you own, which is why Part 5 is all about protecting it. (Bill's Windows 11 manual explains how the same account signs you in to your computer.)

Adding a second address (an alias)

Microsoft lets you add an extra address to the same mailbox, called an **alias**. It shares your inbox, contacts and password; mail sent to either address lands in the same place. People use one to give out to stores and websites while keeping their main address private.

- You can create a **new @outlook.com** alias for free from your Microsoft account settings.
- You **can't** create a brand-new @hotmail.com, @live.com or @msn.com alias any more. Existing ones keep working; new ones simply aren't offered.
- Be careful removing an alias: Microsoft says deleting an address on its own domains is **permanent** — it can never be used again by anyone, including you.

HEADS UP

Sign in at least once a year

Microsoft closes personal accounts that haven't been signed in to for **two years**. When that happens the mail is gone for good. If you keep an old Hotmail address "just in case", sign in to it at outlook.com every few months. It takes a minute and keeps the account alive. One more warning: scammers send fake "your account will be closed" emails. Never click those — just go to outlook.com yourself and sign in.

CHAPTER 4

Goodbye Mail and Calendar: Moving to the New Outlook

For years, Windows 10 and Windows 11 came with two simple, free apps called **Mail** and **Calendar**. If you used them, you may have noticed they stopped working. Here's what happened, and what to do.

What Microsoft changed

What	What it means for you
December 31, 2024	Microsoft ended support for the Windows Mail, Calendar and People apps. After that date they could no longer send or receive email, and they were removed from the Microsoft Store.
What replaced them	The **new Outlook for Windows** — a free app that does mail, calendar and contacts in one place. Microsoft's own advice is to move to new Outlook, or use Outlook.com in a web browser.
Your mail	If your account was Outlook.com, Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo, your mail was never stored only in the old app — it's safe at the email company and appears as soon as you add the account to new Outlook.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your email didn't disappear

When the old Mail app stopped, many people feared they'd lost years of messages. For nearly everyone, nothing was lost. Remember the post-office-box idea from Chapter 2: the mail was kept at Microsoft (or Google, or Yahoo) all along. The old app was only a door, and Microsoft retired that door. Open the new one and everything is right where you left it.

Getting the new Outlook

On most up-to-date Windows 11 computers, new Outlook is already installed — look in the Start menu for **Outlook** with the blue icon. If you still have the old Mail app, opening it now just shows a notice that it's no longer supported. If you can't find Outlook at all, open the **Microsoft Store** app, search for **Outlook**, and install the free Outlook for Windows app from Microsoft — never from a website that pops up offering a download. Chapter 6 walks through the first sign-in.

The rare case: mail saved only on your computer

A few people used an older style of email account (called **POP**) that downloaded messages onto the computer and removed them from the server. If that's you, Microsoft kept an export option in the old Mail app:

1. Open the old Mail app. A notice says it's no longer supported.
2. Choose **Export Data** on that notice. Windows saves a folder of your messages (as .eml files) and a calendar file (.ics).
3. In new Outlook, bring messages in with **Settings > General > Import**, one folder at a time.
4. Bring the calendar in from the Calendar view with **Add calendar > Upload from file**.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **This is a good one to do together**
>
> If the words POP, .eml or import make your eyes glaze over, you're in good company. Moving years of locally saved mail is exactly the kind of job worth handing to someone who does it every week. Call (330) 200-8042 and I'll make sure nothing gets left behind.

New Outlook versus the old Mail app

New Outlook is busier than the old Mail app, but the basics are in the same spirit: folders down the left, a list of messages in the middle, the message you're reading on the right. It adds things the old app never had — the Focused Inbox (Chapter 11), rules (Chapter 12), Sweep (Chapter 16) and better junk filtering. On a free account you'll see some ads in the message list; that's how Microsoft pays for free email, and Chapter 18 explains the paid option that removes them.

PART 2

Getting Set Up

Signing in on the web, setting up the new Outlook app on Windows, putting Outlook on your phone, and a slow tour of the screen so every part has a name.

CHAPTER 5

Signing In to Outlook.com on the Web

The website is the simplest door to your mailbox, because there's nothing to install. It works on any computer with a web browser, and it's always up to date.

Signing in

1. Open your web browser (Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari or Firefox).
2. Click in the address bar at the very top, type **outlook.com**, and press **Enter**.
3. Click **Sign in**. Type your full email address and click **Next**.
4. Enter your password — or, if you've set up a passkey or the Microsoft Authenticator app (Chapter 19), approve the sign-in the way it asks.
5. If it asks **Stay signed in?**, choose **Yes** on your own computer and **No** on a shared or public one.

> TIP
> **Make it one click next time**
>
> Once your inbox is open, save it as a favorite (a bookmark) in your browser — in Edge or Chrome, click the little **star** at the right end of the address bar. Next time, click the favorite instead of typing. Typing the address yourself, or using your own favorite, is also the safest way to reach Outlook, because you never land on a look-alike page.

Don't have an account yet?

Creating an Outlook.com address is free. On outlook.com, choose **Create free account** (the wording can vary a little), pick the name you want before the @, and follow the prompts. New addresses end in **@outlook.com**. You'll be asked for a phone number or a second email address — give a real one you'll keep, because that's how you'll get back in if you ever forget your password (Chapter 21).

> HEADS UP
> **The real address is outlook.com**
>
> Scammers build fake sign-in pages that look exactly like Microsoft's. The real ones live at addresses ending in **outlook.com**, **live.com** or **microsoft.com**. If you clicked a link in an email and it asks for your password, stop — close it, and go to outlook.com yourself.

CHAPTER 6

Setting Up the New Outlook App on Windows

If you'd rather have email as a proper app on your Windows computer — with its own icon on the taskbar and pop-up notices when mail arrives — new Outlook is the one to use. It's free.

