BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Yahoo & AOL Mail

Your long-time email account, explained in plain English
Sign-in, safety, storage, scams and moving on

Keep your old address safe — and yours

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

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For Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Yahoo and AOL look very much alike, so most steps work on both; where they differ, you'll be told. If a screen doesn't match exactly, look for the same words nearby — the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

Who runs Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail today, the places you can read your mail, and the one page that controls your account's safety. Start here and the rest of the manual will make sense.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is reading this manual — this is for **you**. Maybe you've had the same Yahoo or AOL address for twenty years and it's how your whole family, your bank and your doctor reach you. Maybe you've been locked out and can't remember the password you made back when. Maybe your friends just told you they got a strange email "from you." Or maybe you're thinking about moving to a different email service and don't know where to start. Wherever you are, you've come to the right place.

I'm Bill. With 30+ years of professional experience, I've helped folks feel at home with their technology, and long-held Yahoo and AOL accounts come up again and again. These accounts are precious — they hold years of letters and photos, and they're the key that resets the passwords on everything else. That's exactly why crooks go after them. I wrote this manual the way I'd explain it sitting beside you at the kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, with no fancy words left unexplained.

What this manual covers

- **Signing in** — passwords, the Sign-in Helper, Account Key, two-step verification, and the special "app passwords" that other email apps need.
- **Storage and paid plans** — how much room you have, and honest prices for Yahoo Mail Plus and AOL's paid extras, so you only pay for what you truly want.
- **Spam, blocking and scams** — including the fake "Yahoo support" and "AOL support" phone numbers that trick people every day.
- **Hacked or locked out** — a calm, step-by-step cleanup, and how to get back in.
- **Keeping your account alive** — the inactivity rules that can quietly delete an old mailbox.
- **Moving to another service** — forwarding, bringing your contacts, and telling people.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this manual does for you

By the end, you'll sign in with confidence, keep crooks out of your account, spot a fake support number or a fake Yahoo email at a glance, clean up after a break-in, and know exactly what to do if you ever decide to move. Most of all, you'll feel in charge of your own email again.

The big promise: looking around can't hurt

Here's the most important thing in the whole manual. **Opening menus and reading settings in Yahoo Mail or AOL Mail can't break anything.** Nothing changes until you choose to save. The real dangers in email come from other people — scammers — and a whole part of this manual is about spotting them and shutting them out.

And you're never stuck on your own. If you'd like a hand, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. There's no such thing as a silly question about email.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Yahoo and AOL: Two Old Friends, One Family Tree

Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail are two of the oldest free email services in America. Your address ends in **@yahoo.com** or **@aol.com** (some older AOL members have **@aim.com**, and some former Verizon customers have an AOL-run **@verizon.net** address). Anyone in the world can write to you there, and you can write back.

Why the two look so alike

For years, AOL and Yahoo were owned by the same company, and their email was built by the same people. That's why the screens, the menus and even the help articles look so similar. Most of what you learn here works on both; where they differ, I'll tell you.

What changed in 2026

Yahoo agreed to sell AOL to a software company called **Bending Spoons**, with the sale expected to close on or after January 2, 2026. AOL is now run by its own company, **AOL Media LLC**, with its own Terms of Service and Privacy Policy. AOL told members that their **email address, password and sign-in stay the same**, and that nobody needed to do anything to keep using AOL.

HEADS UP

Expect AOL to keep changing

When a service changes owners, menus, prices and paid plans often change over the following months. If an AOL screen doesn't match this manual exactly, look for the same words nearby. And be extra careful with any email that uses the sale as an excuse to ask you to "confirm" your account or payment — that's a favorite trick of scammers (Chapter 17).

GOOD TO KNOW

Yahoo is still Yahoo

Yahoo Mail itself didn't change hands. It's still run by Yahoo, at **mail.yahoo.com**, with help at **help.yahoo.com**. AOL's help lives at **help.aol.com**.

CHAPTER 3

Where You Read Your Mail

Your mail lives on Yahoo's or AOL's computers, not on your own. That means you can read the very same inbox in several different ways, and they all stay in step. Pick whichever feels easiest.

Where	What it's good for
The website	On a computer, go to **mail.yahoo.com** or **mail.aol.com** and sign in. This is where every setting lives, so it's the best place for the bigger jobs in this manual.
The official app	The free **Yahoo Mail** app or the free **AOL** app on your iPhone, iPad or Android phone (Chapter 13). Best for everyday reading.
Another email app	Apple's Mail app, Outlook, the Gmail app and others can show your Yahoo or AOL mail too. Some of them need a special **app password** (Chapter 8).

TIP

Type the address yourself

Get to your mail by typing **mail.yahoo.com** or **mail.aol.com** into the address bar, or by using a bookmark you made yourself. Don't reach it by searching and clicking an ad — fake sign-in pages and fake support pages buy ads that look real.

Some settings only live on the website

The phone apps are made for reading and writing. Several jobs in this manual — blocking a list of addresses, checking storage, setting up forwarding — are done on the **website, on a computer**. When a step says "on a computer," that's why. If you only have a phone or tablet, you can often open the website in the phone's web browser, but it's fiddlier.

CHAPTER 4

Your Account Security Page — the Control Room

Nearly every safety job in this manual starts in one place: your **Account Security** page. Think of it as the control room for your account. It's where you change your password, turn on two-step verification, make app passwords, and check your recovery phone and email.

Getting there in Yahoo

1. On a computer, type **login.yahoo.com/account/security** into the address bar.
2. Sign in if asked.
3. You'll see sections such as **Ways of signing in** (password, two-step verification) and **External connections** (app passwords).

Getting there in AOL

AOL has a matching **Account Security** page — AOL's help articles call it by the same name. Sign in at **aol.com**, click your name or profile picture, open your account information, and choose **Account Security**. The layout closely follows Yahoo's.

What you'll find	What it's for
Password	Change it here (Chapter 5).
2-step verification	Add a second check when you sign in somewhere new (Chapter 7).
App passwords	Codes for other email apps (Chapter 8).
Recovery phone and email	Your way back in if you forget your password (Chapter 9).
Recent activity	Where and when your account was used — handy if you suspect a break-in (Chapter 18).

