BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Roomba

Apps, maps, schedules, emptying, upkeep and fixes — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for Roomba owners and their families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Roomba robot vacuums and Combo models · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Roomba manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test. Whether a Roomba just arrived as a gift, you've had one for years and want it to work better, or you heard the news about iRobot and wondered whether yours will keep running, every chapter explains what a feature actually does *for you*, with slow step-by-step directions. Roombas come in many models and use one of two apps, so if a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

Part 1 — Getting to Know Your Roomba

1 A Note from Bill
2 What Happened to iRobot, and Does My Roomba Still Work?
3 Which Roomba Do I Have?
4 The Newer Lineup and the Older Models

Part 2 — Setting Up

5 Getting Your Home Ready
6 Placing the Dock
7 Which App: Roomba Home or iRobot Home (Classic)?
8 Connecting to Wi-Fi
9 The First Run and Your Map

Part 3 — Everyday Cleaning

10 Start, Pause and Send It Home
11 Rooms, Keep Out Zones and the Map
12 Schedules and Cleaning Preferences
13 Mopping with a Combo Model

Part 4 — Emptying and Care

14 Emptying the Bin
15 The Self-Emptying Dock and Bags
16 Brushes, Filter, Sensors and Wheels: A Simple Care Routine
17 The Battery: How Long It Lasts and Replacing It

Part 5 — When Something Goes Wrong

18 Error Messages and Beeps
19 Stuck, Lost or Missing Spots
20 Won't Charge or Won't Dock
21 Wi-Fi and App Trouble

Part 6 — Voice, Privacy and Staying Safe

22 Voice Control with Alexa, Google and Matter
23 Privacy and Cameras
24 Scams, Fake Support and Counterfeit Parts

Part 7 — Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

25 When to Call Bill
26 Your Roomba Cheat-Sheet

PART 1

Getting to Know Your Roomba

A welcome, the honest story of what happened to iRobot, how to find out exactly which Roomba you have, and how the newer models differ from the older ones. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Maybe a Roomba came home as a gift and is still sitting in its box. Maybe you've had one humming around the living room for years and it has started acting up. Or maybe you read that the company behind it went through a bankruptcy and you're wondering whether your robot is about to stop working. Whichever brought you here, this guide is for **you**.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it standing in your kitchen: patiently, in plain English, and without the marketing talk. If I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then.

You truly can't break it by exploring

A Roomba is a sturdy little machine built to bump into table legs all day long. Pressing a button in the app won't hurt it, and almost every setting can be changed back. The worst that usually happens is a clean that starts at the wrong time, and you can stop that with one tap or one press of the button on top.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a Roomba does for you

A robot vacuum takes the daily sweeping off your list. Crumbs, pet hair and tracked-in grit get picked up while you read, nap or run errands, and you save your energy (and your back) for the things you'd rather do. It doesn't replace a deep clean now and then, but it keeps floors tidy between them.

What this guide covers

- What happened to iRobot, the company that makes Roomba, and what it means for your robot.
- Finding your exact model and knowing which of the **two apps** it uses.
- Setting up the dock, connecting to Wi-Fi, and making your first map.
- Rooms, **Keep Out Zones**, schedules and mopping on Combo models.
- Emptying the bin and the self-emptying dock, and a simple care routine.
- What to do when it beeps, gets stuck, won't charge or won't connect.
- Voice control, privacy, and the scams that target robot-vacuum owners.

GOOD TO KNOW

Thinking about buying one?

This guide is about living with a Roomba. If you're still comparing brands — Roomba, Roborock, eufy and others — our Robot Vacuums guide walks through choosing one for your home.

And I'm only a phone call away

This guide will carry you a long way on your own. But if you ever get stuck — the app won't find the robot, or it keeps wandering off and dying under the bed — call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small.

So find a comfortable chair, and let's get to know this little robot together.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What Happened to iRobot, and Does My Roomba Still Work?

If you've seen headlines about iRobot and bankruptcy, here are the plain facts, without the hype. The short answer comes first: **yes, Roombas keep working**, and the company that makes them is still in business under a new owner.

The facts, in order

When	What happened
December 14, 2025	iRobot, the Massachusetts company that makes Roomba, filed a **Chapter 11** case in federal bankruptcy court in Delaware. Chapter 11 is a court-supervised restructuring: a business keeps operating while it sorts out its debts. It is not a shutdown.
The plan	The deal was arranged in advance with **Picea** (Shenzhen PICEA Robotics), the company that had been iRobot's main contract manufacturer — the firm that actually built Roombas — and was also its main lender. Picea would take over all of iRobot's ownership.
January 23, 2026	iRobot announced it had completed the court-supervised transaction. iRobot is now a privately held company **wholly owned by Picea**. Its shares were removed from the Nasdaq stock market, and the old shareholders lost their investment.
Today	iRobot says it remains a U.S.-based consumer robotics company headquartered in Bedford, Massachusetts, and that it continues to support its customers. As part of the deal, a U.S. subsidiary was set up to safeguard customer data.

What it means for you

- **Your robot:** nothing about the court case switches a Roomba off. It keeps cleaning, docking and charging, and the buttons on top work with or without the app.
- **The apps:** both Roomba apps — the newer **Roomba Home** app and the older **iRobot Home (Classic)** app — are still offered in the app stores and have kept receiving updates in 2026 (Chapter 7 explains which one you need).
- **Warranty and parts:** iRobot says it continues to support customers. If you have a warranty question, go to iRobot's own support site or call the number listed there — not a number from a search ad (see Chapter 24).

