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PlayStation 5

Setup, accounts, PlayStation Plus, storage and parental controls — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for families and grandparents

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For PS5, PS5 Digital Edition & PS5 Pro · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your PlayStation 5 manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Whether you're setting up a console as a gift for the grandkids, keeping an eye on what the children play, or enjoying a game or a movie yourself, every feature here comes with what it actually does *for you* and slow, step-by-step directions. It's written for the PS5, PS5 Digital Edition and PS5 Pro as of November 2026. Sony updates the console's software often, so if a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting to Know Your PS5

What a PlayStation 5 is, which model is which, what comes in the box, and how to hook it up and switch it on for the very first time. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe a PlayStation 5 just arrived as a gift for the grandchildren and you've been handed the job of setting it up. Maybe your own children asked for one and you want to know what you're saying yes to. Or maybe you're curious about playing a game or watching a movie on it yourself. Whoever you are, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. Helping people feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I've written this guide the way I'd explain it sitting next to you on the couch: plainly, patiently, and without the gamer talk. When a word like "PSN" or "M.2 SSD" comes up, I'll stop and tell you what it means.

You can't break it by exploring

A PlayStation looks complicated, with its glowing lights and a controller covered in buttons. But you cannot hurt it by pressing the wrong button or opening the wrong menu. If you ever feel lost, press the **PS button** in the middle of the controller (the little PlayStation logo) and you'll always find your way back. You'll meet that button properly in Chapter 6.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

A family that understands its game console can enjoy it instead of arguing about it. A few minutes of setup (the right accounts, sensible time limits and a spending cap) means fewer surprise charges, fewer bedtime battles, and more time actually having fun together.

What's in this guide

- **Setting up** the console, the TV connection and the controller (Parts 1 and 2).
- **Accounts and security**: your PlayStation account, two-step sign-in and passcodes (Part 3).
- **Keeping kids safe**: child accounts, age limits, playtime, spending limits and the free PlayStation Family phone app (Part 4).
- **Games, PlayStation Plus and storage**: what to buy, what the subscription gets you and what to do when the console fills up (Parts 5 and 6).
- **Beyond games**: movies and TV apps, playing from a phone, and easier-to-see settings (Part 7).

- **Staying safe and fixing hiccups**: the scams aimed at PlayStation families and the fixes for common problems (Part 8).

And I'm only a phone call away

If you get stuck, you're never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small and no one will make you feel silly for asking. Now let's meet your PlayStation.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Which PS5 Is Which

A **PlayStation 5** (PS5 for short) is a game console made by Sony. It's a box that plugs into your TV and plays video games, and it also plays movies and runs TV apps like Netflix and YouTube. You hold a wireless **controller** to work it. Sony sells three versions today, and they all run the same games.

The three PS5 models

Model	What makes it different	Sony's U.S. price
PS5 (with a disc drive)	Plays game discs, Blu-ray movies and DVDs as well as downloaded games.	$649.99
PS5 Digital Edition	No disc drive. Every game is downloaded from the PlayStation Store.	$599.99
PS5 Pro	Sony's most powerful model, for sharper, smoother graphics on a 4K TV. No disc drive built in.	$899.99

Those are Sony's recommended prices, which took effect on April 2, 2026. Stores often sell bundles that include a game, and holiday sales come and go, so the price on the shelf may be different. If a deal looks far too good, especially from a website you've never heard of, be careful (see Chapter 25).

GOOD TO KNOW

Which one should you buy?

For most families, the plain **PS5** or the **Digital Edition** is plenty. The Pro only makes a difference on a large 4K TV with someone who cares a lot about graphics. Choose the disc version if you'd like to buy used games, borrow discs from friends, or watch Blu-ray movies. Choose Digital if you're happy to buy everything as downloads.

Finding out which one you have

The quickest way is to look at the box or the front of the console: a disc model has a slot for discs. To see the exact model number on the screen, go to **Settings** > **System** > **System Software** > **Console Information**. The model number starts with **CFI-**. Write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28; it helps if you ever call for help.

What about PlayStation Portal?

You may also see a **PlayStation Portal** in stores. It looks like a controller with a screen in the middle. It is *not* a separate console: it streams games from a PS5 at home over Wi-Fi, so it's only useful if you already own a PS5. Sony's U.S. price is $249.99. There's more about playing away from the TV in Chapter 23.

CHAPTER 3

What's in the Box & What Else You Might Want

Open the box slowly and keep the packaging for a few weeks in case anything needs to go back. Here's what you'll find and what each piece is for.

In the box

Item	What it does
The console	The main box. It can stand upright or lie flat.
A DualSense controller	The wireless handheld controller. It has a built-in rechargeable battery.
HDMI cable	Connects the console to your TV. Use this one; it's made for the PS5.
Power cord	Plugs into the wall or a surge protector.
USB cable	Connects the controller to the console for charging and for pairing the first time.
A stand or feet	Helps the console sit steadily. The instructions in the box show how it attaches.

TIP

Keep the paperwork together

Slip the quick-start sheet, the receipt and the console's serial number (on the bottom of the box) into an envelope and keep it with your other appliance manuals. If the console ever needs warranty service, you'll be glad you did.

Things you might add later

- **A second controller**, if two people will play together. Sony's own DualSense works best.
- **A headset**, if a youngster will chat while playing, or so someone can play late without waking the house.
- **A charging stand** for the controllers, so they're always ready.
- **A Disc Drive** (sold separately) for the Digital Edition or the Pro, if you later decide you want to play discs.
- **Extra storage** if the console fills up with games (Chapter 21).

