BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Video Calling

See the people you love — FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp, and Messenger, in plain English

A plain-English guide to seeing family face-to-face

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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What's Inside

This is your video-calling manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Each of the four main apps gets its own section, so you can go straight to the one your family uses and skip the rest. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you* and slow, step-by-step directions anyone can follow. If a screen looks a little different on your device, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Comfortable with Video Calls

What a video call really is, the handful of things you need, and how to look and sound your best — before we open a single app. Start here and the rest is easy.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you're holding this book, chances are someone you love is a little too far away — a daughter two states over, a grandchild who moved for work, a friend who winters down south — and you'd give anything to see their face more often than the holidays allow. That's exactly what this book is for.

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

Why video calling is worth a little effort

A regular phone call lets you hear a voice. A video call lets you **see the person** — their smile, the new haircut, the baby's first steps, the garden they're so proud of. For many of the folks I help, that one difference turns "I talk to them sometimes" into "I feel like I'm part of their lives again." It is, hands down, the single most rewarding thing I teach people to do.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Video calling collapses the distance. You can read bedtime stories to a grandchild in another state, show your sister the quilt you just finished, or simply have a cup of coffee "together" on a Sunday morning. It costs nothing extra once you have internet, and it works on the phone or tablet you already own.

You truly cannot break anything

Here is the most important promise in this whole book: **you cannot break your phone, your tablet, or the internet by trying.** You can't wear anything out by tapping the wrong button. The worst thing that happens on a video call is that it ends and you start it again. Tapping, poking, and exploring to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns — including me, years ago.

So relax your shoulders. We'll go one small step at a time, and if a call ever goes sideways, hanging up and calling back fixes almost everything.

How this book is arranged

There are four main ways people make video calls, and this book gives each one its own section: **FaceTime** (built into Apple iPhones and iPads), **Zoom** (the one used for group gatherings, clubs, and church), **WhatsApp** (popular with family overseas), and **Facebook Messenger** (handy if you're already on Facebook). You do not need to learn all four. Find the one your family uses and start there — the others will make sense later if you ever need them.

FROM BILL

Start with whatever your family already uses

The best video-calling app is simply the one the people you want to see are already on. Ask your daughter or your grandson: "What do you use to video call?" Whatever they answer — that's your starting point. Turn to that section and skip the rest for now.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Video Call Actually Is

Before we touch an app, let's demystify the whole thing, because the idea is simpler than it sounds.

A phone call you can see

A video call is just a telephone call with a picture added. Your phone or tablet has a tiny camera on the front — the same side as the screen — and a tiny microphone. During a video call, your camera sends a live picture of your face to the other person, and their camera sends their picture back to you. You talk exactly like a normal call; you just also get to see each other.

It travels over the internet, not the phone line

Here's the one thing that's different from an old-fashioned call: a video call travels over the **internet**, not the telephone network. That matters for two friendly reasons. First, it does not use your phone-plan minutes at all. Second, it means both people need an internet connection — usually **Wi-Fi** (the wireless internet in your home) or cellular data if you're out and about.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Wi-Fi is your friend here**
>
> Video uses more internet than a plain voice call because it's sending a moving picture. At home, connect to your Wi-Fi and you never have to think about it — Wi-Fi internet doesn't count against any phone-plan limits. We'll cover how to tell you're on Wi-Fi in a moment.

The front camera vs. the back camera

Your device has two cameras: one on the **front** (facing you, next to the screen) and one on the **back**. Video calls normally start on the front camera so the other person sees your face. If you ever want to show them something — your garden, a leaky faucet, the grandkids' drawing on the fridge — there's a button to flip to the back camera, and another to flip back. We'll point it out in each app.

Everyone needs the same app — mostly

Think of each app like a different telephone company. For a video call to connect, both people usually need to be using the **same app**. If your son uses FaceTime, you'll use

FaceTime to call him. If your book club meets on Zoom, you'll use Zoom. The happy exception is FaceTime, which can now send a link that lets even non-Apple folks join — more on that later.

A quick word on cost

All four apps in this book are **free to use** for ordinary personal video calls. You may run into paid upgrades (Zoom sells business plans, for example), but you will never need to pay a penny to see your family. If any app or website ever demands payment just to make a normal video call, stop — that's a red flag, and it's worth a quick call to me.

CHAPTER 3

What You Need Before You Start

Good news: you almost certainly already have everything. Let's check the short list.

1. A device with a camera

Any reasonably modern **smartphone** (iPhone or Android) or **tablet** (iPad or Android tablet) has a front camera and microphone built in — you're all set. A **laptop** computer almost always has a camera built into the top of the screen too. A desktop computer may need a small clip-on camera called a **webcam**, but most folks use a phone or tablet, which is easiest.

2. An internet connection

At home, that's your **Wi-Fi**. If you can check email or watch a video on your device, you have enough internet for a video call. Here's how to be sure you're connected to Wi-Fi:

- **On an iPhone or iPad:** open **Settings** (the grey gear icon), tap **Wi-Fi**, and look for a network name with a blue checkmark beside it. That's you, connected.
- **On an Android phone:** swipe down from the top of the screen and look for the Wi-Fi symbol (a little fan of curved lines) lit up. Or open **Settings** then **Network & internet**.

TIP

If your internet is slow or spotty

Sit closer to your Wi-Fi box (the router) during the call, or ask whoever set up your internet to help you find the best spot in the house. A strong signal makes the picture smooth and clear instead of frozen and blocky.

3. The app itself

FaceTime comes already installed on every iPhone and iPad — nothing to download. Zoom, WhatsApp, and Messenger are free downloads from your device's app store (the **App Store** on Apple, the **Play Store** on Android). We'll walk through downloading each one in its own section, slowly, with no steps skipped.

4. The other person's details

To call someone, you need a way to reach them in that app — usually their **phone number** or the **email address** they use for it. The easiest path is to have their number saved in your Contacts (your phone's address book). If it's already there because you call or text them,

you're ready.

GOOD TO KNOW

A tablet with no phone number can still video call

Many folks love video calling on an iPad because the screen is bigger and easier on the eyes. An iPad doesn't have its own phone number, but it can still make FaceTime and app video calls using an email address or the app's own sign-in. Bigger screen, same result.

PART 2

Looking and Sounding Your Best

A few tiny habits — where to sit, how to hold the device, where the light comes from — that turn a frustrating call into a lovely one. None of it is fussy.

CHAPTER 4

Light, Angle, and Where to Sit

You don't need to be a movie star, and nobody on the other end is judging. But three tiny habits make a world of difference in how clearly they can see you — and how much you enjoy the call.

Let the light fall on your face, not behind you

This is the single biggest tip in the whole book. Cameras love light *in front* of you and hate light *behind* you. If you sit with a bright window at your back, the camera turns your face into a dark shadow. Turn around so the window — or a lamp — is **in front of you**, lighting your face, and you'll look bright and clear.