HEADS UP

A promise isn't a guarantee — so keep a small safety net

Companies under new owners usually carry on as before, and iRobot says it will. Still, nobody can promise how any app or cloud service will look years from now. A few cheap habits protect you either way: learn the **CLEAN** button so the robot runs without your phone (Chapter 10), write down your exact model (Chapter 3), and keep a spare filter and brushes in a drawer (Chapter 16).

FROM BILL

Worried about your own Roomba?

If the news has you uneasy, I'm happy to look at your robot with you, check that the app and updates are working, and set it up so it can run on its own buttons and schedule. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

CHAPTER 3

Which Roomba Do I Have?

iRobot has sold dozens of Roomba models over the years, and they look alike at a glance. Knowing your exact model matters, because it decides which app you use, which replacement parts fit, and which features you have. It takes two minutes to find out.

Find the model on the robot

1. Lift the robot off the dock and turn it over gently onto a towel or a soft rug.
2. Look for the label on the underside. It lists the **model** and the **serial number**.
3. Write both down in the Cheat-Sheet at the end of this guide (Chapter 26).
4. If the robot is already in your app, the model also appears in the robot's settings or product information screen.

> **TIP**
>
> **Snap a photo of the label**
>
> Take a picture of the label with your phone. When you order a filter, call for help or look up an error, you'll have the model and serial number right there without flipping the robot again.

Reading the name

Roomba names give you clues. The word **Combo** means the robot both vacuums and mops. A plus sign (as in **j7+**) or a dock name like **Clean Base** or **AutoWash** means it came with a bigger base station that does extra work for you. A **number in the hundreds** (105, 205, 405, 505, 705) points to the newer lineup that arrived in 2025; a **letter** (e, i, j, s) or an **Essential** or **Combo 10 Max** name points to the older families.

Family	Examples	App it uses
Newer lineup (2025 onward)	Roomba 105, 205 DustCompactor Combo, Plus 405 Combo, Plus 505 Combo, Max 705 Combo, Roomba Mini	**Roomba Home** (for robots sold after March 2025)
Older lineup	Roomba e, i, s, j and m series, Combo j and i models, Essential, Essential 2, Combo 10 Max; Braava mops	**iRobot Home (Classic)**

GOOD TO KNOW

Not sure? The box or quick-start card tells you

The quick-start card in the box names the app to download. If the box is long gone, the model on the bottom label plus the table above will point you to the right one.

CHAPTER 4

The Newer Lineup and the Older Models

In March 2025, iRobot replaced most of its lineup with new numbered models and a new app. If you bought your Roomba before then, nothing changed for you: older models keep using the app they always did. Here is how the two generations compare, so you know what to expect from yours.

The newer models

Model	What it is	iRobot regular list price
Roomba 205 DustCompactor Combo	Vacuums and mops. Uses a compacting dust bin in the robot instead of a big emptying base.	$469.99 (often on sale for much less)
Roomba Plus 405 Combo + AutoWash Dock	Vacuums and mops, with a base that empties the robot and washes the mop.	$799.99
Roomba Plus 505 Combo	A step up from the 405 in the same family.	$999 at launch
Roomba Max 705 Combo + AutoWash Dock	The top model of the lineup.	$1,299.99

These are iRobot's regular list prices as shown on its own store in November 2026. iRobot and retailers run sales very often, sometimes at half price or less, so treat the list price as a ceiling, not what you should expect to pay. Robot-only versions and other bundles are sold too.

What changed with the newer lineup

- **A new app.** Newer models use the **Roomba Home** app. Older models stay with the **iRobot Home (Classic)** app. You can't control a new model with the old app, or the other way around.
- **Combo is now the norm.** Most of the new models both vacuum and mop.
- **Smart-home updates.** In late 2025, some newer models (the Plus 500 Combo and Max 700 family) gained support for **Matter**, a common smart-home language that lets them work with Apple, Google and Amazon systems (Chapter 22).

If you have an older Roomba

Older i, j, s and Combo models are still good robots. They keep cleaning, keep their maps and schedules in the iRobot Home (Classic) app, and use the same basic care: empty the bin, clean the brushes, replace the filter. Most of this guide applies to every Roomba; where the two apps differ, I'll say so.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

No need to upgrade just because there's a new model

If your Roomba cleans well and the app still connects, there is no reason to replace it. A fresh filter, new brushes and, if runs are getting short, a new battery (Chapter 17) can make an older robot feel like new for far less than a new one costs.

PART 2

Setting Up

Getting the house ready, placing the dock, choosing the right app, joining Wi-Fi and making the first map. An hour or so, once, and you're set.

CHAPTER 5

Getting Your Home Ready

A Roomba does its best work in a home that's been made a little robot-friendly. Ten minutes of tidying before the first run saves a lot of rescuing later. You only do most of this once.

The robot's natural enemies

Watch out for	What to do
Cords and cables	Lamp cords, phone chargers and window-blind cords wrap around the brushes. Tuck them behind furniture, clip them up off the floor, or block the area with a Keep Out Zone (Chapter 11).
Rug fringe and tassels	Fringe gets pulled into the brushes. Fold the fringe under the rug, or keep the robot off that rug.
Small, light rugs and bath mats	The robot can push them around or ride up and get stuck. Put a non-slip pad under them, or move them during a clean.
Socks, shoelaces, toys	Anything small and soft on the floor can get swallowed or tangled. A quick pick-up before a clean helps.
Very dark rugs or floors	The sensors that stop the robot falling down stairs can mistake a very dark or black rug for a drop and steer around it. That's normal behavior, not a fault.
Low furniture	Sofas and beds with just enough room to squeeze under can trap the robot. Raise them a little, block the gap, or add a Keep Out Zone.

