BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Samsung SmartThings

Hubs, Samsung TVs and appliances, routines and alerts — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for seniors and families

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For the SmartThings app on iPhone & Android · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to Samsung SmartThings: the free app that ties together your Samsung TV, your appliances, and the lights, plugs and sensors around your home. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow, step-by-step directions. Samsung updates the app often, so when a button has moved, look for the same words nearby.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What SmartThings is, the handful of words it uses, and how to get the free app and your Samsung account ready. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you own a Samsung phone, TV, refrigerator or washer, there's a good chance an app called **SmartThings** has already asked to say hello. Maybe your new TV wanted you to "connect to SmartThings," or your washer came with a little card about getting alerts on your phone. This guide explains what all that means — and how to make it work **for you**.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at your kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, and without trying to sell you anything.

What this guide will do for you

- Explain in plain words what SmartThings is, and what it can and can't do.
- Help you find out whether you already own a SmartThings **hub** — many Samsung TVs, monitors and refrigerators have one built in.
- Walk you step by step through adding your Samsung TV and appliances, and other brands' lights, plugs and sensors.
- Show you how to set up simple **routines**, like lights that come on at sunset.
- Cover the extras: Home Monitor, energy tracking, appliance alerts and finding lost Galaxy devices.
- Show you how to share your home with family, and use your voice with Bixby, Alexa or Google.
- Give you a calm, in-order checklist for when something says "offline."

The big promise: you can't break anything

Nothing in this guide will damage your TV or your appliances. If you add a device to the wrong room, you move it. If a routine does something silly, you turn it off or delete it. The worst that usually happens is a light comes on when you didn't expect it — and now you'll know why.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

SmartThings puts the controls for many different things in one app: the TV, the washer, the lights and the thermostat. Instead of five apps and five passwords, you have one place to check, from the couch or from the other side of the country.

GOOD TO KNOW

Menus move around

Samsung updates the SmartThings app often, and a redesigned look reached phones during 2026. If a button in this guide isn't exactly where I say, look for the same words nearby. The ideas stay the same even when the buttons move.

And I'm only a phone call away

If anything here leaves you unsure, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question.

Let's start with what SmartThings actually is.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What SmartThings Is (and Isn't)

SmartThings is Samsung's free smart-home app and service. It connects to your Samsung TV, appliances and Galaxy devices, and to thousands of products from other companies — light bulbs, smart plugs, door sensors, thermostats and more. Once they're connected, you can control them from your phone and set them to work together.

What SmartThings can do

- **Control things from your phone**, at home or away: turn the TV off, check whether the washer is done, turn on a lamp.
- **Send you alerts**: the laundry is finished, the fridge door is open, a leak sensor got wet.
- **Run routines**: do several things at once with one tap, or automatically at a set time.
- **Keep an eye on the house** with Home Monitor, if you have sensors or cameras.
- **Track energy use** of supported Samsung appliances.
- **Let family members share** the same home in their own copy of the app.

What SmartThings can't do

- It can't make an ordinary appliance smart. A device needs to be "connected" (Wi-Fi, or one of the smart-home radio types in Chapter 3) to show up.
- It can't control everything. Some brands only work in their own app.
- It isn't a professionally monitored alarm. Home Monitor alerts *you*; it doesn't call the police (Chapter 16).
- It doesn't work without your home internet for most things. When the Wi-Fi is down, many devices will show "offline" in the app.

TIP

You don't need a Samsung phone

SmartThings works on iPhones and on Android phones from any maker. A Galaxy phone simply has a few extra built-in touches, like pop-up cards when it spots a new Samsung device nearby.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Knowing the limits up front saves frustration. You'll know when SmartThings is the right tool, and when a device just needs its own app.

CHAPTER 3

The Words You'll See

Smart-home apps use a handful of words over and over. Here they are in plain English. You don't have to memorize them — come back here whenever one puzzles you.

Word	What it means
Samsung account	Your free sign-in for all Samsung services. It's an email address and a password. Everything in SmartThings belongs to a Samsung account.
Location	A home in the app — for example, "Home" or "Lake cottage." Each location has its own devices, rooms and members.
Room	A group of devices inside a location, such as "Kitchen" or "Living room."
Device	Anything connected to the app: TV, washer, light, plug, sensor.
Hub	A small box (or a feature built into some Samsung TVs, monitors and fridges) that talks to smart-home gadgets that can't use Wi-Fi on their own. See Chapter 6.
Matter	A shared smart-home standard. A device with the Matter logo can work with SmartThings, Apple Home, Google Home and Alexa.
Thread	A low-power radio used by many Matter devices. It needs a hub that acts as a **Thread border router**.
Zigbee	An older low-power radio used by many sensors and bulbs. It also needs a hub.
Routine	A set of actions that run together, either when you tap a button or automatically.
Mode	A label for what's happening at home, such as Home, Away or Night. Routines can check it.
Member	Someone you've invited to share your location in their own SmartThings app.

GOOD TO KNOW

Wi-Fi devices don't need a hub

Your Samsung TV, washer, dryer, fridge and many plugs and bulbs connect over your home Wi-Fi. They work in SmartThings with no hub at all. A hub only matters for Zigbee, Thread and similar gadgets.

CHAPTER 4

Getting the App and Your Samsung Account

The SmartThings app is free. On a Galaxy phone it's usually already installed. On an iPhone or another Android phone, you download it.