Opening it the first time

1. Click the **Start** button and type **Outlook**. Click the **Outlook** app with the blue icon.
2. If you're signed in to Windows with your Microsoft account, Outlook may already suggest your address. Choose it and click **Continue**. Otherwise type your email address.
3. Sign in when asked. Outlook may show a few welcome screens about privacy and settings — read them, choose what you're comfortable with, and continue.
4. Your inbox appears. The first time, it can take a few minutes to bring in all your mail.

Adding another email account

New Outlook can show more than one email address — say, your Hotmail and a Gmail — each in its own section of the folder list.

1. Click the **Settings** gear near the top right of the Outlook window.
2. Choose **Accounts**, then **Email accounts**.
3. Click **Add account**. (There's also an Add account link at the bottom of the folder list.)
4. Type the address and click **Continue**. For a Gmail address, a Google window opens — sign in and click **Allow** so Outlook can show your Gmail.
5. Wait a moment while the new account's mail comes in. It appears as a new section in the folder list.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Some accounts need an extra step**
>
> Microsoft notes that some other email services — iCloud and some Yahoo setups, for example — need a special **app password** created on that company's website before Outlook can connect. If Outlook keeps saying the password is wrong even though you're sure it's right, that's usually why. It's a fiddly job and a fine reason to call me.

Pinning it where you can find it

Once Outlook is open, look at its icon on the taskbar along the bottom of the screen. Right-click it and choose **Pin to taskbar**. Now it's always one click away, even after you close it.

If your screen looks different

Microsoft notes that if its new Outlook steps don't match your screen, you may be in **classic Outlook** — the older Office program with a File menu and ribbon. That's fine; your mail is the same. Classic Outlook uses **File > Add Account** instead. Many people at home are happier in new Outlook or the website, which are simpler.

CHAPTER 7

The Outlook App on Your Phone

Your phone already has a mail app — Mail on an iPhone, or Gmail on most Android phones — and either can read an Outlook.com address. But Microsoft's own free **Outlook** app gives you the Focused Inbox, Sweep-style tidying, and the same folders you see on the computer. Many people find it the most comfortable way to keep up with email.

Installing it

1. On an iPhone or iPad, open the **App Store**. On Android, open the **Google Play Store**.
2. Search for **Microsoft Outlook**. Check the maker is **Microsoft Corporation** — there are copycats.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**. It's free.
4. Open the app and sign in with your Outlook.com or Hotmail address. If you're asked to approve the sign-in, do it on your phone the way it shows.

Adding another account in the phone app

Open the app's menu (tap your picture or initials at the top left), then tap the **Settings** gear. Choose **Accounts**, then **Add Account**, then **Email Account** on iPhone (or **Add an email account** on Android). Enter the address and sign in.

Swipe to tidy

In the message list you can swipe a message left or right to act on it — archive it, delete it, flag it or schedule it for later. The first time you swipe, Outlook offers to help you pick your favorite actions. To change them later, go to **Settings > Mail > Swipe Options** (in some versions, Swipe Options is right under Settings).

> **TIP**
>
> **Make one swipe Archive, not Delete**
>
> Set your easiest swipe to **Archive**. Archiving clears the message out of your inbox but keeps it safely in the Archive folder, so a slip of the thumb never loses anything. Save Delete for the other direction.

GOOD TO KNOW

Outlook Lite is gone

Some Android phones had a smaller app called **Outlook Lite**. Microsoft stopped offering it in October 2025 and switched it off completely on May 25, 2026. If you used it, install the regular **Microsoft Outlook** app instead and sign in with the same address and password — your mail is all still there.

CHAPTER 8

A Tour of the Outlook Screen

The website and the new Windows app are laid out almost identically, so learn one and you know both. Let's walk across the screen from left to right.

The three main columns

Part of the screen	What it does
Folder pane (left)	Your list of folders: **Inbox**, **Drafts**, **Sent Items**, **Deleted Items**, **Junk Email**, **Archive**, and any you make yourself. Click a folder to see what's in it. A number beside it shows how many unread messages it holds.
Message list (middle)	The messages in the folder you picked, newest at the top. Bold means unread. At the top you may see two tabs, **Focused** and **Other** (Chapter 11).
Reading pane (right)	Click a message in the list and it opens here so you can read it. Reply, Reply all and Forward buttons sit at the top of the message.

Along the top and the side

- **Search box** — at the top. Type a name or a word and press Enter to find any message.
- **New mail** button — top left. Starts a brand-new message.
- **Settings gear** — near the top right. Almost every setting in this guide starts here.
- **Your picture or initials** — top right. Shows which account you're in, and has **Sign out**.
- **A strip of small icons** down the far left edge — Mail, Calendar, People (your contacts) and more. Click the envelope to come back to your mail.

TIP

Lost? Click Inbox

If you ever click something and don't recognize where you are, look at the folder list on the left and click **Inbox**. You're home. If the folder list has vanished, click the little stack of three lines (the menu button) at the top left to bring it back.

Making the text bigger

On the website, the quickest way to enlarge everything is your browser's own zoom: hold the **Ctrl** key and press the **plus** key (on a Mac, the **Command** key and plus). Each press makes it a little bigger; Ctrl and the minus key shrinks it back, and Ctrl and zero resets it. The same keys work in the new Outlook app. On your phone, the Outlook app follows the text size you

set in the phone's own settings.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Comfort first

There's no prize for squinting. Bigger text means fewer mistakes, less eye strain and more enjoyment. Set it to what feels easy and leave it there — nothing else about Outlook changes.

PART 3

Everyday Email

Reading, writing and replying; folders that keep things filed; the Focused Inbox; rules that sort mail for you; and away messages and signatures.

CHAPTER 9

Reading, Writing and Replying

This is the heart of email, and Outlook makes it straightforward. The buttons have the same names on the website, the Windows app and the phone app.

Reading a message

Click (or tap) a message in the list. It opens in the reading pane. Bold messages are ones you haven't opened yet; once you open one it turns to regular type. To mark it unread again — handy as a "come back to this" reminder — right-click it in the list and choose **Mark as unread**.