Stairs and drops

Every Roomba has **cliff sensors** underneath — small eyes that look for the floor ahead and make the robot back away from a stair edge. They work well, but they need to be clean (Chapter 16) and they can be fooled by very dark surfaces. If the top of your stairs has a dark runner, watch the first few runs or block the stairs with a Keep Out Zone.

STAY SAFE

Pets and accidents

If you have a dog or cat, the worst thing a robot vacuum can do is roll through a pet accident and spread it across the house. If an accident is possible — a new puppy, an older pet, an upset stomach — check the floor before a clean, or pause the schedule until things settle down. Some newer, camera-equipped models are designed to recognize some obstacles, but don't count on any robot to spot every mess.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Less bending for you

Once cords are tucked away and the problem rugs are sorted, the robot can run on its own most days without anyone getting down on hands and knees to rescue it.

CHAPTER 6

Placing the Dock

The dock (iRobot also calls it the **Home Base**, or a **Clean Base** or **AutoWash Dock** on bigger models) is where the robot charges and, on many models, empties itself. Where you put it makes a big difference to whether the robot finds its way home.

A good spot

- On a **hard, level floor**, flat against a wall.
- Near an outlet, with the power cord tucked behind the dock so the robot can't snag it.
- With **clear space** on both sides and in front. The quick-start card shows the exact clearance for your model — follow it.
- Not at the top of the stairs, not behind a door that gets closed, and not tucked under furniture.
- Somewhere central, if you can, so the robot can reach most rooms on one charge.
- Within good Wi-Fi range if you use the app (a spot where your phone shows strong Wi-Fi).

Setting it up

1. Unpack the dock and remove all tape and protective film from the dock and the robot.
2. Put the dock in its spot and plug it in. A light on the dock usually shows it has power.
3. Set the robot on the dock so the metal charging contacts on the bottom of the robot touch the contacts on the dock.
4. Let it charge. The first full charge can take a few hours, and that's normal.

TIP

Leave the dock where it is

Once the robot has made its map, try not to move the dock. Robots remember where home is. If you must move it, expect the robot to need a run or two to settle in, or to remap.

HEADS UP

Use the dock and cord that came with it

Charge the robot only with its own dock and power cord, or official replacements. Cheap, no-name chargers and batteries are a common cause of trouble (Chapter 24).

CHAPTER 7

Which App: Roomba Home or iRobot Home (Classic)?

A Roomba works without a phone — press **CLEAN** and it goes. But the free app is where you set schedules, name rooms, draw Keep Out Zones and see what the robot is doing. Here's the part that confuses people: iRobot now has **two** apps, and you need the one that matches your robot.

App	Use it for	How to spot it
Roomba Home	Newer Roombas sold after March 2025: the 100, 200, 400, 500 and 700 series and Roomba Mini	The newer app. Named for the robot.
iRobot Home (Classic)	Older Roombas and Combo models (e, i, s, m and j series, Essential, Essential 2, Combo 10 Max), plus Braava mops	The long-standing app, renamed with "(Classic)" at the end.

Getting the right one

1. Find your model (Chapter 3).
2. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**; on an Android phone, open the **Google Play Store**.
3. Search for the app's exact name from the table above.
4. Check that the developer listed is **iRobot**, then tap **Get** or **Install**.
5. Open the app and create an iRobot account, or sign in if you already have one.

GOOD TO KNOW

Had the old app for years? It may simply have a new name

If you set up an older Roomba long ago, the app on your phone may now show the name **iRobot Home (Classic)**. That's the same app you've always used, just renamed. Keep using it. You only need Roomba Home if you add a newer robot.

SCAM ALERT

Only download from the official app store

Don't install a Roomba app from a link in a text, email or pop-up, and ignore look-alike apps from other developers. The real apps come from iRobot and are free.

CHAPTER 8

Connecting to Wi-Fi

The app connects to the robot over your home Wi-Fi. During setup, the app walks you through each step on screen; this chapter covers the things that trip people up.

Before you start

- Have your **Wi-Fi name and password** handy (often on a sticker on the router).
- Put your **phone on the Wi-Fi network you want the robot to use**. During setup the robot joins the network your phone is on.
- Use your main home network, not a **guest network** — iRobot doesn't recommend guest networks.
- Stand near the robot and the dock, with the robot charged.

The 2.4 GHz question

Many routers broadcast two kinds of Wi-Fi: **2.4 GHz**, which reaches farther, and **5 GHz**, which is faster up close. Some Roomba models can't use 5 GHz at all, and iRobot says the Roomba 100 series requires a 2.4 GHz network. If your router shows two network names — one ending in "5G" — connect your phone to the one **without** "5G" before setup.

Setting up in the app

1. Open your Roomba app and sign in.
2. Tap the option to add or set up a robot, and choose your model when asked.
3. Follow the on-screen steps. The app tells you which buttons to press on the robot and when.
4. When asked, choose your Wi-Fi network and type the password carefully — it's case-sensitive.
5. Wait while the robot connects. It may chime or change its light. The app tells you when it's done.
6. Let the app install any software update it offers. Keep the robot on the dock while it updates.

TIP

If it won't connect

Move the phone and robot closer to the router, double-check the password, and make sure your phone is on the 2.4 GHz network, not a guest network. Chapter 21 has more.

GOOD TO KNOW

Got a new router or changed the Wi-Fi password?

The robot won't know about it. In the iRobot Home (Classic) app, open the robot's **Settings**, then **Wi-Fi Settings**, and choose the option to reconnect or change the robot's Wi-Fi. In Roomba Home, look in the robot's settings for its Wi-Fi option, or set the robot up again.