STAY SAFE

Only ever reach this page yourself

Real Yahoo pages have **yahoo.com** in the web address, with a lock icon in the address bar; real AOL pages have **aol.com**. If an email or a caller sends you a link to "secure your account," don't use it. Type the address yourself instead.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Five minutes here protects years of mail

A visit to the control room — a strong password, two-step verification on, and a current recovery phone and email — is the single best thing you can do for an old Yahoo or AOL account. Part 2 walks through each one.

PART 2

Signing In

Passwords, the Sign-in Helper, Account Key, two-step verification, the app passwords other email apps need, and the recovery phone and email that get you back in. The heart of keeping an old account safe.

CHAPTER 5

Passwords and the Sign-in Helper

Most sign-in trouble comes down to a password that's forgotten, mistyped, or remembered wrongly by the computer. Here's how to sort out each one.

Forgot your password or your Yahoo ID

Yahoo's tool for this is called the **Sign-in Helper**. It sends a code to the recovery phone or recovery email on your account, then lets you make a new password.

1. On a computer or phone, go to **login.yahoo.com/forgot** (or click **Forgot password?** on the Yahoo sign-in page).
2. Type your recovery phone number or recovery email address — or your Yahoo address if you know it.
3. Choose how to get your code, then type the code Yahoo sends you.
4. Make a new, strong password (Bill's Passwords and Password Managers manual explains how), and write it somewhere safe at home.

AOL works the same way: on the AOL sign-in page, choose **Forgot password?** and follow the steps to get a code at your recovery phone or email.

"Invalid ID or password"

This means the address and password you typed don't match. Before anything else, check:

- **Caps Lock** — if it's on, every letter comes out as a capital.
- **A saved, out-of-date password** — if your browser fills in the password for you, it may be filling in an old one. Type it yourself instead.
- **A different web browser** — if it works in another browser, your account is fine; the problem is the first browser.
- **Someone changed it** — if none of that helps and you're sure of the password, a crook may have changed it. Use the Sign-in Helper right away, then follow Chapter 19.

Locked out for a while

After too many wrong tries, Yahoo may lock the account to protect it. Yahoo says it **unlocks by itself after 12 hours**, or you can get back in straight away with the Sign-in Helper.

The sign-in screen keeps coming back

1. On the sign-in page, click **Not you?**, then sign in again.

2. Still looping? Clear your browser's cookies, quit and reopen the browser, and try again.
3. Still stuck? Try a different browser, or go straight to **mail.yahoo.com**.

HEADS UP

Never let anyone "reset it for you" over the phone

Yahoo and AOL won't call you to reset a password, and you never need to pay anyone to do it. A person on the phone who offers to fix your password, especially for a fee, is a scammer (Chapter 16).

CHAPTER 6

Account Key: Signing In Without a Password

Account Key is a way of signing in with your phone instead of a password. You type your address, Yahoo sends a notification to the Yahoo app on your phone, and you tap to approve. Some long-time Yahoo and AOL users turned it on years ago and still use it.

Account Key is winding down

Yahoo now says Account Key **can't be set up on all Yahoo accounts anymore**. If you already have it, it keeps working, and you can still turn it off. If you don't have it, the modern choice is two-step verification with a push notification (Chapter 7), which works in a very similar way.

Signing in with Account Key

1. Make sure you're signed in to a Yahoo app on your phone — that's where the approval appears.
2. On the sign-in page, type your Yahoo address and click **Next**.
3. On your phone, tap the notification (or open the app and tap the **Account Key** icon).
4. Tap the **Approve** button. You may be asked to type or tap a matching code to confirm.

Turning Account Key off

You might want to turn it off if you're changing phones, or so you can use two-step verification.

1. On a computer, go to your Account Security page (**login.yahoo.com/account/security**).
2. Click **Turn off Account Key**.
3. Click **Turn off**, then **Turn off** again to confirm. You'll sign in with a password from now on, so make sure you know it first.

TIP

Changing phones? Deal with Account Key first

Because Account Key depends on the Yahoo app on your phone, a lost, broken or traded-in phone can leave you stranded. If you use it, either set up the Yahoo app on the new phone before you part with the old one, or switch back to a password and turn on two-step verification instead.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can't use both at once

Yahoo says if you use Account Key, you'll need to turn it off before you can turn on two-step verification. That's normal — they do the same job in slightly different ways.

CHAPTER 7

Two-Step Verification

Two-step verification (Yahoo writes it "2-step verification") adds a second check when someone signs in to your account from a new device or browser. Even if a crook steals your password, they still can't get in without that second step — which only you have.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The single strongest lock you can add

For a long-held account that resets the passwords on everything else, this is the best protection there is. It takes about five minutes, and on your own familiar devices you'll rarely even notice it.

Your choices for the second step

Method	How it works
Push notification	A Yahoo app on your phone asks "Is this you?" and you tap **Yes**. The easiest for most people.
Your phone number	Yahoo texts or calls you with a code to type in.
Authenticator app	An app such as Google Authenticator or Microsoft Authenticator shows a fresh code. Yahoo shows this choice only once your account has at least two recovery methods.
Security key	A small physical key you plug in or tap. Very strong; best for people comfortable with gadgets.

Turning it on in Yahoo

1. On a computer, go to **login.yahoo.com/account/security** and sign in.
2. Under **Ways of signing in**, click **2-step verification**.
3. Choose a method — **Push notification** or **Your phone number** are the simplest.
4. Follow the on-screen prompts to finish.

Don't see the option? Yahoo says you need to have **created a password** first, and Account Key must be off (Chapter 6). AOL offers the same protection on its own Account Security page.

Signing in once it's on

On a new device you'll type your password as usual, then either approve the notification on your phone or type the code you were sent. That's all.

SCAM ALERT

A code is like a house key — never hand it over

Nobody from Yahoo, AOL, your bank or anywhere else needs the code you're sent. Yahoo's own advice is not to reply to any text asking for a verification code. If someone on the phone or in a message asks you to read it to them, it's a crook trying to get into your account. Hang up.

