BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 19

# Smart Locks

Keyless front doors made plain —
explained in plain English, one step at a time

**A plain-English guide to living without a hidden key**

Take your time — your old key still works

*Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech*

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

*For August, Schlage & Yale locks · facts current November 2026*

# What's Inside

This is your Smart Locks manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it nearby and reach for whatever you need. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. Smart-lock makers change their apps and screens from time to time, so if a button sits in a slightly different spot on yours, don't worry — I'll always tell you what to look *for*, and the idea stays the same. This book covers the three families most folks here own — **August**, **Schlage**, and **Yale** — described at the family level so it stays true as new models arrive.

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PART 1

# Getting to Know Smart Locks

What a smart lock is, what it actually does for you day to day, the main kinds you'll run into, and how to pick the one that fits your door and your life. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

# A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe your children bought you a smart lock for the holidays and it's still in the box. Maybe you've had one on the door for a year and never felt sure how to add a code for the cleaning lady. Maybe you're just tired of fishing for keys in the dark, or worried about that spare key under the mat. Wherever you're starting from, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this book the same way I'd sit down next to you at your front door: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing and no fancy words. If I ever use a term you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then — you won't have to look anything up.

## What a smart lock really is, in one breath

A **smart lock** is simply a deadbolt — the same sturdy lock you already have on your door — with a small battery-powered motor and a little computer added, so it can lock and unlock itself when you tell it to. You can tell it with a code on a keypad, a tap of your phone, or just by walking up to the door. That's the whole idea. Everything else in this book is detail.

## This book is yours — read it any way you like

You do not have to read these pages in order, and there is no test at the end. Start on page one, or flip straight to the chapter that answers today's question. Fold the corners, underline things, scribble in the margins. Keep it in the drawer by the door and pull it out whenever you need it. It's a reference, not a race — you cannot fall behind.

## The big reassurance: your old key still works

Here is the most important comfort in this whole book, so I'll say it plainly. A smart lock does **not** take away your ordinary way in. On most locks you still have a real metal key, or a keypad with a code, or both. If the battery, the phone, or the internet ever lets you down, you are not locked out of your own home — there is always a plain, old-fashioned backup, and I'll show you exactly what yours is. You are adding a convenient new door-opener, not throwing away the ones you trust.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Why folks love them

No more hunting for keys with your arms full of groceries. No more hiding a spare under the mat where anyone can find it. You can let a trusted neighbor or a caregiver in without handing over a key — and see for yourself that the door locked behind you after you left. For a lot of people it's the first piece of "smart home" gear that genuinely makes daily life easier.

## A word about safety, right up front

I'll be honest with you, because that's how I do things. A smart lock is a wonderful convenience, and a good one is every bit as sturdy as a regular deadbolt. But it is also connected to an app and sometimes to the internet, and that means a few simple habits matter — a strong account password, keeping the lock's software up to date, and sharing codes sensibly. I'm not telling you this to frighten you. A little know-how makes a smart lock safe *and* easy, and this book has a whole part (Part 7) devoted to peace of mind.

## And I'm only a phone call away

This book will carry you a long way on your own. But a lock is the one gadget where a mistake means standing on your own porch — so if you ever get stuck, you are never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. I can even install these locks for you, right here in Portage County. There is no such thing as a silly question — the only bad one is the one you talked yourself out of asking.

***— Bill***

CHAPTER 2

# What a Smart Lock Actually Is

Before we touch a single screwdriver or app, let's answer the simplest question of all: what *is* this thing, really, and how is it different from the lock you have now?

## A deadbolt with a small motor and a small brain

Picture your ordinary deadbolt — the thick metal bar that slides out of the edge of the door into the frame when you turn the knob or the key. A smart lock is that same deadbolt, with two things added: a tiny **electric motor** that can slide the bolt for you, and a small **computer** (about as clever as a wristwatch) that listens for your instructions. Fresh batteries give it the power. That's genuinely all it is.

Because it has a motor and a brain, you can now tell it to lock or unlock in ways a plain lock could never manage: by tapping a button in an app on your phone, by punching a code into a keypad, by tapping your phone to it, or even automatically as you walk up. The sturdy metal bolt doing the actual work is exactly the same as always.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **"Smart" just means it can take instructions**
>
> Don't let the word "smart" put you off. In plain terms it only means the device can follow instructions you give it — through an app or a code — instead of needing a physical key turned by hand every single time. A smart lock is no more mysterious than a garage-door opener, which does the very same trick for your garage.

## Where the "smart" part lives

The lock talks to an **app** — a small program on your phone or tablet, run by the company that made the lock. The app is your remote control and your record book: from it you lock and unlock the door, hand out codes, and see a list of who came and went. The lock and the app find each other over a wireless signal, which we'll untangle gently in Part 2.

## What it does NOT do

- It does **not** replace your door or your door frame — a good door and a solid frame still matter most for security, and we'll talk about that honestly.
- It does **not** watch or record you — a smart lock is a lock, not a camera (though some come with a doorbell camera as a separate piece).

- It does **not** leave you stranded if the power or internet goes out — there is always a backup way in, which is the first thing I'll make sure you know for your model.

TIP

### If you can work a microwave, you can work this

People picture smart locks as complicated. They aren't. Once it's installed and set up — the part worth doing carefully, or letting me do — the everyday use is punching in a code or tapping a phone. Simpler, honestly, than the lock you have now.

CHAPTER 3

# What a Smart Lock Does For You

A gadget is only worth having if it earns its keep. So before anything else, let's be clear about the real, everyday good a smart lock does — not the fancy features, but the small daily comforts that make folks glad they bought one.

## No more keys to carry, lose, or fumble

Your door opens with a code you remember or a phone that's already in your pocket. No digging through a purse on a cold porch, no dropping keys in the snow, no getting locked out because you left them inside. If your hands are full of groceries, many locks will even unlock as you walk up (Part 4).

## Let people in without handing over a key

This is the one that changes lives. You can give your daughter, a neighbor, the dog-walker, a house-cleaner, or a caregiver their *own* code to get in — and take it away again in a second when you no longer want them to have it. No more copying keys, no more spares floating around that you can't account for, no more being tied to the house waiting for someone to arrive.

> WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU
>
> **A real help as we get older**
>
> If a family member, nurse, aide, or caregiver needs to come and go — to check on you, bring groceries, or help in an emergency — a smart lock lets them in without you getting up, and without a key hidden outside where a stranger could find it. You stay in control of exactly who has a code and when it works. We devote a whole chapter to this in Part 7.

## Know the door is locked — from anywhere

How many times have you pulled out of the driveway and wondered, "did I lock the door?" With a smart lock you glance at the app and see for certain. If you forgot, you tap once and it locks — whether you're in the kitchen or three states away visiting the grandkids. Many locks will also **lock themselves** automatically after a few minutes, so you never have to wonder again.

## A record of who came and went

The app keeps a simple list — a sort of visitor's logbook — showing when the door was locked or unlocked and, if each person has their own code, *which* person it was. "The cleaner arrived at 10:04, the grandson let himself in at 3:15." It's quietly reassuring, and we cover it fully in Part 5.

## An honest word: what it won't fix

A smart lock is a convenience and a sensible security upgrade, but it is not a force field. It won't make a flimsy door strong, and it depends on batteries and, for some features, on your home internet. I'll always tell you plainly what a feature can and can't do — because a tool you understand is a tool you can trust.

CHAPTER 4

# The Main Kinds of Smart Lock

Walk into a store or search online and the choices can feel endless. In truth they sort into a few simple kinds. Once you can tell them apart, the whole decision gets easy. Here are the two big questions that separate them.

## Question one: does it replace your lock, or ride on top of it?

### Retrofit (rides on top — the August way)

A **retrofit** lock attaches to the *inside* of your existing deadbolt. From the outside your door looks completely unchanged — same keyhole, same key. A motor on the inside turns the thumb-latch (the little lever you'd normally twist by hand) for you. Nothing about the outside of your door changes, and **your old key keeps working exactly as before**. The **August** family of locks is the best-known example of this kind.

### Full replacement (a whole new deadbolt — the Schlage and Yale way)

A **full replacement** lock is a brand-new deadbolt that takes the place of your old one entirely. You unscrew the old lock and screw the new one in. Because it's a complete new lock, it usually has a **keypad** on the outside (buttons or a touch surface you tap a code into), and often a new metal key as well. Most **Schlage** and **Yale** smart locks are this kind.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Neither kind is "better" — they suit different people**
>
> A retrofit is quick, renter-friendly, and keeps your exact key and outside look. A full replacement gives you a keypad on the door so you (and guests) can get in with no phone and no key at all. We'll help you choose in Chapter 6, and either way the sturdy bolt is doing the same honest job.

## Question two: how do you tell it to unlock?

This is really a question of how many "doorways in" you want. A given lock may offer several at once. Here are all the ways a modern smart lock can let you in:

| Way in | What it means |
|---|---|
| **Keypad code** | Punch a number code into buttons or a touch pad on the door. No phone needed. Great for guests. |
| **The app** | Tap "unlock" in the app on your phone — works from the couch or from far away. |

| Way in | What it means |
|---|---|
| **Walk-up (auto-unlock)** | The lock senses your phone approaching and unlocks for you, hands-free. |
| **Tap your phone** | Hold your phone (or watch) near the lock and it opens — like tapping to pay at a store. |
| **Fingerprint** | On some locks, a fingertip reader opens the door, like unlocking a phone. |
| **The metal key** | The plain old key, as a backup (kept on retrofits; optional on some replacements). |

TIP

### You don't have to use them all

A lock might offer five ways in, but you only ever use the one or two you like. Many folks settle on "a code for me and the family, the app when I'm away." Pick what's comfortable and ignore the rest — the extra options are there for you, not the other way around.

CHAPTER 5

# Meet the Three Families: August, Schlage & Yale

This book focuses on the three brands most folks around here own. I'll describe each as a **family** of locks rather than one exact model, because each company sells several and brings out new ones every year — but the family character, and the app you'll use, stays steady. (Interestingly, the same parent company now owns both August and Yale, so their apps have grown very similar.)