Writing a new message

1. Click **New mail** at the top left (on the phone, tap the **New mail** button).
2. In the **To** line, start typing the person's name or address. If they're in your contacts, Outlook offers them — click the right one.
3. Click in the **Subject** line and type a few words saying what it's about — "Sunday dinner" or "Photos from the lake."
4. Click in the big space below and write your message.
5. Click **Send**. The message moves to your **Sent Items** folder so you have a copy.

Replying and forwarding

Button	What it does
Reply	Answers only the person who wrote to you. The one you'll use most.
Reply all	Answers the sender *and* everyone else on the message. Use with care — the whole group sees it.
Forward	Sends a copy to someone new. Type their address in the To line, add a note, and send.

HEADS UP

Pause before Reply all

The most common email embarrassment is a private reply sent to the whole group. Before you click **Reply all**, ask: does everyone really need to read this? If not, click plain **Reply**.

Attaching a photo or file

While writing, click **Attach** (a paper clip) and pick the file from your computer or phone. Outlook may offer to share a large file as a **OneDrive link** instead of attaching a copy; for big photo albums that's the better choice, because a link doesn't take up space in anyone's mailbox. Bill's Email manual explains attachments in more depth.

Drafts: finishing later

If you close a message before sending it, Outlook keeps it in the **Drafts** folder. Open Drafts, click the message, and carry on where you left off.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> ### You can't take back a sent message
>
> Outlook.com can't "recall" a message once it's gone — Microsoft says recall doesn't work for personal accounts or for mail sent to addresses like Gmail. What you *can* do is turn on **Undo send** beforehand, under **Settings > Mail > Compose and reply**: it holds each message for a few seconds, with an **Undo** button, so you can catch a mistake before it goes.

CHAPTER 10

Folders: Your Filing Cabinet

Folders work like the drawers of a filing cabinet. Each message lives in one folder at a time. Outlook comes with a set already made, and you can add your own.

The folders Outlook gives you

Folder	What goes there
Inbox	Where new mail arrives.
Drafts	Messages you started but haven't sent.
Sent Items	A copy of everything you've sent.
Deleted Items	Outlook's wastebasket. Deleted mail waits here until you empty it.
Junk Email	Mail Outlook thinks is spam or a scam. Check it now and then (Chapter 14).
Archive	A place to put mail you've dealt with but want to keep — out of the inbox, not deleted.

Making your own folder

1. In the folder list on the left, **right-click** your account name or email address at the top of the list.
2. Choose **Create new folder**.
3. Type a name — "Grandkids", "Bills", "Church", "Medical" — and press **Enter**.
4. To put a folder inside another one, right-click the outer folder and choose **Create new subfolder**.

Putting messages in a folder

- **Drag it:** click a message in the list, hold the mouse button, slide it onto the folder on the left, and let go.
- **Or use Move to:** select the message, click **Move to** in the toolbar above, and pick the folder.
- **On the phone:** open the message, tap the three dots, and choose **Move**.

TIP

Archive is the easy-going filing system

If making lots of folders feels like a chore, you don't have to. Just click **Archive** on anything you've finished with. Your inbox stays short, everything you archived is kept, and the search box (Chapter 23) finds any of it in seconds. Plenty of tidy people use nothing but Inbox and Archive.

GOOD TO KNOW

Folders don't give you more space

Moving mail into folders keeps things neat, but it still counts toward your mailbox storage (Chapter 17). Only deleting — and then emptying Deleted Items — frees up room.

CHAPTER 11

The Focused Inbox: Focused and Other

If you see two tabs at the top of your inbox — **Focused** and **Other** — you're looking at the **Focused Inbox**. Outlook tries to put mail from real people and important senders in Focused, and newsletters, advertisements and automated notices in Other. It's turned on by default.

Why it trips people up

The Focused Inbox is helpful when it guesses right. But when a message seems to be "missing", a very common reason is that it's sitting quietly under the **Other** tab. Nothing is wrong — it was just filed on the other side. So the first habit: **if you're expecting something, click Other**.

Teaching it what matters

If a message from someone important lands in Other, right-click it (or open its menu) and choose **Move to Focused**. Outlook may also offer **Always move to Focused**, so future mail from that sender goes straight to the right place. It works the other way too, for a store that keeps landing in Focused.

Turning it on or off

Where	How
Outlook.com	**Settings** gear > **Mail** > **Layout**. Under Focused Inbox, choose to sort messages into Focused and Other, or **Don't sort my messages**. Click **Save**.
New Outlook for Windows	**View** tab > **View settings** > **Mail** > **Layout**, then the same choice. If you have several accounts, set each one.
Outlook phone app	Menu > **Settings** gear > **Mail** > switch **Focused Inbox** on or off.

FROM BILL

My honest advice

If the two tabs confuse you, turn the Focused Inbox **off**. You'll see everything in one list, newest first, the way email used to be, and you'll never wonder where a message went. If you get a lot of advertising mail and like it kept out of the way, leave it on and get in the habit of peeking at Other once a day. Either choice is perfectly fine.

CHAPTER 12

Rules: Let Outlook File Your Mail for You

A **rule** is an instruction you give Outlook once, and it follows forever. "When mail comes from my pharmacy, put it in the Medical folder." "When the subject says Newsletter, mark it as read." Rules run automatically on every new message, day and night.

Making a rule on Outlook.com

1. Click the **Settings** gear, then **Mail**, then **Rules**.
2. Click **Add new rule**.
3. Give the rule a name you'll recognize — "Pharmacy to Medical."
4. Under **Add a condition**, pick what to look for — for example **From**, then type the sender's address.
5. Under **Add an action**, pick what to do — for example **Move to**, then choose the folder.
6. Leave **Stop processing more rules** ticked unless you know you want more than one rule to act on the same message. Click **Save**.