HEADS UP

You don't need to buy everything at once

Stores like to sell add-ons at the register. The console works perfectly well with just what's in the box. Live with it for a few weeks and then decide what you actually need.

PART 2

Setting It Up

Connecting the PS5 to your TV, the first-time setup, getting comfortable with the controller, and the right way to turn it off.

CHAPTER 4

Hooking It Up to the TV

This is the part people dread, and it's the easiest part of all. Two cables go into the console, and one of them goes into the TV.

Pick a good spot

- Near the TV, with room to breathe. The PS5 pulls in air and pushes out warm air, so leave a few inches of open space around it. Don't tuck it inside a closed cabinet or pile things on top.
- On a flat, steady surface where it won't be knocked over by pets or small children.
- Near a power outlet. A surge protector is a good idea for any expensive electronics.
- Close to your Wi-Fi router if you can, or within reach of a network cable (more on that below).

Connect the cables

1. Plug one end of the **HDMI cable** into the **HDMI OUT** port on the back of the PS5.
2. Plug the other end into an **HDMI** port on your TV. TVs usually label them HDMI 1, HDMI 2 and so on. Note which number you used.
3. Plug the **power cord** into the back of the PS5 and into the wall or surge protector.
4. Optional but recommended: if your internet router is nearby, connect a network cable from the router to the PS5's **LAN** port. A wired connection is steadier than Wi-Fi for games and big downloads.
5. Turn on the TV, and use the TV remote's **Input** or **Source** button to pick the HDMI number you used.

> **TIP**
>
> **Write down the HDMI number**
>
> "The PlayStation is on HDMI 2." Write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28. When someone says the TV shows "No Signal," nine times out of ten the TV is simply set to the wrong input.

GOOD TO KNOW

4K and fancy TV settings

The PS5 works on any TV with an HDMI port, old or new. On a newer 4K TV it can show sharper pictures. You don't need to change anything; the console figures out what your TV can do during setup.

CHAPTER 5

The First-Time Setup

The first time you turn the PS5 on, it walks you through a short setup on the screen. Set aside about half an hour, because the console usually downloads an update along the way. Have your **Wi-Fi password** handy, and decide whose PlayStation account will be the main one (see Chapter 8).

Step by step

1. Press the **power button** on the front of the console. A light glows and the screen comes on.
2. Connect the controller to the console with the **USB cable**, then press the **PS button** in the middle of the controller. This pairs the two so they know each other.
3. Choose your **language**.
4. Connect to the internet: choose your Wi-Fi network and type the password, or let it use the network cable if you plugged one in.
5. If an update is offered, let it install. The console may restart. This is normal.
6. Sign in with a **PlayStation account** or create one. If you're setting it up for a child, the adult should sign in first; Chapter 11 explains why.
7. If you're replacing an older PlayStation, the setup may offer to **transfer data** from it. See below.
8. Follow the remaining screens (power-saving choices, a few privacy questions). It's fine to accept the suggested choices; you can change any of them later in **Settings**.

Moving over from an older PS4 or PS5

If the family is upgrading, the new PS5 can copy saved games, settings and games from the old console. Both consoles need to be on, updated, signed in to the **same account**, and connected to the same home network. If you skip it during setup, you can do it later: go to **Settings** > **System** > **System Software** > **Data Transfer**, then select **Continue**.

HEADS UP

Don't unplug during a transfer

Sony warns not to turn off either console or change network settings while data is moving, because that can damage or lose data. Start the transfer when nobody needs the TV for a while. A child account can't transfer during the new console's first setup; finish setup first, or let an adult account do it.

CHAPTER 6

The Controller, Explained

The PS5 controller is called the **DualSense**. It has a lot of buttons, but for everyday use you only need a few. Hold it with both hands, thumbs on top.

The buttons that matter

Button	What it does
PS button	The round PlayStation logo in the middle. Press it once to bring up the menu at the bottom of the screen (the **control center**). Hold it to go to the home screen. If you're ever lost, press this.
X button	The "yes" or "select" button, on the right side with the other shapes.
Circle button	The "back" button. Press it to go back one screen.
Left stick and arrow buttons	Move around the menus.
Options button	To the right of the touch pad. Brings up extra choices for whatever is highlighted.
Create button	To the left of the touch pad. Takes screenshots and video clips of a game.
Mute button	The small button below the PS button. Mutes the controller's built-in microphone; it glows orange when muted.

Charging the controller

The controller has a battery inside. Plug it into the console with the USB cable to charge, or use a charging stand. The light bar around the touch pad shows when it's charging. A controller can charge while the console is in rest mode (Chapter 7), so many families simply plug it in at night.

Adding a second controller

1. Connect the new controller to the console with the USB cable.
2. Press its **PS button**.
3. Unplug the cable. The controller now works wirelessly and remembers this console.

TIP

A gentler rumble

The DualSense buzzes and pushes back on the triggers during games. If that's uncomfortable for older hands or arthritis, it can be turned down. Look under **Settings** > **Accessories** > **Controllers** for vibration and trigger effect intensity.

CHAPTER 7

Turning It On, Off & Rest Mode

A PS5 has three states: on, off, and **rest mode**, a low-power sleep. Knowing the difference saves a lot of confusion and protects the console.

The three states

State	What it means
On	Running normally. The light on the console is white.
Rest mode	Asleep, using a little power so it can charge controllers, download updates and wake up quickly. The light glows orange.
Off	Completely off. No light.

