BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 12

YouTube

Watching, searching, and following what you love — explained in plain English, and how to stay safe

A plain-English guide for every YouTube viewer

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 YouTube manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it nearby and reach for whatever you need. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. YouTube tidies up its screens from time to time, so if a button sits in a slightly different spot on yours, don't worry — I'll always tell you what to look *for*, and the idea stays the same.

Part 1 — Getting Started with YouTube

1 A Note from Bill
2 What YouTube Actually Is
3 Three Ways In: Phone, Computer & TV
4 Free with Ads, or Premium? A Fair Comparison
5 Signing In with a Google Account
6 Getting Comfortable: Taps, Scrolls & Nothing to Fear

Part 2 — Watching a Video

7 Starting a Video & Meeting the Player
8 Play, Pause, Rewind & the Timeline
9 Captions (CC): Reading the Words on Screen
10 Full Screen & Turning Your Phone
11 Playback Speed: Slow It Down or Speed It Up
12 Picture Quality & Saving Your Data
13 Volume, Muting & Watching Quietly

Part 3 — Finding What You Want to Watch

14 Searching Well: Getting to the Right Video
15 The Home Screen & How Suggestions Work
16 Shorts: The Very Short Videos
17 Browsing by Topic, Trending & Categories
18 Autoplay: The Never-Ending Stream
19 Tidying Up What YouTube Suggests

Part 4 — Following What You Love

20 Subscribing to Channels
21 Your Subscriptions Feed
22 The Bell: Choosing Your Notifications
23 Likes (and the Dislike Button)
24 Playlists: Your Own Collections
25 Watch Later: Saving Something for Tonight
26 Your History — and How to Clear It

Part 5 — Joining In (Only If You'd Like To)

27 You Can Just Watch — Joining In Is Optional
28 Leaving a Comment, Safely
29 Comment Manners & Protecting Your Privacy
30 You Have a Channel Too (Even If It's Empty)

Part 6 — YouTube on the Big TV

31 The YouTube App on a Smart TV
32 Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV & Streaming Sticks
33 Casting: Sending a Video from Phone to TV
34 Linking Your Phone to the TV with a Code
35 Using Your Phone as the TV Remote

Part 7 — Watching Safely

36 The Lay of the Land: Where Trouble Hides
37 Clickbait & Misleading Thumbnails
38 Scam Links in Descriptions & Comments
39 Fake Giveaways & 'You've Won!'
40 Impersonation Channels & Fake Verification
41 Ads That Lead to Scams
42 Deepfakes & 'Too Good to Be True'
43 Protecting Kids & Grandkids: YouTube Kids

Part 8 — Handy Extras & When to Call Bill

44 Handy Extras: Sharing, Mini-Player & Saving
45 YouTube Music & YouTube Kids, Briefly
46 Making YouTube Easier to See & Hear
47 Quick Fixes: When Something Won't Work
48 Your YouTube Cheat-Sheet
49 A Plain-English Glossary of YouTube Words
50 When to Call Bill

PART 1

Getting Started with YouTube

What YouTube is, the two ways to use it, free versus Premium, signing in, and the handful of finger-moves that run everything. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe your grandchildren are always saying "just look it up on YouTube" and you've never felt sure where to start. Maybe you've watched a few videos and wondered what all the other buttons do. Maybe you simply want to follow a favorite singer, learn to fix a leaky faucet, or watch old television shows from your younger days. Wherever you're starting from, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

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

Why YouTube is worth your time

YouTube is the largest collection of videos the world has ever had, and nearly all of it is **free to watch**. Picture a television with millions of channels — except you choose exactly what comes on, and it's ready the moment you want it. Music from every era. How-to videos for anything you can imagine — cooking, gardening, repairs, knitting. Church services and old movies. News and nature films. The grandchildren's school concert. Whatever you're curious about, someone has almost certainly made a video about it, and it's waiting there for you.

This book is yours — read it any way you like

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

The big promise: you truly can't break it

Here is the most important thing in this whole book, so I'll say it plainly. **You cannot break YouTube by tapping around and exploring.** Watching a video changes nothing. Tapping a button just shows you something new. Almost everything can be undone, closed, or simply ignored — and I'll show you how as we go. Tapping, swiping, and poking at the screen to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns, including me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When you stop worrying about breaking something, you start actually using it — and that's when YouTube becomes genuinely useful: music you love on tap, answers to every little question, and a window onto the whole wide world from your favorite chair.