What you need

- A phone or tablet. Samsung's U.S. page lists **Android 12 or later** (with at least 3 GB of memory) or **iOS 17 or later**.
- Your home Wi-Fi name and password.
- A **Samsung account**. If you have a Galaxy phone, you probably already have one — it's the account in **Settings** on the phone.

Install the app

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**. On Android, open the **Google Play Store** (or the **Galaxy Store** on a Samsung phone).
2. Search for **SmartThings**. The publisher is **Samsung Electronics**.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**.
4. Open the app and sign in with your Samsung account, or follow the prompts to create one.
5. Allow the permissions it asks for — location, notifications and nearby devices. The app uses them to find new devices and to send you alerts.

SCAM ALERT

Only download the real app

SmartThings is free. If a website asks you to pay to download it, or a "helper" app claims to control Samsung devices for a fee, back away. Get it only from the App Store, Google Play or the Galaxy Store.

One account for the whole house

Samsung's own pages say devices should be registered to a single Samsung account. In practice, that means one person in the house **owns** the location and invites everyone else as a member (Chapter 20). Don't create a second, separate home for your spouse — invite them instead.

TIP

Write down the account

Write your Samsung account email and password in the cheat-sheet at the end of this guide (Chapter 26). It's the single most useful thing you can keep. If you forget the password, you can reset it at account.samsung.com.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once you're signed in, the same account works on your Samsung TV, phone, watch and fridge. Sign in once and your devices start finding each other.

CHAPTER 5

Finding Your Way Around the App

The SmartThings app has a row of tabs along the bottom. Samsung redesigned the app in 2026, first on iPhone and then on Galaxy and other Android phones, so the tab names depend on which version you have.

Newer app (2026 redesign)	Older app	What's there
Home	**Favorites**	Your pinned devices and routines, and quick status cards.
Devices	**Devices**	Every device, sorted by room.
Life	**Life**	Extra services: Home Monitor, Energy, Find, Home Care and more.
Routines	**Automations** or **Routines**	Your routines, and the button to make new ones.
Menu	**Menu**	Settings, notifications, voice assistants, help.

Two buttons you'll use most

- **The plus sign (+)** at the top: add a device, a routine or a room.
- **The home name** at the top left (it might just say **Home**): switch between locations, or tap **Manage locations** to change rooms and members.

Pin your favorites

Put the things you use every day on the first tab so you aren't hunting for them.

1. Open the **Devices** tab.
2. Find the device you use most, such as the TV or the porch light.
3. Press and hold its tile, or tap the three dots, and look for **Add to favorites**.
4. Go back to the first tab (Home or Favorites) — it's waiting for you there.

> **TIP**
>
> **Tap the tile, or tap the name**
>
> On most device tiles, tapping the little power icon turns the device on or off. Tapping the name opens the full controls, such as the TV remote or the washer's cycle settings.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A tidy first tab means one tap to check on the house. No digging through menus.

PART 2

The Hub

Whether you need one at all, which Samsung TVs, monitors and refrigerators already have one built in, and the standalone hub to buy if you don't.

CHAPTER 6

Do You Need a Hub?

This is the question I hear most, so let's settle it first. A **hub** is a translator. Some smart-home gadgets — especially small battery sensors and some bulbs — don't use Wi-Fi. They speak low-power radio languages called **Zigbee** and **Thread**. A hub hears them and passes the message to SmartThings.

You do NOT need a hub for

- Your Samsung TV, soundbar, washer, dryer, refrigerator, range, dishwasher or air conditioner — they use your Wi-Fi.
- Most Wi-Fi smart plugs and bulbs.
- Products from other brands you link through their own account (Chapter 12).

You DO need a hub for

- **Zigbee** devices: many door and window sensors, motion sensors, leak sensors and some bulbs.
- **Matter-over-Thread** devices: a growing number of newer plugs, sensors, locks and bulbs. The box usually shows the Matter logo and the word "Thread."
- Running routines locally and quickly, even for some devices that could work without one.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Matter comes in two kinds**
>
> A Matter device either uses your **Wi-Fi** (no hub needed) or uses **Thread** (needs a Thread border router, which a SmartThings hub can be). The box or the maker's website tells you which. Either way, SmartThings Support describes a hub as the Matter "controller," so plan on having one before you add Matter devices.

Check whether you already have one

1. Open SmartThings and go to the **Devices** tab.
2. Look for a device described as a **hub** — it may be listed under your TV, monitor or fridge.
3. Or tap the **+** and choose to add a device; if the app asks you to pick a hub for a Zigbee or Thread device, it will list the hubs it knows about.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Before you buy anything, you may find the hub is already sitting in your living room — inside the TV. That can save you about $120.

CHAPTER 7

Samsung TVs, Monitors & Fridges as Hubs

Samsung now builds a SmartThings hub into many of its own products. SmartThings calls this "hub everywhere." If you have one of these, it can be the hub for your whole home.

Samsung products with a built-in hub

According to SmartThings and Samsung, built-in hubs appear in:

- Select Samsung **QLED, Neo QLED and OLED TVs** from 2023 and later.
- **The Frame** and **The Serif** TVs from 2024 and later.
- Samsung **Smart Monitors**, **projectors** and **soundbars** (select models).
- **Family Hub** refrigerators (the ones with the big touchscreen).
- Select **Bespoke AI Laundry Combo** washer-dryers.

HEADS UP

Some 2023 and 2024 TVs need a small add-on

Samsung's own support pages say certain 2023 and 2024 models with a built-in hub need the **SmartThings Dongle**, a small plug-in stick, before they can talk to Zigbee and Thread devices. Newer models have the radios built in. Before you buy Zigbee or Thread gadgets, check your exact model number on samsung.com or in the TV's SmartThings settings.