> TIP
>
> **The easy rule**
>
> Face the window, don't sit with your back to it. A soft lamp on the table in front of you works just as well in the evening. If your face looks dark on screen, more light in front is almost always the fix.

Hold it a little above eye level

If you hold the phone down low in your lap, the camera looks up your chin — not the most flattering angle for anyone. Lift the device so the camera is at about **eye level** or a touch above, and look at it as you would a friend across the table. You'll look relaxed and natural, and it's easier on your neck too.

Prop it up so your arms can rest

Holding a phone up for a twenty-minute chat makes anyone's arm ache, and a tired arm makes the picture wobble. Prop the device against something steady instead:

- Lean it against a stack of books, a tissue box, or a coffee mug on the table in front of you.
- A small, inexpensive stand (sometimes called a "phone stand" or "tablet stand") holds it perfectly and costs very little — a lovely thing to ask a family member to pick up for you.
- On an iPad, a folding cover that doubles as a stand is ideal.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why bother propping it up

A propped-up device means your hands are free — to hold your coffee, pet the cat, or show the grandkids something — and the picture stays rock-steady instead of jiggling. It instantly makes the call feel calmer and more like you're really in the room together.

Tidy what's behind you (only if you want to)

Whatever is behind you is what they'll see. A plain wall, a bookshelf, or a window with a nice view all work well. There's no need to fuss — but if the laundry pile is right in the frame and it'll bother you, just turn your chair a little. That's all it takes.

CHAPTER 5

Being Heard Clearly

Good sound matters even more than a good picture. If they can hear you comfortably, everything else is forgiven. Here's how to make sure.

Find a quieter spot

Microphones pick up everything — the television, the dishwasher, the fan. A moderately quiet room makes your voice come through clearly without anyone straining. If the TV is on in the same room, turn it down or move to the next room over. You don't need silence, just a little calm.

Speak at a normal distance

You do not need to lean in and shout at the phone. Hold or prop it at a comfortable arm's length and speak in your ordinary voice — the microphone is sensitive and will hear you just fine. Shouting actually makes you harder to understand, not easier.

Only one person talks at a time

On a video call there's a tiny delay — a fraction of a second — between your words leaving and arriving. If two people talk at once, it gets jumbled. The gentle habit is to let one person finish, pause a beat, then reply. On group calls especially, this little courtesy keeps everything smooth.

> **TIP**
>
> **Headphones or earbuds make a big difference**
>
> If you have earbuds or headphones — even the plain ones that may have come with your phone — plugging them in or connecting them makes the other person's voice clearer and cuts out background echo. Not required, but a real treat for a longer chat.

The mute button, and why you'd use it

Every app has a **mute** button — usually a little microphone symbol. Tapping it turns your microphone *off* so the others can't hear you, while you can still see and hear them. It's handy if you need to cough, blow your nose, or answer the door. Tap it again to switch your microphone back on. Just remember to un-mute before you start talking again — we've all spoken for a full minute on mute at least once.

CHAPTER 6

Video-Call Manners (For You and Everyone Else)

A few gentle courtesies make video calls pleasant for everyone. None of this is strict — it's just kindness, the same as any good visit.

Pick a good time

A video call asks for someone's full attention in a way a text doesn't. For a nice long chat, it's thoughtful to agree on a time ahead — "Can we video call Sunday after lunch?" — rather than surprising someone who might be driving or at work. For quick hellos, a surprise call is a delight; use your judgment.

Look at the camera now and then

It's natural to look at the other person's face on your screen — but their face isn't quite where the camera is. Glancing at the **camera** (the tiny dot near the top of the screen) every so often makes it feel, to them, like you're making eye contact. Don't overthink it; a glance here and there is plenty.

It's fine to end the call

When you're ready to go, a warm "well, this was lovely, I'll let you get on" and a tap of the red **End** button is all it takes. You will not hurt the app or lose anything. Ending a call is completely normal and completely safe.

GOOD TO KNOW

What the other person sees and doesn't see

During a video call they see whatever your camera is pointed at and hear whatever your microphone picks up — nothing more. They cannot see the rest of your phone, your photos, your messages, or anything else. When the call ends, the camera and microphone switch off. Your privacy is intact.

Practice with a patient person first

The very best way to get comfortable is a short practice call with a kind, unhurried family member — someone who'll happily let you fumble the first time. Five minutes of "can you see me? can you hear me?" and you'll have the knack. After that, it's just visiting.

FROM BILL

There's no such thing as fumbling

Every single person I've ever taught dropped a call, showed the ceiling, or talked on mute the first week. Then it clicked, and now they video call without a second thought. You're not behind — you're right on schedule. And I'm a phone call away at (330) 200-8042 if you'd like a hand getting started.

PART 3

FaceTime — The Apple Way

If you have an iPhone or iPad, FaceTime is already built in, free, and beautifully simple. This is the whole app, slowly, from your first call to a group with everyone in it.

CHAPTER 7

What FaceTime Is and Who Can Use It

FaceTime is Apple's own video- and voice-calling app. It comes already installed on every iPhone and iPad — there's nothing to download and nothing to set up beyond signing in once, which most people did when the device was new. It's free, and it makes wonderfully clear calls.

Who you can FaceTime

The simplest rule: you can FaceTime anyone who also has an Apple device — iPhone, iPad, or Mac computer. That covers a great many families. Both people need to be signed in with their **Apple Account** (the free account, formerly called an Apple ID, that every Apple device uses), which is almost always already done.

GOOD TO KNOW

Android and Windows folks can join too — by link

FaceTime used to be Apple-only, but now you can create a **link** to a FaceTime call and send it to anyone — including friends on Android phones or Windows computers. They tap the link and join from their web browser (Chrome or Edge works best); they don't even need an Apple device. We'll cover this in Chapter 11.

Finding the FaceTime app

Look for the FaceTime icon: a white video camera on a green background. It's usually on your Home Screen. If you can't spot it, swipe down the middle of your Home Screen to open **Search**, type "FaceTime," and tap it when it appears. (You cannot delete FaceTime by accident in a way that matters — it can always be found again this way.)

TIP

Make a one-time check that you're signed in

Open **Settings** (grey gear), scroll down to **Apps** then **FaceTime** (on older iPhones it's **Settings > FaceTime** directly), and make sure the switch at the top is green and your email/phone shows below. If it's off, tap it on. You usually only ever do this once.

CHAPTER 8

Making Your First FaceTime Call

Let's make a call, one calm step at a time. We'll call one person — the simplest kind of call — and you can practice with a patient family member.