A word about safety, right up front

I'll be honest with you, because that's how I do things. YouTube is wonderful, but it is also a place where scammers go fishing — misleading videos, fake "giveaways," and bad links tucked under videos and in the comments. I am not telling you this to frighten you; I'm telling you because a little know-how makes you nearly scam-proof, and this book has a whole part (Part 7) devoted to watching safely. You can enjoy YouTube *and* be safe. The two go together.

And I'm only a phone call away

This book will carry you a long way on your own. But if you ever get truly stuck, you are never stuck alone — that's not how I do things. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question. The only bad question is the one you talked yourself out of asking.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What YouTube Actually Is

Before we touch a single button, let's answer the simplest question of all: what *is* this thing everyone keeps talking about?

A television you control

The easiest way to picture YouTube is as a television with an endless number of channels — except *you* decide what plays, and nothing is ever "not on right now." Everything is ready the instant you want it. Type what you'd like to watch, or tap a video that catches your eye, and it begins. When it ends, another is waiting. That's the whole idea. Everything else in this book is just helpful detail.

The videos come from everyone, everywhere: big companies, television studios, musicians, and ordinary people with a camera and something to share. The folks who make videos are called **creators**, and each one has a **channel** — think of it as their own personal television station that you can tune into.

GOOD TO KNOW

YouTube belongs to Google

YouTube is owned by **Google**, the same company behind the Google search box and Gmail. That matters for one happy reason: if you already have a **Google account** (for email or an Android phone), you can use it on YouTube too — no need to sign up for anything new. We'll cover signing in a few chapters from now.

It's free to watch

Here's the good news up front: watching YouTube costs you **nothing**. You do not pay to watch videos. In exchange, YouTube shows **advertisements** — short commercials before and sometimes during videos, just like on television. If you'd rather skip the ads, there's a paid option called **Premium**, which we'll weigh up in Chapter 4. But you never have to pay a penny to enjoy YouTube.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A whole world, for free

Learning your way around YouTube means music, news, old shows, how-to help, church services, and the grandkids' recitals are all a few taps away — at no cost, any hour of the day or night. For a lot of folks it becomes the most-used thing on the whole phone or TV.

CHAPTER 3

Three Ways In: Phone, Computer & TV

There are a few different doorways into YouTube, and they all lead to the very same videos. You can use whichever suits you — or all of them. Here they are.

On a phone or tablet — the app

The **YouTube app** is a white (or black) square with a red rectangle in the middle — a little "play" triangle inside it, like a tiny television remote's play button. It likely came already installed on your phone. Tap it to open YouTube. This is how most folks watch day to day, and it's what this book describes most of the time.

On a computer — the website

On a computer or laptop, open your internet program (such as Chrome, Safari, or Edge) and type **youtube.com** into the address bar at the top. The same videos appear, laid out for a bigger screen with a keyboard and mouse. Handy for longer viewing sessions.

On your television — the big screen

Many modern televisions have a **YouTube app** built right in, and so do little streaming boxes and sticks like **Roku**, **Amazon Fire TV**, **Apple TV**, and **Google Chromecast**. This lets you watch YouTube on your big living-room screen, from the comfort of your couch. We give the television its own part later on (Part 6) because it's such a pleasant way to watch.

> **TIP**
>
> **Same account, every screen**
>
> If you sign in (more on that soon), your YouTube is the same on every device — the same subscriptions, the same history, the same Watch Later list. Start a video on your phone and you can often pick it up on the TV. Nothing to copy over; it all lives up on the internet.

Throughout this book I'll describe the **app on a phone** as the main path, since that's what most folks reach for, and I'll point out where the computer or TV works a little differently. The words you look for are almost always the same in every place.

CHAPTER 4

Free with Ads, or Premium? A Fair Comparison

YouTube gives you two ways to watch: the **free** way (with advertisements), which most people use and which costs nothing, and a paid upgrade called **YouTube Premium**, which removes the ads and adds a few conveniences. Let's lay them side by side so you can decide — there's no wrong answer, and you can start free and change your mind later.

Free, with ads

The free version gives you **all** of YouTube's videos — every one. The only trade is that you'll see short advertisements before videos, and sometimes in the middle of longer ones. Many ads can be skipped after about five seconds (watch for a **Skip** button in the corner). For a lot of folks, the ads are a minor nuisance and free is more than enough.

YouTube Premium, paid

Premium is a monthly subscription — you pay a set amount each month — and in return you get:

- **No advertisements** at all — videos start right away and never interrupt.
- **Background play** — the sound keeps going when you switch to another app or lock the phone, which is lovely for listening to music while you potter about.
- **Downloads** — save videos to watch later without internet, handy for trips.
- **YouTube Music** included — a music app rather like a radio you control (more in Part 8).