The same Rules page is in new Outlook for Windows under the Settings gear. A quicker way in either one: right-click a message from the sender and look for **Rules > Create rule** (or **Advanced actions > Create rule**), which fills in the sender for you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rules work on new mail only

Microsoft notes that a new rule applies to messages that arrive **after** you create it. It won't go back and file the old ones. To tidy up older mail from the same sender, use Sweep (Chapter 16) or drag them to the folder yourself.

Good rules for everyday life

- Mail from your bank, pharmacy or doctor's office: into a **Bills** or **Medical** folder.
- Mail from a club or church list: into its own folder you read once a week.
- Shipping notices from a store you trust: into a **Deliveries** folder.

HEADS UP

Check your rules once in a while

Rules are powerful, which is why criminals who break into an account sometimes add a sneaky rule that forwards copies of your mail to them or deletes warnings from your bank. Every few months, open **Settings > Mail > Rules** and make sure every rule there is one you made. If you see one you don't recognize, delete it and read Chapter 21.

CHAPTER 13

Away Messages and Your Signature

Two small settings that make email feel more personal and save you typing: an automatic reply when you're away, and a signature that signs every message for you.

Automatic replies ("I'm away")

Going on a trip or into the hospital and won't check email? An automatic reply answers everyone who writes, so nobody worries when you don't respond.

1. On Outlook.com, click the **Settings** gear, then **Account** (on some screens it's **Accounts**), then **Automatic replies**.
2. Switch automatic replies **on**.
3. If you like, tick the box to send replies only during a time period, and choose the start and end dates. With no end date, it keeps replying until you switch it off.
4. Type your message, then click **Save**.

> STAY SAFE
>
> **Keep your away message vague**
>
> Your automatic reply goes to *everyone* who writes, including strangers and scammers. Say "I'm away from email until Monday the 14th" rather than "We're in Florida for three weeks and the house is empty." Don't announce that the house is empty, and don't include your phone number or travel details.

Your email signature

A **signature** is a short sign-off that Outlook adds to the bottom of your messages — your name, and perhaps "Sent with love from Grandma" or a phone number for friends.

1. On Outlook.com, click the **Settings** gear, then **Mail**, then **Compose and reply** (on some screens, **Accounts > Signatures**).
2. Type your signature in the box.
3. Choose whether it's added to new messages, to replies and forwards, or both.
4. Click **Save**.

The phone app keeps its own separate signature, and it may add a line about the Outlook app until you change it. To change it, open the app's **Settings** and look for **Signature**.

TIP

Keep it short and private

A first name and a warm sign-off is plenty. Leave your home address and birth date out of your signature — it goes to everyone you write to, and everyone they forward your message to.

PART 4

Junk, Clutter and Space

The Junk Email folder, blocking a sender for good, Sweep for clearing out piles of advertising, how much storage you have, and an honest look at what Microsoft 365 costs.

CHAPTER 14

The Junk Email Folder

Outlook watches every incoming message and moves anything that looks like spam or a scam into the **Junk Email** folder, so it never clutters your inbox. It catches a great deal. But no filter is perfect, so it helps to know how to correct it in both directions.

When good mail lands in Junk

1. Click **Junk Email** in the folder list.
2. Find the message that shouldn't be there and select it.
3. Click **Not junk** (on some screens, under the **Report** button). The message moves back to your inbox, and Outlook learns from it.

Making sure someone always gets through: Safe senders

For people and companies you never want filtered — your grandchildren, your doctor's office, your bank's real address — add them to your **Safe senders** list.

1. Click the **Settings** gear, then **Mail**, then **Junk email**.
2. Under **Safe senders and domains**, click **Add** (or **Add safe sender**).
3. Type the email address and press Enter, then click **Save**.

> **TIP**
> **Glance at Junk twice a week**
>
> Outlook empties the Junk Email folder automatically after a while, and once those messages are gone they can't be recovered. So make a little habit of opening Junk every few days. Don't open or click anything that looks suspicious — just rescue anything real with **Not junk**.

When junk lands in your inbox

Select the message and use **Report** > **Report junk** (on the phone, the three dots, then **Report Junk**). It moves to the Junk folder and helps Outlook's filter get smarter for everyone. If it's pretending to be a company to steal your details, choose **Report phishing** instead (Chapter 20).

GOOD TO KNOW

Reporting isn't the same as blocking

Microsoft points out that reporting a message doesn't stop that sender from writing again. To shut a particular sender out for good, block them too — that's the next chapter.

CHAPTER 15

Blocking a Sender

Blocking tells Outlook: "never put mail from this address in my inbox again." Anything they send goes straight to Junk. It's quiet, the sender isn't told, and you can undo it any time.

Blocking from the message itself

1. Select or open a message from the sender you want to block.
2. Open the message's menu — the **three dots** — or right-click it in the list.
3. Choose **Block** (sometimes under **Report**, as **Block sender**) and confirm.

Blocking an address or a whole domain in Settings

1. Click the **Settings** gear, then **Mail**, then **Junk email**.
2. Under **Blocked senders and domains**, click **Add** (or **Add blocked sender**).
3. Type the full email address — or, to block everything from one company, just the part after the @, such as **annoyingstore.com**.
4. Press Enter, then click **Save**.

Unblocking someone

Go back to **Settings > Mail > Junk email**, find the address in the Blocked list, select it and click **Remove** (a little trash can), then **Save**. If someone tells you their mail keeps landing in Junk, check here first — then add them to Safe senders.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why blocking only goes so far

Blocking works well against a store or a persistent person who writes from the same address. Scammers, though, change addresses constantly, so blocking yesterday's scam address does little against today's. For scams, use **Report phishing** and delete. For advertising from real companies, the **Unsubscribe** link at the top of the message or Sweep (next chapter) is often cleaner than blocking.