The easiest way: from your Contacts

If the person is saved in your Contacts (your phone's address book), this is the gentlest route:

1. Open the **FaceTime** app (green camera icon).
2. Tap the green **New FaceTime** button near the top.
3. In the **To:** box, start typing the person's name. As soon as you see them in the list below, tap their name. (If they have more than one number or email, pick the one you know they use.)
4. Tap the green **FaceTime** button to start a video call. You'll hear it ringing, just like a phone.
5. When they answer, there they are. Say hello!

> TIP
>
> **The audio-only option**
>
> Right beside the video button you may see a **phone** symbol labelled FaceTime Audio. That makes a crystal-clear voice-only call over the internet — no picture, handy if someone isn't dressed for the camera. Same app, just without the video.

Calling someone who texts or calls you

You can also start a FaceTime call straight from a text conversation. Open **Messages**, tap the conversation with the person, tap their name or picture at the very top, and tap **FaceTime**. It's handy when you're already chatting by text and decide you'd rather see each other.

Answering a FaceTime call

When someone FaceTimes you, your phone rings and the screen lights up. What you do depends on the moment:

- **If the phone is unlocked and you're using it:** a banner drops from the top. Tap the green **Accept** to answer, or the red **Decline** to send it away.

- **If the phone is locked (screen was off):** you'll see a green phone icon to **slide** across to answer, and a red one to decline.
- To answer **voice-only** at first (so they don't see you until you're ready), there may be a small option to answer without video — but it's perfectly fine to just accept and say "give me one second!"

GOOD TO KNOW

Missed a call? No harm done

If you don't get to it in time, FaceTime simply notes a missed call — nothing breaks. You can tap the person's name in the FaceTime list later and call them right back. Missing a call is never a problem.

CHAPTER 9

The Buttons You See During a Call

Once a FaceTime call connects, a row of controls appears over the picture. If they fade away, just tap the screen once and they come right back. Here's what each one does — none of them can hurt anything.

Button	What it does
The red circle (End)	Hangs up and ends the call. Tap it when you're done. Completely safe.
Microphone (Mute)	Turns your microphone off so they can't hear you; tap again to turn it back on. The icon shows a line through it when you're muted.
Camera (Video off)	Turns your camera off so they can't see you, while you still see them. Handy for a moment of privacy.
Flip camera	Switches between the front camera (your face) and the back camera (what's in front of you). Great for showing someone your garden or a repair.
Your little picture	The small window showing your own face, so you can check how you look. You can drag it to a different corner if it's in the way.

Showing someone something with the back camera

This is one of FaceTime's loveliest tricks. Tap the **flip camera** button and your camera swings around to show whatever you're pointing at — the roses coming up, a new recipe, a worrying spot on the ceiling you want a second opinion on. Tap it again to flip back to your face. Walk slowly and the picture stays clear.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

The flip-camera button turns a chat into "come see." Grandparents give kitchen tours, adult children check on a parent's new gadget, and neighbors show each other the hummingbird at the feeder — all without anyone leaving home. It's being there, from your armchair.

Making the most of the whole screen

FaceTime shows the other person as large as the screen allows. On an iPad the picture is wonderfully big. If your own little preview window ever covers something, press and hold it and slide it to another corner. You can't lose it or break it — it just tucks neatly wherever you drop it.

PART 4

FaceTime With the Whole Family

Group calls with everyone at once, FaceTime links that anyone can join, and the friendly extras — so the whole clan can gather on one screen.

CHAPTER 10

Group FaceTime — Everyone at Once

A **Group FaceTime** call puts several people on the screen together — the whole family on a Sunday, or all the grandchildren singing happy birthday at once. FaceTime allows a large group (up to 32 people), far more than you're ever likely to need.

Starting a group call

1. Open **FaceTime** and tap **New FaceTime**.
2. In the **To:** box, add the first person's name, then keep typing to add the next, and the next — adding as many people as you'd like.
3. When everyone's name is in the box, tap the green **FaceTime** button.
4. It rings all of them at once. As each person answers, their face joins the grid.

Starting a group call from a group text

If you already have a group text going with the same people, open that conversation in **Messages**, tap the row of faces at the top, and tap **FaceTime**. Everyone in the text gets rung at once. It's often the quickest way for a family that already texts together.

How the group screen behaves

On a group call, FaceTime automatically makes the person who's **currently talking** larger, so your eye goes to whoever's speaking. The others appear in smaller tiles. You don't have to manage any of this — it just happens. If the shifting tiles feel busy, that's normal; you'll stop noticing it after a call or two.

> TIP
>
> **One talker at a time, please**
>
> Groups are the most fun but also the most prone to everyone talking over each other. A gentle "go ahead, Mom" and letting each person finish keeps it joyful instead of jumbled. On a big family call, it helps to have one person loosely play host and pass the conversation around.

Adding someone who's running late

If a call's already going and you want to pull in one more person, tap the screen to show the controls, tap the group of faces or the **name** at the top, and look for **Add People**. Type their

name and they get rung into the existing call. Nobody else is interrupted.

CHAPTER 11

FaceTime Links — Inviting Anyone

A FaceTime **link** is a little web address you create and share. Anyone you send it to — including people on Android phones or Windows computers who have no Apple device at all — can tap it and join your call. It's also the easiest way to set up a call for later.

Creating and sharing a link

1. Open **FaceTime**.
2. Tap **Create Link** at the top.
3. A sharing menu pops up. Choose how to send it: tap **Messages** to text it, **Mail** to email it, or pick another app. You can also tap **Copy** to copy the link and paste it wherever you like.
4. Send it to the people you want. The link is now saved in your FaceTime list too, so you can find it again.

Starting the call when it's time

When you're ready to begin, open FaceTime, tap that link in your list, and tap **Join**. You'll be in a waiting room of sorts; as people tap their copy of the link, you'll see them asking to join, and you tap to let them in. This little gate is a nice safety feature — only people you admit get into your call.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **What the non-Apple person sees**
>
> When your Android or Windows friend taps the link, their web browser opens, asks permission to use their camera and microphone (they tap **Allow**), and asks for their name. Then they wait for you to let them in. It works without them installing anything — a genuinely handy bridge between Apple and everyone else.

Using a link to schedule a call for later

Because a link can be made ahead of time and shared, it's perfect for planning: "Here's our link for the family call Sunday at 2." Everyone keeps the same link, and at 2 o'clock you all tap it and gather. You can even add the link to a calendar invitation so it pops up as a reminder.

STAY SAFE

Only share links with people you trust

A FaceTime link is like a key to a door — anyone who has it can knock. Share your link only with the people you actually want on the call, and don't post it somewhere public. Because you still have to admit each person, you're in control, but it's wise not to pass the key around.

CHAPTER 12

The Friendly Extras

FaceTime has a handful of pleasant extras. You never need any of them to have a good call — think of this as a little tour of the nice-to-haves.

Make your face bigger and clearer

If the other person is hard to see because they're far from their camera, there's nothing to do on your end — but you can ask them to come a little closer to their device. For your own picture, good light in front of you (Chapter 4) does more than any setting.