As a rough guide, Premium for one person runs somewhere around **$14 a month**, and a **family plan** that covers several people in your household runs around **$23 a month**. There's often a cheaper **student** rate too. Prices change and vary, so always check the current figure on YouTube before you sign up — never take my rough numbers as gospel.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **You can try it, then stop**
>
> Premium usually offers a **free trial** for the first month. You can try it and, if it's not for you, cancel before the trial ends and pay nothing. Just set yourself a reminder to cancel if you decide against it, so you aren't charged by surprise.

HEADS UP

Pay only through YouTube itself

If you ever sign up for Premium, do it inside the official YouTube app or at youtube.com — never through a link in an email or a text promising a "deal." Those are fakes after your card number. Real YouTube Premium is only ever sold by YouTube.

FROM BILL

My honest advice

Start free. Truly — the free version is wonderful and complete. If, after a while, the ads genuinely bother you, or you find yourself listening to a lot of music, that's the time to consider Premium. There's no need to pay for something until you're sure you'd use what it adds.

CHAPTER 5

Signing In with a Google Account

Here's a comfort: you can **watch almost all of YouTube without signing in at all**. Open the app, search, watch — no account needed. So if signing in feels like a hurdle, skip it for now and come back when you're ready.

Why you might want to sign in

That said, signing in with a **Google account** unlocks the nicer parts of YouTube and makes it truly yours:

- **Subscriptions** — follow your favorite channels so their new videos come to you (Part 4).
- **History** — YouTube remembers what you've watched, so you can find it again.
- **Playlists & Watch Later** — save videos into your own collections for later.
- **Better suggestions** — over time, YouTube learns what you enjoy and offers more of it.

What a Google account is

A **Google account** is simply an email address ending in **@gmail.com** together with a password. If you have a Gmail email address, or an Android phone, you almost certainly already have one — and that same account works on YouTube. There's nothing new to buy or set up; it's all free.

Signing in

1. Open the YouTube app. In the **top-right corner**, tap the round **circle** (it may show a letter or a little figure).
2. Tap **Sign in**.
3. Type your Google email address (the one ending in @gmail.com) and tap **Next**.
4. Type your password and tap **Next**. You're in — your circle now shows your initial or photo.

If you don't have a Google account yet, that same screen offers **Create account**. It walks you through it in a few minutes, and it's free. If you'd rather not do it alone, this is a perfect little job to do together on a phone call — see Part 8.

STAY SAFE

Guard your Google password like a house key

Your Google account very likely holds your email too, so its password is precious. Make it strong, don't reuse it elsewhere, and write it on a card kept in a private drawer at home — not stuck to the computer. And never type it into a page you reached from a link in a message; always open YouTube or Google yourself.

CHAPTER 6

Getting Comfortable: Taps, Scrolls & Nothing to Fear

YouTube runs on the very same finger-moves as the rest of your phone or tablet. If you've used your phone at all, you already know these — and if YouTube is your first real adventure, these few moves are all you'll ever need. Let's name them so nothing feels mysterious.

The handful of moves

- **Tap** — one light touch to choose, open, or play something. You never need to press hard; the glass feels the gentlest touch.
- **Scroll** — rest a finger on the screen and slide it up to move down a list (or down to go back up). This is how you browse through videos.
- **Tap the screen while a video plays** — the controls (play, pause, and so on) appear over the video for a few seconds, then tidy themselves away so they don't block the picture.
- **Back arrow** — the arrow in the top-left corner (or your phone's own Back button) takes you to the previous screen. It's your "undo" for getting lost.

TIP

There's no wrong tap you can't walk back from

If you tap something and the screen changes in a way you don't recognize, don't panic and don't start pressing everything. Just look for the **back arrow** in the top-left corner, or the little **house** (Home) button at the bottom, and you'll retrace your steps. Curiosity is rewarded here; you really can't hurt a thing by exploring.

A gentle warm-up

Here's a pleasant way to find your feet. Open YouTube, tap the search box at the top, and type the name of a song you love or a hobby you enjoy. Tap a result to play it. Tap the screen once to see the controls; tap again to hide them. When you're done, tap the back arrow. That's it — you've just done the single most common thing people do on YouTube, and nothing broke. Do it a few times and it'll feel like second nature.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Confidence is the real skill

The folks who get the most from YouTube aren't the ones who memorized the most — they're the ones who relaxed and started tapping around. Once you believe you can't break it (and you can't), the whole thing opens up. That belief is worth more than any single instruction.