## August — the retrofit specialist

August locks mount on the inside of your existing deadbolt. From outside, your door is unchanged and your **old key still works**. There's no keypad on the door itself in the basic form (August sells a separate stick-on keypad if you want one). You control it from the **August app** (now often shown as the **Yale Access** app), and it's a favorite of renters and anyone who doesn't want to change the look of their door. Newer August models have Wi-Fi built in; older ones needed a small plug-in "Connect" bridge for the away-from-home features.

## Schlage — the sturdy keypad deadbolt

Schlage (say it "SHLAYG") is a long-established American lock maker, and their smart locks are full-replacement deadbolts with a **keypad on the door**. The well-known **Encode** line has Wi-Fi built right in — no separate bridge needed — and uses the **Schlage Home** app. Schlage locks tend to earn top marks for physical sturdiness. The **Encode Plus** model also works with Apple's tap-to-unlock (more on that in Part 4).

## Yale — the sleek, flexible replacement

Yale is another storied lock name. Their **Assure** line are full-replacement deadbolts, offered either with a **push-button keypad** or in a sleek **key-free** touchscreen version (no keyhole at all — so the backup there is batteries and a code, not a key). Yale uses the **Yale Access** app, and Wi-Fi is usually added with a small plug-in module or built in on newer models. Some Yale models speak the newer "Matter" smart-home language we'll meet in Part 8.

| Family | Character in a nutshell |
|---|---|
| **August** | Retrofit (rides on your deadbolt). Keeps your key. App-first; keypad optional. August / Yale Access app. |

| Family | Character in a nutshell |
|---|---|
| **Schlage** | Full replacement with keypad. Wi-Fi built in (Encode). Very sturdy. Schlage Home app. |
| **Yale** | Full replacement, keypad or key-free. Wi-Fi via module/built in. Yale Access app. |

**FROM BILL**

### I'll meet you where you are, whatever you own

If you've already got one of these on the door, wonderful — this book covers it. If you're still choosing, the next chapter walks you through it. And if you'd rather someone just handle the whole thing, I install and set up all three families right here in Portage County. (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 6

# Choosing the Right One for You

There's no single "best" smart lock — only the best one for *your* door, your comfort, and how you live. Let's walk through the handful of honest questions that settle it, with no sales pressure and no jargon.

## Do you own or rent?

If you **rent**, or simply don't want to change the outside of your door, lean toward a **retrofit** (August). It leaves the existing lock and key in place and can be taken off cleanly when you move. If you **own** and don't mind swapping the whole deadbolt, a replacement (Schlage or Yale) opens up the keypad and hands-free options.

## Do you want to get in without a phone or key?

If yes — and most folks do — you want a **keypad** on the door, which means a Schlage or Yale replacement (or adding August's separate keypad accessory). A code on the door is the single most useful feature for seniors and for letting family and helpers in, because it needs no phone, no app, and no fiddling.

## Do you want a backup metal key?

Most people sleep easier with a real key as the last-resort backup. August keeps your existing keyhole. Schlage keypad locks include a key. Some sleek Yale models are deliberately **key-free** (no keyhole to pick) — lovely and secure, but then your backups are the keypad code and a battery trick, so be sure that suits you before you buy.

## How's your Wi-Fi near the door?

The away-from-home features — locking from afar, getting alerts — lean on your home Wi-Fi reaching the front door. If your router is far from the entry, pick a lock with strong Wi-Fi or plan for a Wi-Fi extender. We'll cover this properly in Part 2; for now, just know it matters.

| If this is you… | A sensible starting point |
|---|---|
| **"I rent / won't change my door"** | Retrofit — August. Keeps your key and the outside look. |
| **"I want a code pad on the door"** | Replacement with keypad — Schlage Encode or Yale Assure (keypad version). |
| **"I want a metal-key backup"** | August, Schlage keypad models, or a Yale with a keyway (avoid key-free if this matters). |

| If this is you… | A sensible starting point |
|---|---|
| **"I want the simplest, sturdiest"** | Schlage Encode — Wi-Fi built in, keypad, strong build, well-regarded app. |
| **"I use an iPhone and Apple Home"** | A model with Apple tap-to-unlock, such as Schlage Encode Plus or a Yale Plus. |

HEADS UP

### Buy from a seller you trust, and get the right size

Smart locks come in a standard size that fits most American doors, but very thick doors or unusual setups need a check first. Buy new from the maker or a known store (not a mystery third-party seller), and if you're unsure whether one fits your door, measure first or ask me. A lock that doesn't fit is a frustrating afternoon.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### There's no wrong choice you can't live with

All three families make genuinely good locks. If you pick one and later wish you'd chosen another, it's a lock, not a lifelong commitment — they're straightforward to swap. Don't let the choosing stall you. Pick the one that answers your biggest question above, and you'll be happy.

PART 2

# Before You Install

A little groundwork before the screwdriver comes out: how your deadbolt works, whether to retrofit or replace, what you'll need on hand, and the Wi-Fi question untangled in plain English.

CHAPTER 7

# Your Deadbolt, Explained

To understand a smart lock, it helps to understand the plain lock it's built on. Don't worry — this takes five minutes and it makes everything afterward click into place.

## The parts of a deadbolt

A **deadbolt** is the strong, separate lock above or below your door handle. (The handle latch is the springy little tongue that lets the door stay shut; the deadbolt is the heavy square bar that keeps it *locked*.) It has a few named parts worth knowing:

- **The bolt** — the thick metal bar that slides out of the door edge into the frame. This is what actually holds the door shut against a shove.
- **The outside** — on a normal deadbolt, a keyhole (the "cylinder"). On a smart replacement lock, this is where the keypad lives.
- **The inside** — the **thumb-turn**, the little lever you twist by hand to lock or unlock from inside. A retrofit smart lock clamps onto this and turns it for you.
- **The strike plate** — the metal plate on the door frame with a hole the bolt slides into.

GOOD TO KNOW

**The bolt is the muscle; the lock is just the hand that moves it**

Whether a key, a code, an app, or a little motor moves the bolt, the *bolt itself* is what keeps your door shut. That's why a smart lock is genuinely as strong as a regular deadbolt — it's the same bolt doing the same job. The "smart" part only changes how the bolt gets told to move.

## Why a strong frame matters most

Here's an honest truth most ads won't tell you: the weakest spot on most doors isn't the lock, it's the **frame** and the screws holding the strike plate. No lock, smart or plain, helps if the frame splinters. If you're upgrading your lock anyway, it's a fine moment to fit longer (3-inch) screws into the strike plate so they bite deep into the wall stud. A small thing that does more for real security than any feature.

FROM BILL

### A quick frame check is part of what I do

When I install a lock, I check the frame and strike plate while I'm there and swap in long screws if needed — it's the single cheapest security upgrade there is, and it takes two minutes. If you're doing it yourself, don't skip it. (330) 200-8042 if you'd like a hand.

CHAPTER 8

# Retrofit or Replace: Which Fits Your Door

We met these two kinds in Part 1. Now let's settle which suits *your* door, because it decides what you buy and how the install goes.

## When a retrofit (August) is the right call

- You **rent**, or a homeowners' association limits changes to the door's outside.
- You **like your current key** and want it to keep working for everyone who already has one.
- You want the **quickest, least fuss** install — a retrofit usually goes on with a screwdriver in well under half an hour and changes nothing on the outside.
- You want to be able to **take it off cleanly** later and put the plain lock back.

## When a full replacement (Schlage / Yale) is the right call

- You want a **keypad on the door** so anyone can get in with a code — no phone, no key.
- You **own** your home and don't mind swapping the whole deadbolt.
- You'd like the newest conveniences like **tap-to-unlock** or fingerprint readers, which generally come on replacement locks.
- Your existing deadbolt is old, stiff, or worn and could use replacing anyway.

## A gentle reality check on your door

Before buying either kind, it helps to know a couple of things about your door. Don't fret — these are easy to check, and I'll show you how in the setup chapter. The main ones are how **thick** your door is, which way it's **handed** (does it swing open to the left or the right), and — for a retrofit — the **shape of your inside thumb-turn**, since the August clamps onto it.

> **TIP**
>
> **Take a photo before you buy**
>
> Snap a clear photo of both sides of your current deadbolt with your phone. If you call a store, me, or the maker's help line with a question, that one picture answers most of what we'd need to ask. It's the easiest way to be sure a lock will fit.

CHAPTER 9

# What You'll Need on Hand

Setting up a smart lock is a short, satisfying job if you have a few things ready first. Here's the whole list — nothing exotic.

## For the install itself

| What | Why |
|---|---|
| **A Phillips screwdriver** | The common cross-head kind. That's usually the only tool needed; many locks even include a small one in the box. |
| **The batteries** | Nearly always included in the box. Have them handy; it's the first thing you'll put in. |
| **Ten to thirty minutes** | A retrofit is quick; a full replacement takes a little longer. No rush — do it in daylight, not when you're dashing out. |
| **Your phone, charged** | You'll use it to run the app and pair the lock. Plug it in beforehand so it doesn't die mid-setup. |

## For the "smart" setup

- **Your home Wi-Fi name and password.** You'll type these in so the lock can reach the internet. Dig the password out now — it's often on a sticker on the underside of your router.
- **An email address you can check.** Making an app account uses your email to confirm it's you and to recover the account later. Use *your own* email, not a helper's.
- **A few minutes of patience.** The app walks you through it one tap at a time. We'll do it together in Part 3.

HEADS UP

### Know your Wi-Fi password before you start

The single most common hitch I see is folks reaching the Wi-Fi step and not knowing their own Wi-Fi password. Find it first. It's usually printed on a sticker on your router (the box your internet company installed), labeled "Wi-Fi password," "WPA key," or "network key." Jot it down before you begin and the whole setup glides.

GOOD TO KNOW

### "2.4 GHz" — a word you may meet

Many smart locks only connect to the "2.4 GHz" part of your Wi-Fi (an older, longer-reaching channel), not the "5 GHz" part. Most home Wi-Fi has both, often sharing one name, and the lock sorts it out by itself. If it refuses to connect, this is worth mentioning to me or the maker's help line — it's a known, fixable snag, not something you did wrong.