Things to know about a TV as a hub

- The TV must stay **plugged in and connected to Wi-Fi**. It can do its hub work while the screen is off.
- If you unplug it, move it to another room, or reset it, your Zigbee and Thread devices may go offline until it's back.
- One hub is plenty. If you have two hub-capable Samsung products, the app lets you pick which one does the job.
- A TV is a fine hub for a few lights and sensors. If you want a lot of devices, or need them to work when the TV is unplugged for a move, a standalone hub (Chapter 8) is steadier.

Sharing a Thread network with other systems

If you also use Apple Home or Google Home, you may already have a Thread network from an Apple TV, HomePod or Nest device. In October 2025, SmartThings added the ability for its hubs to join an existing Thread network or share theirs, so the systems can help each other instead of competing. This happens mostly behind the scenes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If you already own a recent Samsung TV or Family Hub fridge, you may never need to buy a separate hub. That's one less box, one less power cord and one less thing to troubleshoot.

CHAPTER 8

Standalone Hubs

If you don't have a hub built in — or you'd rather not depend on the TV — a small standalone hub plugs into your Wi-Fi router and sits quietly on a shelf.

The current choice: Aeotec Smart Home Hub 2

Samsung no longer makes its own standalone hubs for most stores. The current SmartThings-branded hub is made by a partner company, Aeotec, and is called the **Aeotec Smart Home Hub 2** (model GP-AEOHUBV4US in the U.S.).

Feature	Details
Works with	SmartThings, Matter, Thread (built-in Thread border router) and Zigbee
Zigbee devices	Up to about 150 directly
Z-Wave	**Not supported** on this model (the older version had it)
Price	About **$120** at major U.S. stores, as of November 2026
Connection	Plugs into power and into your home network; set up in the SmartThings app

HEADS UP

Got Z-Wave devices?

If you have older Z-Wave locks or switches from a previous SmartThings hub, the new Aeotec hub won't run them. Before you retire an old hub that still works, make a list of what's connected to it, or call me and we'll sort it out together.

Older hubs you may see

- **SmartThings Hub v2 and v3** (white square boxes) and the **Aeotec Smart Home Hub** (first version). Many still work.
- **SmartThings Station**, a round wireless phone charger that doubles as a hub. It has become hard to find in stores.
- The original **2015 hub** can't run Thread devices without a separate Thread border router, according to SmartThings Support.

Set up a standalone hub

1. Plug the hub into power and, if you can, into a spare port on your router with the included cable.
2. Open SmartThings and tap **+**, then **Add device**.
3. Choose the hub (you can search, browse by brand, or **scan** the QR code on the hub).
4. Pick the location and room where it lives.
5. Follow the prompts. The hub may update itself for a few minutes; leave it plugged in.

TIP

Where to put it

Somewhere central, up off the floor, and not inside a metal cabinet or right behind the TV. Small sensors only reach so far, and walls and appliances get in the way.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A standalone hub doesn't care whether the TV is unplugged, the fridge is being replaced, or the living room is being repainted. Your sensors and lights just keep working.

PART 3

Adding Your Devices

Set up your home and rooms, then add your Samsung TV and appliances, Matter gadgets with a QR code, and products from other brands.

CHAPTER 9

Locations and Rooms

Before you add devices, it helps to set up the "rooms" they'll live in. SmartThings organizes everything as **locations** (each home) and **rooms** (inside each home).

Add a room

1. Open SmartThings and tap **Home** (the home name) at the top left.
2. Tap **Manage locations**, then tap the location you want — usually your home.
3. Tap **Rooms**.
4. Tap **Add** (the plus sign), then choose or type a room name, such as Kitchen or Laundry.
5. Tap **Next**. The room now appears under that location.

Add a second location

If you have a second home, a cottage, or you look after a parent's house, give it its own location. Each location keeps its own devices, rooms, routines and members.

1. Tap the home name at the top left, then **Manage locations**.
2. Tap **Add location** and enter a name, like "Mom's house."
3. Set its address on the map if asked — routines that use sunrise, sunset or weather need it.

Move a device to another room

1. Open the device from the **Devices** tab.
2. Tap the three dots (**More options**) and choose **Edit** or **Information**.
3. Change the **Room** and save.

> **TIP**
>
> **Keep the names short and clear**
>
> Name things the way you'd say them out loud: "Kitchen light," "Bedroom TV," "Washer." Voice assistants (Chapter 21) use these names, and "Hey Google, turn on Kitchen light" works much better than "SmartBulb A19 2."

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Rooms turn a long list into a tidy floor plan. You can check "everything in the kitchen" at a glance, and tell a voice assistant to turn off a whole room at once.

CHAPTER 10

Adding Your Samsung TV and Appliances

Samsung's own products are the easiest to add. On a Galaxy phone, a card may even pop up on its own saying it found a new device nearby — just tap it and follow along.

Before you start

- Your phone and the device must be on the **same Wi-Fi network**, and both signed in to the **same Samsung account**.
- Turn on Bluetooth and location on your phone; the app uses them to find the device.
- Washers, dryers and many other appliances use **2.4 GHz Wi-Fi only**. If your router has two network names, connect your phone to the 2.4 GHz one during setup.

Add a Samsung TV

1. Turn the TV on and make sure it's connected to Wi-Fi and signed in to your Samsung account.
2. In SmartThings, tap **+**, then **Device** (or **Add device**).
3. Choose **By brand**, then **Samsung**, then **TV**.
4. Tap **Start** and follow the prompts. If a PIN appears on the TV, type it into the phone.
5. Pick the location and room, and give the TV a simple name.