The right way to turn it off or put it to sleep

1. Press the **PS button** on the controller to open the control center at the bottom of the screen.
2. Select the **Power** icon at the far right.
3. Choose **Enter Rest Mode** or **Turn Off PS5**.

HEADS UP

Don't pull the plug while it's on

Unplugging a PS5 while it's on or in rest mode (orange light) can damage saved games or the console's software. Always wait until the light is completely off before you unplug it or flip a power strip.

GOOD TO KNOW

Rest mode and Remote Play

Rest mode is what lets the console download updates overnight and lets you wake it up from a phone with Remote Play. Chapter 23 shows the two rest-mode settings that make that work.

PART 3

Accounts & Security

Your PlayStation account, keeping it safe with two-step sign-in, and sharing one console with the whole family.

CHAPTER 8

Your PlayStation Account

To download games, play online or use PlayStation Plus, each person signs in with an **account for PlayStation**. You'll also hear it called a **PSN account**, short for PlayStation Network, Sony's online service. The account is free.

The pieces of an account

Part	What it is
Sign-in ID	Your email address. This is what you type to sign in.
Password	Pick a strong one you don't use anywhere else, and store it in a password manager or a safe written list.
Online ID	The nickname other players see. Children should use a name that doesn't reveal their real name, age or town.
Wallet	Money stored on the account for buying games. You can add a credit card or redeem PlayStation Store gift cards.

Who should have which account

- **An adult** (a parent or grandparent) should have their own adult account and be the **family manager**. That person controls the money and the rules.
- **Every child** should have their own **child account**, created by the adult. Sony says each child needs a separate child account made with their real name and date of birth, so age limits work.
- **Other adults** in the home can have their own adult accounts in the same family.

STAY SAFE

Don't let kids use the grown-up account

It's tempting to sign everyone in as Mom or Grandpa. But then the child can see every game, chat with anyone and spend the card on file. Ten minutes setting up a child account (Chapter 11) prevents all of that.

CHAPTER 9

Locking Down Your Account: 2-Step Sign-In & Passkeys

Game accounts are a favorite target for thieves, because they hold a credit card and games that can be resold. **2-step verification** (Sony calls it 2SV) means that even if someone steals your password, they still can't get in without a code from your phone.

Turn on 2-step verification on the PS5

1. Go to **Settings** > **Users and Accounts** > **Security** > **2-Step Verification**.
2. Choose a method: **Text Message** (a code is texted to your phone) or **Authenticator App** (an app such as Google Authenticator or Microsoft Authenticator shows the code).
3. Enter your mobile number, or scan the QR code on the screen with the authenticator app.
4. Type the code you receive and select **Activate**.
5. Write down your **backup codes** and keep them somewhere safe at home.

TIP

Why the backup codes matter

If you lose or replace your phone, the backup codes are how you get back into your account. Without them, Sony has to verify your identity, which takes longer. You can see them any time by signing in to Account Management on playstation.com and selecting **Security** > **Backup Codes**.

Passkeys: signing in without a password

Sony now offers **passkeys**, a newer way to sign in that uses your phone's fingerprint, face or screen lock instead of a password. They're quick and very hard to steal. You set one up on playstation.com under Account Management > **Security**. If your phone or computer doesn't support passkeys, stick with 2-step verification; either one is a big improvement.

SCAM ALERT

A code you didn't ask for

If a text arrives with a PlayStation sign-in code and you aren't signing in, someone may be trying your password. Never read that code to anyone who calls or messages you, no matter who they say they are. Change your password from playstation.com. Chapter 25 has more.

CHAPTER 10

Sharing the Console: Users & Login Passcodes

One PS5 can hold several people, each with their own games, saves and settings. When you turn it on, it asks who's playing. Each person picks their own picture.

Switching between people

1. Press the **PS button** to open the control center.
2. Select your profile picture, then **Switch User**.
3. Pick the person, or select **Add User** to add someone new.

Put a passcode on the grown-up account

If a child can simply pick your picture and sign in as you, every parental control is useless. Sony recommends that **everyone** with an account on the console sets a four-digit login passcode.

1. Sign in as yourself.
2. Go to **Settings** > **Users and Accounts**.
3. Select **Login Settings** > **Set a PS5 Login Passcode**.
4. Enter four digits using the controller buttons the screen shows. Choose something only you know.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Two different passcodes**
>
> The **login passcode** protects one person's account on this console. The **console restriction passcode** (Chapter 16) protects the parental-control settings. They're separate. Write both on the cheat-sheet and keep it where children won't find it.

PART 4

Keeping Kids Safe

Child accounts, age limits, chat settings, playtime, spending limits, and the free phone app that lets a parent or grandparent manage it all from the kitchen table.

CHAPTER 11

The Family Manager & Child Accounts

PlayStation organizes a household into a **family**. One adult is the **family manager**: the person in charge. Children are **child members**, and their settings follow them to any PlayStation they sign in on.

Who can do what

Family member	What they can do
Family manager (one per family)	Adds family members, sets parental controls and playtime, sets spending limits, sees each child's playtime, approves exceptions, resets a child's password, and can name other adults as parents or guardians.
Parent or guardian	An adult the manager trusts. Can set parental controls and approve requests, but can't spend the manager's wallet or reset a child's password.
Child member	Plays within the limits you set. Can ask you for exceptions. Can't add payment methods or leave the family.
Adult member	Another grown-up in the home with their own account and their own wallet.