CHAPTER 10

# Wi-Fi, Bluetooth & Whether You Need a Bridge

This is the one topic that confuses people most, so let's take it slowly and plainly. It's really about *how far* you need to reach your lock, and it's simpler than it sounds.

## Bluetooth — the short-range signal

**Bluetooth** is a short-range wireless signal, good for about the span of a room or two — the same thing that connects a phone to a hearing aid or a car radio. Every smart lock has it. When your phone is *near* the lock, Bluetooth lets the app control it directly. The catch: it only works up close. From the grocery store, Bluetooth alone can't reach your door.

## Wi-Fi — the reach-from-anywhere signal

**Wi-Fi** is your home internet signal — the same one your phone and TV use. If the lock can reach your Wi-Fi, then it can reach the internet, and that's what lets you lock the door, get alerts, and manage codes **from anywhere in the world**, not just across the room. Wi-Fi is what turns a smart lock from a near-the-door gadget into a from-anywhere one.

## So do you need a "bridge" or "hub"?

A **bridge** (also called a hub or a connect) is a small box you plug into a wall socket indoors. Its only job is to pass messages between your lock and your Wi-Fi when the lock itself can't reach the Wi-Fi on its own. Here's the plain situation today:

| Your lock | What it needs to reach the internet |
|---|---|
| **Schlage Encode** | Wi-Fi built right in. No bridge needed — it talks to your home Wi-Fi by itself. |
| **Newer August** | Wi-Fi built in on recent models. No bridge. Older August needed a plug-in "Connect" bridge. |
| **Yale Assure** | Wi-Fi added with a small plug-in module, or built in on newer models. Check your exact model. |
| **Bluetooth-only mode** | Any lock still works up close over Bluetooth even with no Wi-Fi — you just lose the from-afar features. |

GOOD TO KNOW

### A lock with no Wi-Fi is still a perfectly good lock

If you never care to control the door from away, you can skip Wi-Fi entirely and run the lock on Bluetooth and its keypad. It'll lock, unlock, and hold codes just fine. Wi-Fi only adds the from-anywhere extras. Don't feel you *must* have every feature switched on.

HEADS UP

### A fair warning about leaning on the internet

The from-afar features travel through the lock-maker's computers out on the internet. Now and then those have an outage, or your home internet goes down, and for a while you can't control the lock *remotely*. This is exactly why the keypad code and the backup key matter so much — they never depend on the internet and always work. A smart lock should make life easier, not leave you reliant on a signal to get in your own door.

CHAPTER 11

# A Realistic Look Before You Buy

I want you to go in with clear eyes, because a happy owner is one who knew what to expect. Here's the honest picture — the good and the few caveats — before any money changes hands.

## What these locks genuinely do well

- Everyday **keyless entry** that just works, year in and year out.
- **Letting trusted people in** on your terms, and taking that access away in seconds.
- **Peace of mind** — the door locking itself, and a glance telling you it's locked.
- Solid **physical security**, on par with a good regular deadbolt, from all three families.

## The honest caveats

- **They run on batteries**, which you'll replace once or twice a year. The lock warns you well ahead, and there's always a backup — but it's a small new chore (Part 6).
- **The from-afar features need internet**, so an outage can briefly take those away (your code and key still work).
- **Setup rewards a little patience.** The install and first pairing are the fiddliest part; after that it's smooth sailing. This is the bit I'm glad to do for you.
- **They cost more than a plain lock.** Roughly speaking, expect somewhere in the low-to-mid hundreds of dollars, depending on the model and features — I won't quote an exact price, as they shift with sales and models, but that's the ballpark.

TIP

### Don't buy more lock than you'll use

Fingerprint readers, tap-to-unlock, face-this and voice-that — they're lovely, but if all you want is a code pad and the comfort of locking from your chair, a simpler, cheaper model will delight you just as much. Buy for how you'll actually live, not for the longest feature list.

FROM BILL

### Not sure it's right for you? Just ask

If you're on the fence about whether a smart lock suits your home, your door, or your comfort with gadgets, call me before you spend a dime. I'll give you a straight answer — sometimes that answer is "a good plain deadbolt and a lockbox would serve you better," and I'll tell you so. (330) 200-8042. No sales pitch, just honest advice.

PART 3

# Setting It Up

Putting the lock on the door and bringing it to life: a calm run through the install, the app, pairing, and the all-important calibration — the one step folks skip and shouldn't.

CHAPTER 12

# Before You Begin: Measure & Gather

Five quiet minutes of preparation turn a frustrating afternoon into a pleasant one. Let's get set before anything comes apart.

## Clear the decks

1. Pick a time you're **not** rushing out the door — mid-morning on a free day is perfect.
2. Open the box and lay the parts out on a towel so nothing rolls away. Keep the little printed guide that came with it; it has your model's exact details.
3. Put the batteries within reach, and have your Phillips screwdriver and your charged phone ready.
4. Prop the door open, or work with it unlocked, so you're never fighting a closing door.

## Know your door's handful of facts

If you're fitting a full-replacement lock (Schlage or Yale), the app or printed guide will ask you to confirm two simple things. You can check both in a moment:

- **Door thickness** — most doors are a standard thickness the lock fits out of the box; very thick doors may need a spacer that's included or sold separately.
- **Handing** — which side the door hinges on, so the lock knows which way to turn. The app will ask "left" or "right"; just stand inside looking at the door and note which side the hinges are on.

> TIP
>
> **Keep the old parts in a labeled bag**
>
> When you take the old lock off (for a replacement), drop its screws and pieces into a sandwich bag and label it. If you ever move out and want to put the original lock back, you'll be so glad you kept them together. For a retrofit, you're not removing anything — your old lock stays put.

CHAPTER 13

# Installing a Retrofit Lock (the August Way)

A retrofit is the gentlest install there is — nothing on the outside of your door changes, and your key keeps working the whole time. Here's the shape of it. Always follow your model's own printed steps, but this is what to expect.

## The steps, in plain order

1. On the **inside** of your door, unscrew and remove just the **thumb-turn cover** — the little plate around the lever you twist by hand. The rest of your deadbolt stays exactly where it is.
2. Fit the **mounting plate** that came with the August onto the exposed lock, and choose the correct **adapter** (small plastic piece) that grips your particular thumb-turn — the box has a few shapes to suit different locks.
3. **Clip or twist the August body** onto the mounting plate. It covers the inside thumb-turn and will now turn it for you.
4. **Put the batteries in** (usually by twisting off the faceplate). The lock wakes up.
5. That's the hardware done — nothing was changed outside, and your key still works. Now move to the app chapter to bring it to life.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Your old key and lock still work normally

This is the beauty of a retrofit: you haven't replaced anything, only added a helper on the inside. If the August ever comes off, you've got a perfectly ordinary deadbolt again. Nothing to undo, nothing lost.

HEADS UP

### Don't force the adapter

If the little adapter piece doesn't seem to grip your thumb-turn, you've likely got the wrong shape for your lock — try another from the box rather than forcing it. A good fit should feel snug but not strained. When in doubt, the maker's quick-start guide shows which adapter suits which lock.

CHAPTER 14

# Installing a Replacement Deadbolt (Schlage / Yale)

Swapping the whole deadbolt sounds daunting but is genuinely a beginner job — it's a handful of screws and two halves that sandwich the door. Take it slowly and it's deeply satisfying. Follow your model's printed steps; here's the overall shape so nothing surprises you.

## The steps, in plain order

1. **Remove the old deadbolt.** Unscrew the two screws on the inside plate, pull both halves off the door, then unscrew the **bolt** itself from the edge of the door and slide it out.
2. **Fit the new bolt** into the same hole in the door's edge and screw it in. Make sure it faces the right way (there's usually an "up" marking).
3. **Place the outside half** (the keypad) against the outside of the door, feeding its connecting cable or posts through to the inside.
4. **Place the inside half** against the inside, line it up, and screw the two halves together snugly — not so tight it binds.
5. **Put in the batteries** (lift off or slide down the cover), and fit the cover back on.
6. **Test by hand:** with the door open, turn the inside knob and watch the bolt slide smoothly in and out. If it's stiff, loosen the screws a touch and realign. Then move to the app chapter.

TIP

### Finger-tight, then check it moves freely

The commonest beginner slip is screwing the two halves together too hard, which can make the bolt stiff. Snug them up, then test that the bolt glides in and out easily by hand. If it drags, back the screws off a quarter-turn. A freely-moving bolt is a happy motor and a long battery life.

FROM BILL

### This is the chapter folks most often hand to me

Swapping a deadbolt is well within reach for a confident do-it-yourselfer, but it's also the job I'm most often called for — and I'm glad to do it. A clean, correctly-aligned install is the difference between a lock that lasts years and one that eats batteries and jams. If your hands aren't what they were, or you'd just rather it be done right the first time, that's what I'm here for. (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 15

# The App & Making Your Account

The **app** is the little program that turns your phone into the lock's remote and record book. Each family has its own, and getting it on your phone is the same easy routine as any app.

## Getting the right app

| If you have… | Install this app |
|---|---|
| **August locks** | The "August" app (now often shown as "Yale Access"). |
| **Schlage locks** | The "Schlage Home" app. |
| **Yale locks** | The "Yale Access" app. |

### To install it

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store** (blue "A"). On an Android phone, open the **Play Store** (the colorful triangle).
2. Tap the **search** box at the top and type the app's name from the table above.
3. Find the official one — the maker's name will be shown as the publisher — and tap **Get** or **Install**.
4. Wait for it to finish, then tap **Open**. The lock's own guide may also show a square **QR code** you can point your camera at to jump straight to the right app.

## Making your account

The first time you open the app it asks you to make an **account** — your personal, secure spot that holds your lock and its codes. This matters, so do it carefully:

1. Tap **Create account** (or **Sign up**).
2. Enter **your own email address** and, if asked, a mobile number. Use yours, not a helper's — this is how you'll recover the account and get alerts.
3. Choose a **strong password** you don't use anywhere else (Part 7 shows you how), and write it on a card kept somewhere private.
4. The app sends a **code** to your email or phone to confirm it's really you. Type that code in.
5. If it offers **two-step verification** (also called 2FA), say **yes** — it's the single best thing you can do for your lock's safety, and we explain it fully in Part 7.