Once it's added, tap the TV in the app for an on-screen remote — handy when the real remote has vanished into the couch cushions.

Add a Samsung washer or dryer

1. In SmartThings, tap **+**, then **Add device**, and choose **Washer** or **Dryer** (or scan the QR code on the appliance, if it has one).
2. Choose the location and room.
3. When the app asks, put the machine in connection mode. On many models, you press and hold **Smart Control** until the display shows **AP**. On models with a touch screen, look in **Settings** for **Easy Connection**.
4. Follow the prompts to join it to your home Wi-Fi. On an iPhone, the app may ask you to briefly join the appliance's own temporary network — that's normal.

HEADS UP

Remote start has limits, for safety

On Samsung ranges, remote control only works after you close the door and turn on Smart Control at the range, and it cancels if the door is opened. Samsung says gas ovens must be started at the range itself. Never leave anything on a cooktop or in an oven you can't see.

TIP

If it won't connect

Move closer to the router, check you're on the 2.4 GHz network, and make sure the Wi-Fi name has plain letters and numbers. Then turn the appliance off for a minute and try again.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Once your appliances are in SmartThings, they can tell you things — the laundry is done, the fridge door is open, a filter needs changing — instead of you having to remember to check.

CHAPTER 11

Adding Matter Devices with a QR Code

Matter is the shared standard that lets one plug or bulb work with SmartThings, Apple Home, Google Home and Alexa alike. Look for the Matter logo, or the words "Works with Matter," on the box.

What you need

- The device's **Matter QR code**. It's on the device itself, on a card in the box, or both.
- A SmartThings hub (built-in or standalone — Chapters 7 and 8).
- For Thread devices, a hub that is also a Thread border router.

Add it

1. Plug in or power up the device. It should be in pairing mode — usually it is when it's brand new.
2. Open SmartThings, tap **+** and choose **Add device**.
3. Tap **Scan** and point your phone's camera at the QR code. Or choose the brand and device from the list.
4. If the code won't scan, look for the 11- or 21-digit **setup code** printed under the QR code and choose to enter it instead.
5. Pick the location and room, and give it a name.

TIP

Keep the QR code

Snap a photo of the QR code (or keep the card) before you install the device. If a plug ends up behind the couch, or a light switch goes into the wall, you'll still have the code if you ever need to add it again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Already in another app?

A Matter device can belong to more than one system at once. If it's already in Apple Home or Google Home, open it in that app and look for an option to share it with another app or service. That app gives you a fresh code to scan in SmartThings.

HEADS UP

If it fails

Make sure the QR code is fully visible and well lit, the device is in pairing mode, and you're close to both the device and the hub. If it was set up before, it may need a factory reset first — the maker's instructions explain how.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Matter means you're not locked in. Buy the plug or bulb you like, and it works with the system you have — even if someone else in the family uses a different one.

CHAPTER 12

Linking Other Brands

Many brands — cameras, doorbells, thermostats, robot vacuums — have their own apps and their own accounts. SmartThings can often **link** to that account, so their devices show up in SmartThings alongside your Samsung ones.

Link a partner brand

1. Make sure the device already works in its own app (for example, the thermostat's app).
2. In SmartThings, tap **+**, then **Add device**.
3. Browse **By brand** or search for the brand's name.
4. Choose the device type. SmartThings will send you to the brand's sign-in page.
5. Sign in with **that brand's** account (not your Samsung account) and approve the link.
6. Choose which devices to bring in, and which room each goes in.

GOOD TO KNOW

Linked devices depend on two companies

A linked device runs through the brand's internet service as well as Samsung's. If the brand changes its app or ends its SmartThings support, the device may stop working in SmartThings — but it will usually still work in its own app.

HEADS UP

Not every brand plays along

Some popular products don't work with SmartThings at all. For example, Chamberlain's myQ garage openers list SmartThings as not supported. If a brand isn't in the SmartThings list, check its website before buying.

TIP

Unlink when you replace something

When you sell or throw out a linked device, remove it from the brand's own app as well as from SmartThings. That keeps ghost devices from cluttering your list.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One app to check, instead of a phone full of different brands' apps. Linked devices can also join your routines — the thermostat can turn down when the Good Night routine runs.

PART 4

Routines and Modes

Make your devices work together: one tap for several things, lights that come on by themselves, and modes for Home, Away and Night.

CHAPTER 13

Routines Made Simple

A **routine** is a little recipe: *if* something happens, *then* do these things. There are two kinds, and both are made in the same place.

Kind	How it starts	Example
Manual routine	You tap it (or ask a voice assistant)	"Movie night": dim the lamps, turn on the TV
Automatic routine	Something happens: a time, a sensor, a device, a mode	At sunset, turn on the porch light

Make a manual routine

1. Open SmartThings and go to the **Routines** tab (in older versions, **Automations**).
2. Tap **+** and choose **Create routine** (or **Add routine**).
3. Give it a name and pick an icon, if asked.
4. For the "If" part, choose the option to start it yourself — it may be called **Start routine manually**, **Tap to run** or similar.
5. For the "Then" part, tap **Add** and pick what should happen: control devices, send a notification, change the mode.
6. Tap **Save**.

To run it, open the Routines tab and tap the play button next to its name. You can also add it to your favorites (Chapter 5).