PART 2

Watching a Video

The heart of YouTube. How to start a video, work the player controls, turn on captions, go full screen, slow it down or speed it up, and set the picture quality. Everything you need to watch in comfort.

CHAPTER 7

Starting a Video & Meeting the Player

Everything on YouTube leads to one simple act: watching a video. Let's walk through it slowly, then name every button you'll see, so nothing on that screen is a mystery.

Playing your first video

1. Find a video you'd like — tap one on the home screen, or search for something (Part 3 covers searching in full).
2. **Tap the video's picture** (its little preview image, called a **thumbnail**). It begins to play at the top of the screen.
3. That's it — you're watching. Underneath you'll see the video's title and more videos to watch next.

The player — the video and its controls

The playing video is called the **player**. When you **tap once on the video itself**, a set of controls appears over the picture for a few seconds. Here's what each one does. Don't worry about memorizing them — just know they're there when you tap.

Control	What it does
Play / Pause	The big triangle (play) or two bars (pause) in the middle. Tap to start or stop.
The progress bar	The thin line along the bottom showing how far through you are. Red for watched, grey for still to come.
Skip back / forward	Double-tap the left side to jump back ten seconds, the right side to jump forward ten. Great for catching a missed word.
CC (captions)	Turns on the words-on-screen (subtitles). Covered in its own chapter.
Gear / cog	Settings for this video — quality and speed. Covered soon.
Full screen	The little frame-corners icon; makes the video fill the whole screen.
Next video	A forward-skip arrow that jumps to the next video in a list or playlist.

TIP

The controls hide themselves — and that's fine

After a few seconds the controls fade away so they don't block the picture. They're not gone — just resting. A single tap on the video brings them right back. If you ever feel the buttons have "disappeared," that's all it is: tap once and they return.

CHAPTER 8

Play, Pause, Rewind & the Timeline

These are the controls you'll use most — the equivalent of the play, pause, and rewind buttons on an old video player. They're easy, and worth getting comfortable with first.

Pausing and playing

To **pause** (freeze the video), tap once on the video to show the controls, then tap the **two upright bars** in the middle. To start again, tap the **triangle** (play). On a computer, the spacebar on your keyboard pauses and plays too — a handy shortcut.

Going back to catch something you missed

Missed a word, or want to see a step again? You have two easy ways:

- **Double-tap the left half** of the video to jump back about ten seconds. Double-tap again to go back ten more. (Double-tap the right half to jump forward.)
- **Drag the little dot** along the progress bar at the bottom. Rest your finger on the dot and slide it left to go back, right to go forward, then lift your finger to play from there.

Seeing how long is left

At the ends of the progress bar, two little times appear: the time you've watched so far, and the video's total length. If it reads 2:30 and the total is 10:00, you're two and a half minutes into a ten-minute video. No surprises about how long something runs.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Nothing is live unless it says so**
>
> Most YouTube videos were recorded earlier, so pausing, rewinding, and skipping are all fine — you'll never "miss" anything by pausing. (A few videos are **live**, happening right now; those show a red **LIVE** label. Even then, you can usually rewind to catch up.)

CHAPTER 9

Captions (CC): Reading the Words on Screen

Captions — also called **subtitles** or **CC** (for "closed captions") — put the spoken words on the screen as text, so you can read along. They're a wonderful help if your hearing isn't what it was, if the speaker talks fast or has an accent, or if you simply want to watch quietly without disturbing anyone.

Turning captions on and off

1. Tap the video once to show the controls.
2. Look for the small **CC** button (two letters in a little box). Tap it.
3. Words now appear along the bottom of the video as people speak. Tap **CC** again to turn them off.

If you don't see a CC button, this particular video may not offer captions — but most do, and on many YouTube can even generate them automatically.

Making captions bigger or easier to read

If the caption text is too small, you can enlarge it. Tap the **gear/cog** icon on the video, then **Captions** or **Subtitles**, then **Options**. There you can set a larger text size, and sometimes change the color or add a background behind the words to make them stand out. Set it once and it stays that way for all videos.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Follow along with ease

Captions mean you never have to crank the volume up or ask "what did they say?" You read and listen together, which many folks find makes videos far easier to follow — especially news, documentaries, and anyone speaking quickly. Turn them on and give it a week; most people keep them.

GOOD TO KNOW

Automatic captions aren't perfect

When YouTube makes captions by itself (rather than the creator typing them), it occasionally mishears a word, especially names or unusual terms. It's usually close enough to follow comfortably — just don't be surprised by the odd funny mistake.