STAY SAFE

### The account is the real key now — guard it

With a smart lock, whoever controls the app account controls the door. So the email and password on that account deserve the same care as a house key: strong, private, not shared, and backed up by two-step verification. Spend an extra two minutes here and you've done most of your lock's security in one go.

CHAPTER 16

# Pairing the Lock to the App

**Pairing** simply means introducing your phone and the lock to each other for the first time, so the app can control it. The app leads you through it; here's what to expect so nothing throws you.

## The pairing routine

1. Stand **right next to the lock** with your phone — pairing uses short-range Bluetooth, so close counts.
2. In the app, tap **Add a device** (or **Set up a new lock**) and pick your model from the list, or point your camera at the QR code in the lock's guide.
3. Make sure your phone's **Bluetooth** is turned on — the app will prompt you and may ask permission; tap **Allow**.
4. The app finds the lock and connects. It may ask you to **name** it ("Front Door") and to update its software right away — let it, as newer software is safer (Part 7).
5. Follow any prompts to join your **Wi-Fi**: pick your network name and type the Wi-Fi password you dug out earlier. This is what gives you the from-anywhere features.

TIP

### If it won't find the lock, get closer and wake it

Pairing troubles are nearly always distance or a sleeping lock. Stand within arm's reach, make sure the batteries are in, and give the lock a touch (a key tap on the keypad, or pressing the logo) to wake it up. Turning your phone's Bluetooth off and back on clears most of the rest. No harm done by trying again — you can't break anything by retrying.

GOOD TO KNOW

### "Pairing" happens once

You only pair a lock once. After that, your phone and the lock simply recognize each other every time. If you later get a new phone, you install the app, sign in to your *same account*, and your lock is already there — nothing to pair again.

CHAPTER 17

# Calibration & Your First Tests

Here's the step people are tempted to skip — please don't. **Calibration** is a quick setup dance where the lock learns exactly how far to turn to lock and unlock *your* particular door. Skip it and the lock may half-turn, strain, or jam. Do it and the lock runs sweetly for years.

## Calibrating (mostly for retrofits, some replacements)

1. Open the app with the lock paired and the **door open** (so it can turn freely without the bolt catching the frame).
2. Find **Calibrate** (sometimes under Settings or shown automatically after pairing) and tap **Start**.
3. The lock will turn fully one way, then the other, learning its range. Just let it run — it takes under a minute.
4. When it says it's done, you're set. If it reports trouble, check the lock isn't fighting a stiff bolt, and run it again.

## Your first tests — with the door OPEN

Always do these first tests with the door standing **open**, so a misalignment can't lock you out. Try each way in that your lock offers:

1. **App:** tap Lock, watch the bolt slide out; tap Unlock, watch it slide back. Smooth and sure?
2. **Keypad** (if you have one): set a code — the app or the printed guide shows how — then punch it in and confirm the bolt moves.
3. **By hand:** turn the inside knob or thumb-turn. It should always work directly, no app needed.
4. **The backup key** (if your lock has one): try it in the keyhole, so you know it works and where you'll keep it.

HEADS UP

### Test with the door open, every time

I can't say this strongly enough: when you set up a lock or change a big setting, test it with the door *open*. If something's misaligned, you'll find out safely, standing in your hallway — not standing on the porch in the rain. Only close the door once every way in has worked with it open.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### A well-calibrated lock is one you forget about

Get this one step right and your smart lock fades into the background of life, the way a good lock should — quietly doing its job, never making you think about it. That's the goal: not a gadget you fuss over, but a door that just works.

PART 4

# Using It Every Day

The daily pleasures: locking and unlocking by app, by code, by itself, and hands-free — plus tap-to-unlock, fingerprints, and the backup key that means you're never locked out.

CHAPTER 18

# Locking & Unlocking with the App

The app is your remote control for the door. Whether you're on the couch or across the country, it's the same big, friendly button. Let's use it.

## The main screen

Open the app and the first thing you see is your lock, usually drawn as a large circle or dial showing whether it's **locked** or **unlocked** right now. Tap that dial (or the Lock/Unlock button) and the motor does the rest — you'll often hear a reassuring little whir and see the picture change to match.

## Locking up from afar

This is the feature folks fall in love with. Left the house and can't remember if you locked up? Open the app from anywhere, glance at the dial, and if it says unlocked, tap once to lock it. (This from-afar control needs the lock's Wi-Fi working — if you're only near the door, Bluetooth handles it either way.)

> **WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU**
>
> **The end of "did I lock the door?"**
>
> That nagging worry on the highway — "did I lock up?" — simply ends. You look, you know, and if need be you fix it with a tap, without turning the car around. For a lot of folks that single comfort is worth the whole price of the lock.

## Checking without touching

You don't have to *do* anything to benefit — just opening the app and seeing "Locked" in green is reassurance in itself. Many locks also send a little **notification** (a message on your phone) whenever the door is locked or unlocked, so you often know without even opening the app. We'll tidy up those notifications in Part 8 so you get the ones you want and none you don't.

CHAPTER 19

# The Keypad & Your Entry Code

If your lock has a **keypad** on the door — buttons or a touch surface — then the humble number code is, for most folks, the star of the show. No phone, no key, no fuss: punch in your code and the door opens. Here's how to make it yours.

## Setting your own code

1. In the app, find **Access**, **Codes**, or **Guests** (the wording varies by family).
2. Tap **Add a code**, give it a name you'll recognize ("My code," "Front door"), and type a number you'll remember.
3. Save it. On most locks the code works within moments. Test it on the keypad with the door open.

## Choosing a good code

- Make it **4 to 8 digits** — longer is a touch safer, but pick a length you'll remember without strain.
- **Avoid the obvious:** not 1-2-3-4, not 0-0-0-0, and not your house number or birth year (those are easy for a stranger to guess).
- Pick something **meaningful to you but not public** — an old phone number's last digits, a memorable date no one would link to you.
- It's fine to **keep it simple** enough for comfort. A lock you can open easily beats a perfect code you fumble on the porch.

TIP

### Give each person their own code

Rather than everyone sharing one code, give each person their *own* — one for you, one for your spouse, one for the cleaner. It costs nothing, and it means the app's logbook can tell you *who* came in, and you can remove just one person's code later without disturbing anyone else's. More on this in Part 5.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Smudge-proofing: some keypads ask for extra taps

A clever worry: could someone see the worn or smudged buttons and guess your code? Many keypads answer this by letting you tap a few *extra* random digits before or after your real code — the lock ignores the extras as long as your true code is in there. If your lock offers this, it keeps nosy eyes from spotting a pattern.

CHAPTER 20

# Auto-Lock: the Door That Locks Itself

**Auto-lock** is a setting that tells the lock to lock itself a chosen number of minutes after it was opened. Switch it on and you may never manually lock your door again — it simply takes care of itself.

## Turning it on

1. In the app, open your lock's **Settings**.
2. Find **Auto-Lock** (sometimes "Auto-relock").
3. Turn it on and choose a **delay** — how long after unlocking it should wait before locking. A minute or two is common; pick what suits how long you linger at the door.
4. Save. From now on the door locks itself after that pause, every time.

## Choosing the right delay

Too short and the door may lock while you're still carrying in groceries; too long and it sits unlocked longer than you'd like. Most folks land around **one to three minutes**. You can change it any time, so try a setting for a week and adjust to taste.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Never leave the door unlocked by accident again

The most common way homes are left vulnerable isn't a picked lock — it's a door simply left unlocked. Auto-lock quietly removes that risk forever. You walk in, set down your bags, and a minute later the door has locked itself behind you. Nothing to remember.

HEADS UP

### Mind the auto-lock when you step outside briefly

The one thing to watch: if you pop out to the mailbox or the garden, auto-lock may lock the door behind you. Keep your phone, a key, or your code habit with you, or briefly pause auto-lock in the app when you know you'll be in and out. Nothing dangerous — just a "don't lock yourself out" reminder.

CHAPTER 21

# Auto-Unlock: Hands-Free as You Walk Up

**Auto-unlock** is the almost magical one: the door unlocks by itself as you approach, so you can walk straight in with your arms full. It works by sensing your phone coming home. It takes a little trust to rely on, so let's set it up carefully.

## How it works, plainly

Your phone quietly notices when you've **left** the area around home and when you're **coming back**. As you return and get within Bluetooth range of the door, the lock unlocks for you. The key detail: it only unlocks after you've genuinely gone *away* and come back — so it won't pop open just because you're near the door inside the house.

## Switching it on

1. In the app, open your lock's **Settings** and find **Auto-Unlock**.
2. Turn it on. The app will ask permission to know your phone's **location** — say **Allow / Always**, because that's how it senses you leaving and returning.
3. Make sure your phone's **Bluetooth** and **location** are on (the app will remind you).
4. Test it: leave the house and walk a few blocks away, then return. As you reach the door, it should unlock itself. Give it a few tries to learn your comings and goings.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Why it sometimes needs a moment

Auto-unlock isn't instant to the second — it may take a few seconds as you reach the door, and now and then it misses a time or two while it learns your routine. That's normal. If it's inconsistent, it's usually a phone setting (location set to "Always," Bluetooth on). It gets more reliable the more you use it.

HEADS UP

### Keep a backup habit — don't rely on it alone

Auto-unlock is a convenience, not a guarantee. Phones update, batteries die, signals wobble. Always carry your code in your head or a key in your pocket so a missed auto-unlock is a shrug, not a lockout. Treat it as a happy bonus when it works, and you'll never be caught out.

CHAPTER 22

# Tap-to-Unlock, Home Key & Fingerprints

The newest locks offer a couple of extra ways in that feel wonderfully modern. You don't need them — a code and the app do everything — but if your lock has them, here's what they are.

## Tap your phone or watch (Apple Home Key and the like)

Some locks let you **hold your phone or smartwatch near the lock** and it opens — the same gentle tap you'd use to pay at a store checkout. On an iPhone this is called **Apple Home Key**, and it's supported by locks like the Schlage Encode Plus and certain Yale "Plus" models. Once set up (through Apple's own Home app), you don't even need to wake the phone — a tap and you're in. Android phones have their own version of the same trick on supported locks.