CHAPTER 8

App Passwords for Outlook, Apple Mail and Other Apps

If you read your Yahoo or AOL mail in a different email program — Outlook on a computer, an older copy of Apple Mail, or a printer or scanner that sends email — it may refuse your normal password. That's on purpose. These programs need a special one-time code called an **app password**.

Why app passwords exist

Apps that use Yahoo's own sign-in page (where you type your password on a Yahoo screen) don't need one. Apps that only have a plain "password" box do. An app password is a long, random code that lets just that one app into your mail, without ever giving it your real password.

Making an app password in Yahoo

1. On a computer, go to **login.yahoo.com/account/security** and sign in.
2. Under **External connections**, click **Create app password**.
3. Type a name you'll recognize, like "Outlook on desk computer."
4. Click **Generate password**. A code appears.
5. Type or paste that code into the other app's password box, then click **Done**.

> TIP
> **If the button won't work**
>
> Yahoo says to make app passwords in a web browser you've used to sign in to Yahoo **for several days in a row**, and not in a private or Incognito window. If it still won't let you, use Yahoo's own website or app for now — Yahoo says customer care can't override this.

App passwords stay on until you delete them

This surprises people: **changing your main password does not cancel your app passwords.** They keep working until you delete them. That's handy day to day, but after a break-in it matters a great deal (Chapter 19).

1. Go to your Account Security page.
2. Under **External connections**, click the app passwords.

3. Click **Delete** next to any you don't recognize or no longer use, and confirm.

AOL uses app passwords in the same way; look for the app password option on AOL's Account Security page.

HEADS UP

Never turn on "less secure apps"

If an old program or a helpful website tells you to switch on "use less secure apps," don't. Yahoo advises against it. An app password is the safe way to connect an older program.

CHAPTER 9

Recovery Phone and Email: Your Way Back In

Your **recovery phone** and **recovery email** are how Yahoo and AOL know it's really you when you forget your password or sign in from somewhere new. They're not just a nice extra — for an old account, they're everything.

HEADS UP

Out-of-date recovery info can lock you out for good

Yahoo says plainly that if your recovery info is wrong or you can't reach it, you **may not be able to get back into your account**. An old landline, a cell number you gave up, or a work email from a job you left years ago won't help you. Please check yours today.

What to check

- **A mobile number you'll keep** — your own cell phone, not a landline.
- **A second email address you can still open** — perhaps a Gmail or Outlook address, or a trusted family member's.
- **Nothing you don't recognize** — a crook who got in may have added their own phone or email. Remove anything that isn't yours.

Updating them

1. Go to your Account Security page (Chapter 4).
2. Find your phone numbers and email addresses — Yahoo may show these under your account information.
3. Add your current cell number and a second email you can open. Yahoo will send each a code to confirm.
4. Remove any old or unfamiliar ones.

"First time signing in here?"

When you sign in from a new phone, a new computer or a new place, Yahoo may ask for a code sent to your recovery phone or email, just to be sure it's you. That's the system working. It's one more reason to keep those details current.

TIP

Yahoo will sometimes ask you to update recovery info

From time to time, Yahoo asks you to check your recovery info **after you've signed in** on its own website. That's real. An *email* asking you to click a link and "verify your recovery info" is not — go to the Account Security page yourself instead.

FROM BILL

A good job to do together

Checking recovery info, turning on two-step verification and cleaning out old app passwords is a short, calm session — and it's the work that saves people from the worst lockouts I see. If you'd like a second pair of eyes, I'm happy to help (Chapter 25).

PART 3

Storage, Paid Plans & the Apps

How much room your mailbox has, what happens when it fills up, honest prices for Yahoo Mail Plus and AOL's paid extras, and the free phone apps.

CHAPTER 10

Storage: How Much Room You Have

For years, Yahoo advertised a huge free mailbox, and many people never deleted a thing. That has changed, and it's worth knowing where you stand.

Yahoo's free storage today

In the United States, Yahoo now says every free account includes **20 GB** of mail storage. That's plenty for everyday letters, but a mailbox full of years of photos and attachments can come close to it. Yahoo says the amounts can differ outside the U.S., so check your own account if you live elsewhere.

GOOD TO KNOW

What a gigabyte means for email

A **GB** (gigabyte) is a measure of space. Plain-text emails are tiny; photos, videos and big attachments are what fill a mailbox. Someone who mostly writes and reads letters may never come near 20 GB. Someone who's kept every family photo ever sent might.

What happens when the mailbox is full

Yahoo is clear about this, and it's serious:

- You **can't send or receive** new email until you clear space.
- Email sent to you while you're full is **not stored and can't be recovered**.
- Yahoo says it emails you first, and gives a grace period after you go over the limit.

HEADS UP

Don't ignore a "storage full" notice

If you're over the limit, letters from your doctor, bank or family may simply never arrive. Clear space or choose a plan before the grace period ends. And make sure the notice is real: check your storage on Yahoo's own website rather than clicking a link in the email (see Chapter 17).

Freeing up space

1. On a computer, sign in at **mail.yahoo.com**.

2. Look at your storage — Yahoo shows how much you're using in your mail or account settings.
3. Find the biggest culprits: search for old emails with large attachments, especially photos and videos you've already saved elsewhere.
4. Delete them, then empty the **Trash** and **Spam** folders so the space is really freed.

TIP

Save the photos first

Before deleting old emails with family pictures, save the pictures you want to keep to your computer or your photo library. Then the email can go. Bill's Email manual shows how to save an attachment.

And AOL?

AOL hasn't published a storage figure we could confirm for November 2026. If AOL ever warns you that your mailbox is full, the same tidy-up steps work: delete big old emails, then empty Trash and Spam.

CHAPTER 11

Yahoo Mail Plus and Storage Plans: Honest Prices

Yahoo sells a few paid options. None of them are required — free Yahoo Mail works fine for most people. Here's what each one is, so you can decide calmly.

Option	What you get
Free Yahoo Mail	20 GB of storage, with ads. $0.
100 GB storage plan	More room, nothing else. Listed at **$1.99 a month**.
1 TB storage plan	A great deal more room (1 TB is 1,000 GB). Listed at **$9.99 a month**.
Yahoo Mail Plus	200 GB of storage, **no ads**, extra features, and 24/7 support for account questions. Listed at **$4.99 a month**.
Mail Plus (Mobile Only)	Ad-free in the phone app only. Listed at **$1.99 a month**.