CHAPTER 10

Full Screen & Turning Your Phone

By default a video plays in a small window at the top of the screen, with a list of other videos below. That's fine for a quick look — but when you want to settle in and really watch, make the video fill the whole screen.

Going full screen

1. Tap the video once to show the controls.
2. Tap the **full-screen** icon in the bottom-right corner — it looks like the four corners of a frame, or a little rectangle.
3. The video grows to fill the screen. To come back out, tap the same icon again (now it points inward), or tap your phone's back arrow.

Turning the phone sideways

Videos are wider than they are tall, so they look biggest when your phone is turned **sideways** (landscape). Turn the phone a quarter-turn and, if full screen is on, the video rotates to fill it — nice and large. Turn it back upright to return to normal.

TIP

If the screen won't rotate

If turning your phone doesn't rotate the video, your phone's **rotation lock** is probably on — a little padlock-with-an-arrow setting that keeps the screen upright. Swipe to open your phone's control panel and tap the rotation-lock icon to unlock it. (My iPhone and Android manuals show exactly where this lives.)

Watching on a tablet or TV instead

A bigger screen makes everything easier on the eyes. If a video's worth watching properly, consider a tablet — or, best of all, your television (Part 6). The controls work just the same; there's simply more of everything to see.

CHAPTER 11

Playback Speed: Slow It Down or Speed It Up

Here's a feature many folks love once they discover it: you can make a video play **slower** or **faster** than normal, without changing anything about the video itself. The voices just slow down or speed up a touch.

Why you'd want to

- **Slower** — if a how-to video moves too quickly, or a speaker talks fast, slowing to three-quarters speed makes every step easy to follow. Wonderful for recipes and repairs.
- **Faster** — if someone is speaking slowly and you're impatient, a touch faster gets you through a long talk in less time while still following along.

Changing the speed

1. Tap the video once, then tap the **gear/cog** icon.
2. Tap **Playback speed**.
3. Choose a number. **1** (or "Normal") is regular speed. **0.75** is a little slower; **0.5** is half-speed. **1.25** or **1.5** is a little faster.
4. The video carries on at the new speed. Set it back to **Normal** the same way whenever you like.

GOOD TO KNOW

It resets itself

Changing the speed only affects the video you're watching (and usually the next few). It won't secretly stay fast forever. If a video ever sounds oddly fast or slow, pop into the gear menu and set the speed back to Normal — that's all it takes.

CHAPTER 12

Picture Quality & Saving Your Data

YouTube can show a video crisp and sharp, or a little softer — and softer uses less internet. Most of the time YouTube picks a sensible quality for you automatically, so you needn't touch this at all. But it's good to know the control is there.

What "quality" means

Quality is how sharp and detailed the picture is, measured in numbers like 480p, 720p, or 1080p (and higher). A bigger number means a sharper picture — but it also uses more internet data to play. On a good Wi-Fi connection, higher is lovely. On a slow connection, a lower number keeps the video playing smoothly instead of stopping to "buffer" (that pause where it says *Loading*).

Changing the quality

1. Tap the video once, then the **gear/cog** icon.
2. Tap **Quality**.
3. Choose **Auto** to let YouTube decide (the easy choice), **Higher picture quality** for the sharpest image, or **Data saver** to use less internet.

TIP

Video stopping to "buffer"? Try lower quality

If a video keeps pausing to load, your internet may be struggling with a sharp picture. Pop into the gear menu, tap Quality, and pick a lower number (like 480p) or "Data saver." The picture softens a touch, but the video plays smoothly without those annoying pauses.

HEADS UP

Mind your data if you're not on Wi-Fi

Watching video over your phone's **cellular data** (when you're away from Wi-Fi) can use up your monthly data allowance quickly, which may cost extra. When you're out and about, either use "Data saver," or save video-watching for when you're home on Wi-Fi. At home on Wi-Fi, watch all you like — it doesn't count against a phone plan.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You're in charge of the picture

Knowing this one setting means you'll never be stuck with a video that won't play smoothly, or burn through your data by accident. Most folks leave it on Auto and forget it — but now, if a video misbehaves, you know exactly which lever to pull.

CHAPTER 13

Volume, Muting & Watching Quietly

A quick, practical chapter on sound — because getting the volume right is half of a comfortable watch.

Turning the volume up and down

Use the **physical volume buttons** on the side of your phone or tablet while a video plays — press the top one for louder, the bottom one for quieter. A little bar appears on screen showing the level. This is the easiest way, and it works in every app, not just YouTube.