Add a child on the PS5

1. Sign in to the PS5 with **your** (the adult's) account.
2. Select your profile picture in the upper right of the home screen.
3. Select **Switch User** > **Add User** > **Get Started**.
4. Select **Create an Account** and follow the screens. Enter the child's real date of birth so the age limits work properly.
5. Choose the child's parental controls when asked. You can change every one of them later.

You can also add a child from a phone using the PlayStation Family app (Chapter 15), or on a computer by signing in to Account Management on playstation.com and selecting **Family Management** > **Add Family Member** > **Add a Child**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some things to know before you start

Child members can't be removed from a family once added, so make the family under the adult who'll be in charge for the long run. When a child is old enough, the console offers to upgrade them to an adult account, and that upgrade can't be undone.

FROM BILL

Grandparents can be guardians too

If the grandkids play at your house, ask the parent (the family manager) to make you a **parent or guardian** in their family. Then you can approve a request or add twenty minutes of playtime from your own phone, without needing their password.

CHAPTER 12

Parental Controls & Age Ratings

Every game has an age rating. In the U.S. that's the **ESRB** rating on the box or store page: **E** for Everyone, **E10+**, **T** for Teen, **M** for Mature (17+) and **AO** for Adults Only. PlayStation's parental controls use those ratings to decide what a child can start.

Where the controls live

1. Sign in as the family manager (or a parent or guardian).
2. Go to **Settings** > **Family and Parental Controls** > **Family Management**.
3. Select the child, then choose the parental control you want to change.

Start with a preset

Rather than setting a dozen things one by one, choose a **Restriction Level** and the console fills in sensible settings. You can change any single setting afterward, and the level then shows as **Customize**.

Preset	Roughly what it does
Child	PS5 games limited to the child's age; older PS4 games rated about 7 and under; web browser off; PlayStation VR off; chat and shared content off; spending limit 0.
Early Teens	PS5 games limited to the child's age; PS4 games about 12 or 13 and under; web browser off; chat off; spending limit 0.
Late Teens or Older	PS5 games limited to the child's age; PS4 games about 15 and under; web browser allowed; chat still off; spending limit 0.

Chat with strangers

When **Communication and User-Generated Content** is set to **Restrict**, your child can't send text messages or voice chat with other players (pre-written in-game messages still work), and can't see or share screenshots, video clips and broadcasts from other players. Every preset starts with this restricted, which is the safest choice for younger children.

Saying yes to just one game

If a child tries to start a game that's above their limit, the console blocks it and offers to send you a **request**. You get a notification and an email. You can allow that one game without loosening the rules for everything else. The same works for chat in a single game. The "Ways It Can Make Life Easier" topic walks through approving one from your phone.

TIP

Look at the game together

Before you approve a request, look up the game's rating and the short description of why it got that rating ("Fantasy Violence," "Online Interactions" and so on) on the ESRB website, esrb.org. It takes a minute and makes the conversation with the child easier.

CHAPTER 13

Playtime Limits

Playtime controls let you decide how long, and during which hours, each child can play. As time runs out, the console shows a reminder at the top of the screen, so there's no sudden surprise.

The three settings

Setting	What it does
Restrict Playtime	Turns limits on (**Restrict**) or off (**Do Not Restrict**).
When Playtime Ends	**Notify Only** (a reminder appears) or **Log Out** (the child is signed out). Younger children usually do better with Log Out.
Duration and Playable Hours	How many minutes a day, and between which hours, either the same every day or different for school days and weekends.

Set playtime on the PS5

1. Sign in as the family manager, parent or guardian.
2. Go to **Settings** > **Family and Parental Controls** > **Family Management** and select the child.
3. Set the child's **Time Zone** first; playtime won't work until it's set.
4. Select **Playtime Settings**, choose the limits, and select **Save**.

"Can I have more time?"

When a reminder appears, the child can select **Ask for More Playtime**. You get a notification and can choose **Change Playtime** or **Decline**. You can also give extra time yourself with **Change Playtime for Today**, from the console or the Family app. The limits apply on a PS4 too, if the child plays on both.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The console becomes the one who says "time's up," not you. Children tend to argue less with a timer they agreed to in advance, and you can still be the hero who grants fifteen extra minutes.

CHAPTER 14

Spending Limits

Games often sell extras inside the game: new outfits, coins, levels. On PlayStation, when a child buys something on their account, the money comes from the **family manager's wallet**. A monthly spending limit is how you keep that in check.

The good news: it starts at zero

By default, a child's **Monthly Spending Limit** is **0**, so they can't buy anything until you change it. If you'd like them to have a small allowance, set an amount you're comfortable with.

Set a spending limit on the PS5

1. Go to **Settings** > **Family and Parental Controls** > **Family Management**.
2. Select the child, then **Parental Controls** > **Monthly Spending Limit**.
3. Choose the amount and confirm.

HEADS UP

Anyone you make a guardian can change it

Sony notes that a parent or guardian you appoint can change spending limits too. Choose guardians you trust, and agree together on the amount.

Protect your own account's card, too

The limit protects the child's account. If a child ever signs in as **you**, they could buy with your card. That's one more reason to put a login passcode on the adult account (Chapter 10). Many families also skip saving a credit card at all and add money with gift cards bought at a store, so the most that can ever be spent is what's in the wallet.

TIP

Check the purchase history

Once a month, look over what was bought. Sign in to Account Management on playstation.com and open the transaction history. Spotting an odd charge early makes it much easier to sort out.