Prices are the U.S. prices listed for the Yahoo Mail app in Apple's App Store in November 2026; Yahoo can change them, and the price you see when you sign up is the one that counts. Yahoo says you can combine Mail Plus with a storage plan for up to **1.2 TB** in all.

What Yahoo Mail Plus adds

- **An ad-free inbox.**
- **200 GB** of storage.
- **24/7 support** for general account questions — Yahoo lists billing, account recovery and updating account information.
- **Your mailbox stays active** even if you don't open it for a long time (Chapter 21).
- **Automatic forwarding** to another address — on Yahoo, this is a Mail Plus feature (Chapter 23).

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Who Mail Plus is genuinely worth it for

If you're moving to a new email service but want your Yahoo mail forwarded for a year, if you rarely open your Yahoo mailbox but can't afford to lose it, or if the ads truly bother you, Mail Plus can be worth the money. If you just need more room, a storage plan alone is cheaper.

Paying, and stopping

Yahoo accepts Mastercard, Visa, Discover, American Express and PayPal — not cash, checks, money orders, or prepaid and gift cards. Plans renew automatically until you cancel.

Where you signed up	Where to manage it
Bought on a computer	Go to **login.yahoo.com/myaccount/subscriptions** to manage or cancel.
Bought on an iPhone or iPad	Open the **Settings** app, tap your name at the top, then **Subscriptions**.
Bought on an Android phone	Open the **Play Store** app, tap your profile picture, then **Payments & subscriptions** > **Subscriptions**.

SCAM ALERT

Yahoo never takes gift cards

Yahoo says it doesn't accept gift cards or prepaid cards at all. Anyone who asks you to pay for "Yahoo support," "account recovery" or "storage" with gift cards is a scammer, every time.

CHAPTER 12

AOL's Paid Extras

AOL Mail is free. AOL also sells several paid extras, and it's easy to lose track of what you signed up for years ago. So let's be clear about what's what.

What AOL sells	What it does
AOL Mail Plus (in the AOL app)	Removes paid ads in the AOL phone app. Listed in Apple's App Store at **$1.99 a month** or **$19.99 a year**, with a free trial.
Ad-Free AOL Mail (website)	Removes paid ads when you use AOL Mail on a computer's web browser. AOL says you may still see promotions for AOL's own products.
AOL plans (older bills may say AOL Advantage)	Bundles of live tech support, security software and identity protection, at various monthly prices.

The App Store also lists other AOL bundles ("AOL Plus" and an "AOL Security Bundle") at a range of weekly and yearly prices. Because AOL changed owners in 2026, names and prices are moving around; check the price on the screen before you agree to anything.

HEADS UP

Check what you're already paying for

If you've had AOL since the dial-up days, it's worth checking whether you're still paying for something — a support or security plan you may have forgotten about. Look at your credit card or bank statement for an AOL charge. If you see one, sign in at aol.com and look at your account's billing or plans page to see what it's for. You do **not** need to pay anything to keep a free AOL email address.

Are AOL's support plans worth it?

Honestly, for most people, no. Free AOL Mail does everything most folks need, and the security tools in the bundles often duplicate what your computer or phone already includes. If a plan's live support truly gives you peace of mind, that's a fair reason to keep it. Just make the choice on purpose, knowing the price.

SCAM ALERT

"Your AOL subscription is renewing" emails

A very common scam email claims your AOL or Yahoo "subscription" is about to renew for hundreds of dollars and gives a phone number to cancel. It's fake. The real price of these plans is listed in your own account. Never call the number in the email — Chapter 16 explains why.

CHAPTER 13

The Apps on Your Phone

Both services have a free official app for iPhone, iPad and Android. They're the easiest way to read mail on the go, and they're the safest place to sign in on a phone.

App	In plain terms
Yahoo Mail	Made by Yahoo. Free, with optional in-app purchases. On iPhone and iPad it needs iOS 17 or later. Can also show your Gmail, Outlook or AOL mail in one place.
AOL ("AOL Mail, News, Weather")	Made by AOL Media LLC. Free, with optional in-app purchases. Mail, news and weather together. On iPhone and iPad it needs iOS 17 or later.

Getting the app

1. On your phone, open the **App Store** (iPhone) or the **Play Store** (Android).
2. Search for **Yahoo Mail** or **AOL**. Check that the maker is listed as **Yahoo** or **AOL Media LLC**.
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**. The app itself is free.
4. Open it and sign in with your email address and password.

Handy things the apps do

- **Swipe to delete or file** a message without opening it.
- **Face ID or fingerprint** — the AOL app lets you lock the app with Face ID or Touch ID.
- **Approve sign-ins** — the Yahoo app is where two-step push notifications and Account Key approvals appear (Chapters 6 and 7).
- **Bulk clean-up** — the Yahoo Mail app highlights one-tap unsubscribe and "delete by sender" to help clear out a crowded inbox.

GOOD TO KNOW

AI summaries and "Spaces" in Yahoo Mail

Newer versions of the Yahoo Mail app add AI summaries of long emails and "Spaces" that group travel, family and finance emails together. They're optional helpers — you can ignore them and use your inbox exactly as before.

TIP

In-app offers are optional

Both apps show offers for paid plans. Tapping **X** or **Not now** is always fine. Nothing in this manual requires paying, except Yahoo's automatic forwarding.

PART 4

Spam, Blocking & Scams

Junk mail, blocking a sender, the fake "Yahoo support" and "AOL support" phone numbers, and emails that pretend to be from Yahoo or AOL. The chapters most worth reading twice.

CHAPTER 14

Spam and the Spam Folder

Spam is junk email — ads you never asked for, get-rich offers, and worse. Yahoo and AOL catch most of it automatically and put it in a folder called **Spam**, out of your way.

When junk gets into your inbox

1. Tick the box next to the message (on a phone, press and hold it).
2. Choose **Spam** (sometimes shown as **Mark as spam** or a shield icon).
3. The message moves to the Spam folder, and the filter learns from it.