HEADS UP

Unsubscribe only from companies you know

Outlook often shows an **Unsubscribe** link near the top of mail from real companies. That's safe to use for a store you've bought from. For mail from a stranger or an obvious scam, don't click unsubscribe links inside the message — they can confirm your address is real. Report and delete instead.

CHAPTER 16

Sweep: Clear Out the Clutter in One Go

Sweep is one of Outlook's best and least-known tools. Pick one message from a chatty sender — a store, a newsletter, a site that emails you every day — and Sweep can clear out all of their mail at once, and keep it cleared.

Using Sweep on Outlook.com or new Outlook

1. In your inbox, click one message from the sender you want to clear out.
2. In the toolbar above the message list, click **Sweep** (a little broom). If you don't see it, click the three dots in the toolbar to show more buttons.
3. Choose what you want: delete **all messages from this sender** in the folder; delete all of them **and any future messages**; **always keep only the latest** message from them; or delete their messages **older than 10 days**.
4. Click **OK**. The pile disappears into Deleted Items.

Sweep choice	When it's handy
Keep only the latest	Perfect for a daily deals email or a weather report — you always have today's, never a backlog.
Older than 10 days	Good for a newsletter you skim now and then but never need to keep.
Delete all and future	For a sender you want gone entirely but who isn't a scam.

GOOD TO KNOW

A few things Microsoft says about Sweep

Sweep isn't available in the Junk Email, Drafts, Sent Items or Deleted Items folders. The ongoing Sweep rules run about once a day, so don't worry if a new message sits there for a few hours. And swept mail goes to Deleted Items, so it only frees up storage once Deleted Items is emptied.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A short inbox is a calmer inbox

When the advertising is swept away, the messages from real people stand out — and so do the odd ones that don't belong. Ten minutes with Sweep on your five noisiest senders can cut your daily email to a fraction of what it was.

CHAPTER 17

Storage: How Much Room You Have

Email takes up space, and Microsoft gives every account a certain amount. Most people never run out. But when it does fill up, mail stops flowing, so it's worth understanding — and it's simpler than it sounds.

Two separate allowances

Allowance	What it holds
Mailbox storage — 15 GB free	Space for the messages themselves, plus contacts and calendar. A free Outlook.com account gets **15 GB**. A Microsoft 365 subscription raises it to **100 GB**.
Microsoft cloud storage — 5 GB free	One shared allowance for **OneDrive** files and photos *and* your **email attachments** and pictures inside emails. Free accounts get **5 GB**; paid plans get much more (Chapter 18).

That second one surprises people. If OneDrive is backing up the photos from your phone or computer, it may be filling the very same 5 GB that your email attachments use.

HEADS UP

When either one is full, email stops

Microsoft says that if you go over **either** your mailbox storage or your cloud storage, you can't send or receive email in Outlook.com. Messages people send you are bounced back to them, and they'll have to send again once you've made room. Outlook shows warnings as you get close — don't ignore them.

Checking how much you're using

1. On Outlook.com, click the **Settings** gear.
2. Choose **Account**, then **Storage**.
3. You'll see how much mailbox space you've used, and a list of your folders with how much each takes.

Freeing up space

- **Empty Deleted Items and Junk Email.** Deleted mail still counts against your space until it's emptied. Right-click **Deleted Items** and choose **Empty folder**.
- **Use the Storage page.** Next to each folder there's an option to permanently delete all of it, or just items older than 3, 6 or 12 months. Great for an old Sent Items folder.

- **Find the big ones.** Large attachments take the most room. In a folder, sort by size (from the sort or filter menu above the list) and delete the biggest messages you don't need. Save any photos you want to keep first.
- **Sweep the newsletters** (Chapter 16), then empty Deleted Items.
- **Check OneDrive** at onedrive.com if your *cloud* storage is the full one. Bill's Windows 11 manual covers OneDrive.

TIP

Save before you delete

Before clearing out old mail with family photos attached, open the message and save the pictures to your computer (click the attachment, then **Download**). Once a message is permanently deleted, its attachment goes with it.

SCAM ALERT

"Your mailbox is full" emails are often fake

One of the most common scams sent to Outlook and Hotmail users is a message saying your mailbox is full, your storage has expired, or you must "verify" to keep receiving mail — with a button to click. Don't click it. Check for yourself: go to outlook.com, open **Settings > Account > Storage**, and see the real numbers. Microsoft's real warnings appear inside Outlook itself.

CHAPTER 18

Microsoft 365: Do You Need to Pay?

Outlook.com is free, and for most people free is plenty. Microsoft also sells **Microsoft 365** subscriptions that add storage, remove ads, and — on the bigger plans — include Word, Excel and other Office apps. Here are the honest numbers, as listed in Microsoft's US store in November 2026.

The plans and prices

Plan	Price (US dollars)	People	What you get for email
Free Outlook.com	Free	1	15 GB mailbox, 5 GB cloud storage, ads in the inbox
Microsoft 365 Basic	19.99 a year or 1.99 a month	1	Ad-free Outlook, 100 GB mailbox, 100 GB cloud storage, extra security features
Microsoft 365 Personal	99.99 a year or 9.99 a month	1	Everything in Basic, 1 TB cloud storage, plus Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Copilot AI
Microsoft 365 Family	129.99 a year or 12.99 a month	Up to 6	Personal's features shared with up to five other people, each with their own account and storage
Microsoft 365 Premium	19.99 a month or 199.99 a year	Up to 6	Family's features plus the most Copilot AI; Microsoft's top consumer plan

Prices change, and Microsoft sometimes offers a discounted first month or year, so check the current price at microsoft.com before you buy. Prices in stores like Costco or Best Buy may differ.

Who actually needs one

- **You're running out of space** and don't want to delete old mail — Basic is the inexpensive fix: 100 GB of mailbox space and 100 GB of cloud storage.
- **The ads bother you** — every paid plan removes them.
- **You want Word and Excel** on your computer, or OneDrive room for all your photos — that's Personal or Family.
- **The whole family** needs Office and storage — Family covers up to six people for one price.