## Fingerprint readers

A few locks include a small **fingerprint reader** — you press a registered fingertip and the door opens, exactly like unlocking a phone. It's quick and needs nothing in your hands at all. You "teach" it your fingerprints once in the app. Handy, though in very cold or wet weather fingerprint readers can be fussier than a plain code.

## The newest: walk-up with no tap at all

The very latest locks use a precise short-range technology (you may see it called **UWB**, for ultra-wideband) to unlock truly hands-free as you step up to the door, more reliably than the older auto-unlock. It's lovely but still new and found only on premium models — don't feel you're missing out if yours doesn't have it.

> **TIP**
>
> **Fancy, but a code still does it all**
>
> Tap-to-unlock and fingerprints are delightful, but they're icing. If you never set them up, your lock still does everything you need with a code and the app. Learn those two first, live with them a while, and only reach for the fancier options if you find you want them.

CHAPTER 23

# The Backup Key & Manual Override

This may be the most reassuring chapter in the book, so let's be thorough. No matter what the battery, the phone, or the internet is doing, you have a plain, dependable way into your own home. Let's make sure you know exactly what yours is.

## Find your backup — now, before you need it

| Your lock | Your dependable backup |
|---|---|
| **Retrofit (August)** | Your original metal key in the original keyhole — completely unchanged. Keep a key as always. |
| **Schlage keypad locks** | A metal key in the keyhole, plus the keypad code. Two independent backups. |
| **Yale with a keyway** | A metal key as backup, plus the keypad code. |
| **Yale key-free models** | No keyhole by design. Backups are the keypad code and a battery jump-start (Part 6). Know this before buying. |

## The inside always works by hand

From *inside* the house you're never stuck: every one of these locks has a knob or thumb-turn you can simply turn by hand, no power or app required. You can always get **out**, which matters most of all. The question of a backup is only about getting *in* from outside.

## Where to keep the backup key

- **Not** under the mat, in a fake rock, or over the door frame — those are the first places a burglar looks. A smart lock lets you finally retire that hidden key for good.
- **Do** keep a key with a trusted neighbor or family member, or in a proper **lockbox** (a small key safe with its own code) mounted out of easy reach.
- **Do** carry one in your wallet or car if you like belt-and-suspenders peace of mind.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### The best of both worlds

Here's the quiet triumph of a smart lock: you get all the convenience of codes and phones *and* you keep an old-fashioned key in your pocket for the day technology has an off day. You're never choosing between modern and dependable — you have both at once.

FROM BILL

### Do a backup drill once, with me or on your own

Just once, on a nice day, practice getting in using *only* your backup — the key, or the code if that's your backup. Knowing in your bones that it works turns "what if" worry into quiet confidence. If you'd like someone to walk through it with you the first time, that's a perfect little visit. (330) 200-8042.

PART 5

# Codes, Guests & Keeping Track

The feature that changes daily life: giving each person their own code, welcoming guests and caregivers, scheduling access, taking it back, and reading the logbook of who came and went.

CHAPTER 24

# Access Codes, Explained

An **access code** is simply a personal number that opens your door, given to a particular person. This is where a smart lock stops being a gadget and starts being genuinely useful — because handing out and taking back codes is nothing like copying and collecting keys. Let's get the whole idea straight.

## A code is a key you can make and unmake in seconds

Think of each code as a key — except you create it in the app in a moment, you can give it to anyone without them ever setting foot in a hardware store, and you can make it **stop working** whenever you please. No returning keys, no re-keying the lock, no wondering how many copies are out there. You always know exactly who has a code and can change that list at will.

## The kinds of code you can give

| Type | Good for |
|---|---|
| **Permanent code** | Works all the time, until you remove it. For you, your spouse, close family. |
| **Temporary code** | Works for a set stretch — a week while family visits, a weekend guest. |
| **Scheduled code** | Works only on certain days or hours — the cleaner every Tuesday 9 to noon. |
| **One-time code** | Works a single time, then expires itself. For a one-off delivery or visit. |

Not every lock offers every type, but all of them let you give permanent and temporary codes, which covers almost everything folks need. The app is where you create and manage them all.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### You, in charge, with no loose keys

The deep comfort here is **control**. You decide who gets in, from when until when, and you can see and change that any time from your chair. No key is ever truly "out there" beyond your reach again. For peace of mind, that's worth a great deal.

CHAPTER 25

# Giving a Code to Family

Let's do the most common task start to finish: giving your son, daughter, or grandchild their own way in. Once you've done it once, you'll do it without thinking.

## Two ways to share, and which to choose

- **A simple code** — you create a number and tell them. They punch it into the keypad. Nothing for them to install. Best for most family, and the only option if they won't use an app.
- **A shared "key" in the app** — you invite them by email and they get the lock in *their* app, so they can unlock from their phone too. Best for close family who want the full app experience.

## Giving a code (the simple way)

1. In the app, open **Access** / **Codes** / **Guests**.
2. Tap **Add**, name it for the person ("Katie"), and set a number — or let the app suggest one.
3. Choose **permanent** (or set dates if you prefer). Save.
4. Tell your family member their code. Ask them to try it once while you're there so you both know it works.

## Inviting family into the app (the fuller way)

1. In the app, find **Share access**, **Invite**, or **Guests**.
2. Enter their **email address**. Choose whether they're a full user or a limited guest (limited is fine for most).
3. They get an email, install the same app, make their own account, and the lock appears for them.
4. You can see them in your list and remove their access any time.

> **TIP**
>
> **Name codes after people, not purposes**
>
> Call the code "Katie," not "Family code 2." When you glance at your logbook later and it says "Katie unlocked the door at 4:10," that's far more useful than a number you have to decode. Clear names make the whole system tell you a story at a glance.

HEADS UP

### Giving a code is not giving control

A good thing to understand: when you give someone a *code*, they can open the door — but they can't see your other codes, change settings, or remove your access. Only a full *account owner* (you) can do that. So share codes freely with people you trust to come in; only make someone a full account user if you truly want them running the lock with you.

CHAPTER 26

# Guest & Caregiver Codes

This is the chapter I most hope you'll read closely, because it's where a smart lock does its kindest work — letting the right people help you, safely and simply, without a key hidden outside and without you having to get up to answer the door.

## The caregiver who comes while you rest

If a home-health aide, a nurse, or a family caregiver comes to check on you, bring medicine, or help around the house, you can give them a code that lets them in — perhaps only during their visiting hours. You don't have to leave a key out, struggle to the door, or be awake and dressed to let them in. And the logbook quietly confirms they came, and when.

## The cleaner, the dog-walker, the handyman

Give each helper their own code that works only when they're meant to come — the cleaner's code live Tuesday mornings, the dog-walker's each weekday afternoon. They let themselves in, do their work, and the door locks behind them. If someone stops working for you, you remove just their code in a second — no awkward key collection.

## The family member far away

If your children live out of town and worry about you, you can give *them* app access so they can check the door is locked, let an emergency visitor in remotely, or simply see that you got home safely — all with your blessing and on your terms. For many families this turns worry into reassurance on both sides.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Help, without giving up your independence

The whole point is that you stay **in charge of your own home**. You choose who has a code, exactly when it works, and you can change your mind any moment. Accepting a little help getting around a key is not giving up independence — done this way, it protects it.

STAY SAFE

### Set caregiver codes to the hours they're needed

For anyone who isn't close family, lean on **scheduled** or **temporary** codes rather than permanent ones — the cleaner's code working only Tuesday mornings, say. It's not about distrust; it's simply tidy, and it means a code can never be used at an odd hour. The next chapter shows you how.

CHAPTER 27

# Scheduling & Temporary Access

A code doesn't have to work forever or around the clock. You can set exactly *when* it's live — which is how you welcome a weekend guest or a weekly helper without a key ever being out of your control. Here's how.

## A code that works for a set stretch of days

1. Create a code as usual, in **Access** / **Codes** / **Guests**.
2. Look for **temporary**, **start and end date**, or a little calendar.
3. Set when it should **begin** and when it should **expire** ("this Friday to Sunday").
4. Save. The code springs to life and dies on its own — you don't have to remember to remove it.

## A code that works only on certain days or hours

1. Create or edit a code and look for **schedule**, **recurring**, or day-of-week choices.
2. Pick the **days** (every Tuesday) and, if offered, the **hours** (9:00 to noon).
3. Save. Now the code opens the door only in that window and is dead the rest of the time.

TIP

### Let codes expire themselves

The beauty of dates and schedules is that you set them once and forget them — the code tidies itself away. No note on the calendar to "remove Bob's code," no risk of an old code lingering for years. For anyone temporary, always reach for a date or a schedule rather than a plain permanent code.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Scheduling leans a little on Wi-Fi

Codes that start and stop at set times rely on the lock knowing the correct time, which it keeps via its internet connection. If your lock has no Wi-Fi, simple permanent and temporary codes still work, but fancy day-and-hour schedules may not. One more small reason the Wi-Fi link is handy.

CHAPTER 28

# Changing & Revoking Access

Taking a code away is as easy as giving one, and it's one of the real joys of a smart lock — no chasing down keys, no re-keying, no awkwardness. Here's how to tidy your list whenever you like.

## Removing one person's code

1. Open **Access** / **Codes** / **Guests** and find the person in the list.
2. Tap their name, then **Delete**, **Remove**, or **Revoke access**.
3. Confirm. That code stops working at once — and no one else's code is touched.

## Changing a code

To change someone's number — or your own — open their entry, choose **edit**, type the new number, and save. The old number stops working immediately and the new one takes over. Handy if a code was overheard, or you'd simply like a fresh one.

## When to clean house

- A helper or service you no longer use — remove their code the day it ends.
- After a big gathering where several folks used a guest code — retire it and make a fresh one next time.
- Once in a while, open your code list and read it top to bottom. Recognize everyone? If a name puzzles you, remove it. It's your door.

STAY SAFE

### A yearly code review is a fine habit

Once a year — say, when the clocks change — open your list of codes and account users and make sure every one still belongs. Remove anything you don't recognize or no longer need. It takes five minutes and keeps your door's "keyring" clean and known. This is the sort of thing I'm glad to do alongside you on a visit.