TIP

Start with one

Pick one thing you do every day and turn it into a routine. A "Leaving" routine that turns off the TV and the lamps is a great first one. Get it working, then build the next.

GOOD TO KNOW

Older names you may see

Older versions of SmartThings called manual routines **scenes** and automatic ones **automations**. Same idea, new names.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Five taps become one. On a tired evening, one button can turn off every light downstairs while you head up to bed.

CHAPTER 14

Automatic Routines

An automatic routine runs by itself when its "If" happens. Samsung's own guidance lists the main kinds of triggers as time, location and device activity.

Common "If" choices

Trigger	What it watches
Time	A set time, or sunrise or sunset, on chosen days.
Device status	A door opens, motion is seen, the washer finishes, a leak sensor gets wet.
Member location	When your phone arrives home or leaves (needs location permission).
Mode	When the home changes to Away or Night (Chapter 15).
Weather	Temperature or conditions outside, for your location's address.

Example: porch light at sunset

1. Go to the **Routines** tab, tap **+**, and choose **Create routine**.
2. Name it "Porch light on."
3. Under **If**, tap **Add**, choose **Time of day** (or **Time**), and pick **Sunset**.
4. Under **Then**, tap **Add**, choose **Control devices**, pick the porch light, and set it to **On**.
5. Tap **Save**. Make a second routine to turn it off at, say, 11 p.m.

Good starter routines

- **Good morning:** at 7 a.m. on weekdays, turn on the kitchen light.
- **Laundry done:** when the washer finishes, flash a lamp or announce it on a speaker.
- **Water alarm:** when a leak sensor detects water, send a notification to everyone.
- **Night path:** when motion is seen in the hall after 10 p.m., turn a light on low for five minutes.

HEADS UP

Don't automate the dangerous things

Keep automations to lights, plugs, TVs and alerts. Don't set a routine to turn on a space heater, an oven or a cooktop when no one is there to watch it.

TIP

If a routine misbehaves

Open it and switch it off with the toggle next to its name — you don't have to delete it. Check the "If" carefully: "when the door opens" and "while the door is open" behave differently.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Coming home to a lit porch, never wondering whether you left the lamp on, getting a tap on the shoulder when the laundry's done — that's what automatic routines are for.

CHAPTER 15

Modes: Home, Away and Night

A **mode** is a simple label for what's going on at your house. SmartThings starts you with **Home**, **Away** and **Night**, and you can add your own, such as "Vacation." Your home is in only one mode at a time.

Why modes help

Modes let one routine behave differently depending on the situation. A motion sensor in the hall might turn on a light when the mode is Night, but send you a notification when the mode is Away.

Change the mode

- With a routine: under **Then**, choose to **change the location mode**, for example to Away.
- Automatically: make a routine that sets Away when every member's phone has left home, and Home when the first one arrives.
- By hand: look for **Mode** on the first tab or in your location's settings.

Use the mode as a condition

1. Open or create a routine.
2. Under **If**, add the trigger you want — for example, motion in the hall.
3. Add a second condition: **Location mode** is **Night**.
4. Under **Then**, turn on the hall light at a low level.
5. Tap **Save**.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Modes and Home Monitor are separate**
>
> The words Home and Away appear in two places. **Modes** are labels for routines. **Home Monitor** (Chapter 16) has its own **Arm (Away)**, **Arm (Stay)** and **Disarm** settings. You can link them with a routine, but changing one doesn't automatically change the other.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One switch — "we're away" — can tell the whole house how to behave, without you rebuilding every routine for every situation.

PART 5

The Extras in the Life Tab

Home Monitor, SmartThings Energy, appliance alerts and Home Care, and finding lost Galaxy devices and SmartTags.

CHAPTER 16

Home Monitor

SmartThings Home Monitor turns your sensors and cameras into a simple do-it-yourself security watch. It lives in the **Life** tab. It's free, but it only knows what your sensors tell it — so you need at least a door sensor, motion sensor or camera for it to be useful.

The three settings

Setting	When to use it
Arm (Away)	For when you're out and the house is empty. Every security sensor counts.
Arm (Stay)	For when you're home but want protection — for example, while everyone is asleep. You choose which sensors count, usually just the outside doors.
Disarm	Normal life. Security alerts are off (smoke and leak alerts can stay on).

Set it up

1. Open SmartThings, tap the **Life** tab, and choose **Home Monitor** (add it if asked).
2. Go through the **Security** settings: choose which sensors count for Arm (Away), and which count for Arm (Stay).
3. Choose how you want to be told: a phone notification, a siren or a light, if you have them.
4. Look at the **Smoke** and **Leak** settings too, if you have those sensors, and turn on alerts.

Arm it automatically

Samsung notes you can arm and disarm Home Monitor with routines. A common one: when every member's phone has left home, set Arm (Away); when the first one comes back, Disarm.

STAY SAFE

It alerts you — it doesn't call for help

Home Monitor sends alerts to **your phone**. It does not call the police or fire department. If you want someone to respond when you can't, you need a professionally monitored alarm service. Real smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, tested monthly, are still a must.

TIP

Test it on a quiet afternoon

Arm (Away), step outside, and open the door. Check that your phone gets the alert. Then Disarm. Much better to find a problem now than on vacation.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Peace of mind for very little cost. A few small sensors and the free Home Monitor can tell you if a door opens while you're away, or if the water heater starts to leak.

CHAPTER 17

SmartThings Energy

SmartThings Energy shows how much electricity your connected devices are using. It's in the **Life** tab, and it's free. It works best with Samsung appliances and smart plugs that measure power.