Leaving a FaceTime message

If you FaceTime someone and they don't answer, newer iPhones let you **leave a short video message** — look for a **Record Video** option on the "no answer" screen. You record a quick hello, and it waits for them like a voicemail you can see. A sweet way to say "thinking of you" when someone's out.

SharePlay — watching together (optional)

FaceTime can let two people watch the same show or listen to the same music *while* on a call, so a far-away friend can "sit with you" through a movie. It's called **SharePlay**. It's a lovely idea but a step beyond the basics — if it interests you, it's a perfect thing to explore together with a grandchild, or to call me about.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **Don't let the extras distract you**
>
> The heart of FaceTime is simple: tap a name, see a face. Everything in this chapter is a bonus you can ignore forever and never miss. Get comfortable with plain calls first; the extras will still be there whenever you're curious. And remember — (330) 200-8042 — no question too small.

A quick FaceTime recap

If you remember only this much, you can FaceTime anyone:

- **To call one person:** FaceTime app > New FaceTime > type their name > green FaceTime button.
- **To call a group:** same thing, but add several names before you tap the button.

- **To invite anyone (even non-Apple):** FaceTime app > Create Link > share it.
- **During a call:** red button hangs up, microphone button mutes, flip-camera button shows what's in front of you.

PART 5

Zoom — For Groups, Clubs, and Gatherings

Zoom is the one your church group, book club, doctor, or far-flung family reunion probably uses. Joining a Zoom is easier than people fear — here's the whole thing.

CHAPTER 13

What Zoom Is and When You'll Meet It

Zoom is a video-calling app built for groups. It became a household name when everyone needed to gather without gathering, and it stuck around because it does group meetings so well. You'll run into Zoom for book clubs, church services, town meetings, support groups, classes, telehealth doctor visits, and big family get-togethers.

The one big difference from FaceTime

With FaceTime, you *call* someone. With Zoom, you usually **join a meeting** that someone else has set up. They send you an invitation — by email or text — with a **link** to tap or a **Meeting ID** (a string of numbers) to type in. Your whole job, most of the time, is simply to join at the right time. That's it.

GOOD TO KNOW

You're almost always a guest, not the host

Nearly everyone I help uses Zoom only to *join* meetings other people run — the book club leader, the church, the doctor's office. That means you don't need to learn how to schedule or host anything. Joining is the whole skill, and it's an easy one.

Is Zoom free?

Joining a meeting is **always free** — you never pay to attend. Zoom sells paid plans to the people who *host* meetings (businesses and clubs), and the free host plan limits a meeting to **40 minutes** before it has to be restarted. If your club's Zoom ever ends abruptly at 40 minutes, that's why, and the host simply starts it again with the same link. Nothing wrong on your end.

CHAPTER 14

Getting Zoom on Your Device

You can join a Zoom from a web browser without installing anything, but the **app** is smoother and easier on a phone or tablet. Let's install it once — you only do this a single time.

On an iPhone or iPad

1. Open the **App Store** (blue icon with a white letter "A" made of drawing tools).
2. Tap the **Search** magnifying glass at the bottom.
3. Type **Zoom** and search. Look for **Zoom Workplace** (the official one, by Zoom Communications).
4. Tap **Get**, then confirm with your passcode, Face ID, or Touch ID. It downloads on its own.

On an Android phone or tablet

1. Open the **Play Store** (a colorful triangle icon).
2. Tap the search bar at the top and type **Zoom**.
3. Find the official **Zoom Workplace** app and tap **Install**. It downloads on its own.

HEADS UP

Get the real Zoom, not a look-alike

App stores sometimes list copycat apps with similar names. The genuine one is made by **Zoom Communications, Inc.** — check the maker's name under the title before you install. When in doubt, don't guess; give me a call and we'll make sure you've got the right one.

Do you need an account?

To *join* most meetings, **no account is needed** — you tap the link and go. Some meetings ask you to sign in; if so, you can make a free Zoom account with just your email, or often "continue as a guest" by simply typing your name. Don't let an account prompt scare you off — joining as a guest is usually right there as an option.

CHAPTER 15

Joining a Zoom Meeting

Here's the heart of it. When someone invites you to a Zoom, they send you either a link or a Meeting ID. Let's do both ways.

The easy way: tap the link

Most invitations arrive as a link in an email or text. The link looks something like "zoom.us/j/" followed by numbers. To join:

1. At the meeting time, open the email or text and **tap the link**.
2. Your phone asks to open it in the Zoom app — tap **Open** (or **Launch Meeting**).
3. Zoom may say "Please wait, the host will let you in soon." That's the **waiting room** — perfectly normal. Wait a moment and you'll be admitted.
4. Zoom asks to use your camera — tap **Allow** — and may show a **Join with Video** button. Tap it so people can see you.
5. It asks about sound: tap **Join with Wi-Fi or Cellular Audio** (or "Call using internet audio"). This is the step people forget — without it, you can't be heard or hear others.

> **TIP**
>
> **The two "join" taps people miss**
>
> Almost every "I joined but no one can hear me" moment comes down to two taps: **Join with Video** (so they see you) and **Join with Audio / Call using internet audio** (so you can talk and listen). If something seems off when you land in a meeting, look for those two buttons first.

The other way: type the Meeting ID

Sometimes you're given a **Meeting ID** (a 9-to-11-digit number) and maybe a **Passcode**. To use them:

1. Open the **Zoom** app.
2. Tap **Join** (or **Join a Meeting**) — you can do this without signing in.
3. Type the **Meeting ID** number, then type your name so people know who you are.
4. Tap **Join**. If asked, type the **Passcode** the host gave you.
5. Then the same camera and audio steps as above: Join with Video, and Join with Audio.

Arriving a few minutes early

It's a kindness to yourself to join **five minutes early**. That gives you time to get past the waiting room, allow the camera, and settle in before things begin — no scrambling while everyone watches. If you land in an empty meeting, you're simply early; the host will arrive.

CHAPTER 16

Getting Around Inside a Zoom

Once you're in, a row of controls sits along the bottom (tap the screen once if they've faded). You'll mostly use just two of them — mute and video — but here's the whole row so nothing's a mystery.

Control	What it does and when to use it
Mute / Unmute	The microphone icon. A red line through it means you're muted (no one hears you). Tap to toggle. On busy group calls, staying muted until you speak keeps background noise down for everyone.
Start / Stop Video	The camera icon. A red line means your camera is off. Tap to turn your face on or off.
Leave	The red word **Leave** in the corner. Tap it, then **Leave Meeting**, to exit. Safe and final — you can always rejoin with the same link.
Participants	Shows the list of everyone in the meeting. Nice for seeing who's here.
Chat	A typed message area. Handy if your sound fails — you can type "can't hear, one sec" to the group.
Reactions	Little thumbs-up and clapping symbols you can send without interrupting. A fun, gentle way to join in.