CHAPTER 9

The First Run and Your Map

Models that make maps (most Roombas from the last several years) learn your home by driving through it. The first few runs are a get-to-know-you tour. Once the map is made, you can name rooms, send the robot to just the kitchen, and draw places it should avoid.

Helping it learn

1. Tidy up the floors (Chapter 5) and open the doors to every room you want cleaned.
2. Turn on the lights in darker rooms if your model uses a camera to find its way.
3. Start a clean from the app or press **CLEAN**. Some models offer a dedicated mapping run in the app; if yours does, the app will suggest it.
4. Let it run until it returns to the dock by itself. Don't pick it up or move the dock mid-run.
5. Check the app. Depending on your model, the map may be ready after one run or may take a few.

Tidying up the map

- **Name the rooms** — Kitchen, Living Room, Bedroom — so you can pick them later.
- **Split or merge rooms** if the robot drew the lines in odd places, like an open kitchen and dining room counted as one.
- **Save** when you're done. Edits only stick when you save them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a good map does for you

A map turns "clean everything, every time" into "clean the kitchen after supper." It's what makes room-by-room cleaning, Keep Out Zones and smarter schedules possible.

GOOD TO KNOW

Two floors?

Some models can store maps for more than one floor; others work best on a single level. Carry the robot (not the dock) upstairs and check what your app offers for another floor.

PART 3

Everyday Cleaning

Starting and stopping, rooms and Keep Out Zones, schedules, and mopping with a Combo model. This is the part you'll use most.

CHAPTER 10

Start, Pause and Send It Home

You can run a Roomba two ways: with the button on top of the robot, or with the app. It's worth knowing both. The button works even if your phone is in another room, the Wi-Fi is down, or the app ever changes.

With the button on the robot

- **Start a clean:** press **CLEAN** (on some models, the single main button) once.
- **Pause:** press the same button once while it's running.
- **Send it home:** many models have a separate **Home** button with a little house on it. Press it and the robot drives back to the dock.
- **Pick it up:** it's fine to lift a paused robot. Carry it by the body, not the bin.

With the app

1. Open your Roomba app. Your robot appears on the main screen.
2. Tap the big **Clean** (or start) button to clean everywhere, or choose rooms first if your model has a map.
3. Tap **Pause** to stop it where it is, then **Resume** or send it to the dock.
4. Watch progress on the screen. When it's done, the app shows what was cleaned.

TIP

Make the button your backup plan

Write "CLEAN = start or pause, House = go home" on a sticky note near the dock for anyone who visits. A house-sitter or grandchild can run it without your phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Clean on your terms

Unexpected company? Press CLEAN, put the kettle on, and the living room is done before they arrive. Phone ringing? One press pauses the noise.

CHAPTER 11

Rooms, Keep Out Zones and the Map

Once your Roomba has a map (Chapter 9), you can tell it exactly where to go — and where not to go. This is the single best way to stop it getting stuck in the same place every day.

Cleaning just one room

1. Open the app and tap your robot.
2. Choose the rooms you want cleaned from the list or the map.
3. Start the clean. The robot goes straight there and returns to the dock when it's finished.

Keep Out Zones: places the robot should avoid

A **Keep Out Zone** is a box you draw on the map. The robot treats it as off-limits. iRobot's older maps (called **Imprint Smart Maps** in the iRobot Home (Classic) app) and the newer app both let you draw them. Good places for one:

- The tangle of cords behind the TV or computer desk.
- Pet food and water bowls.
- A rug with fringe, or a thick shag rug it can't handle.
- The gap under a sofa or recliner where it always gets stuck.
- Around the Christmas tree in December.

Drawing one

1. Open the app and go to your map. Look for the option to edit the map or add zones.
2. Choose to add a **Keep Out Zone**.
3. Drag the box over the area you want avoided, and stretch its corners to fit with a little room to spare.
4. Save. The robot follows the new zone on its next clean.

GOOD TO KNOW

Other kinds of zones

Depending on model and app, you may also see zones that ask for extra cleaning in a busy spot (like by the back door), or zones that keep a Combo model from mopping a rug. They're drawn the same way.

HEADS UP

If the map goes wrong

Moving the dock, rearranging furniture in a big way or a robot that was carried to another floor can confuse the map. If rooms stop making sense, the app lets you edit or, as a last resort, delete the map and let the robot learn the home again. Deleting removes your room names and zones too, so try smaller fixes first.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Set it once, stop pre-tidying

A few well-placed Keep Out Zones mean you don't have to move the dog bowls or gather up cords before every clean. The robot simply goes around them.

CHAPTER 12

Schedules and Cleaning Preferences

A schedule is what turns a Roomba from a gadget into a helper. Pick the days and time once, and the robot cleans on its own without anyone reaching for a phone.

Setting a schedule

1. Open the app and tap your robot.
2. Find the schedule option (often labeled **Schedule** or found under automations).
3. Choose the days and the start time.
4. If your model has a map, choose which rooms to clean on that schedule — every room, or just the kitchen after supper.
5. Save it. You can add more than one schedule, such as the whole house on Monday and the kitchen daily.

Choosing a good time

- **When you're out** — at church, shopping or lunch with friends — so the noise isn't a bother and the floors are clear of feet.
- **Not during a nap** or while you're on the phone.
- **Not overnight** if a pet might have an accident while you're asleep (Chapter 5).
- **After meals** for a kitchen-only clean, when crumbs are fresh.

Cleaning preferences

The app also has settings for *how* the robot cleans. Names and choices vary by model and app, but you'll commonly find:

Setting	What it does
Suction or power	Stronger for carpet and pet hair, gentler and quieter for hard floors.
Number of passes	One pass for a quick tidy, two for a deeper clean.
Edge cleaning	Whether to work along walls and baseboards.
Mopping level (Combo)	How wet the mop pad is (Chapter 13).
Child & Pet Lock	Locks the buttons on the robot so a curious grandchild or a pet can't start a clean.