Muting a video

To silence a video entirely without pausing it, tap the video once and look for a small **speaker** icon; tapping it mutes and unmutes. Or simply turn the volume all the way down with the side buttons. Handy if an advertisement starts loudly and you'd rather it stayed quiet.

Watching without sound

Want to watch in a quiet house, or in a waiting room, without disturbing anyone? Turn the volume down and turn on **captions** (Chapter 8). You'll read along in perfect silence. It's a combination many folks come to prefer.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Headphones make it personal**
>
> A pair of headphones or earbuds plugged in (or connected wirelessly) sends the sound to your ears alone — clear as a bell, and no one else hears a thing. Lovely for music or a late-night show, and often easier to hear than the phone's little speaker.

PART 3

Finding What You Want to Watch

How to search well, make sense of the home screen, understand why YouTube suggests what it does, and keep the never-ending stream from running away with your evening.

CHAPTER 14

Searching Well: Getting to the Right Video

The search box is the fastest way to find anything on YouTube. Learn to use it well and the whole library opens up to you.

How to search

1. Tap the **magnifying-glass** icon, usually at the top of the screen.
2. Type what you're after — a song, a topic, a how-to question, a person's name.
3. Tap **Search** (or the magnifying glass / "Go" on the keyboard). A list of videos appears; tap any one to watch it.

Searching like a pro — just be specific

The trick is to type what you'd actually *say*. YouTube understands plain questions, so you don't need special words. The more specific you are, the better the results:

- Instead of "music," try "Patsy Cline Crazy" or "1950s rock and roll hits."
- Instead of "cooking," try "how to make pie crust from scratch" or "easy slow cooker pot roast."
- Instead of "exercise," try "gentle chair exercises for seniors."
- For repairs, name the thing: "how to replace a kitchen faucet washer."

Talk instead of type

If typing is fiddly, you can **speak** your search. Tap the little **microphone** icon next to the search box, then say what you want out loud — "Frank Sinatra My Way" — and YouTube types it for you and searches. Speak clearly and at a normal pace; it's surprisingly good.

> **TIP**
>
> **Spelling needn't be perfect**
>
> Don't fret over exact spelling. YouTube is forgiving — if you're close, it understands and often says "Did you mean…?" with the right spelling. Just get the sounds roughly right and let it help you the rest of the way.

GOOD TO KNOW

Suggestions as you type

As you type, a list of suggestions drops down beneath the box — common searches that start the way yours does. If you see what you want in that list, just tap it instead of finishing typing. A nice shortcut.

CHAPTER 15

The Home Screen & How Suggestions Work

When you open YouTube, you land on the **Home** screen — a grid of video suggestions picked just for you. Let's demystify where they come from, because understanding this makes YouTube far more pleasant (and a little safer).

Why YouTube suggests what it does

YouTube watches what you watch — which videos you tap, how long you stay, what you search for — and uses that to guess what else you'd enjoy. If you watch a lot of gardening videos, you'll see more gardening. This is called the **algorithm** — a fancy word for YouTube's automatic guessing. It's not a person; it's just a computer noticing patterns.

This is mostly a **good** thing: the more you use YouTube, the better it gets at offering things you'll like. But it's worth knowing so you're not puzzled when your Home screen fills with whatever you watched a lot of lately.

The buttons across the bottom

Along the bottom of the app (on a phone) sits a row of buttons that take you to the main areas of YouTube:

Button	Where it takes you
Home	The house icon — your main screen of suggestions. Your "front porch."
Shorts	Very short videos, one after another (covered next chapter).
Subscriptions	New videos from channels you follow (Part 4). The heart of a tidy YouTube.
You / Library	Your history, playlists, Watch Later, and downloads — your own corner.

TIP

The house always takes you home

Just like elsewhere on your phone, if you ever tap something and feel lost on YouTube, look for the little **house** (Home) button at the bottom and tap it. It carries you straight back to safe, familiar ground. You can always start over from there.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Shape your own YouTube

Because YouTube learns from what you watch, you quietly shape it every day. Watch the things you genuinely enjoy and ignore the rest, and within a week or two your Home screen becomes a pleasant reflection of your real interests — like a newspaper that prints only the sections you read.

CHAPTER 16

Shorts: The Very Short Videos

Shorts are YouTube's name for very short videos — usually under a minute — shown one after another as you flick up the screen. You'll have seen similar things elsewhere. They can be fun in small doses; here's how they work and how to keep them in their place.