CHAPTER 15

The PlayStation Family App

The free **PlayStation Family** app puts the family controls on your phone. Instead of walking to the TV and digging through menus, you can set limits, approve requests and add playtime from wherever you are. Some family features are only available in the app.

Get started

1. On your iPhone or Android phone, download the **PlayStation Family** app from the App Store or Google Play. It's free.
2. Open it and select **Sign in** with the family manager's account (or **Create an Account**).
3. If your family isn't set up yet, select **Set Up Your Family** to create a child account.
4. Turn on notifications when the app asks, so you'll hear about requests right away.

What you can do from the app

- Change a child's **Parental Controls**, **Playtime Settings** and **Privacy Settings**: tap the child at the top of the home screen, then the settings icon next to their name.
- Approve or decline **game requests** and **chat requests**.
- See what they're playing right now and a week of activity.
- Set the **Monthly Spending Limit** and add funds to the wallet.
- Add another child or adult under **Settings** > **Family Management**.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A grandparent can say yes to "just one more level" from the next room, or a parent at work can approve a new game without a phone call home. Rules stay consistent because everyone is changing the same settings.

CHAPTER 16

Stop Kids from Changing the Rules

Children are clever. Two loopholes catch many families: making a brand-new account with no limits, or signing in as a guest. Close both, and protect your settings with a passcode.

Set the console restriction passcode

1. Sign in as the family manager.
2. Go to **Settings** > **Family and Parental Controls** > **PS5 Console Restrictions**.
3. Enter the current passcode. If you've never set one, it's **0000**.
4. Select **Change Your Console Restriction Passcode** and enter four new digits, twice.

> **HEADS UP**
>
> **Write this one down**
>
> Sony says that if you forget the console restriction passcode, you'll need to reset the PS5, which erases what's on it. Write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28 and keep it out of sight.

Block new accounts and guest sign-in

1. In **PS5 Console Restrictions**, select **User Creation and Guest Login**.
2. Choose **Not Allowed**.

Quick safety checklist

- Each child has their own child account with their real birthday.
- The adult accounts have login passcodes.
- The console restriction passcode is no longer 0000.
- New user creation and guest login are set to Not Allowed.
- Chat is restricted for younger children, and you've talked about what to do if a stranger is unkind.
- The spending limit is set on purpose, not by accident.

STAY SAFE

Talk, not just settings

No setting replaces a conversation. Tell children plainly: never share your password, your real name, your school or your address with someone you meet in a game, and come tell a grown-up if anyone asks for pictures, gifts or secrets. Promise they won't be in trouble for telling you.

PART 5

Games, PlayStation Plus & the Store

Buying games without overspending, what the PlayStation Plus subscription includes, and how to check or cancel it.

CHAPTER 17

Buying & Downloading Games

There are two ways to get a game: buy a **disc** at a store (disc models only) or buy a **download** from the **PlayStation Store**, which is built into the console. Either way, the game ends up stored on the PS5.

Discs or downloads?

	Disc	Download
Where you buy it	Any store, new or used	PlayStation Store on the console, phone app or website
Can you resell or lend it?	Yes	No; it's tied to the account
Still takes up space?	Yes, it installs to the console	Yes
Works on the Digital Edition?	Only with the separate Disc Drive	Yes

Buying from the PlayStation Store

1. From the home screen, select **PlayStation Store**.
2. Browse or use the **Search** icon to find a game. Check its age rating and price on the game's page.
3. Select the price or **Add to Cart**, then check out. The money comes from your wallet or card.
4. The game downloads by itself. You can watch progress in the control center under **Downloads/Uploads**.

TIP

Try before you buy

Many games have a free **demo** or **trial**, and some games are completely free to download, with optional purchases inside. Look for "Free" or "Download" on the store page. Watch out for those optional purchases with children (Chapter 14).

PlayStation Store gift cards

Gift cards sold in stores add money to an account's wallet. They're a tidy way to give a child a set amount to spend. To redeem one on the PS5, open the PlayStation Store, select the menu (the three dots) and choose **Redeem Code**, then type the code from the back of the card.

SCAM ALERT

Gift cards are for the PlayStation Store only

No real company, government office, utility, sheriff or grandchild in trouble will ever ask you to pay them with PlayStation (or any) gift cards. If someone tells you to buy gift cards and read them the numbers, it's a scam every time. Hang up. Chapter 25 explains the common versions.

HEADS UP

Refunds are limited

Digital games are much harder to return than a sweater. PlayStation has a refund request process, but the rules are strict, especially once a game has been downloaded or played. Before buying an expensive game, make sure it's the right one and the right edition. You can read the current rules on playstation.com under Support > PS Store & Refunds.

CHAPTER 18

PlayStation Plus: Essential, Extra & Premium

PlayStation Plus (PS Plus) is Sony's paid monthly or yearly subscription. You don't need it to play games you own. Families usually sign up for one reason: most games need PS Plus for **online multiplayer**, meaning playing over the internet with friends.

The three levels

Level	What it adds
Essential	Online multiplayer, a few games to claim each month (monthly games), member discounts, cloud storage for saved games, and Share Play.
Extra	Everything in Essential, plus the **Game Catalog** (hundreds of PS5 and PS4 games to download and play while you're a member) and a selection of Ubisoft+ Classics.
Premium	Everything in Extra, plus the **Classics Catalog** of older PlayStation games, game trials, **cloud streaming** of some PS5 games, and the Sony Pictures Catalog of movies.