CHAPTER 29

# The Logbook: Who Came and Went

Your app keeps a quiet, honest record — a sort of visitor's logbook — of every time the door was locked or unlocked, and how. It's reassuring to have, simple to read, and entirely yours.

## Finding and reading it

1. In the app, look for **Activity**, **History**, or **Log**.
2. You'll see a list, newest at the top: "Front door unlocked by Katie's code, 4:10 PM," "Locked automatically, 4:13 PM," and so on.
3. Scroll down to look back over days or weeks. If each person has their own code, it'll name *who* — which is exactly why giving everyone their own code pays off.

## What it's good for

- Confirming the **cleaner or caregiver came** — and when they arrived and left.
- Reassuring yourself that a **grandchild got home safe** after school.
- Simple peace of mind that the door's comings and goings are all accounted for.
- A gentle memory aid — "was that Tuesday or Wednesday the plumber came?" — right there in the list.

GOOD TO KNOW

### The log is for you, not a stranger

This record lives in your own private account, seen only by you (and anyone you've made a full account user). It isn't broadcast anywhere. Like the lock's from-afar features, the history is kept by the maker's service — one more reason to keep your account password strong and your two-step verification on, which we'll do together in the next part.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Quiet reassurance, always on

You may rarely open the logbook — but knowing it's there, faithfully noting every lock and unlock, is a comfort of its own. It's the difference between *hoping* the door's been behaving and *knowing* it has. That quiet certainty is a big part of what you're buying.

PART 6

# Batteries, Backups & When Things Go Wrong

The practical part everyone needs sooner or later: keeping the batteries fresh, getting in when the battery dies or the phone is flat, avoiding lockouts, and calmly sorting out a lock that won't answer.

CHAPTER 30

# Batteries & Low-Battery Warnings

A smart lock runs on ordinary batteries, and keeping them fresh is the one small chore it asks of you. The good news: the lock warns you long before there's any trouble, so you're never caught by surprise if you heed it.

## What they use and how long they last

Most of these locks use a handful of everyday **AA batteries** (a few August models use a different cell — check your box). How long they last depends on how much you use the lock and its Wi-Fi, but a sensible rule is to expect **several months to about a year** on a set. Figures vary, so let the *warnings*, not the calendar, tell you when.

## How the lock warns you

- A **message in the app** — "battery low" — often starting well before it's truly needed.
- A **light or sound on the lock itself** — a flashing light or a few beeps when you use it.
- Some send a **notification to your phone** so you see it even without opening the app.

TIP

### Replace at the first warning, not the last

When you see that first "battery low" nudge, you usually still have days or weeks of life left — but don't gamble. Pop a fresh set in that week. A five-minute chore done early is how you make sure the battery never dies at an inconvenient moment. Keep a spare set of AAs in the drawer by the door.

HEADS UP

### Use fresh alkaline batteries — skip the rechargeables

The makers recommend good-quality fresh **alkaline** batteries (the ordinary kind). Avoid rechargeable or older part-used batteries in a lock — they can read as "low" too soon or quit without much warning. A door lock is exactly the wrong place to pinch pennies on batteries.

CHAPTER 31

# Changing the Batteries

Swapping the batteries is a quick, no-tools job on most locks. Let's walk it so it feels routine the first time.

## The usual routine

1. Find the battery cover — on a replacement lock it's the **inside** panel (often lifts off or slides up); on an August it's behind the **faceplate** you twist off.
2. Take out the old batteries, noting which way they sat (there are little + and – marks to match).
3. Put in a full set of **fresh** ones, all at once — don't mix old and new. Match the + and – directions.
4. Pop the cover back on. The lock wakes up; the app's battery reading climbs back to full within a few minutes.

GOOD TO KNOW

### Your codes and settings survive a battery change

A worry worth laying to rest: changing the batteries does **not** erase your codes, your settings, or your pairing. All of that is remembered safely. You're just giving the lock fresh fuel — everything else stays exactly as it was. Nothing to set up again.

TIP

### Change them with the door open, and test after

As with any lock work, do a battery change with the door open where you can, and afterward give the lock a test — lock and unlock once — before you close up. It confirms the fresh batteries seated properly and the lock's happy.

CHAPTER 32

# When the Battery Dies

Suppose the warnings got missed and the battery is flat. Take a breath — you are not locked out. Every one of these locks has a way in that doesn't need the battery. Let's know yours cold, so a dead battery is a minor nuisance, never a crisis.

## Your dead-battery way in, by lock

| Your lock | Getting in with a flat battery |
|---|---|
| **Retrofit (August)** | Your ordinary metal key in the unchanged keyhole works no matter what the battery's doing. |
| **Schlage keypad lock** | The metal key always works. (The keypad needs battery power to run.) |
| **Yale with a keyway** | The metal key always works. |
| **Yale key-free model** | No keyhole — so use the 9-volt jump-start trick below, then your code. Carry a spare 9V in the car. |

## The 9-volt jump-start (key-free keypad locks)

Many keypad locks that have no keyhole offer a clever trick: two little metal contacts on the **bottom edge** of the outside keypad. Hold a fresh **9-volt battery** (the rectangular kind, like a smoke-detector battery) against those contacts, and it gives the keypad just enough power to light up so you can punch in your code and get in — then replace the real batteries inside. Keep a 9-volt in your car or purse if your lock is the key-free kind.

HEADS UP

### Check whether YOUR lock has a jump-start — before you need it

Not every lock has the 9-volt trick, and not every lock has a key. The time to find out which backups *yours* has is a sunny afternoon now — not a cold night at the door. Read your model's guide, or call me and we'll confirm it together. Knowing your backup in advance is the whole game.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### A dead battery is a shrug, not a lockout

Once you know your backup, a flat battery goes from a scary "I'm locked out!" to a mild "ah, time for new batteries." You get in with your key or a 9-volt, swap the batteries, and carry on. That's the difference a little knowing-ahead makes.

CHAPTER 33

# Dead Phone, No Signal — Getting In Anyway

Phones run flat, drop signal, or get left at a friend's house. A smart lock is designed so your phone is a *convenience*, never the only way in. Let's make sure a dead phone never means a locked door.

## Why your phone being dead doesn't lock you out

Your **keypad code** and your **metal key** don't need your phone at all — they work straight at the door. The phone and app are only one of several doorways in. So a flat phone simply means you use your code or key, exactly as millions of people do every day. Nothing to fix.

## Why no internet doesn't lock you out either

If your home Wi-Fi or the maker's online service has an outage, you lose the *from-afar* features for a while — but the lock itself still works perfectly up close: your code at the keypad, your key, the knob by hand, and your phone over short-range Bluetooth. The internet is only needed to reach the lock from a distance.

GOOD TO KNOW

### This is why we keep the simple ways in

Every "what if" in this chapter has the same answer: the plain old code and key always work, because they live at the door and need no battery in your pocket and no signal in the air. That redundancy is deliberate — it's what makes a smart lock trustworthy. Lean on the clever features daily, but always keep the simple ones in your back pocket.

TIP

### A code in your head beats a phone in your pocket

If you remember just one habit from this book, make it this: **know your keypad code by heart.** A code you carry in your head can't run out of battery, lose signal, or be left behind. It's the most dependable key you'll ever have — and it weighs nothing.

CHAPTER 34

# Lockouts & How to Avoid Them

A "lockout" — standing outside unable to get in — is the one thing everyone fears about a smart lock. The honest truth is that lockouts are easy to prevent entirely, with a few plain habits. Let's lock the fear away for good.

## The handful of habits that prevent every lockout

1. **Know your code by heart**, so you can always get in with no phone and no key.
2. **Keep a backup key somewhere trustworthy** — a neighbor, a lockbox, your car — never under the mat.
3. **Replace batteries at the first warning**, so the power never runs out unexpectedly.
4. **Mind the auto-lock** when you step outside briefly (the mailbox, the garden) — take your code or key with you.
5. **Do a backup drill once**, so you're certain your way-in works before you ever need it.

## If you ever ARE locked out

- Don't panic or force the door — that can damage the frame and still won't open it.
- Try your **code** first (even if the keypad seems dim, it may still read your code or respond to a 9-volt jump-start).
- Use your **backup key** or the one at your neighbor's.
- If all else fails, call a **trusted local locksmith** — or call me; I know the locks and the people, and I can often sort it out or point you to the right person. (330) 200-8042.

STAY SAFE

### Beware "emergency locksmith" ads online

If you're ever locked out and searching in a hurry, be wary of the flashy "24-hour emergency locksmith" results online — some are out-of-town operations that quote a low price, then charge a fortune on the spot. Keep the number of a **local, trusted** locksmith (or mine) written down *now*, before you need it, so panic never pushes you toward a bad deal.

CHAPTER 35

# When the Lock Won't Respond

Now and then a smart lock gets balky — it won't answer the app, the keypad seems dead, or it turns but doesn't quite lock. Before you worry, here are the calm, simple fixes that cure the great majority of hiccups.

## The things to try, in order

1. **Check the batteries.** A balky lock is a low battery nine times out of ten. Put in a fresh set first — it's the likeliest cure by far.
2. **Wake the lock and your phone's Bluetooth.** For app troubles, make sure Bluetooth is on, stand close, and try turning Bluetooth off and back on.
3. **Close and reopen the app.** Fully shut it and open it fresh — this clears most little app glitches.
4. **Restart your phone.** The old reliable. Off and on again fixes a surprising amount.
5. **Check your Wi-Fi** (for from-afar troubles). If other things won't load either, the internet's the culprit, not the lock.
6. **Re-run calibration** if the bolt turns but doesn't seat properly — the lock may have drifted and needs to relearn your door.

## If the bolt is physically stiff or sticking

Sometimes the trouble is mechanical, not electronic: the door has swollen with the weather, or the bolt and the hole in the frame have fallen out of line, so the motor strains. Test by hand with the door open — if the bolt is stiff to turn even by hand, that's your answer. A little dry graphite in the bolt, or realigning the strike plate, usually sorts it. This is a good one to hand to me.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **When the simple fixes don't do it, that's what I'm for**
>
> If you've put in fresh batteries, restarted things, and the lock still isn't right, don't spend your whole afternoon wrestling with it — and *never* leave your door unlocked or propped while you puzzle over it. Call me at (330) 200-8042. A lock that won't lock is exactly the sort of thing I'll come out for, and a fresh pair of hands often sorts it in minutes.