Watching Shorts

Tap the **Shorts** button at the bottom (a little play icon, often with a lightning-bolt feel to it). A short video plays. To see the next one, **flick up** the screen with your finger — like turning a page. Flick down to go back. They play automatically and loop. To leave, tap the back arrow or the Home button.

HEADS UP

Shorts can eat an hour before you notice

Because each one is so short and the next is always ready, it's easy to flick through Shorts far longer than you meant to — many folks look up and an hour has gone. There's no harm in enjoying them, but if you ever feel they're running away with your time, just tap Home and go watch something you chose on purpose instead.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not every video is a Short

Regular YouTube videos — the longer ones you search for and settle into — are a different thing from Shorts. If you don't care for the flick-up-one-after-another style, simply stay on the Home screen and in your Subscriptions, and leave the Shorts button alone. You lose nothing.

CHAPTER 17

Browsing by Topic, Trending & Categories

Besides searching, YouTube offers gentler ways to *browse* — to wander and see what's about, like strolling the aisles of a library rather than asking for one book by name.

The topic chips at the top of Home

Across the top of the Home screen you'll often see a row of little buttons with words on them — **Music**, **News**, **Live**, **Cooking**, **Gaming**, and so on. These are called **chips**. Tap one and the whole screen fills with videos of just that kind. Tap it again (or tap **All**) to go back to your usual mix.

Explore and Trending

Some versions of YouTube have an **Explore** area (look in the menu or the sidebar) with sections like **Trending** (videos lots of people are watching right now), **Music**, **News**, and **Gaming**. It's a fine way to see what the wider world is watching when you're not after anything in particular.

> **TIP**
>
> **Browsing is for when you don't know what you want**
>
> Searching is best when you have something specific in mind. Browsing — the chips, Explore, Trending — is for the evenings when you just fancy watching *something* and would like a few ideas. Both are good; use whichever suits your mood.

CHAPTER 18

Autoplay: The Never-Ending Stream

By default, when one video finishes, YouTube automatically starts another — its best guess at what you'd like next. This is called **Autoplay**. It's handy at times and a nuisance at others, so it's worth knowing how to control.

The good and the not-so-good

Autoplay is pleasant when you want to keep listening to music or let a run of videos play while you relax. It's less welcome when you only meant to watch one thing — suddenly it's an hour later and you're three videos deep into something you never chose. The cure is simply to turn Autoplay off when you don't want it.

Turning Autoplay on or off

1. Tap the video once to show the controls.
2. Look near the top for a small **toggle switch** labeled **Autoplay** (it may show as a little switch, blue/on or grey/off).
3. Tap it to switch Autoplay off — now the video simply ends and waits, instead of rolling straight into the next. Tap again to turn it back on.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You decide when the evening ends

Turning Autoplay off puts you back in the driver's seat: each video ends and waits politely for you to choose the next, rather than the stream deciding for you. Many folks find their YouTube time feels calmer and more deliberate once they do this. Try it for a week.

CHAPTER 19

Tidying Up What YouTube Suggests

If your Home screen fills up with things you'd rather not see — perhaps you watched one odd video and now YouTube keeps offering more like it — you can gently steer it back. You have more control than you might think.

Tell YouTube "not interested"

On any suggested video you don't care for, tap the **three dots** beside it (sometimes arranged as three dots in a row or a column). Choose **Not interested**, or **Don't recommend this channel**. YouTube takes the hint and shows you fewer like it. Do this a few times and your Home screen cleans up nicely.

Clearing a wrong turn from your history

Because YouTube learns from what you watch, one accidental video (or something a visiting grandchild watched on your account) can throw off your suggestions. Removing it from your **watch history** (Part 4) usually sets things right. We'll cover exactly how there.

TIP

A gentle hand on the wheel

You don't need to fuss over this daily. A quick "Not interested" here and there, whenever something unwelcome pops up, is enough to keep your YouTube pleasant. Think of it like pulling the odd weed, not re-landscaping the whole garden.

GOOD TO KNOW

Suggestions aren't a judgment of you

If YouTube ever offers something strange or unwelcome, it's not "reading your mind" or saying anything about you — it's a machine making a clumsy guess, often from a single click. Brush it aside with "Not interested" and think no more of it.

PART 4

Following What You Love

Turn YouTube from a jumble of videos into your own tidy collection: subscribe to channels, use the bell wisely, build playlists, save things for later, and manage your history.