Speaker view vs. gallery view

Zoom can show you just the **person speaking** (large), or **everyone** in a grid (gallery). There's a small button to switch — often labelled **View** in a corner. Try both and keep whichever you like. Neither is right or wrong; it's purely your preference.

GOOD TO KNOW

Raising your hand

In bigger meetings, Zoom has a **Raise Hand** button (under Reactions or Participants). It quietly signals the host that you'd like to speak, so you don't have to interrupt. The host calls on you, you unmute, and you talk. Very civilized.

When the meeting ends

Either the host ends it for everyone (your screen simply returns to normal — nothing's wrong), or you tap **Leave** when you're ready to go. If a meeting hits the 40-minute free limit and closes, just tap the same link again to rejoin when the host restarts it.

FROM BILL

Zoom is mostly waiting, then joining

I've taught Zoom to a lot of nervous folks, and every one of them was surprised how little there is to it: tap the link, allow the camera, tap to join the audio, and visit. If a club's Zoom ever gives you trouble, call me before the meeting and we'll do a practice run — (330) 200-8042.

PART 6

WhatsApp and Messenger

Two more ways families stay face-to-face — WhatsApp (a favorite for relatives overseas) and Facebook Messenger (easy if you're already on Facebook). Here's how each one video calls.

CHAPTER 17

WhatsApp — Free Calls Anywhere in the World

WhatsApp is a free messaging and calling app that's wildly popular around the world. If you have family overseas, odds are good they're on WhatsApp, because it makes free video and voice calls between any two countries over the internet — no long-distance charges, ever.

Getting WhatsApp

1. Open your **App Store** (Apple) or **Play Store** (Android).
2. Search for **WhatsApp Messenger** (made by WhatsApp LLC) and install it.
3. Open it and follow the setup: it confirms your **phone number** by texting you a code, which you type in. This is normal and safe — it's how WhatsApp knows it's really your number.
4. Let it find which of your contacts are also on WhatsApp — those are the people you can call.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **WhatsApp uses your phone number as your "address"**
> Unlike Zoom, there's no meeting to join — WhatsApp works like a phone book. Anyone in your contacts who also has WhatsApp shows up automatically, and you call them by name. You both just need the app and each other's numbers saved.

Making a WhatsApp video call

1. Open **WhatsApp**.
2. Tap the **Chats** tab and open a conversation with the person (or tap the new-chat pencil and pick them).
3. At the top right of the conversation you'll see a **video camera** icon. Tap it.
4. It rings them. When they answer, you'll see each other. Say hello!

The on-call buttons are the same friendly set as everywhere else: a red button to **end**, a microphone to **mute**, and a **flip-camera** button to show what's in front of you. If they fade, tap the screen to bring them back.

Group video calls on WhatsApp

WhatsApp does group video calls too — a good-sized group (up to 32 people). You can start one from a group chat by tapping the video icon, or begin a one-on-one call and tap **Add participant** to pull others in. It's a lovely way for a scattered family to gather.

TIP

WhatsApp is ideal for far-away family

Because it's free between countries and used almost everywhere, WhatsApp is often the easiest bridge to relatives abroad. If your grandchildren moved overseas, ask whether they're on WhatsApp — the odds are very good, and the calls cost nothing.

CHAPTER 18

Facebook Messenger — If You're Already on Facebook

If you use **Facebook** to keep up with family photos and news, you already have a built-in way to video call them: **Messenger**, Facebook's chat-and-call companion. Anyone who's your Facebook friend can be video called, which makes it effortless if your circle is already there.

Getting Messenger

Messenger is a separate app from the main Facebook app. Search for **Messenger** (made by Meta) in your **App Store** or **Play Store** and install it. Sign in with the same Facebook email/phone and password you already use — no new account to create.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **One account, two apps**
> Facebook and Messenger share the same login. When Messenger asks you to sign in, it's the same Facebook details you've always used. You're not making anything new — just adding the app that handles the calls and chats.

Making a Messenger video call

1. Open **Messenger**.
2. Tap the **Chats** area and open a conversation with the person (or search their name at the top).
3. Tap the **video camera** icon at the top right of the conversation.
4. It rings them. When they pick up, there they are.

Same controls as always during the call — end, mute, flip camera. Messenger also sprinkles in fun extras like playful backgrounds and effects, which the grandchildren adore and you're free to ignore entirely.

Group calls and "Rooms"

Messenger handles large group video calls as well, and has a feature called **Rooms** for gathering a bunch of people with a shareable link, much like Zoom. For most folks, simply opening a group chat and tapping the video icon is all you'll ever need.

HEADS UP

Mind the friend requests and messages from strangers

Because Messenger is tied to Facebook, you may occasionally get messages or calls from people you don't know. You're never obligated to answer. If a stranger — or someone claiming to be a relative in trouble — contacts you asking for money or personal details, don't engage; it's a common scam. We cover this in the next part.

CHAPTER 19

Which App Should You Use?

By now you've met all four. You do not need to choose just one — but if you're wondering where to focus, here's the plain-English summary.

App	Best for	You need
FaceTime	Apple families; the simplest calls	An iPhone or iPad (it's built in)
Zoom	Clubs, church, classes, group gatherings	The free app; usually just a link to join
WhatsApp	Far-away and overseas family	The free app and the other person's number
Messenger	People you already know on Facebook	A Facebook account and the free Messenger app

FROM BILL

Let your family choose for you

Truly, the best app is the one your people already use. You'll have a far nicer time joining your daughter on the app she already knows than talking her onto a new one. Ask around the family, learn that one app well, and let the others wait until you need them.

You can have more than one

It's perfectly fine — and common — to use FaceTime for one grandchild, WhatsApp for a sister abroad, and Zoom for the book club. Each lives as its own icon on your screen; you just tap whichever one you need. Having several doesn't clutter anything or cause conflicts.

PART 7

When Things Go Sideways — and Staying Safe

The handful of hiccups everyone hits, with calm fixes for each — plus the scams to know about so you can video call with complete peace of mind.

CHAPTER 20

Fixing the Common Hiccups

Every video caller runs into these. None is a sign anything is wrong with you or your device, and each has a simple fix. When something's off, work down this list calmly — the answer is almost always near the top.

"They can't hear me"

- Check the **mute** button — the microphone icon. If it has a line through it, you're muted. Tap it once to turn your microphone back on. This is the number-one cause, every time.
- In **Zoom**, make sure you tapped **Join with Audio** ("Call using internet audio") when you entered.
- Make sure nothing is covering the bottom edge of your phone, where the microphone sits — a thick case or a finger can muffle it.