TIP

Pausing for vacation or visitors

Going away, or the grandchildren are visiting with toys everywhere? Turn the schedule off in the app rather than deleting it. Turn it back on when life returns to normal.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Floors that stay clean by themselves

Three short scheduled cleans a week usually keep floors tidier than one big push. You'll spend less time vacuuming and more time on the things you enjoy.

CHAPTER 13

Mopping with a Combo Model

A Roomba with **Combo** in its name vacuums and mops. The mop is a light damp wipe for sealed hard floors — kitchen tile, vinyl, sealed wood — that picks up dust and light everyday grime. It won't scrub away dried-on spills, and it isn't meant for carpet.

Before mopping

1. Fill the robot's water tank — or, on an AutoWash Dock model, the dock's clean-water tank — with plain tap water unless your model's guide names a cleaning solution you can use.
2. Attach a clean mop pad if your model uses removable pads.
3. Make sure the app knows which rooms or areas are carpet, so the robot keeps its wet mop off rugs. Combo models handle carpet in different ways, so read what the app says for your model.
4. Start the clean, choosing vacuum and mop together if the app asks.

After mopping

- Empty and rinse any dirty-water tank, and let it air-dry with the lid open.
- Wash or replace the mop pad. Reusable pads can usually go in the washing machine; disposable pads go in the trash.
- On an AutoWash Dock, the dock washes the mop for you; you still empty the dirty water and refill the clean water now and then. The app tells you when.

HEADS UP

Unsealed wood and anything you're unsure about

Waxed, oiled or unsealed wood floors don't like water. If you're not sure your floor is sealed, keep the robot in vacuum-only mode there, or test a small area first.

STAY SAFE

Only the right liquids

Don't pour bleach, vinegar or general floor cleaners into the robot's tank. Use plain water or a cleaner iRobot names for your model. The wrong chemicals can damage the tank, pads and seals.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A fresher kitchen floor with no bending

A damp wipe every few days keeps the kitchen floor from getting sticky, without dragging out a bucket and mop.

PART 4

Emptying and Care

The bin, the self-emptying dock and its bags, a simple care routine for brushes, filter and sensors, and the battery. A few minutes a week keeps a Roomba working for years.

CHAPTER 14

Emptying the Bin

Every Roomba has a dust bin in the robot itself. On models without a self-emptying dock, you empty it by hand — ideally after every clean or two. A full bin is one of the most common reasons a Roomba stops picking things up.

How to empty it

1. Pause or dock the robot so it isn't running.
2. Press the bin-release button (usually on the back of the robot, marked with a trash-can picture) and slide the bin out.
3. Hold the bin over the trash and open its door or lid to let the dirt fall out.
4. Tap the bin gently against the inside of the trash can to loosen stuck dust.
5. Slide the bin back in until it clicks.

HEADS UP

Keep the bin dry

Don't rinse the vacuum bin under the tap unless your model's guide says that bin is washable. The filter sits in or on the bin, and many filters must never get wet.

TIP

Sensitive to dust? Empty it outdoors

If you're sensitive to dust, empty the bin into a bag outdoors or straight into the outside trash can, and wash your hands after.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Better cleaning with one small habit

An empty bin and a clean filter mean full suction. The robot picks up more in less time, and you see the difference on the carpet.

CHAPTER 15

The Self-Emptying Dock and Bags

Many Roombas come with a bigger base — a **Clean Base** on older models or an **AutoWash Dock** on newer Combo models — that sucks the dirt out of the robot's bin into a disposable bag inside the base. You stop emptying the robot by hand, and only change a bag now and then.

How often to change the bag

iRobot says one bag can hold up to about **60 days** of dirt, depending on your home. A house with shedding pets fills it faster; a tidy home with one person fills it slower. The app or a light on the base tells you when the bag is full.

Changing the bag

1. Open the lid on top of the base.
2. Pull the bag out by its cardboard tab. Many bags close off as you pull them out, so the dust stays inside.
3. Throw the whole bag away.
4. Slide a new bag's cardboard tab into the slot until it's seated, and tuck the bag in.
5. Close the lid firmly. The base won't empty the robot if the lid isn't closed or there's no bag.

Which bags to buy

Bags are made to fit a particular base. Before you buy, check your base's model name (on its label or in the app) and buy bags listed for it, from iRobot or a store you trust. Off-brand bags are cheaper and some work fine, but a poor fit can leak dust or stop the base from emptying.

HEADS UP

Robot not emptying?

Check that the bag isn't full, that it's seated properly, and that the lid is fully closed. Then look for a clog in the opening on the robot's bin and in the base's emptying port. A sock or a clump of hair is the usual culprit.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Fewer trips to the trash can

A self-emptying base means you go weeks without touching the dirt. For anyone with a bad back, arthritis or dust allergies, that's the single most helpful feature a Roomba can have.

CHAPTER 16

Brushes, Filter, Sensors and Wheels: A Simple Care Routine

A Roomba needs a little regular care, much like an upright vacuum. None of it is hard, and it's the difference between a robot that lasts years and one that seems to get weaker every month.

How often, according to iRobot

Part	How often
Dust filter	Tap the dust out about **once a week** (more often with pets). **Replace** it about every **two months**.
Main brushes	Clear hair and debris regularly. Replace roughly every **6 to 12 months**, sooner if they're worn.
Side brush, wheels, sensors	Check and clean regularly. Your app's care screen or your model's care chart shows the timing.
Self-emptying bags	When the base says the bag is full (Chapter 15).