When a good email lands in Spam

Now and then a real letter — from a grandchild, or a pharmacy reminder — ends up in Spam by mistake. Open the **Spam** folder, open the message, and choose **Not spam**. It moves back to your inbox, and the filter learns that sender is fine. Adding the person to your contacts helps, too.

> TIP
> **Peek in the Spam folder once a week**
> A quick glance once a week catches the occasional good email that got swept up. You don't need to open anything — just read the sender names and subjects.

Newsletters you signed up for

Mail from a store or charity you really did sign up with isn't spam — it's a subscription. The kinder way to stop it is the **Unsubscribe** link the real company provides, or the one-tap unsubscribe in the Yahoo Mail app. That tells the company to stop, rather than just hiding the mail.

> HEADS UP
> **Don't unsubscribe from obvious junk**
> For mail from a company you've never heard of, don't click its "unsubscribe" link and don't reply. That can confirm to a spammer that your address is real. Just mark it as spam. The Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual calls these "unsubscribe traps."

CHAPTER 15

Blocking a Sender

If one particular address keeps bothering you — an ex-business, a pushy seller, someone you'd rather not hear from — you can **block** it. Yahoo says you can block up to **1,000** addresses, and the sender isn't told.

Blocking an address in Yahoo Mail (on a computer)

1. Sign in at **mail.yahoo.com**.
2. Click the **Settings** icon (a little gear), then **More Settings**.
3. Click **Security and Privacy**.
4. Under **Blocked addresses**, click **Add**.
5. Type the email address you want to block, then click **Save**.

Unblocking

Go back to **Settings** > **More Settings** > **Security and Privacy**, point at the address in the blocked list, and click the **delete** (trash can) icon next to it.

AOL Mail has the same idea in its settings: look for a blocked senders or spam settings section and add the address there.

GOOD TO KNOW

Blocking works best on real people

Blocking is great for a person or company that writes from the same address every time. Scammers and spammers usually change addresses constantly, so blocking them is like swatting flies. For them, **Spam** is the better button — it teaches the filter.

HEADS UP

Check your block list after a break-in

Crooks who get into an account sometimes block your bank or your family, so you won't see warnings. If your account was ever hacked, look through your blocked addresses and remove any you didn't add (Chapter 19).

CHAPTER 16

The Fake "Yahoo Support" and "AOL Support" Phone Number

This is the scam I most want every Yahoo and AOL user to know about, because it catches careful, sensible people. It usually starts with a real problem — you can't sign in — and an honest search for help.

How it works

1. You search the web for "Yahoo customer service number" or "AOL mail help phone."
2. The top results — often ads — show a phone number that looks official, sometimes with the Yahoo or AOL logo.
3. You call. A friendly person answers "Yahoo support" or "AOL support."
4. They say your account has been hacked, or your computer is infected, and ask to connect to your computer to "fix" it.
5. Then comes the bill: hundreds of dollars for a "security plan," often by gift card, wire, or a payment app — or they quietly look into your bank account while they're connected.

SCAM ALERT

Never get a support number from a web search

Yahoo's own advice is: **don't use search engines to find Yahoo contact info**, because they can lead to malicious websites and support scams. Go straight to Yahoo's help site instead. The same goes for AOL. Fake support numbers also show up in pop-ups, in fake "your subscription is renewing" emails, and even in social media posts.

How real Yahoo and AOL help works

Service	The safe way to get help
Yahoo	Go to **help.yahoo.com**, choose the product, and click **Contact Us** where it's offered. Help may come by email, chat or help articles. Yahoo also answers on Facebook (Yahoo Customer Care) and X (@yahoocare). Yahoo Mail Plus subscribers get 24/7 account support.
AOL	Go to **help.aol.com**. AOL does sell paid live-support plans, which is exactly why fake AOL numbers are so believable. If you want AOL's phone support, find the number on help.aol.com itself or in your own AOL account — never from a search result or an email.

The tell-tale signs of a fake

- They want to **connect to your computer** or have you install a program.
- They ask for your **password** or the **code** you were just texted.
- They want payment by **gift card**, wire, cryptocurrency or a payment app. (Yahoo doesn't accept gift cards at all.)
- They say you'll **lose your account today** unless you act now.
- They charge a fee just to **reset a password** — which you can always do yourself, free, with the Sign-in Helper (Chapter 5).

If you already called one

1. **Hang up** and, if they connected to your computer, turn the computer off.
2. From a different, safe device, change your Yahoo or AOL password and follow Chapter 19.
3. If you gave a card or bank number, call your bank using the number on the back of your card.
4. If they were in your computer, have it checked before you use it for banking again.
5. Report it to the FTC at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

FROM BILL

No embarrassment — just call

These crooks are professionals, and they fool smart people every single day. If you've called one, the fastest recovery comes from acting quickly, not from feeling bad. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we'll lock things down together. Bill's Spotting and Avoiding Scams manual goes deeper.

CHAPTER 17

Emails Pretending to Be Yahoo or AOL

Crooks send emails dressed up as Yahoo or AOL — "Your mailbox is full," "Your account will be closed," "Unusual sign-in detected." The goal is to get you to click a link and type your password into a fake page. This trick is called **phishing**.

What real Yahoo emails look like

- **The Yahoo icon.** In Yahoo Mail on the web, real emails from Yahoo show a Yahoo icon next to the sender's name. Yahoo says that if you don't see it, the email isn't from Yahoo. (Other email apps may not show the icon, so check the sender's actual address there.)
- **No password requests.** Yahoo says it never asks for passwords or credit card numbers in emails.
- **Change notices.** If something in your account changes, Yahoo sends a notice titled "Your Yahoo account information has changed." If you didn't make the change, go to your Account Security page yourself — don't click the email.

Red flags in a fake

Red flag	What it looks like
A look-alike address	Yahoo warns of addresses with a missing or swapped letter, a zero instead of an O, or a free email address that a real company wouldn't use.
Panic and deadlines	"Verify within 24 hours or lose your mail."
A link that goes somewhere else	On a computer, rest the pointer over a link without clicking. The real destination shows at the bottom of the window. If it doesn't end in yahoo.com or aol.com, it's fake.
A phone number to call	Real account notices don't ask you to phone a number to keep your mail.