GOOD TO KNOW

### A reset is a last resort — and it clears your codes

You may read about "factory resetting" a stuck lock. It can help, but know that it wipes your codes and settings and means setting up from scratch. Try everything else first, and if you do reset, have your account details and a little time ready. When in doubt, call before you reset — it's easy to undo a reset you haven't done yet, and impossible to undo one you have.

PART 7

# Security & Peace of Mind

An honest, balanced look at keeping a smart lock safe: a strong account, keeping it updated, sensible code habits, where these locks truly help as we age, and why a physical backup still matters.

CHAPTER 36

# Keeping Your App Account Strong

With a smart lock, your **app account** is the real master key. Whoever can sign into it can control your door. So the most important security work you'll ever do isn't at the door at all — it's making that account strong. The good news: it's two simple steps, done once.

## Step one: a strong, unique password

Your account password should be **long, and used nowhere else**. The easiest strong password is a short phrase of a few unrelated words you'll remember — something like three plain words strung together with a number. It doesn't need to be a jumble of symbols; *length* matters more than confusion. The one rule that matters most: don't reuse a password you've used on other accounts.

## Step two: two-step verification (2FA) — turn it on

**Two-step verification** (often called "2FA" or "two-factor") means that even if someone learned your password, they still couldn't get in — because signing in also needs a one-time **code sent to your phone** that only you have. It's the single best protection there is, and it takes two minutes:

1. In the app, open **Settings** or your **account/profile**.
2. Find **Two-step** or **Two-factor verification** (sometimes under "Security").
3. Turn it on, and choose to get your codes by **text message** or an authenticator app (text is simplest to start).
4. From now on, signing in on a new device asks for a code texted to you. A tiny step for an enormous gain in safety.

STAY SAFE

### This is the one to do today

If you do nothing else from this whole part, turn on **two-step verification** for your lock's account. It is the difference between a stolen password being a disaster and being a harmless nuisance. Two minutes now buys you years of peace of mind. If you'd like a hand switching it on, that's a perfect quick call.

SCAM ALERT

### No real company asks for your login code

Here's a scam to know: someone phones or texts claiming to be from the lock company (or "tech support") and asks you to read back the verification code that just arrived on your phone. **Never do this.** That code is the key to your account — a real company never needs you to read it to them. Anyone asking is trying to break into your account. Hang up and, if unsure, call me.

CHAPTER 37

# Keeping the Lock Updated

Your lock has software inside it — called **firmware** — and now and then the maker improves it or fixes a flaw. Keeping it current is a quiet, important part of staying safe, and it's nearly automatic.

## What firmware is, and why updates matter

**Firmware** is simply the lock's built-in instructions — its "brain's memory." Updates patch any security weaknesses discovered since the lock was made, the same way your phone and computer get updates. A lock kept up to date is a lock whose makers are still looking out for you.

## How to update

1. Open the app now and then and look for a **firmware update** notice (often under the lock's Settings, or it'll simply offer one).
2. Make sure the lock has **good battery** and stay nearby while it updates — it takes a few minutes and shouldn't be interrupted.
3. Let it finish. The lock keeps working normally throughout, and your codes and settings are untouched.

> **TIP**
>
> **Say yes to updates — just not mid-dash**
>
> When the app offers an update, say yes — but pick a calm moment with good batteries, not as you're rushing out the door. Updates are almost always smooth, and keeping current is one of the easiest ways to keep your lock safe for the long haul. Check for one every month or two if the app doesn't nudge you.

CHAPTER 38

# An Honest Talk About Risks & Benefits

I promised you honesty, so let's have the balanced conversation about smart-lock security that the ads skip. The short version: a well-set-up smart lock from a good maker is a sensible, safe choice — *and* it's worth understanding the trade-offs clearly.

## The genuine benefits for security

- **No hidden key** under the mat or in a fake rock for a burglar to find — a real, common weakness, gone.
- **The door locks itself**, ending the most common vulnerability of all: a door simply left unlocked.
- **You can check and lock from anywhere**, and see a record of comings and goings.
- **Codes beat copied keys** — you always know who has access, and can revoke it instantly.

## The honest risks — and how small they are in practice

- **The account could be targeted** — which is exactly why a strong password and two-step verification (Chapter 36) matter so much. Done right, this risk is very small.
- **It depends on batteries and, for some features, the internet** — which is why we keep the code and key backups (Part 6).
- **Any lock can be physically defeated** by someone determined — but that's true of your old lock too, and a good smart lock is no weaker.
- **Your data lives on the maker's service** — the logbook and settings. Stick to reputable makers (like the three in this book) who take that responsibility seriously.

GOOD TO KNOW

### The real-world threat is a jiggled handle, not a hacker

Films make us picture hackers cracking locks from a van. In real life, the overwhelming majority of break-ins are someone trying an unlocked door or a weak frame — low-tech and opportunistic. A smart lock that auto-locks and has no hidden key actually defends against the *common* threats better than most ordinary setups. Keep a sense of proportion: do the simple safe habits and enjoy the lock.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Safe and convenient are not enemies here

You don't have to trade safety for convenience. With a good lock, a strong account, updates kept current, and your backups known, you get both at once — a door that's easier to live with *and* sensibly secure. That's the whole promise, and it's an honest one.

CHAPTER 39

# Smart Habits for Codes & Sharing

Most of a smart lock's everyday safety comes down to a few sensible habits around codes — the same common sense you'd use with keys, really. Here's the short list worth living by.

## The do's

- **Give each person their own code**, so you can see who's who and remove one without disturbing the rest.
- **Use temporary and scheduled codes** for anyone who isn't close family (Part 5).
- **Remove codes you no longer need** promptly — a departed helper, a one-off guest.
- **Review your code list once a year** and clear out anything you don't recognize.

## The don'ts

- **Don't** use an obvious code — house number, birth year, 1-2-3-4.
- **Don't** share a code by writing it on a note left at the door, or in a public spot.
- **Don't** text or email a code to someone over an unfamiliar or insecure channel if you can simply tell them in person or by a phone call.
- **Don't** give full account access when a simple code will do — a code lets someone in; account access lets them run your lock.

STAY SAFE

### Treat a code like a key, because it is one

The simplest way to stay safe is to picture each code as a physical key. You wouldn't tape a spare key to the front door or hand copies to people you barely know — so don't do the digital equivalent with codes. A little of the same care you've always shown with keys covers almost everything.

CHAPTER 40

# Where Smart Locks Really Help as We Age

I want to spend a whole chapter here, because this is where a smart lock earns its place more than any clever feature — in the quiet dignity of staying in your own home, on your own terms, for longer.

## Letting help in without giving up independence

If getting to the door is hard, a smart lock means a trusted aide, nurse, family member, or neighbor can let themselves in with their own code — during the hours you choose — without you struggling up, and without a key hidden outside. You decide who, and when, and you can change your mind any time. That's not dependence; that's you running your own household with a little modern help.

## Peace of mind for family near and far

Grown children who worry can — with your blessing — see that the door's locked and that you got home, or let an emergency helper in remotely if you've fallen or aren't answering. For many families this quietly replaces daily "are you okay?" calls with simple, respectful reassurance on both sides.

## The end of the key troubles that come with age

- No more fumbling a small key with stiff or arthritic hands on a cold porch — a code or a tap does it.
- No more being locked out because a key was lost or left inside — your code lives in your head.
- No more hidden spare key that a stranger could find, or that you worry about after someone's come and gone.
- No more re-keying the whole lock when a helper moves on — just remove their code.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### Independence, protected by a little technology

The goal of everything in this book is not gadgetry for its own sake — it's helping you stay safely, comfortably, and proudly in your own home. A smart lock, set up well, is one of the few pieces of technology that genuinely serves that goal every single day. That's why I believe in them, and why I'm glad to help you get one working just right.

FROM BILL

### Setting one up for an aging parent? Let's do it thoughtfully

If you're arranging a lock for a parent — or thinking of one for yourself — I'm glad to help set it up *with* the whole family's needs in mind: the right backups, codes for the right people, the account in the right hands, and a calm walk-through so it serves and never confuses. That kind of thoughtful setup is exactly what I do. (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 41

# Why a Physical Backup Still Matters

We've touched this throughout, but it deserves its own plain statement, because it's the foundation everything else rests on: **always keep a dependable, non-electronic way into your home.**

## Why it matters

Phones die, batteries drain, internet drops, and now and then a gadget simply has an off day. A physical backup — a metal key, or at minimum a keypad code you know by heart — means none of those ordinary hiccups can ever leave you standing on your own porch. It's the humble safety net under all the convenience.

## What counts as a good backup

| Backup | Why it works |
|---|---|
| **A metal key** | The gold standard where your lock has a keyhole. Keep one with a neighbor, in a lockbox, or in your car. |
| **A keypad code in your memory** | Dependable and weightless — works with no phone, no key, no internet. Everyone in the house should know it. |
| **A key safe / lockbox** | A small coded box holding a spare key, mounted out of easy reach. Far safer than under the mat. |
| **A trusted neighbor or family member** | Someone nearby who holds a spare key or has a code, for true emergencies. |

STAY SAFE

### Retire the hidden key — but don't retire the key

A smart lock finally lets you throw away that spare key under the mat, which is a real security win. But don't swing to the other extreme and have *no* backup at all. Move the spare somewhere safe — a neighbor, a lockbox — rather than getting rid of it. Convenience up front, a dependable backup behind it: that's the sweet spot.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

### The safety net you'll rarely use — and always be glad is there

Most months you'll never touch your backup. But the day the battery dies or the phone's at home, that key in your neighbor's drawer or that code in your head turns a potential crisis into a two-minute non-event. That quiet security is what lets you enjoy all the clever features without a shadow of worry.

PART 8

# Voice Assistants, Fixes & When to Call Bill

Tying your lock into Alexa, Google, or Apple Home, an honest word on voice control, the quick fixes for everyday hiccups, a plain glossary, your cheat-sheet, and when to pick up the phone.