What it costs

Prices change, so always check the amount on the sign-up screen before you pay. As of November 2026, the 12-month plans are reported at about **$79.99** (Essential), **$134.99** (Extra) and **$159.99** (Premium) in the U.S. Sony raised the one-month and three-month prices for new members in May 2026; Essential is now $10.99 a month or $27.99 for three months. Paying for a year is usually the cheapest way if you know you'll keep it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Do you need it at all?

If the household plays mainly by itself (story games, puzzle games, sports against the computer), you may not need PS Plus. If a child wants to play online with school friends, Essential is usually enough. Extra and Premium make sense when someone plays a lot of different games and would otherwise buy them. A game's store page shows whether it needs PS Plus for online play.

HEADS UP

Catalog games leave when you stop paying

Games from the Extra or Premium catalogs can be played only while you're a member, and Sony rotates games out of the catalog from time to time. Monthly games stay in your library while you remain a member at any level.

CHAPTER 19

Checking or Canceling a Subscription

Subscriptions renew automatically, which is handy until you forget about one. Here's how to see what you're paying for and when it renews, and how to stop it.

See your subscriptions on the PS5

1. Go to **Settings** > **Users and Accounts**.
2. Select **Account** > **Payment and Subscriptions** > **Subscriptions**.
3. Select a subscription to see its next payment date.

Cancel on the PS5

1. Follow the steps above to open **Subscriptions**.
2. Select the subscription, then **Cancel Subscription**.

This works for PlayStation Plus and for other subscriptions bought through PlayStation, such as EA Play, GTA+ or Ubisoft+ Classics. After you cancel, the subscription stops at the next payment date, so you keep what you've already paid for.

Cancel from a computer or phone

- **On the web:** sign in to Account Management on playstation.com, select **Subscription**, then **Cancel** under the one you want to stop.
- **In the PlayStation App:** tap the **PlayStation Store** icon, tap the menu at the top right, choose **Subscriptions Management**, then **Cancel**.

TIP

Set a reminder instead

Not sure whether to keep it? Leave it on, but put a reminder on your calendar a week before the renewal date. Then decide with fresh eyes.

PART 6

Storage: Making Room for Games

Why the console fills up, how to see what's taking space, and the two ways to add more.

CHAPTER 20

How Full Is It? Checking & Freeing Space

Modern games are big, and the PS5's built-in storage fills up faster than most people expect, especially with several family members each installing their favorites. When a download says there isn't enough space, don't panic. Deleting a game is not losing it.

See what's using the space

From the home screen, go to **Settings** > **Storage**. You'll see how much is free and how much each kind of data uses.

Delete a game you're not playing

1. Go to **Settings** > **Storage** > **Console Storage** > **Games and Apps**.
2. Choose the games you want to remove and select **Delete**.

> **WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU**
>
> **You won't lose what you paid for**
>
> A game you bought stays in your **Game Library** and can be downloaded again whenever you like, for free. For discs, just put the disc back in. Saved progress is kept separately on the console, so it's still there when the game comes back.

Back up saved games

If you have PlayStation Plus at any level, saved games can also be kept in Sony's **cloud storage**, a copy on the internet. That protects years of progress if the console ever fails. To upload them, go to **Settings** > **Saved Data and Game/App Settings** > **Saved Data (PS5)** and choose **Upload or Delete from Console Storage**.

CHAPTER 21

Adding Storage: USB Drives & M.2 SSDs

If deleting isn't enough, you can add storage. There are two kinds, and the difference matters.

The two choices

	USB extended storage	M.2 SSD (inside the console)
What it is	An external drive that plugs into a USB port	A small card-like drive that installs in a slot inside the PS5
Play PS5 games from it?	No. Store them there, then move them back to play	Yes
Play PS4 games from it?	Yes	Yes
Difficulty	Plug it in	Need a small screwdriver and some care
Size Sony supports	250 GB to 8 TB	250 GB to 8 TB

USB extended storage: the easy option

A USB drive is handy as a "parking lot" for PS5 games you're not playing right now (moving a game back is quicker than downloading it again), and older PS4 games can play straight from it. Sony asks for a SuperSpeed USB 5Gbps or faster drive between 250 GB and 8 TB, connected directly to the console, not through a USB hub. The console formats the drive the first time, which erases anything on it.

M.2 SSD: more room for PS5 games

An **M.2 SSD** is a fast drive the size of a stick of gum. Installed inside the PS5, it works just like the built-in storage. Sony's requirements are specific, so check the drive's details before buying:

- **PCIe Gen4 x4 M.2 NVMe** SSD. M.2 SATA drives don't work.
- Size from **250 GB to 8 TB**.
- A read speed of **5,500 MB/s or faster** is recommended.
- It **must have a heatsink** or another cooling part, either built in or added, and the whole thing must fit Sony's size limits.

Installing one, in short

1. Update the PS5's system software first.
2. Turn the console fully off, unplug everything and let it cool. Touch something metal to discharge static.
3. Remove the cover over the expansion slot (on newer models it's a small panel) and the screw on the slot cover.
4. Slide the drive in at an angle, press it down and fasten it with the screw.
5. Put the covers back, plug in and turn it on. The console offers to **format** the drive. That erases anything already on it.

To have new games download to the M.2 drive, go to **Settings** > **Storage** > **Installation Location**. To move games already installed, open the **Game Library**, highlight a game, press the **Options** button and choose **Move Games and Apps**.

HEADS UP

Not every drive that fits will work

Sony says it can't guarantee every drive that meets the specifications will work, and installing one wrong could damage the console. Sony's support page for adding an M.2 SSD has a video for each model. If you'd rather not open the console yourself, this is a good job to hand to someone experienced.