STAY SAFE

The one habit that beats every phishing email

Never sign in from a link in an email. If an email worries you, close it, type **mail.yahoo.com** or **mail.aol.com** yourself, and look. If there's truly a problem, you'll see it there.

If you clicked and typed your password

1. Go to your Account Security page yourself and **change your password** straight away.
2. Turn on two-step verification if it isn't on (Chapter 7).

3. Follow the cleanup checklist in Chapter 19.
4. If you used the same password anywhere else, change it there too.

> **TIP**
>
> **Mark it, then delete it**
>
> Mark a fake Yahoo or AOL email as **Spam** so the filter learns, then delete it. There's no need to reply or to forward it to anyone.

PART 5

Hacked, Locked Out & Keeping It Alive

How to tell if someone got into your account, a calm cleanup checklist, getting back in when you're locked out, and the inactivity rules that can quietly delete an old mailbox.

CHAPTER 18

Signs Your Account Was Hacked

Old Yahoo and AOL addresses are favorite targets — sometimes because the same password was used somewhere else that later leaked. Here are the signs Yahoo itself lists — any one of them is worth acting on.

Sign	What it looks like
You stop getting email	Your inbox goes quiet, or certain people's mail never arrives.
Friends get spam "from you"	Contacts tell you they got strange links or a plea for money from your address.
Sign-ins from unexpected places	Your account's recent activity shows sign-ins from towns or countries you've never been to.
Settings you didn't change	A new signature, a different sending name, filters, forwarding, or an automatic reply you never set up.

Checking recent activity

Your Account Security page shows recent sign-in activity — where and on what kind of device your account was used. Look for anything that isn't you. A sign-in from your own phone in a nearby town can look odd but be perfectly normal, since locations are only approximate.

HEADS UP

The quiet break-in

The most dangerous hacks are the quiet ones. A crook may leave everything looking normal but add a **forwarding address** or a **filter** so copies of your bank and password-reset emails go to them. That's why the cleanup in the next chapter checks settings, not just the password.

SCAM ALERT

"Grandma, I'm stuck — can you send money?"

If a crook has your account, they may email your contacts pretending to be you, stranded and in need of money or gift cards. If friends mention a message like that, tell them it's not you, and start the cleanup in Chapter 19 right away.

CHAPTER 19

Hacked-Account Cleanup, Step by Step

If you think someone got in, don't panic — work down this list in order. Do it on a computer you trust if you can. It usually takes under an hour.

Lock the door

1. **Change your password** on your Account Security page. Make it long and brand new — not one you've used anywhere else.
2. **Delete app passwords you don't recognize** (Chapter 8). Remember: changing the password doesn't cancel them.
3. **Check your recovery phone and email.** Remove any you don't recognize and make sure yours are current (Chapter 9).
4. **Turn on two-step verification** (Chapter 7).

Undo what the crook changed

Yahoo lists these mail settings as the ones hackers most often change. Check each in Settings > More Settings:

Setting	What to check
Auto-forwarding address	Make sure your mail isn't being forwarded to an address you don't know.
Filters	Delete any filter you didn't make — especially ones that send mail to Trash or another folder.
Reply-to address	Make sure replies to you come back to *your* inbox.
Sending name and signature	Put back your own name and signature.
Vacation response	Turn off any automatic reply you didn't set up.
Blocked addresses	Remove any you didn't add, like your bank or family.
Send-only and default sending address	Make sure the "From" address is yours.

Then tidy up the rest

- **Run a security scan** on your computer — Yahoo recommends up-to-date antivirus software.
- **Change the same password elsewhere.** If you used it on any other site, change it there too, starting with your bank.

- **Tell your contacts** with a short, calm email: "My email was broken into. If you got a strange message from me, please delete it — and never send money based on an email."
- **Check your recovery email's security too.** Yahoo points out that if your recovery email is with another provider, it needs protecting as well.
- **Call your bank** if any money or card details may have been exposed.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What the cleanup does for you

Done in this order, the cleanup shuts the crook out, removes the hidden back doors they leave behind, and stops them using your name to fool your friends. Afterward, your account is safer than it was before the break-in.

TIP

Write down what you found

Jot down anything odd you found — an unknown forwarding address, a strange filter, a sign-in from far away. It helps if you need to contact Yahoo or AOL, or your bank.

CHAPTER 20

Locked Out: Getting Back In

Being locked out of an account you've had for decades is frightening. Take a breath. Most people get back in with the steps below.

Start with the Sign-in Helper

1. Go to **login.yahoo.com/forgot** (for AOL, choose **Forgot password?** on the AOL sign-in page).
2. Enter your recovery phone number or recovery email — or your address if you remember it.
3. Get the code, type it in, and make a new password.
4. Once you're in, do the checks in Chapter 19 in case someone else changed your password.

If it says your account is locked

Yahoo may lock an account for a while after too many wrong tries; it unlocks by itself after 12 hours, or you can use the Sign-in Helper right away. Repeated locks can mean Yahoo sees a risk — for example, sign-ins from far-apart places in a short time. Once you're back in, secure the account and update your recovery info.

If your recovery phone and email are out of date

This is the hard case. Yahoo says that if you can't use the Sign-in Helper because your recovery info is wrong or out of reach, **you may not be able to get back into the account**. Things that can still help:

- **Check whether a device is still signed in.** An old tablet or phone may still be signed in to the app. If so, use it to update your recovery info and password straight away.
- **Contact Yahoo through help.yahoo.com.** Choose the product and look for **Contact Us**. Yahoo Mail Plus subscribers get 24/7 support that includes account recovery.
- **Start fresh if you must.** If nothing works, you can make a new account — and this time keep its recovery info current from day one. Chapter 24 helps you tell people about a new address.

SCAM ALERT

Beware "account recovery experts"

Being locked out makes people desperate, and crooks know it. Websites, social media accounts and callers who promise to "recover any Yahoo or AOL account" for a fee are scams. Only Yahoo and AOL can restore your account, and you should only reach them through help.yahoo.com or help.aol.com.