Cleaning the brushes

1. Turn the robot over onto a towel.
2. Open the brush guard (a small frame with tabs or a latch) and lift out the main brushes.
3. Pull off hair and string. A pair of small scissors helps with hair wound tightly around the brush.
4. Remove the caps on the brush ends if your model has them and clear any hair hiding there.
5. Put the brushes back in their matching shaped slots and snap the guard closed.

The side brush

The little spinning brush near the front edge sweeps dirt out of corners. If its bristles are bent or hair is wound around its base, remove it (some pull off, some need a small screwdriver), clean it, and put it back — or replace it if it's worn out.

The filter

1. Take out the bin (Chapter 14), then remove the filter from it.
2. Tap the filter against the inside of the trash can to knock the dust out.
3. Don't wash it with water unless your model says it's washable.
4. Put it back the right way round. The bin may not close properly without the filter in place.

Sensors, contacts and wheels

- **Cliff sensors** on the bottom: wipe with a clean, dry cloth or a dry cotton swab. Dirty sensors can make the robot think it's at a drop and refuse to move.
- **Charging contacts** on the robot and the dock: wipe with a dry cloth so it charges reliably.
- **Front wheel**: pull it out if it lifts out on your model, and clear hair from its axle.
- **Drive wheels**: check for hair or string wrapped around them.

TIP

Keep a spare kit in a drawer

A spare filter, a set of main brushes and a side brush cost far less than a service call and mean you're never stuck waiting for a delivery. iRobot sells replacement kits for most models.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A routine you can do sitting down

Bring the robot to the kitchen table on a towel, put on the radio, and give it ten minutes once a week. It keeps the robot working well without any kneeling on the floor.

CHAPTER 17

The Battery: How Long It Lasts and Replacing It

Roombas run on a rechargeable battery. Like the battery in a phone, it slowly wears down over the years. When a robot that used to finish the whole house starts heading home halfway through, the battery is often the reason.

Signs the battery is wearing out

- Cleaning runs get noticeably shorter than they used to be.
- It returns to the dock to recharge in the middle of a clean far more often.
- It dies before getting back to the dock.
- It won't hold a charge even though it's on the dock (but check the dock first — Chapter 20).

Helping the battery last

- Keep the robot on its dock when it isn't cleaning.
- If you'll be away for a long time, follow your model's storage instructions in the app or manual.
- Keep the robot out of very hot or very cold places, such as a sunny window or an unheated garage.

Replacing the battery

On many Roomba models the battery is under a panel on the bottom, held with a few screws, and an owner can swap it. Check your model's guide first. Buy a battery listed for your exact model, from iRobot or a store you trust.

STAY SAFE

Be wary of very cheap batteries

Lithium-ion batteries store a lot of energy. No-name batteries from online marketplaces may not meet safety standards, and a poorly made one can overheat. Buy from iRobot or an established retailer, and stop using any battery that swells, smells or gets hot to the touch.

GOOD TO KNOW

Recycle the old one

Don't put a rechargeable battery in the household trash. Many hardware and home-improvement stores have battery recycling drop-offs, or ask your local recycling program where to take it. Tape over the metal contacts first.

PART 5

When Something Goes Wrong

Error messages and beeps, a robot that's stuck or lost, one that won't charge or dock, and Wi-Fi and app trouble. Most fixes take five minutes.

CHAPTER 18

Error Messages and Beeps

When a Roomba has a problem, it stops and tells you. Depending on the model, it may speak a message, play a tone, light up a red or orange ring, and send a notice to the app. Don't worry: most errors mean "something is caught" or "I need cleaning," not "I'm broken."

Reading the message

1. Open the app. It usually shows what's wrong in plain words, often with a picture and steps to fix it.
2. If the robot spoke an error number, write it down.
3. Follow the app's steps first. They're specific to your model.
4. If there's no app, search iRobot's official support site for your model and the error number.

The usual suspects

What it's telling you	What usually fixes it
Brushes can't turn	Hair, string or a cord is wrapped around the main brushes or their ends. Clean them (Chapter 16).
Side brush stuck	Hair wound around the side brush. Remove and clean it.
Wheel stuck or not touching the floor	The robot is beached on something, or hair is wound around a wheel. Move it to open floor and clear the wheels.
Cliff sensor or "move to a new location"	Dirty cliff sensors, a very dark rug, or the robot is hanging over an edge. Wipe the sensors and move it to open floor.
Bin missing or full	Seat the bin properly; empty it and tap out the filter.
Charging problem	Clean the charging contacts; check the dock's power (Chapter 20).

TIP

The two-minute reset

If an error keeps coming back after you've cleaned everything, restart the robot. Your model's restart method is in the app or on iRobot's support site (it's usually a button held for several seconds). A restart doesn't erase your maps or schedules.

HEADS UP

Don't jump to a factory reset

A **factory reset** is different from a restart: it erases the robot's settings and connection, and you'll set it up again from scratch. Use it only when iRobot's steps or a helper tell you to.

FROM BILL

Same error every day?

A repeating error is often a worn part or a spot in the house the robot can't handle. I can look at the robot and the room together and sort it out. $49 remote · $99 in your home.

CHAPTER 19

Stuck, Lost or Missing Spots

Every robot vacuum gets stuck sometimes. If it gets stuck in the same place again and again, that's good news: it means one small change will fix it for good.

Stuck in the same place

Where it gets stuck	Fix it once
Under a sofa, bed or recliner	Block the gap with a furniture riser or a simple barrier, or draw a Keep Out Zone (Chapter 11).
On a rug edge or a threshold	Flatten the rug edge, add a non-slip pad, or keep the robot off that rug.
Wrapped in a cord	Tuck the cord away or put it inside a Keep Out Zone.
Between chair legs	Push the chairs in after meals, or add a zone around the table.
On a dark rug it won't cross	The cliff sensors may think it's a drop. That's expected; leave it or vacuum that rug by hand.