What it shows you

- Energy history for your home, and how much power each supported device uses.
- A **monthly target** you can set, with an alert if you're heading over it.
- An alert if devices are left on while you're away from home.

Set it up

1. Open SmartThings and tap the **Life** tab.
2. Choose **Energy**. If you haven't used it before, tap **Start** and follow the setup.
3. Pick which devices to include. Only supported devices appear.
4. Set a monthly goal if you'd like one.

GOOD TO KNOW

Requirements

Samsung says Energy needs your devices on Wi-Fi and signed in to your Samsung account. Which devices and features appear depends on your model and your country.

TIP

Your electric bill is still the final word

The numbers in the app cover only the devices it can see. Your whole-house use, and what you're charged, comes from your electric company's meter. The Ways to Make Life Easier topic explains **AI Energy Mode**, which some Samsung appliances use to save power automatically.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You can spot the power-hungry things — the old fridge in the garage, the TV left on all day — and make simple changes without guessing.

CHAPTER 18

Appliance Alerts and Home Care

Connected Samsung appliances can tell you what's going on — and SmartThings **Home Care** keeps an eye on their health.

Appliance alerts

- Samsung says notifications are **on by default**: once a washer is connected, you get an alert when the cycle finishes.
- Some washers also send a **remaining laundry** reminder if wet clothes sit in the drum after the cycle ends. It doesn't work once the machine powers off.
- Fridges can alert you if a door is left open; other appliances send their own status messages.

Turn alerts down or off

1. Open SmartThings and tap **Menu**.
2. Tap **Settings**, then **Notifications**.
3. Turn off the ones you don't want, or turn off notifications for one device only.

> TIP
> **Phone notifications have a switch too**
> If you get no SmartThings alerts at all, check your phone's own settings. On an iPhone, go to **Settings** > **Notifications** > **SmartThings**. On Android, go to **Settings** > **Notifications** > **App notifications**.

SmartThings Home Care

Home Care is a free service in the **Life** tab for connected Samsung appliances. Samsung describes it as watching your appliances, offering help when something goes wrong, and reminding you when maintenance or a replacement part is due — such as a water filter.

1. Tap the **Life** tab and choose **Home Care** (add it if asked).
2. Look for **Device care** cards that flag an appliance needing attention.
3. Tap an appliance to run a check or see its maintenance tips.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pet Care, if you have the robot

SmartThings also has a **Pet Care** service. Samsung says it works only with certain Bespoke Jet Bot robot vacuums with cameras and with home cameras, and availability varies by region. If you don't own one, you can skip it.

SCAM ALERT

Watch out for fake "repair" messages

Real Home Care alerts appear inside the SmartThings app. A text or email saying your appliance is failing and you need to call a number or pay for a "protection plan" is not from SmartThings. Look up Samsung's service options yourself at samsung.com.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

No more running down to the basement to see if the laundry is done, and fewer surprise breakdowns. The appliances remind you, instead of the other way around.

CHAPTER 19

SmartThings Find and Samsung Find

Samsung's finding features help you locate a lost Galaxy phone, tablet, watch or earbuds, and **Galaxy SmartTag** trackers clipped to your keys or bag. The names have shifted over time, so here's the plain version.

Name	What it is
SmartThings Find	The finding service inside the SmartThings app (Life tab). SmartTags are registered here.
Samsung Find	A separate app on newer Galaxy phones (since 2024). It finds Galaxy devices and shows registered SmartTags; it needs the SmartThings app installed for the tags.
Find Hub	Google's service for any Android phone (formerly Find My Device). It's separate from Samsung's, and it's good to have it on too.

HEADS UP

Samsung is moving finding features

Samsung has been shifting finding features from the SmartThings app toward the separate Samsung Find app. If your phone has Samsung Find, start there. If a screen in SmartThings tells you a feature has moved, follow its link.

Find a lost Galaxy device

1. On another phone, open **Samsung Find** or SmartThings and go to **Find**. On a computer, go to **samsungfind.samsung.com** and sign in with your Samsung account.
2. Pick the lost device. The map shows its last known location.
3. Choose **Ring** if it's nearby, or **Lock** if you think it's really lost.

STAY SAFE

Never go to a stolen phone's location alone

If the map shows your phone somewhere unfamiliar, don't go knocking on doors. Lock it, then call the police and give them the location.

STAY SAFE

Share location only with people you trust

SmartThings Find lets you share where your tags and devices are with family members. Share only with people you'd trust with your front-door key, and check the sharing list now and then. If you ever find an unknown tracker traveling with you, contact the police.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A misplaced phone becomes a two-minute search instead of a panic. A SmartTag on your keys means you can make them ring from your phone.

PART 6

Family and Voice

Share your home with the people you live with — or look after — and control it all by voice with Bixby, Alexa or Google.

CHAPTER 20

Sharing with Family Members

Everyone in the house can use SmartThings on their own phone, with their own Samsung account. The owner of the home invites them as **members**.

Invite a member

1. Open SmartThings and tap the home name at the top left, then **Manage locations**.
2. Tap your location, then look for **Members** and **Invite**.
3. Enter the person's Samsung account email, or show them the **QR code** to scan with their phone.
4. They accept the invitation in their own SmartThings app.

What members can and can't do

Members can	See and control the devices, and use and make routines.
Members can't	Add or remove other members, or delete the location.
Only the owner can	Remove members and delete the location.

Remove a member

1. As the owner, go to **Manage locations** and tap the location.
2. Tap **Members**, choose the person, and remove them.