CHAPTER 21

Use It or Lose It: Inactivity and Deletion

Many people keep an old Yahoo address "just in case" and rarely open it. That's risky: Yahoo deletes the contents of mailboxes that aren't used. Here are Yahoo's rules as it states them in November 2026.

What happens	Yahoo's rule
12 months without opening the mailbox	The mailbox becomes **inactive**. It stops receiving new email, and Yahoo **permanently deletes** all emails, folders, contacts and mailbox settings. They can't be restored.
90 days before	Yahoo says it sends a warning to your Yahoo mailbox and to your alternate email address, if you've added one.
24 months without signing in	The whole Yahoo **account** is scheduled for deletion. Once deleted, it can't be recovered and you can no longer use that email address.

HEADS UP

Signing in isn't enough — open the mailbox

Yahoo is specific: signing in to your Yahoo account doesn't count. You have to **open your mailbox itself** at least once every 12 months. Checking Yahoo News or Fantasy Sports while signed in won't keep your mail safe.

How to keep it alive

- **Open the mailbox regularly** — at least once a year; once a month is a comfortable habit.
- **Add an alternate email** so the 90-day warning reaches you somewhere you look.
- **Or subscribe to Yahoo Mail Plus** — Yahoo says it won't delete your mailbox for inactivity while the subscription is active (Chapter 11).

If your mailbox already went inactive

If the account itself is still active, signing in to the mailbox again turns it back on — but Yahoo says this **does not** bring back the deleted emails, folders, contacts or settings.

And AOL?

We couldn't confirm AOL's current rules for unused accounts for November 2026, and AOL's terms changed with its 2026 sale. The safe habit is the same: open your AOL mailbox regularly, and keep your recovery info current.

TIP

Put it on the calendar

If you keep an old address only for a few accounts, set a repeating reminder — say, on your birthday — to open that mailbox. It takes one minute and protects years of mail.

GOOD TO KNOW

Thinking about family, too

If you help a parent or relative with their email, this rule matters. An account that nobody opens after an illness or a move can quietly lose its mail. It's worth a gentle family conversation about who will open it, and how.

PART 6

Moving to Another Service

An honest look at whether to move, then the practical steps: forwarding, bringing your contacts and old mail, telling people, and keeping the old address safe while everyone catches up.

CHAPTER 22

Should You Move? An Honest Look

Some people are perfectly happy with Yahoo or AOL and should stay. Others have reasons to move. There's no wrong answer — only what suits you.

Choice	Why
Good reasons to stay	Everyone already knows your address. It works. You've turned on two-step verification and your recovery info is current. Moving is real work.
Good reasons to move	You keep getting locked out. You can't fix your recovery info. Your mailbox is full and you'd rather not pay. You want your email in the same place as your phone's account (Gmail for Android, iCloud for iPhone). AOL's change of owner makes you uneasy.

You don't have to close the old account

This is the most freeing thing to know. Moving doesn't mean shutting the door. You can keep the old address open — checked now and then — for a year or more while friends, family and companies catch up. Some keep it forever for a handful of old accounts. That's fine, as long as you keep it secure and open the mailbox often enough to keep it active (Chapter 21).

Where people usually move

- **Gmail** — free, 15 GB shared with Google Photos and Drive. Bill's Gmail manual covers it.
- **Outlook.com** — Microsoft's free email. Bill's Outlook manual covers it.
- **iCloud Mail** — free with an Apple Account, handy if your family uses iPhones.

HEADS UP

Your internet company's email isn't a safe home

An address from your cable or phone company can disappear if you change providers or the company stops offering email. A free address that isn't tied to your internet bill is the safer long-term choice.

FROM BILL

Talk it through before you start

If you're torn, call me. I'll give you an honest opinion with no agenda — and if staying put is the right answer for you, I'll say so and help you make the old account safe instead.

CHAPTER 23

Moving Day: Forwarding, Contacts and Old Mail

Moving email has three parts: getting **new** mail to your new address, bringing your **address book**, and deciding what to do with **old** messages. Take them one at a time.

1. New mail: forwarding, or one app for both

Forwarding sends a copy of every new email from your old address to your new one. On Yahoo, Yahoo says automatic forwarding is a **Yahoo Mail Plus** feature (Chapter 11), and it isn't offered in every country. If you have Mail Plus:

1. On a computer, sign in at **mail.yahoo.com**.
2. Click **Settings**, then **More Settings**, then **Mailboxes**.
3. Click your main mailbox.
4. Under **Forwarding**, type your new address and click **Verify**.
5. Open your new mailbox, find Yahoo's message, and follow its instructions to confirm.

The free alternative: add your old Yahoo or AOL account to the email app you use for your new address — the iPhone Mail app, the Gmail app, Outlook and others can all show more than one account. You'll see both inboxes in one place without paying for forwarding. (Bill's Gmail manual explains that Gmail on a computer is retiring its older way of collecting mail from other accounts, so on a computer, forwarding is Google's suggested route.)

2. Your contacts

Your address book is the most valuable thing to bring. Both Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail keep contacts you can **export** — save as a file — on a computer, and Gmail, Outlook and iCloud can **import** that file.

1. On a computer, sign in to your old mail and open **Contacts**.
2. Look for an **Export** choice (it may be under a "more" or three-dots menu). Save the file to your computer.
3. Sign in to your new email on the same computer, open its contacts, and choose **Import**. Pick the file you saved.
4. Check that the names came across, then you can delete the file.

TIP

Contacts on your phone may already be safe

If your phone's address book is synced with your Apple Account or Google Account, those contacts are already stored there, not in Yahoo or AOL. Check your phone's Contacts settings before you export — you may only need to move a few.

3. Old messages

You don't have to move every old email. Some choices, simplest first:

- **Leave them where they are.** Keep the old account open and active, and search it when you need something.
- **Forward the few that matter** — tax letters, warranties, family notes — to your new address one by one.
- **Move whole folders with a computer email program.** With both accounts added to a program like Apple Mail or Outlook on a computer, you can drag a folder from one account to the other. It works well but can take hours for a big mailbox — a good job for a helper.

HEADS UP

Download first, delete later

Don't delete your old account, or empty its folders, until you've checked that everything you care about arrived safely in the new one. Remember that photos inside old emails are attachments — save the ones you want.