PART 7

Beyond Games

Movies and TV apps, playing away from the TV, and settings that make the screen easier to see and hear.

CHAPTER 22

Movies, TV & Streaming Apps

A PS5 is also a perfectly good movie and TV player. Popular streaming apps are available, and the disc model plays Blu-ray movies and DVDs. For some households it replaces a separate streaming stick.

Finding the TV apps

1. On the home screen, move to the top and switch from **Games** to **Media**.
2. Browse the apps shown there, or look in the **TV & Video** area for more.
3. Select an app such as Netflix, YouTube or Disney+ and choose **Download**. Most apps are free to download, but the service itself needs its own account and subscription.
4. Open the app and sign in with that service's email and password.

TIP

Use the TV remote? Maybe

Many TVs let their own remote control the PS5 through the HDMI cable, using a feature with names like HDMI-CEC, Anynet+, Bravia Sync or SimpLink. On the PS5 it's under **Settings** > **System** > **HDMI**. Sony also sells a Media Remote for the PS5, which is easier than the game controller for watching movies.

Playing a movie disc

On a PS5 with a disc drive, slide a Blu-ray or DVD into the slot (label side up when the console lies flat). It starts on its own. Press the **PS button** for playback controls. Parental controls include age limits for **Blu-ray Discs and DVDs** too (Chapter 12).

HEADS UP

Parental controls and other apps

PlayStation's age limits cover games and the console's own features. Streaming apps like Netflix or YouTube have their **own** profiles and kids' settings, which you set up inside each app or on that company's website.

CHAPTER 23

Remote Play & PlayStation Portal

PS Remote Play is a free app that shows your PS5 on a phone, tablet or computer and lets you control it over the internet. It's handy when someone else wants the TV, or for a child to finish a game in another room.

What you need

- An iPhone, iPad, or Android phone or tablet, with the free **PS Remote Play** app.
- Your PS5, updated, and the **same PlayStation account** on both.
- A good internet connection. Sony recommends at least 5 Mbps up and down, and 15 Mbps for best results.
- Optional: a PS5 controller paired to the phone with Bluetooth, which is much easier than the touch-screen buttons.

Set up the PS5 (one time)

1. Go to **Settings** > **System** > **Remote Play** and turn on **Enable Remote Play**.
2. So you can wake the console from rest mode, go to **Settings** > **System** > **Power Saving** > **Features Available in Rest Mode** and turn on **Stay Connected to the Internet** and **Enable Turning on PS5 from Network**.

Connect from your phone

1. Put the PS5 in rest mode or leave it on.
2. Open **PS Remote Play** on the phone and select **Sign In** with the same account.
3. Select **PS5**. The app finds your console and shows its screen.
4. To finish, tap the screen, select **options** > **Settings** > **Disconnect**. You can tick the box to put the console back in rest mode.

HEADS UP

Mind your phone data

Remote Play uses far more data than watching videos. Sony warns that on mobile data you could go over your plan's limit and run up a big bill. Use it on home Wi-Fi unless you have unlimited data.

PlayStation Portal

The **PlayStation Portal** ($249.99, Sony's U.S. price) is a dedicated Remote Play device: a controller with a screen in the middle. It needs a PS5 and good Wi-Fi to work. With PlayStation Plus Premium it can also stream some games from Sony's cloud. It's a nice gift for a household where the TV is in constant demand, but a phone or tablet with the free app does much the same job.

CHAPTER 24

Easier to See & Hear: Accessibility Settings

The PS5 has a good set of accessibility settings, and they're not only for people with a disability. Larger text and captions help anyone sitting across the room from a TV.

The settings worth knowing

Setting	What it does and where to find it
Text size	Makes the console's menus easier to read. Under **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Display and Sound**.
Zoom	Magnifies part of the screen. **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Display and Sound** > **Zoom**.
Screen reader	Reads on-screen text aloud and gives spoken guidance. **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Screen Reader**.
Closed captions	Shows words for what's said on screen and some sound cues, in supported content. **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Closed Captions**.
Mono audio for headphones	Sends the same sound to both ears, helpful with hearing loss in one ear. In the Display and Sound settings.
Color correction	Adjusts colors for color-blindness. In the Display and Sound settings.

TIP

Games have their own settings too

Many games have a separate **Accessibility** or **Options** menu with bigger subtitles, slower pacing or simpler controls. Sony's own games are known for having lots of these. Look in the game's menu before you decide a game is too hard to see or hear.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A grandparent who can read the menus can join in, pick a movie, or set up a timer without asking for help. That small bit of independence makes the console feel like part of the household instead of "the kids' thing."

PART 8

Staying Safe & Fixing Hiccups

The scams aimed at PlayStation families, and calm fixes for the problems that come up most.

CHAPTER 25

Gift-Card, Free-PS5 & Account Scams

Game consoles attract scammers because they mix children, money and excitement. The good news: the scams repeat the same few tricks, and once you know them, they're easy to spot.

SCAM ALERT

"Pay with gift cards"

A caller says you owe a fine, a bill, or that a grandchild is in jail, and tells you to buy PlayStation, Apple or Google Play gift cards and read the numbers over the phone. This is always a scam. Gift cards work only in their own store. Hang up, and call the person or office yourself using a number you already know.

SCAM ALERT

"You've won a free PS5" or "free PSN codes"

Pop-ups, emails and social media posts promise a free console or a "gift card generator." They lead to forms asking for your card number or account password. Real prizes don't ask for your card to "pay shipping." Websites that claim to generate free codes don't produce working codes.