"I can't hear them"

- Turn your **volume up** with the buttons on the side of your device.
- Make sure the little **silent/ring switch** (on an iPhone's upper left edge) isn't set to silent — if you see orange, flip it back.
- If you have earbuds connected but aren't wearing them, the sound may be going to them. Disconnect them or pop them in.

"They can't see me" / black picture

- Check the **camera** button — if it has a line through it, your video is off. Tap to turn it on.
- Make sure your finger or case isn't covering the front camera lens.
- The very first time you use a new app, it asks permission to use the camera — if you tapped "Don't Allow," the picture stays black. See the next chapter's note on fixing permissions.

Frozen, blocky, or stuttering picture

This almost always means the **internet** is struggling for a moment. It's rarely anything you did. Try:

1. Move closer to your Wi-Fi box (router) — a stronger signal smooths everything out.
2. Turn your camera off for a minute (the audio usually keeps going fine) and back on.
3. If it stays bad, hang up and call again — a fresh connection often fixes it instantly.

TIP

The fix that solves almost everything: hang up and call back

When a call gets weird — frozen, silent, echoing, generally haywire — don't wrestle with it. Hang up and start the call again. A fresh start clears up the large majority of glitches in seconds. It's not giving up; it's the smart move.

Echo or a horrible screech

Echo usually happens when two people are in the same room on two devices, or someone's speaker is very loud near their microphone. Have one person mute, or turn the volume down, or use earbuds. The screech (feedback) stops the moment the two devices are apart or one is muted.

CHAPTER 21

Camera and Microphone Permissions

The first time any app wants to use your camera or microphone, your device asks "Is that okay?" — a good safety feature. If you ever tapped "Don't Allow" by reflex, the app can't see or hear, and you'll get a black screen or silence. Here's how to set it right. You only do this once per app.

On an iPhone or iPad

1. Open **Settings** (grey gear).
2. Scroll down and tap the name of the app (for example **FaceTime**, **Zoom**, **WhatsApp**).
3. Make sure the switches for **Camera** and **Microphone** are green (on). Tap any that are off.

On an Android phone

1. Open **Settings**, then **Apps**.
2. Tap the app's name, then **Permissions**.
3. Set **Camera** and **Microphone** to **Allow**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Allowing isn't risky

Giving a trusted calling app permission to use your camera and microphone only lets it do what you want it to — video call. The app can't secretly watch you; the camera and microphone only switch on during a call you're on, and most phones show a little green or orange dot when they're active.

CHAPTER 22

Video-Call Scams — Know These and Relax

Video calling itself is wonderfully safe. The thing to watch for isn't the technology — it's the occasional bad actor who uses *any* channel, including calls and messages, to trick people. Know these few patterns and you can video call with complete confidence.

SCAM ALERT

The "grandchild in trouble" call

A caller (sometimes on video, using tricks to seem convincing) claims to be your grandchild or a lawyer, says there's an emergency — an accident, an arrest — and begs you to send money quickly and keep it secret. It's a cruel, common scam. **Hang up.** Then call your grandchild or their parents directly on the number you already have. Real emergencies survive a verification call; scams do not.

SCAM ALERT

Strangers who want to "get to know you"

A friendly stranger messages you out of the blue — often through Messenger or a social app — and over days or weeks builds a warm friendship or romance, then eventually asks for money, gift cards, or help "just this once." No matter how genuine it feels, **someone you've only met online who asks for money is a scam.** Stop and talk to a family member or to me first.

SCAM ALERT

"Tech support" asking to video call or take control

A pop-up, email, or call claims your device has a virus and offers to "help" — sometimes asking to video call or to have you install something so they can "see your screen." **Never let a stranger take control of your device.** Apple, Microsoft, and your bank do not call you this way. Hang up; it's a scam.

Three habits that keep you safe

- **Never send money or gift cards** because of a call or message, no matter how urgent it sounds. Urgency and secrecy are the scammer's tools.
- **Verify through a number you already have.** If "your bank" or "your grandchild" calls, hang up and call them back on the number you know is real.

- **When unsure, pause and ask.** A quick call to a trusted family member — or to me — before you act has saved many people a great deal. There's no shame in checking; the smart ones always do.

FROM BILL

These calls are exactly what I'm here for

If anything on a call or in a message ever makes you uneasy — a request for money, a story that doesn't add up, a "support" person you didn't call — stop and ring me *before* you do anything: **(330) 200-8042**. Those "is this a scam?" calls are never a bother. They're the whole reason I do this work, and there's never a charge for asking.

The good news

Ordinary video calls with people you know and love carry none of this risk. The camera only runs during the call, the people on it are the people you dialed, and nothing is recorded or shared unless you choose to. Learn the few scam patterns above, keep your "never send money" rule, and you can enjoy every call with a light heart.

PART 8

Easier Calling — Devices, Big Screens & Accessibility

Ways to make video calling even simpler and more comfortable: devices built for it, a bigger picture, captions you can read, and calling from the computer on your desk.

CHAPTER 23

Devices Made for Easy Video Calling

A phone or tablet is the usual way to video call, but a few devices are built from the ground up to make it even easier — no small buttons, no hunting for an app. If a phone feels fiddly, one of these might be just the thing, especially as a gift from family who want to see you more.

Smart displays — a screen that sits on the counter

A **smart display** is a small screen with a camera, a speaker, and a microphone that lives on your kitchen counter or side table, always plugged in and ready. You call — or answer — mostly by voice or a single tap. The two common ones are the **Amazon Echo Show** (you say "Alexa, call Mary") and the **Google Nest Hub** ("Hey Google, call Mary").

- No app to open and no phone to hold — the screen is always there and the camera is already pointed at the room.
- You can answer hands-free, which is wonderful if you're cooking or your hands aren't steady.
- Family members with the matching app (or another Echo Show / Nest Hub) can call you, and some can even be set up to "drop in" and appear automatically — handy for a daily check-in, if you're comfortable with it.

GOOD TO KNOW

These pair with the apps you already know

An Echo Show calls other Echo devices and the Alexa app; a Nest Hub works with Google's system. When family set one up for you, ask them to show you the one phrase that calls each person. From then on it really is just "Alexa, call my daughter."

Simplified tablets for seniors

Some tablets are made specifically for older adults, with huge buttons, a tidy screen, and video calling front and center. The **GrandPad** is the best-known — a simplified tablet with big icons where a video call is often a single tap on a family member's photo. Family manage the setup remotely so you never touch settings. If small print and busy screens are the real hurdle, a device like this removes them.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What these do for you

Purpose-built devices take away the two things that trip people up most — finding the app and pressing tiny targets. If video calling on a phone has felt like more trouble than it's worth, a smart display or a senior tablet can turn it into a one-tap, one-sentence pleasure. Worth mentioning to the family.

A gentle caution on "drop in" and always-on cameras

Some of these devices can be set so trusted family "drop in" and see you without you answering. That can be a comfort — or it can feel like being watched. It's entirely your choice, and it can be turned off. If you're ever unsure how a device is set up, that's a perfect thing to ask me to check so you know exactly who can see and when.