CHAPTER 42

# Voice Assistants: Alexa, Google & Apple Home

If you have a smart speaker or use your phone's assistant, you can often connect your lock so you can ask it to lock up — "Alexa, lock the front door" — or check whether it's locked. It's a pleasant extra, entirely optional. Here's the plain lay of the land.

## The three assistants and a word called "Matter"

| Assistant | In plain terms |
|---|---|
| **Amazon Alexa** | Works with the "Echo" speakers. Connect your lock through the Alexa app's "add device." |
| **Google Home** | Works with Google/Nest speakers. Connect through the Google Home app. |
| **Apple Home** | For iPhone/iPad folks, through Apple's "Home" app. Also where Apple tap-to-unlock lives. |
| **"Matter"** | A new shared language letting newer locks work with any of the above. If your lock says "Matter," it's built to play nicely with all three. |

## Connecting, in general

1. Set up and test your lock in its own app **first** (Parts 3 and 4).
2. Open the assistant's app (Alexa, Google Home, or Apple Home) and choose **Add a device**.
3. Pick **Lock** (or search the maker's name), and sign in with your lock account when asked to link them.
4. Once linked, you can ask the assistant to lock the door or tell you its status.

GOOD TO KNOW

### You can skip all of this and lose nothing

Voice control is a nice-to-have, not a need-to-have. Your lock does everything important through its code, its app, and its backups whether or not you ever connect a speaker. If smart speakers aren't your cup of tea, skip this chapter with a clear conscience.

CHAPTER 43

# A Word of Caution on Voice Control

Voice control is handy, but a door lock is not a light switch, so it's worth a careful, honest word — especially about *unlocking* by voice.

## Locking by voice: generally fine

Asking an assistant to **lock** the door is low-risk and genuinely useful — the worst a mistaken command can do is lock a door that's already locked. "Lock the front door" as you head to bed is a pleasant habit.

## Unlocking by voice: treat with care

**Unlocking** by voice is the one to think twice about. For safety, the assistants deliberately make it harder: most require you to speak or type a **PIN code** before they'll unlock, and some (Google's, lately) won't voice-unlock a lock at all. That friction is a *feature*, not a fault — you don't want your door opening to any voice that drifts through an open window or comes from the television.

STAY SAFE

### Think about who — and what — can hear

A voice assistant opens the door for whoever it hears. Picture the ways that could go wrong: a voice through an open window, a visitor, even a voice on the TV. That's exactly why unlocking asks for a PIN or is switched off. My honest advice: enjoy voice *locking* freely, but lean on your keypad code or the app for *unlocking* rather than voice. Keep the convenience where it's safe.

TIP

### A sensible setup for most folks

Here's what I'd suggest if you want voice in the mix: connect it, use "lock the door" happily, and leave voice-unlocking off (or behind a PIN). You get the bedtime convenience of locking up by voice with none of the worry. Simple and safe.

CHAPTER 44

# Quick Fixes: Everyday Hiccups

Beyond the lock-won't-respond troubles we covered in Part 6, here are answers to the small everyday puzzles folks run into. Most sort out in a minute.

## Common puzzles and their cures

| If this happens… | Try this |
|---|---|
| A code won't work | Re-check the exact digits in the app; make sure it hasn't expired or been scheduled off |
| The app says "can't connect" | Stand near the lock, turn phone Bluetooth off and on, or check your Wi-Fi |
| Auto-unlock keeps missing | Set the app's location permission to "Always" and keep Bluetooth on |
| The bolt grinds or strains | Test by hand with the door open; realign the strike plate or re-run calibration |
| Battery drains fast | Use fresh alkaline batteries; a stiff bolt or weak Wi-Fi makes the motor work harder |
| Keypad won't light up | Low or dead battery — replace it, or use a 9-volt jump-start / your key |

TIP

### "Fresh batteries and a restart" fixes most of it

As with most technology, the two cures that solve the majority of smart-lock gripes are a fresh set of batteries and turning things off and on again (the app, your phone). Try those before you worry about anything deeper. Neither can hurt a thing, and they so often do the trick.

FROM BILL

### Still stuck? That's a fine reason to call

If a fix in this book doesn't do it, or something just feels off with your lock, don't wrestle with it alone — a lock is the one gadget where you want it right. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort it out together, in plain English, with no rush.

CHAPTER 45

# A Plain-English Glossary

Smart locks come with a vocabulary all their own, and the words can make simple things sound harder than they are. Here's a plain dictionary of the terms you'll meet. Keep it handy the first few weeks; soon you won't need it.

| Word | What it means |
|---|---|
| **Deadbolt** | The strong, separate lock whose thick bolt holds the door shut. |
| **Smart lock** | A deadbolt with a small motor and computer, so it can lock and unlock on command. |
| **Retrofit** | A lock that mounts on your existing deadbolt's inside (e.g. August). Keeps your key. |
| **Replacement** | A whole new deadbolt that takes the old one's place (e.g. Schlage, Yale). Usually has a keypad. |
| **Keypad** | The buttons or touch surface on the door where you punch in a code. |
| **Access code** | A personal number that opens the door, given to a particular person. |
| **Auto-lock** | A setting that locks the door by itself a few minutes after it's opened. |
| **Auto-unlock** | A setting that unlocks the door as you walk up, sensing your phone returning home. |
| **Bluetooth** | A short-range wireless signal, good across a room or two, for up-close control. |
| **Wi-Fi** | Your home internet signal; lets the lock be reached from anywhere. |
| **Bridge / hub** | A small plug-in box that passes messages between a lock and your Wi-Fi, if needed. |
| **Firmware** | The lock's built-in software; keep it updated for safety. |
| **Tap-to-unlock** | Holding a phone or watch near the lock to open it (Apple "Home Key" and the like). |
| **Two-step verification** | An extra sign-in code sent to your phone, so a stolen password isn't enough. Turn it on. |
| **Matter** | A new shared language letting newer locks work with Alexa, Google, and Apple alike. |
| **Activity / log** | The app's record of when the door was locked or unlocked, and by whom. |
| **Jump-start** | Using a 9-volt battery to power a dead keypad lock just long enough to get in. |

| Word | What it means |
| --- | --- |
| **Lockbox / key safe** | A small coded box holding a spare key, safer than a key under the mat. |

CHAPTER 46

# Your Smart Lock Cheat-Sheet

Tear this page out, or fold its corner. These are the everyday moves, all in one place.

## Everyday use

| To do this… | Do this |
|---|---|
| Lock or unlock from your chair | Open the app, tap the big Lock / Unlock dial |
| Get in with no phone | Punch your code into the keypad |
| Let the door lock itself | Turn on Auto-Lock in the app's Settings |
| Walk in hands-free | Turn on Auto-Unlock; keep Bluetooth and location on |
| Check if it's locked from away | Open the app and look at the dial (needs Wi-Fi) |

## Codes & guests

| To do this… | Do this |
|---|---|
| Give someone a code | App → Access/Codes → Add → name it, set the number |
| Make a code for set days/hours | When adding a code, choose Schedule or Temporary, set the times |
| Take a code away | App → Access/Codes → tap the name → Delete |
| See who came and went | App → Activity / History |

## When something's off

| Situation | What to do |
|---|---|
| Lock won't respond | Fresh batteries first; then restart the app and your phone |
| Battery warning | Put in fresh alkaline AAs that week — codes and settings are kept |
| Dead battery, need in | Use your key, or a 9-volt jump-start on a key-free keypad |
| Locked out | Use your code, backup key, or neighbor's key — don't force the door |
| Someone asks for your sign-in code | Never give it out — it's a scam. Hang up |

## The three safety habits

- **Know your keypad code by heart** — the key that never runs out of battery.
- **Keep a backup key somewhere safe** — a neighbor or lockbox, never under the mat.
- **Turn on two-step verification** for your app account, and keep the firmware updated.

CHAPTER 47

# When to Call Bill

I built this book so you could do most things with your smart lock yourself, at your own pace, with confidence. And you can. But a lock is the one piece of technology where getting it right truly matters — so part of doing it well is knowing when a task is worth handing to someone who does it every day. Here's my honest take on when to pick up the phone.

## Good reasons to call

- You'd like me to **install the lock** for you — swap the deadbolt, fit it right, calibrate it, and check your door frame while I'm at it. I do this all the time, right here in Portage County.
- You want help getting the **app, account, codes, and two-step verification** set up properly the first time, so you can stop worrying about them.
- You're setting up a lock for an **aging parent** (or yourself) and want it done thoughtfully — the right backups, the right people with codes, the account in the right hands.
- The lock **won't behave** and the fixes in this book haven't sorted it — never leave a door unlocked while you puzzle over it.
- You're **locked out**, or worried your account may be compromised, and want a trusted local hand rather than a stranger from an online ad.

## What working with me is like

I'm Bill, and I run **Bill's Home Tech** right here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent **30+ years** helping people feel at home with their technology, and I treat every call the way I'd want my own parents treated: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing, no jargon, and never, ever any eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question with me.

| How to reach me | |
|---|---|
| **Call or text** | (330) 200-8042 |
| **Book online** | billshometech.com/book |
| **Where I serve** | Portage County, Ohio and nearby |
| **What I can do** | Install, set up, teach, troubleshoot — whatever you need with your lock |
| **What it costs** | Fair, honest, and told to you up front — no surprises |

FROM BILL

### You're never a bother — that's the whole job

Some folks hesitate to call because they don't want to be a nuisance. Please don't feel that way. Helping you is not an interruption to my work — it *is* my work, and it's work I love. Whether it's a five-minute question or installing locks on every door in the house, I'm glad to help. That's what I'm here for.

GOOD TO KNOW

### If you reach my website, you may meet Sophie

When you visit billshometech.com, you might be greeted by **Sophie**, my friendly assistant on the site. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time with me. She's there to make reaching me easier — but a real person (me) always does the actual help.

Thank you for letting me be your guide to smart locks. Take your time, enjoy walking up to a door that knows you, keep a key in your pocket for the odd off day, and remember — you can't break it, your old key still works, and you're never stuck alone. I'm proud of you for learning something new.

***— Bill***