FROM BILL

My straight advice

If your email is working and you're not near the storage limit, you don't need to pay for anything. Free Outlook.com does every job in this guide. If you're bumping into the limit, Basic at $19.99 a year is usually the most sensible step before anything bigger. And you never need Premium just for email. I'm happy to look at what you have and tell you honestly whether any plan is worth it.

SCAM ALERT

Microsoft never phones you about a subscription

Fake "your Microsoft subscription has renewed — call this number to cancel" emails and pop-ups are a favorite trick. Microsoft doesn't call you or ask you to call a number in an email. To see what you actually pay, sign in at **account.microsoft.com** and look under **Subscriptions** (or **Services & subscriptions**). If it isn't listed there, you're not paying for it.

If you stop paying

If a Microsoft 365 subscription ends, Microsoft keeps your files, but your storage drops back to the free amounts. If you're over 15 GB of mail or 5 GB of cloud storage at that point, you won't be able to send or receive email until you make room. So if you plan to cancel, tidy up first.

PART 5

Keeping Your Account Safe

Your Outlook address is the master key to your whole Microsoft world. Here's how to lock it, how to spot the fake messages that try to steal it, and exactly what to do if you're ever locked out or broken into.

CHAPTER 19

Protecting Your Microsoft Account

Remember from Chapter 3 that your Outlook.com or Hotmail address is also your **Microsoft account**. Whoever controls it can read your mail, reset passwords for your other accounts (because those reset links come to your email), and sometimes reach your files and purchases. So this is the one account most worth a few minutes of care.

Your security home page

Everything in this chapter lives on one page. In your browser, go to **account.microsoft.com**, sign in, and click **Security**. (You can also type **account.microsoft.com/security** directly.) Type the address yourself — never follow a link in an email to get there.

Step 1: Keep your recovery details up to date

Microsoft keeps a phone number and a backup email address on file for you, called your **security info**. If you ever forget your password, that's how Microsoft sends you a code to prove it's really you. On the Security page, look for the option to manage how you sign in, check that the phone number is your current mobile and the backup email is one you can still open, and add or remove as needed.

HEADS UP

An old phone number is a locked door

A very common reason people can't get back into an account is that the phone number on file is a landline they gave up or a mobile number they changed. Take two minutes today to make sure Microsoft has your **current** mobile number. It may be the most valuable two minutes in this guide.

Step 2: Turn on two-step verification

Two-step verification means that signing in from a new device takes your password *plus* a second proof — a code sent to your phone, or a tap in the Microsoft Authenticator app. A thief who steals your password still can't get in without your phone.

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com/security** and sign in.
2. Choose the option to manage how you sign in (Microsoft calls it **Manage how I sign in** or **Advanced security options**).

3. Scroll to **Two-step verification** and choose to turn it **on**.
4. Follow the prompts. Microsoft will check you have at least two working ways to verify — for example your mobile number and a backup email.
5. If Microsoft shows you a **recovery code**, write it down and keep it somewhere safe at home. It's your spare key (Chapter 21).

Step 3 (optional): Passkeys and going passwordless

Microsoft now lets you sign in with a **passkey** — your phone or computer's face recognition, fingerprint or PIN — instead of typing a password. There's nothing to remember and nothing a scammer can trick you into typing on a fake page. On the Advanced security options page, choose **Add a new way to sign in or verify**, then **Face, Fingerprint, PIN, or Security Key**, and follow the steps. You can even turn on a **Passwordless account** there, which removes the password altogether and uses the Microsoft Authenticator app to approve sign-ins.

GOOD TO KNOW

Passwordless is wonderful — with a backup

Going passwordless is very secure, but it depends on having your phone. Before you turn it on, make sure your security info is current and you've written down your recovery code. Bill's Securing Your Accounts manual explains passkeys and authenticator apps in more depth.

Step 4: Glance at recent activity

On the Security page, choose to review your **sign-in activity** (the **Recent activity** page — also at **account.live.com/activity**). It lists significant sign-ins over the last 30 days with rough locations. If Microsoft has spotted something odd, you'll see an **Unusual activity** section asking whether it was you. If it wasn't, choose **This wasn't me** and Microsoft walks you through changing your password.

TIP

Locations are approximate

Don't panic if a sign-in shows a nearby city instead of your town — locations are based on your internet provider and are often a little off. What matters is a sign-in from another country or a device you've never owned.

CHAPTER 20

Phishing in Outlook: Spot It and Report It

Phishing (said "fishing") is a fake message dressed up as a company you trust — Microsoft, your bank, Amazon, the post office — designed to get you to click a link and type your password, or to call a fake support number. It's one of the most common ways email accounts are stolen. The good news: once you know the signs, they stand out.

The fakes Outlook users see most

- "Your mailbox is full — click to upgrade your storage."
- "Your account will be closed / suspended in 24 hours unless you verify."
- "Unusual sign-in activity — confirm your identity here." (The real alert sends you to your account page; a fake one sends you to a look-alike.)
- "Your Microsoft 365 / antivirus subscription has renewed — call to cancel."
- "You have a voicemail / a document has been shared with you" with a sign-in link.

SCAM ALERT

Microsoft will never email you for your password

Microsoft doesn't send emails asking you to confirm your password, unlock your mailbox, or call a support number. Any message that does is a fake, no matter how real the logo looks. When in doubt, don't click — go to outlook.com or account.microsoft.com yourself.

The clues Outlook gives you

What you see	What it means
A question mark (?) in the sender's picture	Microsoft says Outlook shows a **?** when it couldn't confirm the sender is who they claim to be. Not every one is a scam, but be very careful — especially if a sender you know suddenly shows one.
A "via" tag beside the sender	Means the message was actually sent by a different address than the one shown. Sometimes innocent; worth a second look.
A yellow or red warning banner	Outlook couldn't verify the sender or found something suspicious. Take it seriously.
The real sender's address	Click or tap the sender's name to see the full address. "Microsoft Account Team" writing from a random Gmail or a strange web address is a fake.
The real link destination	On a computer, rest the mouse pointer on a link without clicking; the real web address appears. If it isn't the company's real site, don't click.