STAY SAFE

Share your home only with people you trust

A member can unlock a connected lock, open a connected garage, turn off cameras, see when the house is empty, and — if location features are on — see when your phone arrives or leaves. Invite only people you'd trust with a house key. When a relationship changes, or a helper or tenant moves on, remove them the same day.

TIP

Looking after a parent's home?

Make the parent's home a separate **location** (Chapter 9), owned by your parent's account or yours, and invite the other as a member. Then you can check that the thermostat is sensible or the fridge door is closed, without mixing it up with your own house.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Everyone gets the same buttons on their own phone, and no one has to share a password.

CHAPTER 21

Bixby, Alexa and Google

Once your devices are in SmartThings, you can control them by voice. Samsung's own assistant, **Bixby**, works on Galaxy phones and many Samsung TVs. SmartThings also links to **Amazon Alexa** and **Google**, so Echo and Nest speakers can control your SmartThings devices too.

Bixby

Bixby can control devices that are already in your SmartThings app. Samsung's examples include:

- "Hi Bixby, turn on the living room light."
- "Hi Bixby, turn on the living room air conditioner."
- "Hi Bixby, pause the washer."

Bixby needs your Samsung account and an internet connection. On newer Samsung TVs, voice features may appear as part of **Vision AI Companion**, Samsung's upgraded Bixby.

Link SmartThings to Alexa

1. Open the **Amazon Alexa** app.
2. Find **Skills** and search for **SmartThings**.
3. Tap **Enable**, then sign in with your **Samsung account** to link the two.
4. Your SmartThings devices appear in the Alexa app's **Devices** tab.
5. Try it: "Alexa, turn on the kitchen light."

Link SmartThings to Google

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap to add a device and choose the option to link a device or service (it may say **Works with Google Home**).
3. Search for and choose **SmartThings**.
4. Sign in with your Samsung account, choose your location, and tap **Authorize**.
5. Your SmartThings devices appear in Google Home. Try: "Hey Google, turn off the bedroom TV."

GOOD TO KNOW

You can also start from SmartThings

In SmartThings, **Menu** has a voice assistant section where you can connect Alexa or Google Assistant. Samsung notes that connecting it this way applies to every location in your account.

TIP

If a voice command doesn't work

Check the device's name in SmartThings — the assistant uses the same name. Rename tricky ones ("Lamp 2") to something clear ("Reading lamp"). New devices sometimes need you to say "Alexa, discover devices" or wait a few minutes for Google to sync.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Your hands are full, the remote is missing, or getting up is a chore — just say it. Voice control is one of the biggest everyday helps for folks with sore knees or shaky hands.

PART 7

When Things Go Wrong

Calm, in-order fixes for devices and hubs that say "offline," how to start a device over, how to stay safe from fake Samsung support, and when to call Bill.

CHAPTER 22

A Device Says Offline

"Offline" or "Disconnected" just means SmartThings can't hear the device right now. It's the most common problem, and it usually fixes itself with a few simple steps. Go in order and stop when it's fixed.

First, is it one device or many?

- **Just one device** offline: work through the steps below.
- **Everything** offline, including Wi-Fi devices: your home internet is probably down. Check another app or website. Restart your modem and router.
- **All the Zigbee or Thread gadgets at once**, but the TV and washer are fine: the **hub** is the likely problem. Go to Chapter 23.

Fix one offline device

1. Check that it has power: it's plugged in, switched on at the wall, or the battery isn't dead.
2. If it plugs in, unplug it for **two minutes**, then plug it back in. Try a different outlet if it still won't respond.
3. For hub gadgets, move the device closer to the hub, with nothing big in between, and check again.
4. Make sure the SmartThings app is up to date, and check the maker's app or website for a firmware update.
5. For Zigbee trouble, Samsung suggests setting your router's Wi-Fi to channel 1, 6 or 11 to cut down interference. If you're not comfortable in your router's settings, skip this or call me.
6. As a last resort, delete the device from SmartThings and add it again (Chapter 23).

HEADS UP

Deleting can affect other devices

Samsung warns that removing a device may affect the connections of other devices, because some plug-in gadgets pass signals along for others. Try the gentle steps first.

TIP

Wi-Fi appliances after a router change

If you got a new router or changed the Wi-Fi password, every Wi-Fi appliance needs to be told the new details. That usually means adding it again in SmartThings (Chapter 10).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Most "offline" problems take two minutes, not a service call. Knowing the order saves you from resetting things that didn't need it.

CHAPTER 23

Hub Offline and Re-pairing

If the hub stops talking, every Zigbee and Thread device behind it goes quiet at once. The good news: when the hub comes back, they usually all come back with it, with no re-pairing needed.

A standalone hub is offline

1. Check its light. No light at all means no power — check the plug and outlet.
2. Check that the network cable (if used) is firmly in at both ends, and that your internet is working.
3. Restart the hub: unplug it, wait a minute or two, and plug it back in. Give it several minutes to start up.
4. Restart your router too, if other things are acting up.
5. Open SmartThings and check the hub's status again.

A TV, monitor or fridge hub is offline

- Make sure it's plugged in, connected to Wi-Fi and still signed in to your Samsung account.
- Restart it: unplug it for a minute, then plug it back in.
- If it was recently reset, moved to a different home network, or signed in with a different account, it may need to be added to SmartThings again.

Start a device over (re-pairing)

When nothing else works, removing a device and adding it again gives it a clean start.