Missing spots or wandering

- Doors closed? The robot can only clean rooms it can reach.
- Lights off? Models that navigate with a camera do better with some light.
- Furniture moved a lot? Let it run a couple of times to update the map, or edit the map.
- Dock moved? Put it back where it was, or let the robot relearn.
- Sensors dirty? Wipe them (Chapter 16).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One fix, a quieter life

Each stuck spot you solve is one less rescue mission. After a week or two of small fixes, most homes reach the point where the robot just runs.

CHAPTER 20

Won't Charge or Won't Dock

A Roomba that won't charge, or that can't find its way back to the dock, is almost always fixed with a cloth and a little rearranging. Try these in order.

Won't charge

1. Check that the dock is plugged in and the outlet works (try a lamp in it). Avoid outlets controlled by a light switch.
2. Look for the dock's power light.
3. Wipe the metal charging contacts on the robot and the dock with a clean, dry cloth.
4. Set the robot on the dock by hand so the contacts line up, and watch for the charging light.
5. Leave it for a few hours. A completely drained battery can take a while to show signs of life.
6. Still nothing? The battery may be worn out (Chapter 17), or the dock may need attention.

Won't dock, or wanders past it

- Give the dock clear space on both sides and in front, as the quick-start card shows.
- Put it on a hard, level floor against a wall, not on thick carpet.
- Clear clutter, shoes and cords from the path to the dock.
- Keep the dock out of direct, bright sunlight if it seems to confuse the robot.
- Don't move the dock after the map is made, or expect a relearning run or two.

HEADS UP

Is the robot actually dead, or just asleep?

Some Roombas go into a deep sleep when off the dock for a long time. Placing it on a working dock usually wakes it. If it still shows nothing after a few hours on the dock, it's time for help.

CHAPTER 21

Wi-Fi and App Trouble

If the app says the robot is offline, the robot itself is usually fine — it just can't reach the internet. It will still clean when you press **CLEAN**. Here's how to get it back online.

Work through these

1. Is your home internet working? Check another device, like your phone on Wi-Fi.
2. Restart your router: unplug it, wait 30 seconds, plug it back in, and give it a few minutes.
3. Make sure the robot is on its dock, charged, and not too far from the router.
4. Update the app from the App Store or Google Play.
5. Close the app completely and reopen it.
6. Did you get a new router, internet company or Wi-Fi password? The robot needs the new details — see the box in Chapter 8.
7. Still offline? Restart the robot, then try again.

Using the right app

If you got a new phone and can't find your robot, check that you installed the right app for your model (Chapter 7) and signed in with the same iRobot account you used before. Your robot and maps belong to that account.

TIP

Forgot the account password?

On the app's sign-in screen, use the forgot-password option and follow the email iRobot sends. Check your spam folder if it doesn't arrive in a few minutes.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs to "remote in" to fix your Roomba app

If a website or caller says they must take control of your computer or phone to fix your robot, hang up. Real fixes happen in the app. See Chapter 24.

PART 6

Voice, Privacy and Staying Safe

Talking to your Roomba through Alexa or Google, what the robot knows about your home, and the scams and counterfeit parts aimed at robot-vacuum owners.

CHAPTER 22

Voice Control with Alexa, Google and Matter

If you have an Amazon Echo or a Google speaker, you can start and stop your Roomba by voice. It's handy for anyone who'd rather not hunt for a phone or bend down to press a button.

With Amazon Alexa

1. Make sure your Roomba is set up and working in its app first.
2. In the Alexa app, enable the iRobot or Roomba skill for your robot (or follow the voice-assistant option inside your Roomba app, which links the accounts for you).
3. Sign in with your iRobot account when asked, to link the two.
4. Try it. iRobot's own example is: **"Alexa, ask Roomba to start vacuuming."**

With Google

Many Roombas also work with Google's voice assistant through the Google Home app. Link your iRobot account in the Google Home app or from the voice-assistant option in your Roomba app, then ask your Google speaker to start or stop the vacuum. iRobot lists the supported phrases for each assistant on its support site.

Matter: one language for smart homes

Matter is a shared smart-home standard backed by Apple, Google, Amazon and others. A Matter robot can be added to Apple Home, Google Home or Alexa directly. In late 2025, iRobot added Matter support to the Roomba Plus 500 Combo, Max 700 Vac and Max 700 Combo, joining the older Combo 10 Max. If you use Apple's Home app and Siri, Matter is how a Roomba joins in.

TIP

Keep voice commands simple

Start, stop and send home are the commands people actually use. Leave the fine-tuning — rooms, zones and schedules — in the Roomba app. Our Amazon Alexa & Echo guide covers setting up the speaker itself.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Help from your armchair

Spilled crackers by the sofa? Say the word and the robot comes to work while you stay put.

CHAPTER 23

Privacy and Cameras

A Roomba with a map knows the layout of your home, and some models carry a small camera to help them steer around obstacles. It's sensible to know what's collected and to take a few simple steps.

What the robot knows

- **Your floor plan:** mapping models store a map of the rooms they clean, linked to your iRobot account.
- **Cleaning history:** when it ran, how long, and where.
- **Images, on some models:** camera-equipped models use the camera to recognize things on the floor. What happens to any images depends on the model and its settings, so check your app's privacy settings and iRobot's privacy policy for your model.