CHAPTER 24

Making the Picture Bigger and Clearer

If squinting at a small phone is the hard part, you have good options for a bigger, clearer view. Comfort matters — a call you can see easily is a call you'll actually enjoy.

Use a tablet instead of a phone

The simplest upgrade: make your calls on an **iPad or tablet** instead of a phone. The screen is several times larger, faces are bigger, and the buttons are easier to hit. FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp, and Messenger all work on a tablet exactly as on a phone — same steps, roomier view. Many folks keep a phone for out and about and a tablet at home just for calls.

Put the call on your television

For the grandest view, some calls can be sent to the big **television** in your living room:

- With an **Apple TV** box (and a recent iPhone or iPad), FaceTime can show the other person on your TV while your phone acts as the camera. The whole family on the couch, the grandkids filling the screen.
- Some smart TVs and streaming devices have Zoom built in or can mirror your phone's screen.

This is a lovely setup but has a few moving parts, so it's a fine one to have a grandchild or me help you arrange the first time. Once it's set, it's usually a tap or two.

Make everything on screen larger

Your device can enlarge text and icons everywhere, which makes the calling apps easier to use too:

Device	Where to make things bigger
iPhone / iPad	Settings > Display & Brightness > Text Size — drag the slider to make text bigger. For even larger, Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size.
Android	Settings > Display > Font size (and Display size) — slide up to enlarge.

TIP

Turn the volume and brightness up without shame

Crank the volume to a level that's genuinely comfortable, and the screen brightness up so faces are clear. These are yours to set however suits you — there are no points for struggling with a dim, quiet screen.

CHAPTER 25

Hearing the Call Clearly

If hearing is the challenge, video calling actually gives you more help than an ordinary phone call does. Here are the tools worth knowing.

Live captions — words on the screen

Many devices can show **live captions**: the other person's words typed on your screen as they speak, like closed captions on television. It's a genuine help if a voice is hard to catch.

- **iPhone / iPad:** Settings > Accessibility > Live Captions, and turn it on. Captions can then appear during FaceTime and other calls.
- **Android:** look under Settings > Accessibility > Live Caption; a tap can switch captions on during calls and videos.

Captions aren't perfect — they occasionally mishear a word — but they turn a frustrating, strain-to-listen call into one you can follow comfortably.

Hearing aids that connect to your device

Many modern hearing aids connect wirelessly to a phone or tablet, so a call's sound goes **straight into your hearing aids** — clearer than any speaker, and set to your prescription. If your hearing aids have this feature, your audiologist or I can help you pair them once; after that, calls route to them automatically.

Earbuds and headphones help everyone

Even without hearing aids, plain earbuds or headphones bring the voice close and cut out room noise. If a call is ever hard to hear, popping in earbuds is often the quickest fix of all.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Captions, connected hearing aids, and earbuds mean a hard-of-hearing caller can enjoy a long, easy conversation instead of nodding along and hoping. Video calling can be *more* accessible than the telephone ever was — you just have to know these tools are there.

CHAPTER 26

Calling From a Computer

You don't need a phone at all — a laptop or desktop computer makes a fine video-calling machine, with a big screen and a comfortable keyboard. Here's the lay of the land.

Does your computer have a camera?

Almost every **laptop** has a small camera built into the top edge of the screen — look for a tiny dot or lens above the display. A **desktop** computer (the kind with a separate monitor) often doesn't, so you'd add an inexpensive clip-on camera called a **webcam**, which includes a microphone. A family member can help you pick one; they're simple to plug in.

Which apps work on a computer

App	On a computer
FaceTime	Built into Apple **Mac** computers (not Windows). On a Mac, open FaceTime just like on an iPhone.
Zoom	Works on both Windows and Mac. Download from zoom.us, or just tap the meeting link and it offers to join in your web browser.
WhatsApp	Has a computer version (WhatsApp for Windows/Mac, or web.whatsapp.com) that mirrors your phone; video calls work once it's linked to your phone.
Messenger	Use messenger.com in your web browser, or the Messenger app for Windows/Mac. Sign in with your Facebook details.

The one computer quirk: letting the browser use your camera

When you join a call through a web browser (like Chrome or Edge) for the first time, a little bar appears asking to use your camera and microphone. Click **Allow**. If you miss it and your camera won't turn on, look for a tiny camera symbol in the address bar at the top and click it to allow. That one permission is the only thing that catches people on a computer.

TIP

The big screen is the payoff

A computer's large screen makes faces big and the controls easy to click with a mouse. If you already spend time at a computer for email, it's a very comfortable place to video call — no new device to buy or learn.

CHAPTER 27

Telehealth — Seeing the Doctor by Video

One of the most useful video calls you'll ever make is to your **doctor**. A "telehealth" or "video visit" lets you see a doctor or nurse from your armchair — a real blessing when driving is hard, the weather's bad, or you simply don't want to sit in a waiting room. The skill is the same video calling you've already learned.

How a video visit usually works

1. When you book, the office tells you how you'll connect — often a **link** they email or text, sometimes through the practice's own app or patient website (a "patient portal").
2. A little before your appointment, find that link or app and open it. Many offices ask you to "check in" or join a **virtual waiting room** a few minutes early.
3. Allow the camera and microphone when asked (same as any call).
4. Wait — just like a real waiting room — until the doctor joins your screen. Then you talk exactly as you would in the office.

Getting ready for a good visit

- Find a **quiet, well-lit** spot and have your device propped up so your hands are free.
- Keep your **medications** and a written list of questions beside you.
- If they need to see something — a rash, a swollen ankle — remember the **flip camera** button to show it.
- Have a **phone nearby** in case the video drops and the office needs to call you to finish.

STAY SAFE

Make sure it's really your doctor's office

Only join a video visit through a link or app your doctor's office actually gave you, tied to an appointment you booked. No legitimate doctor appears out of the blue by surprise video call asking for payment or your Social Security number. If something feels off, hang up and call the office on the number you know.

FROM BILL

I'm glad to do a practice run before your visit

A doctor's video visit is not the moment to be fiddling with buttons. If you have one coming up, call me beforehand at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll do a calm practice run so that when the day comes, you tap the link and simply talk to your doctor. No charge for the peace of mind.

CHAPTER 28

Saving Your Favorite People — One Tap Away

The more you video call, the more you'll want your handful of regulars right at your fingertips, with no typing or searching. Every device and app lets you do exactly that. A few minutes setting this up — or having a family member do it with you — pays off every single call afterward.

Make sure your people are in Contacts

Your **Contacts** (the phone's address book) is the foundation. When someone is saved there with their phone number and email, their name pops up the instant you start typing it, in every app. To add someone:

- **iPhone:** open the **Contacts** app (or the Phone app's Contacts tab), tap the **+** at the top right, and type their name, number, and email. Tap **Done**.
- **Android:** open the **Contacts** app, tap **Add** (a + or a person-with-plus icon), fill in the details, and save.