CHAPTER 24

Telling People and Keeping the Old Address Safe

A new address only works once people use it. Here's how to spread the word without missing anyone important — and keep the old address from becoming a weak spot.

Make a list of who needs to know

Group	Examples
Money	Bank, credit cards, pension, investment accounts, Social Security online account.
Health	Doctors' patient portals, pharmacy, Medicare and supplement plans.
Home	Utilities, phone and internet company, insurance, property tax.
Everyday	Amazon and other stores, streaming services, church, clubs, newsletters you like.
People	Family, friends, neighbors.

TIP

Let the old mailbox build the list for you

For a month, every time a real email arrives at the old address, update that company or person to your new address and tick it off. After a few weeks, you'll have caught nearly everyone.

Tell friends and family

Send one short email from your **old** address so people know it's really you. Put everyone in **BCC** (Bill's Email manual explains BCC) so you don't share their addresses with each other. Something like: "I have a new email address: ____. Please save it and use it from now on. I'll still check this old one for a while."

Updating your accounts

1. Sign in to each account on its own website or app — not from a link in an email.
2. Find the profile, settings or contact information section.
3. Change the email address to your new one. Many will send a code to the new address to confirm.

4. Tick it off your list.

Keep the old address secure

- **Leave two-step verification on** and keep recovery info current.
- **Open the mailbox at least once a year** so Yahoo doesn't delete it (Chapter 21).
- **Turn on a vacation response**, if you like, that says "I've moved — please write to me at ____." Yahoo has a vacation response setting in its mail settings.
- **Don't let it lapse while accounts still use it.** If a bank still sends password resets to the old address and it gets deleted, that's a lockout waiting to happen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A calm move, not a scramble

Moving this way — forward or check both, bring contacts, update accounts as mail arrives, and keep the old address safe — means nothing important gets lost and nobody gets confused. It can take a few weeks, and there's no need to rush.

SCAM ALERT

Scammers love a change of address

A message saying "we noticed you changed your email — click to confirm your bank details" is a phishing trick. When you update an account, do it by signing in yourself, and ignore unexpected "confirm your change" emails that ask for passwords or card numbers.

PART 7

Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, how to reach me, and a one-page summary of the whole manual.

CHAPTER 25

When to Call Bill

I've written this manual so you can handle nearly all of Yahoo Mail and AOL Mail yourself. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time, worry or money. Here's my straight advice.

Times it's well worth a call

- **You called a "support number" or let someone into your computer** — call me right away. The sooner we act, the less harm they can do.
- **You think your account was hacked** — we'll go through the Chapter 19 cleanup together, including the hidden settings crooks leave behind.
- **You're locked out** and the Sign-in Helper isn't working.
- **Setting up the safety net** — two-step verification, recovery phone and email, and clearing out old app passwords, all in one sitting.
- **An app password for Outlook or another program** that just won't connect.
- **Checking what you pay AOL or Yahoo for** and canceling what you don't need.
- **Moving to a new email service** — contacts, old folders, and a list of accounts to update.
- **You'd simply rather have someone patient show you.** Always a good enough reason.

What working with me is like

I help folks here in Portage County, Ohio, in their homes, and anywhere by remote session. I work at your pace, explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth your money. That's been my way through 30+ years of professional experience.

How	Details
Price	$49 remote · $99 in your home
Call or text	(330) 200-8042
Book online	billshometech.com/book
When I can't pick up	My AI receptionist, Sophie, can answer the phone, answer common questions and take a booking for you.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This manual is free to read and share; the help is how I make my living. And unlike the fake support lines, I'll never ask for your password or a gift card.

Thank you for letting me help you feel at home in your email. Take your time, explore without fear, and remember I'm only a phone call away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 26

Your Yahoo & AOL Mail Cheat-Sheet

The whole manual, boiled down. Keep it handy.

The addresses that matter

For	Go to
Read Yahoo Mail	**mail.yahoo.com**
Read AOL Mail	**mail.aol.com**
Yahoo Account Security	**login.yahoo.com/account/security**
Forgot Yahoo password	**login.yahoo.com/forgot** (the Sign-in Helper)
Yahoo subscriptions	**login.yahoo.com/myaccount/subscriptions**
Real help	**help.yahoo.com** and **help.aol.com** — typed in yourself

Your safety checklist

1. Two-step verification on (Account Security > Ways of signing in).
2. Recovery phone and recovery email current — and nothing you don't recognize.
3. Unused app passwords deleted (Account Security > External connections).
4. No forwarding address, filter or reply-to you didn't set.
5. Open the mailbox at least once every 12 months.
6. Never call a support number from a search, a pop-up or an email.
7. Never give a code or password to anyone who contacts you.

Plans at a glance (U.S., November 2026)

- Yahoo: 20 GB free. 100 GB $1.99/month; 1 TB $9.99/month; Mail Plus $4.99/month (200 GB, no ads, forwarding, keeps mailbox active).
- AOL: Mail is free. AOL Mail Plus in the app $1.99/month or $19.99/year. Support and security plans are optional.
- Yahoo doesn't accept gift cards, and no real support line asks for one. Anyone who does is a scammer.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
My email address	_____
Recovery phone on file	_____
Recovery email on file	_____
Apps that use an app password	_____
What I pay Yahoo or AOL each month	_____

HEADS UP

Keep that list private

Keep passwords themselves somewhere safe at home, never in an email to yourself. Bill's Passwords and Password Managers manual shows safe ways to store them.

When something's wrong, in order

1. Can't sign in: check Caps Lock, type the password yourself, then use the Sign-in Helper.
2. Friends got strange email from you: change your password now, then the Chapter 19 checklist.
3. "Storage full": check on mail.yahoo.com, delete big old emails, empty Trash and Spam.
4. Scary email or call about your account: don't click, don't call back — check on the real website.
5. Still stuck: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You can now sign in with confidence, lock your account so it stays yours, spot a fake support number or a fake Yahoo email at a glance, clean up after a break-in, keep an old mailbox alive, and move to a new service calmly if you ever choose to. That's everything you need to keep your email safe for years to come.