Reporting a phishing message

1. Select the suspicious message (don't click anything inside it).
2. On Outlook.com or new Outlook, click **Report** in the toolbar and choose **Report phishing**.
3. In the phone app, open the message, tap the **three dots**, choose **Report Junk**, then **Phishing**.
4. The message is removed from your inbox, and Microsoft uses your report to protect others. If the same sender keeps writing, block them too (Chapter 15).

STAY SAFE

If you already clicked

It happens to careful people. If you clicked a link but didn't type anything, close the page — you're most likely fine. If you typed your password, **change it right away** at account.microsoft.com (go there yourself, not through the email), and follow Chapter 21. If you gave card or bank details, call the number on the back of your card. And if you called a number and let someone onto your computer, disconnect it from the internet and call someone you trust. Bill's Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual covers that in detail.

CHAPTER 21

Locked Out or Hacked: Getting Back In

Two situations feel alike but have different fixes: you **can't sign in** (forgotten password, lost phone), or someone **else got in** (strange sent mail, changed settings). Take a breath — both are usually fixable, and there's a clear path for each.

Forgot your password

1. Go to **outlook.com**, click **Sign in**, and enter your address.
2. On the password screen, click **Forgot password?**
3. Microsoft offers to send a code to the phone number or backup email in your security info. Pick one, get the code, and type it in.
4. Choose a new password — something long that you don't use anywhere else. Write it down and keep it at home.

If you can't receive the code

If your old phone number or backup email no longer works, Microsoft has two other routes:

- **A recovery code.** If you saved the 25-character recovery code Microsoft gave you, use it from the sign-in page (look for **Other ways to sign in**) and you can set a new password. Microsoft notes that if two-step verification is on, some changes made this way take 30 days to take effect.
- **The account recovery form.** Microsoft's form asks questions only the real owner would know — old passwords, subjects of recent emails, contacts you've written to. Microsoft's Sign-in Helper tool can point you to it.

Tips Microsoft gives for the recovery form

- Fill it in on a computer or phone you've **used before** to sign in, from a place you usually use it, such as home.
- You'll need an email address Microsoft can reply to. A family member's is fine, or you can make a free temporary Outlook.com address.
- Answer as much as you can. Guessing is fine — Microsoft says wrong answers don't count against you.
- If it's turned down, you can try again, up to two times a day.

HEADS UP

The one case Microsoft can't help

Microsoft is clear about this: if two-step verification is on and you've lost access to **every** verification method, its support staff can't reset the account for you — they don't have a back door. That's what keeps thieves out, too. It's why keeping your security info current and your recovery code in a drawer (Chapter 19) matters so much.

SCAM ALERT

No one can "recover" your account for a fee

Fake recovery services and fake "Microsoft support" phone numbers found by searching online prey on people who are locked out. The real recovery is free and happens only on Microsoft's own pages. Never pay anyone, give remote access to your computer, or buy gift cards to get an account back.

If someone else got in

Signs include messages in Sent Items you didn't write, friends asking about odd emails "from you", settings you didn't change, or a sign-in alert you don't recognize. Act calmly but promptly:

1. Go to **account.microsoft.com** yourself and **change your password**. If you can't sign in, use Forgot password or the recovery form above.
2. On the Security page, check your **security info**. Remove any phone number or email that isn't yours, and add yours back if it was changed.
3. Turn on **two-step verification** if it wasn't on.
4. Open **Settings > Mail > Rules** in Outlook and delete any rule you didn't make — especially ones that forward or delete mail.
5. Look at **Recent activity** and mark anything unfamiliar as **This wasn't me**.
6. Tell your contacts (from a phone call or a fresh message) to ignore any strange emails or money requests that seemed to come from you.
7. If you use the same password anywhere else, change it there too.

FROM BILL

This is exactly when to call

Being locked out or hacked is stressful, and a mistake in the recovery form can cost days. If you'd like a calm, experienced person beside you, call (330) 200-8042. I'll help you get back in through Microsoft's real channels, secure the account properly, and check your other accounts while we're at it.

PART 6

Fixing Problems & Getting Help

Mail that won't send or won't arrive, messages that seem to have vanished, an honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page cheat-sheet.

CHAPTER 22

Mail Won't Send or Won't Arrive

When email stops flowing, it feels like something big is broken. It almost never is. Work down this list in order — most problems are solved in the first few steps.

If you're not receiving mail

1. **Check the Other tab.** If your inbox has Focused and Other tabs, click **Other** (Chapter 11).
2. **Check Junk Email.** If it's there, select it and click **Not junk** (Chapter 14).
3. **Check your blocked list. Settings > Mail > Junk email** — make sure the sender isn't blocked by mistake (Chapter 15).
4. **Check your rules and Sweep.** A rule or Sweep may be moving or deleting that sender's mail (Chapters 12 and 16). Look in **Settings > Mail > Rules**.
5. **Check your storage.** If your mailbox or cloud storage is full, mail bounces back to the sender. **Settings > Account > Storage** (Chapter 17).
6. **Search for it.** Type the sender's name in the search box at the top — it searches every folder.
7. **Ask the sender to check the address** they used. One wrong letter sends it to someone else.

If your mail won't send

1. **Check your internet.** Can you open another website? If not, the problem is your Wi-Fi, not Outlook. Restarting your router often fixes it.
2. **Look in Drafts (and Outbox, if you have one).** A message that didn't go may be waiting there. Open it and click Send again.
3. **Check the address** for typos, spaces, or a comma instead of a dot.
4. **Check your storage.** Over your limit, Outlook.com can't send either (Chapter 17).
5. **Check the attachment size.** Very large photos or videos may be refused. Share them as a OneDrive link instead (Chapter 9).
6. **Sign out and back in**, or close and reopen the Outlook app. On the website, try a different browser.