Sensible steps

1. Use a strong, unique password for your iRobot account, and don't share it.
2. Open the app's settings and look at the privacy and data options. Turn off anything you're not comfortable with.
3. Keep the app and the robot's software up to date — updates often fix security problems.
4. If you sell or give the robot away, remove it from your account and do a factory reset first.

GOOD TO KNOW

What the ownership change means for your data

When Picea took over iRobot in January 2026, a U.S. subsidiary was set up to safeguard customer data (Chapter 2). If you have specific concerns, iRobot's privacy policy is the place to read what's collected and how to ask for it to be deleted.

TIP

Bathroom and bedroom

If a camera model in a private room bothers you, keep the door closed during cleans or schedule those rooms for when nobody's in them.

CHAPTER 24

Scams, Fake Support and Counterfeit Parts

Popular gadgets attract scammers, and Roombas are no exception. The tricks are old ones dressed up for robot owners. Knowing them takes away their power.

Fake support phone numbers

Search for "Roomba support phone number" and you may see ads and websites that look official but aren't. The person who answers may say your robot or account is "compromised," ask to take control of your computer, or ask for payment to fix it.

SCAM ALERT

Find support the safe way

Get iRobot's support contact from inside the Roomba app or from iRobot's own website that you type in yourself. Never call a number from a pop-up, a text or a search ad. Real support will never ask you to pay with gift cards, wire money or cryptocurrency, or to let a stranger take over your computer.

"Your Roomba subscription is expiring" emails and texts

Messages claiming your robot will stop working unless you pay right now, or that you've won a free Roomba, are phishing — attempts to get your card number or password. The news about iRobot's bankruptcy has given scammers a fresh excuse. Don't click the link. Open the app yourself to check anything that seems real.

SCAM ALERT

The bankruptcy news is not a reason to pay anyone

Your Roomba doesn't need a paid "migration," "reactivation" or "transfer fee" to keep working after iRobot's change of ownership. Anyone asking for one is trying to cheat you.

Counterfeit and knock-off parts

Online marketplaces are full of cheap filters, brushes, bags and batteries that claim to fit Roombas. Some are decent "compatible" parts from honest sellers; others are poor copies or counterfeits that use iRobot's name and packaging.

- **Brushes and filters:** a poor fit can let dust past the filter or wear the robot faster. Buying from iRobot or a store you trust is the safest choice.

- **Bags:** a bad fit can leak dust or stop the base from emptying.
- **Batteries:** the one place not to bargain-hunt (Chapter 17).
- **Price check:** a deal far below everyone else's price is a warning sign.

FROM BILL

Got a call or message that worried you?

If you're not sure whether something is real, hang up and call me at (330) 200-8042 before you do anything. If you've already given out information or money, call your bank first, then me. Our I Think I've Been Scammed guide walks through the next steps.

PART 7

Help and Your Cheat-Sheet

When a hand is worth it, what working with Bill is like, and the whole guide boiled down to one handy page.

CHAPTER 25

When to Call Bill

Most Roomba problems are fixed with a cloth, a pair of scissors and the steps in this guide. But sometimes it's simply easier to have someone do it with you. Here's when a call is worth it.

Good reasons to call

- **The app won't connect** no matter what you try, or you got a new router and the robot went offline.
- **You're not sure which app or which parts** your model needs.
- **The map is a mess** and you'd like rooms and Keep Out Zones set up properly.
- **It keeps getting stuck** or throwing the same error after you've cleaned everything.
- **You'd like Alexa, Google or Apple Home** to control it.
- **You're setting one up for a parent** who lives nearby and want it done right the first time.
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person set it up** and show you the ropes. That's always reason enough.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace — no rushing and no talking down. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll tell you honestly if a part or a new robot isn't worth your money. I bring 30+ years of professional experience to every visit, and Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. Robot vacuums are part of my Smart Home Installation service, and I can often help over a remote session or come to your home.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to keep and share.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

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. A real person — me — does the actual help.

Thank you for taking the time to get to know your Roomba. A little care and a good map, and it'll quietly look after your floors for years.

— Bill

CHAPTER 26

Your Roomba Cheat-Sheet

The whole guide, boiled down. Keep a copy near the dock.

The essentials

To do this	Do this
Start or pause	Press **CLEAN** on the robot, or use the app.
Send it home	Press the **Home** (house) button, or tap it in the app.
Which app	Newer models (sold after March 2025): **Roomba Home**. Older: **iRobot Home (Classic)**.
Wi-Fi	Use the **2.4 GHz** network (the one without "5G"), not a guest network.
Keep it out of a spot	Draw a **Keep Out Zone** on the map in the app.
Bin	Empty after every clean or two (by hand if no self-emptying base).
Filter	Tap out about weekly; replace about every two months.
Main brushes	Clear hair regularly; replace about every 6–12 months.
Base bag	Change when the base says it's full (up to about 60 days).
Won't charge	Check the outlet; wipe the charging contacts with a dry cloth.
Voice	"Alexa, ask Roomba to start vacuuming."

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Robot model	_____
Serial number	_____
Base / dock model	_____
App I use	_____
iRobot account email	_____
Wi-Fi name it's on	_____
Bought on / from	_____
Filter last replaced	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Read the message in the app (or listen to what the robot says).
2. Clean the brushes, wheels, sensors and charging contacts.
3. Empty the bin and check the filter (and the base's bag).
4. Restart the robot; check the dock's power and your Wi-Fi.
5. Look up the error on iRobot's official support site.
6. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042 — that's what I'm here for.

Safe habits

- Get support numbers only from the app or iRobot's website you typed in yourself.
- Nobody needs a fee to keep your Roomba working after the change of ownership.
- Buy batteries, bags and filters from iRobot or a store you trust.
- Remove the robot from your account and reset it before you give it away.