1. Open the device in SmartThings, tap the three dots (**More options**) and choose **Delete**.
2. Reset the device itself, using the maker's instructions. This is often holding a button for several seconds or switching it on and off a set number of times.
3. Add it again with **+** > **Add device** (Chapters 10 and 11).
4. Put it back in its room, and check any routines that used it — they may need the device picked again.

HEADS UP

Never "factory reset" the hub on a whim

Resetting the hub itself can disconnect every device behind it, and you'd have to add them all again. Leave that for last, and call me first if you have a lot of devices.

TIP

Sometimes it's not you

Once in a while, SmartThings itself has an outage, and many people's devices go offline at the same time. If everything went offline at once and restarting changes nothing, wait an hour before resetting anything.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A calm order of steps, so a blinking light is a small chore instead of a lost afternoon.

CHAPTER 24

Staying Safe: Scams and Privacy

Smart homes attract scammers who pose as Samsung or "SmartThings technicians." A few simple habits keep you safe.

SCAM ALERT

Fake Samsung support numbers

Scammers buy search ads and post fake "Samsung support" numbers online. When you call, they ask to "connect to your computer" or want payment by gift card. Get Samsung's support number only from **samsung.com/us/support**, from your product's box or manual, or from the SmartThings app itself — never from a search ad, a pop-up or a text message.

SCAM ALERT

Calls and emails out of the blue

Samsung doesn't call you to say your hub has a virus or your account will be closed. Samsung says its genuine emails come from a samsung.com address. If someone contacts you first, hang up and check with Samsung yourself, using a number you looked up.

SCAM ALERT

"Pay to unlock" or "subscription expiring"

The SmartThings app, Home Monitor, Energy and Find are free for everyday home use. A message saying you must pay to keep your smart home working, or to "unlock" a device, is a scam.

Protect your Samsung account

- Use a strong, unique password for your Samsung account — not the same one as your email.
- Turn on **two-step verification** in your Samsung account settings, so a stolen password alone isn't enough.
- Never read a verification code out to anyone who calls you. Samsung will never ask for it.

Privacy at home

- Review your **members** (Chapter 20) and **location sharing** (Chapter 19) every few months.
- Cameras: put indoor cameras where they don't face bedrooms or bathrooms, and tell guests they're there.
- When you sell a Samsung TV or appliance, remove it from SmartThings and reset it, so the new owner starts fresh.

STAY SAFE

Share location access only with trusted people

Anyone who can see your home's devices or your phone's location can tell when you're out. Share only with close family you trust, and remove anyone at once if things change.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A few minutes of care means your smart home stays *your* home — and the people trying to frighten you into paying get nothing.

CHAPTER 25

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, at your own pace. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time and worry. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **Getting started all at once** — the app, your Samsung account, the TV and the appliances added, rooms named and favorites pinned, in one visit.
- **Choosing a hub**: figuring out whether your TV or fridge already is one, or whether a standalone hub makes more sense for your home.
- **Moving from an old hub**, especially if you have Z-Wave locks or switches.
- **Routines that don't behave** — lights coming on at odd hours, or nothing happening at all.
- **Setting up a parent's home** as a separate location you can check on from your own phone.
- **Everything says offline** after a new router or internet company switch.
- **Someone called claiming to be Samsung** and you're not sure what they did.

What working with me is like

I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and never talk down to anyone. I'll tell you honestly when a gadget isn't worth your money, and I don't sell smart-home products. I've been doing this kind of work for more than 30 years, and I serve Portage County, Ohio, in person, and folks farther away by remote help.

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**. This guide is yours to keep for free; if you'd like a hand, I'm only a phone call away.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may meet Sophie first

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. A real person — me — does the actual help.

Thank you for reading. Take it one device at a time, and remember: the best smart home is the one that makes *your* day a little easier.

— Bill

CHAPTER 26

Your SmartThings Cheat-Sheet

Keep this by the TV or on the fridge. The whole guide, boiled down.

The essentials

Topic	Remember
The app	SmartThings, free, from the App Store, Google Play or Galaxy Store. Sign in with your Samsung account.
Add a device	Tap **+** > **Add device**. Scan a QR code or choose the brand.
Add a room	Home name (top left) > **Manage locations** > your home > **Rooms** > **+**.
Make a routine	**Routines** tab > **+** > **Create routine**. If ... Then ...
Hub	Built into many newer Samsung TVs, monitors and Family Hub fridges, or the Aeotec Smart Home Hub 2 (about $120).
Extras	**Life** tab: Home Monitor, Energy, Home Care, Find.
Invite family	**Manage locations** > your home > **Members** > **Invite**.
Voice	Alexa: enable the SmartThings skill. Google Home: link SmartThings. Bixby: just ask.
Samsung support	Only from samsung.com/us/support or the app — never a search ad.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Samsung account email	_____
Where I keep the password	_____
My hub (TV, fridge or box) and where it is	_____
Wi-Fi name (2.4 GHz) and password	_____
Members I've invited	_____
Linked brand accounts (thermostat, camera...)	_____
Samsung support number (from samsung.com)	_____

When something's wrong, in order

1. Is the home internet working? Try another app.
2. Is it one device, or everything behind the hub?
3. Check power: plugged in, switched on, fresh battery.
4. Unplug it for two minutes, then plug it back in.
5. Restart the hub (or the TV or fridge acting as the hub).
6. Update the SmartThings app.
7. Delete the device and add it again.
8. Still stuck? Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

If there's smoke, gas or water

Don't troubleshoot the app. Get everyone out if needed, call 911 or the gas company, and shut off the water at the main. Deal with the smart home later.