GOOD TO KNOW

Is it just you, or is Outlook down?

Now and then Microsoft's email service itself has a hiccup. If everything above looks fine, give it an hour. Microsoft keeps a page of current Outlook.com issues on its support site — search support.microsoft.com for "Outlook.com known issues" to see whether others are affected.

The phone app is acting up

- Close the app completely and open it again.
- Check for an update in the App Store or Google Play Store.
- Restart the phone.
- As a last step, remove the account from the app (**Settings > Accounts**, tap the account, **Delete account** or **Remove account**) and add it again. Your mail is safe at Microsoft — removing it from the app doesn't delete anything.

CHAPTER 23

Finding Lost or Deleted Email

"I had it yesterday and now it's gone." Almost always, the message is still there — just somewhere you didn't expect. Here's how to find it, and how to rescue one you really did delete.

Search: the fastest way to find anything

1. Click the **Search** box at the top of Outlook.
2. Type something you remember — the person's name, a word from the subject, or a word from the message itself.
3. Press **Enter**. Outlook searches every folder, including Archive.
4. Click the result to open it. To go back to your inbox, click **Inbox** on the left.

Places a "missing" message often hides

- The **Other** tab of the Focused Inbox.
- **Archive** — perhaps a swipe or click archived it.
- **Junk Email**.
- A folder a rule moved it into.
- **Deleted Items** — if it was deleted by mistake.

Getting back a deleted message

Deleted mail goes first to **Deleted Items**. Open that folder, find the message, and drag it back to the Inbox (or right-click and choose **Restore** or **Move**).

If you've already emptied Deleted Items, Outlook.com gives you a second chance:

1. On a computer, open Outlook.com and click **Deleted Items** in the folder list.
2. At the top of the message list, click **Recover items deleted from this folder**.
3. Tick the messages you want back and click **Restore**.

GOOD TO KNOW

You have about 30 days

Microsoft says items removed from Deleted Items can usually be recovered this way for **30 days**. After that they're gone for good. This recovery screen doesn't work in a phone's web browser, so use a computer. If the message isn't listed there, it has most likely been permanently removed.

TIP

Archive instead of delete

If you're never quite sure whether you'll need a message again, archive it instead of deleting it. Archived mail stays searchable forever (as long as you have space), and your inbox stays just as tidy.

CHAPTER 24

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle almost everything in Outlook on your own. But part of being truly helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or money — so here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **You're locked out** or think someone got into your account. Getting the recovery right the first time matters.
- **Moving off the old Mail and Calendar apps**, especially if you had mail saved only on the computer.
- **Your storage is full** and you want to clear space without losing family photos.
- **Setting up Outlook** on a new computer or phone, with all your accounts in one place.
- **Turning on two-step verification or a passkey** and making sure your recovery details are right.
- **Deciding whether Microsoft 365 is worth it** — I'll tell you honestly if you don't need it.
- **A message you're unsure about.** Forward me a description or call before you click. I'd much rather hear from you before than after.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace — no rushing, no talking down, no leaving you with settings you're afraid of. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money. That's been my way through 30+ years of professional experience, here in Portage County and beyond.

How to reach me	Details
What it costs	$49 remote · $99 in your home. Remote means I connect to your computer over the internet, with your permission, while we talk on the phone.
Call or text	**(330) 200-8042**. If I'm with another client, Sophie, my AI receptionist, can answer the phone, take your details and book a time for you.
Book online	**billshometech.com/book**

FROM BILL

The guides are free; my time is paid

This guide and all of Bill's Complete Manuals are free to read. When you want me to do the work with you, it's $49 remote · $99 in your home. And if someone calls claiming to be from Microsoft and you didn't ask them to, hang up — then call me at the number above if you'd like a second opinion.

Thank you for letting me help you feel at home with your email. Take your time, click without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 25

Your Outlook Cheat-Sheet

Print this page and keep it by the computer. The whole guide, boiled down.

Where things are

To do this	Go here
Open your mail on the web	Type **outlook.com** in your browser and sign in.
Almost every setting	The **Settings** gear, near the top right.
Turn the Focused Inbox off	Settings > Mail > Layout > **Don't sort my messages**.
Make a rule	Settings > Mail > Rules > **Add new rule**.
Block or allow a sender	Settings > Mail > **Junk email**.
Clear out a chatty sender	Select one of their messages > **Sweep**.
Check your storage	Settings > Account > **Storage**.
Away message	Settings > Account > **Automatic replies**.
Account security	Type **account.microsoft.com/security** yourself.
Get back deleted mail	Deleted Items > **Recover items deleted from this folder** (within about 30 days, on a computer).

Write it down once (on your printed copy)

Keep handy	
My Outlook / Hotmail address	_____
Phone number on my Microsoft account	_____
Backup email on my account	_____
Recovery code kept in	_____
Do I pay for Microsoft 365? Which plan?	_____

When mail goes missing, in order

1. Check the **Other** tab, then **Junk Email**, then **Archive**.
2. Search for the sender's name.

3. Check rules, Sweep and your blocked list.
4. Check storage — full storage stops mail both ways.
5. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

Safety rules to live by

- Microsoft never emails asking for your password and never phones you out of the blue.
- Go to outlook.com and account.microsoft.com **yourself** — don't follow links in messages.
- A **?** in the sender's picture means Outlook couldn't verify them. Be careful.
- Keep your phone number and backup email current, and turn on two-step verification.
- Sign in to old Hotmail accounts at least once a year so they aren't closed.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You now know which Outlook is which, how to keep your inbox tidy, how to stop junk, how storage works, and how to keep thieves out of your account. That's everything you need to enjoy your email again. Keep this guide bookmarked, explore without fear, and call if you ever want a hand.