> **TIP**
>
> **The easiest way to add someone: let them call you**
>
> When a family member calls or texts you, your phone usually offers to save their number right there — look for "Create New Contact" or "Add to Contacts." One tap and a name, and they're saved for good. Ask your regulars to give you a quick call so you can save each of them this way.

Favorites — your short list

Once your people are in Contacts, most apps let you mark a few as **Favorites** so they sit at the top, ready for one tap:

- **FaceTime / Phone:** open a contact and tap **Add to Favorites**, then choose FaceTime. They'll appear in your Favorites list for instant calling.
- **WhatsApp and Messenger:** the people you talk to most naturally rise to the top of your Chats list, so they're always near at hand. You can also **pin** a chat to keep it right at the top.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

A Favorites list turns calling your daughter into a single tap of her face — no typing, no searching, no chance of dialing the wrong person. It's the difference between "I'll call later when I have patience for it" and just reaching out whenever you think of them.

A photo on each contact helps

Adding a **photo** to each contact — a smiling face instead of grey initials — makes your list warm and easy to read at a glance. A grandchild would likely be delighted to snap and attach photos for all your favorites in five minutes. Little touches like this make the whole phone feel friendlier.

CHAPTER 29

Keeping the Apps Healthy

Video-calling apps, like everything on your device, get small **updates** now and then — free improvements and fixes from the people who make them. You don't need to fuss over this, but a basic understanding keeps everything running smoothly and heads off the odd glitch.

Let updates happen on their own

The simplest approach is to let your device update apps **automatically**, so you never have to think about it:

- **iPhone / iPad:** Settings > Apps > App Store (or Settings > App Store) and turn on **App Updates**. Updates then install quietly, usually overnight while charging.
- **Android:** open the Play Store, tap your profile picture > Settings > Network preferences > Auto-update apps, and choose to update over Wi-Fi.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why an app sometimes looks a little different

After an update, a button may move or an icon may change color. That's not you doing something wrong and it's not a problem — it's just the makers tidying things up. The ideas in this book hold steady even when the exact look shifts a little; that's why we describe *what* to do, not just where every pixel sits today.

Restarting fixes the mysterious

If an app ever behaves oddly — won't open, freezes, acts confused — the oldest and best trick still works: **turn the device off and back on again**. Hold the power button, turn it off, wait ten seconds, turn it on. It clears up a remarkable number of mysteries, and it can't hurt a thing.

TIP

A gentle monthly habit

Once a month or so, just glance that your apps are updating and give the device a restart. That's the whole of "maintenance" for a home video-caller — no more than you'd do dusting the top of the television.

PART 9

Your Cheat-Sheet & When to Call Bill

The one-page reminders to keep by your chair, and an honest word about when a call to me is the right move. You're ready.

CHAPTER 30

The Everyday Cheat-Sheet

Tear this out, fold it, and keep it by the chair where you make your calls. It's everything you need, at a glance.

To make a call

App	Steps
FaceTime (Apple)	Open FaceTime > New FaceTime > type the name > tap the green FaceTime button.
Zoom (join a meeting)	Tap the link they sent you > Open in Zoom > Join with Video > Join with Audio.
WhatsApp	Open WhatsApp > open the person's chat > tap the video-camera icon at the top.
Messenger	Open Messenger > open the person's chat > tap the video-camera icon at the top.

The buttons, everywhere

Button	What it does
Red circle / Leave	Hangs up and ends the call. Always safe.
Microphone icon	Mute (they can't hear you). A line through it = muted. Tap to toggle.
Camera icon	Turns your picture on or off. A line through it = your camera is off.
Flip-camera icon	Switches between your face and what's in front of you — great for "come see this."

The five-second fixes

- **They can't hear me** → check the mute button (microphone with a line through it).
- **I can't hear them** → turn the volume up; check the silent switch isn't on.
- **Black screen / they can't see me** → check the camera button; uncover the lens.
- **Frozen or choppy** → move closer to the Wi-Fi box, or hang up and call again.
- **Everything's weird** → hang up and call back. Fixes most things instantly.

Before every call

- Face a window or lamp so the light is **in front** of you, not behind.

- Prop the device up at about eye level so your hands are free and the picture's steady.
- Find a reasonably quiet spot and speak in your normal voice.

The golden safety rule

STAY SAFE

Never send money because of a call or message

No real grandchild, bank, or "support" person will ever rush you to send money or gift cards in secret. If that happens, hang up and call the person back on a number you already have — or call Bill. Urgency and secrecy are always the warning signs.

CHAPTER 31

When to Call Bill

This book will carry you a long way, and most days you won't need anyone's help at all. But you are never stuck alone — that's simply not how I do things. Here's an honest word about when picking up the phone is the right move, so you never feel you're imposing.

Good reasons to call — none of them silly

- You'd like a **patient practice run** before an important call — a doctor's telehealth visit, a family reunion, a grandchild's birthday. We'll rehearse until it feels easy.
- You've got a **new phone or tablet** and want help getting FaceTime, Zoom, or the others set up and your contacts in place.
- A call keeps **freezing, dropping, or going silent** and the simple fixes haven't cured it — it may be a Wi-Fi matter worth looking at together.
- You got a call or message that **felt wrong** — a request for money, a "support" person, a story that doesn't add up. Always call me *before* you act.
- You just want someone to **sit with you**, in plain English and no rushing, while you get the hang of it. That's the whole job, and I love it.

How to reach me

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 ease with their technology, and helping folks connect with the people they love is my favorite part of the work.

Phone	(330) 200-8042 — call or text. If I can't pick up, leave a message and I'll call you back.
Book a visit online	billshometech.com/book
Where I work	Portage County, Ohio, and the nearby communities.
If you call the website	You may chat with Sophie, my friendly assistant on the site, who can help you book a time to talk.

FROM BILL

My standing offer

If anything in this book — or anything your phone or tablet does — ever puzzles you, pick up the phone. No question is too small and no problem too silly. I'll come out, or talk you through it, as plainly and patiently as it takes. Seeing someone light up when a grandchild's face appears on the screen for the first time never gets old. That's why I do this.

— Bill · Bill's Home Tech · (330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

A few parting words

Here's the truth to carry away from all these pages: **there is no such thing as a dumb question.** The people I help are smart, capable folks who simply weren't handed a manual that spoke plainly. Now you have one.

Don't feel you must learn it all at once — you never will, and you don't need to. Pick one small thing this week: a two-minute practice call with someone kind. Next week, try the flip camera and show them your garden. Before long it's second nature, and the miles between you and the people you love shrink to the size of a screen. **You're going to do just fine.**

— Bill