SCAM ALERT

Fake PlayStation sign-in emails and messages

A message says your account will be suspended or a purchase needs approval, with a link to "sign in." The link goes to a look-alike page that steals the password. Don't click. Open the PlayStation app or type playstation.com yourself to check your account. Never give your password or a 2-step code to anyone who contacts you.

SCAM ALERT

Strangers offering free in-game money

In games, someone offers a child free coins, skins or currency in exchange for their sign-in details, or asks them to buy a gift card. Teach children that anyone who asks for a password or a gift card is not a friend, and to come get you.

If you think your account was taken

1. From a computer or phone, go to playstation.com and reset your password.
2. Turn on 2-step verification or a passkey (Chapter 9).
3. Check your transaction history and saved payment methods in Account Management.
4. If you can't get in, or see charges you didn't make, contact PlayStation Support through the **Contact Us** link at playstation.com/support. Call your card company about charges too.

STAY SAFE

Online shopping for a console

Buy a PS5 from a store you know, or Sony's own website. Be wary of social media sellers, prices far below everyone else's, and anyone who wants payment by gift card, wire transfer or a payment app. Those payments are very hard to get back.

CHAPTER 26

Fixing Common Hiccups

Most PS5 problems have a simple fix. Work down the list calmly; you can't make anything worse by trying these in order.

"No signal" or a black screen

1. Check that the TV is on the right **Input** (the HDMI number from Chapter 4).
2. Look at the console's light. No light means it's off; press the power button.
3. Make sure both ends of the HDMI cable are pushed in firmly. Try a different HDMI port on the TV.
4. Turn the PS5 completely off, wait until the light goes out, unplug it for a minute, then plug in and start it again.

The controller won't connect

1. Charge it with the USB cable for a while; it may simply be flat.
2. With the cable connected to the console, press the **PS button** to pair it again.
3. Still nothing? Turn the console off and on, then try again with the cable.

Slow downloads or games that lag online

- Pause other big downloads and streaming in the house for a while.
- Use a network cable from the router to the PS5 if you can (Chapter 4).
- Restart your internet router: unplug it for 30 seconds, plug it back in, wait a few minutes.
- Check whether PlayStation itself is having trouble at **status.playstation.com**.

"Not enough free space"

See Chapter 20 to delete a game you're not playing. You can download it again later at no charge.

A game freezes or won't start

1. Press the **PS button**, highlight the game's card and press **Options**, then close the game.
2. Start the game again.

3. If problems continue, check for an update: highlight the game on the home screen, press **Options** and choose to check for updates.
4. Make sure the console's own software is up to date: **Settings** > **System** > **System Software**.

HEADS UP

Before you reset anything

Sony's Safe Mode and reset options are powerful and some of them erase everything. If simple restarts don't help, back up saved games (Chapter 20) and ask for help before choosing a reset.

TIP

Overheating

If the console warns that it's too hot or shuts off by itself, give it more room. Move it out of a cabinet, away from walls and heaters, and gently dust the vents with a dry cloth or soft brush while it's off.

PART 9

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary to keep near the TV.

CHAPTER 27

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so you can handle most of your PlayStation on your own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time or worry. Here's my plain advice.

Times it's worth a call

- **Setting it up as a gift**: the console, the TV, the Wi-Fi, a family manager account and a child account for each grandchild, so it's ready on the big day.
- **Parental controls done right**: age limits, chat, playtime and spending set up together, and the PlayStation Family app on your phone.
- **Moving from an old PS4** without losing saved games.
- **Adding an M.2 SSD**, if you'd rather not open the console yourself.
- **Lag, dropouts or slow downloads** that point to weak Wi-Fi in the TV room.
- **Anything that feels like a scam**, or a charge you don't recognize.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, in your home here in Portage County or remotely over the phone and internet. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, I don't sell you gadgets you don't need, and I'll tell you honestly when a subscription isn't worth it. I bring more than 30 years of professional experience to every visit.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. No question is too small.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie

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

Thank you for letting me help your family enjoy the PlayStation. Take your time, explore without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 28

Your PS5 Cheat-Sheet

Print this page and keep it near the TV. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

To do this	Go here
Lost? Get back to the menu	Press the **PS button** (hold it for the home screen).
Turn it off or rest	PS button > **Power** icon > Enter Rest Mode or Turn Off PS5. Don't unplug until the light is off.
Family and kids' controls	Settings > Family and Parental Controls > Family Management.
Lock the settings	Settings > Family and Parental Controls > PS5 Console Restrictions.
Account security	Settings > Users and Accounts > Security > 2-Step Verification.
Subscriptions	Settings > Users and Accounts > Account > Payment and Subscriptions.
Storage	Settings > Storage.
No picture	TV remote > Input/Source > the PS5's HDMI number.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
The PS5 is on HDMI number	_____
PS5 model number (CFI-...)	_____
Family manager's sign-in email	_____
Where the 2-step backup codes are kept	_____
Console restriction passcode	_____ (keep this page out of sight)
Children's playtime and spending rules	_____
PS Plus level and renewal date	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. No picture: check the TV input, then the HDMI cable, then restart the PS5.
2. Controller dead: charge it with the cable and press the PS button.
3. Game frozen: PS button, close the game, start it again.
4. Out of space: delete a game you're not playing; you can download it again free.
5. Suspicious message or gift-card demand: stop, don't pay, and check with someone you trust.
6. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.