CHAPTER 20

Subscribing to Channels

This is the single feature that turns YouTube from a sea of random videos into something that feels like *yours*. When you find a creator you enjoy — a musician, a cook, a news channel, a fellow gardener — you can **subscribe** to their channel, and their new videos come to you. (You'll want to be signed in for this — see Part 1.)

What a subscription is

Think of subscribing like telling the newspaper boy which papers to drop at your door. Subscribing to a channel is free, and it simply means "keep me posted when this channel puts out something new." You can subscribe to as many as you like, and you can unsubscribe any time with no fuss.

How to subscribe

1. Play a video from a channel you like, or tap the channel's name to visit its page.
2. Look for the **Subscribe** button (often a red or dark button, sometimes just the word).
3. Tap it. It changes to say **Subscribed** — that's done. Their new videos will now reach you in your Subscriptions feed (next chapter).

Unsubscribing

Changed your mind? Go back to the channel (or any of its videos), tap **Subscribed**, and choose **Unsubscribe**. No one is told, and you can re-subscribe any time. It's entirely reversible, like everything on YouTube.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your own lineup of favorites

A handful of good subscriptions is the secret to a happy YouTube. Instead of hunting each time, you open your Subscriptions and there's the new episode from your favorite channel, waiting like a letter in the mailbox. It's the difference between wandering a video store and having your favorites delivered.

CHAPTER 21

Your Subscriptions Feed

Once you've subscribed to a few channels, the **Subscriptions** screen becomes the nicest place on YouTube — a tidy list of new videos from only the channels *you* chose, with none of the clutter.

Finding your Subscriptions feed

Tap the **Subscriptions** button along the bottom of the app (it may look like a little box with a play symbol, or a stack of papers). Up comes a list of the latest videos from every channel you follow, newest at the top. Tap any one to watch.

Seeing all your channels

At the top of the Subscriptions screen you can usually see the little round pictures of the channels you follow. Tap **All** (or a channel's picture) to see everything, or just that channel's videos. It's a good way to catch up with one favorite at a time.

> **TIP**
>
> **Make this your starting point**
>
> Many folks find YouTube calmer and more rewarding if they open **Subscriptions** first, rather than the busy Home screen. It shows you only what you asked for — your chosen channels, nothing else. Try making it your habit and see if YouTube feels more like your own.

CHAPTER 22

The Bell: Choosing Your Notifications

Next to many **Subscribed** buttons sits a small **bell** icon. It decides whether — and how often — YouTube taps you on the shoulder when a channel posts something new. A little setup here saves a lot of buzzing later.

What the bell does

After you subscribe, tapping the bell lets you choose how keen you are to hear from that channel:

Bell setting	What you'll get
All	A notification for every new video. Best saved for one or two absolute favorites.
Personalized	YouTube decides — you'll hear about some, not every single one. A sensible middle.
None	No notifications. Their videos still appear in your Subscriptions feed; you just aren't pinged.

Setting the bell

1. On a channel you've subscribed to, tap the **bell** icon next to the Subscribed button.
2. Choose **All**, **Personalized**, or **None**.
3. Done. You can change it any time, as often as you like.

TIP

Turn the bell to 'All' for just a precious few

If your phone buzzes too much, set the bell to **All** for only the one or two channels you never want to miss, and leave the rest on Personalized or None. That way the things you truly care about reach you, and your phone stays peaceful the rest of the day.

GOOD TO KNOW

Notifications are gentle reminders, not demands

A notification is just YouTube saying "there's something new here if you'd like it" — never something you must act on. If they ever feel like too much, turn bells down to None and simply check your Subscriptions feed whenever *you* feel like it. You're in charge of the pace.

CHAPTER 23

Likes (and the Dislike Button)

Under every video sit a **thumbs-up** (Like) and a **thumbs-down** (Dislike). They're a simple way to say "more like this" or "not for me" — and they quietly help YouTube learn your taste. You'll want to be signed in to use them.

Giving a Like

Enjoyed a video? Tap the **thumbs-up** under it. It fills in to show it's done. This does two friendly things: it tells the creator you appreciated their work, and it nudges YouTube to show you more of that kind. Tap it again to un-like if you change your mind.

The Dislike button

The **thumbs-down** says "this wasn't for me." It's a gentle signal to YouTube and is private — the creator isn't shown who disliked, and the count isn't public. Honestly, most folks rarely use it; a quick "Not interested" (Part 3) does much the same job for tidying your suggestions.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A tap of the thumb trains your YouTube

Liking the videos you genuinely enjoy is the pleasantest way to teach YouTube your taste. Over a few weeks of honest Likes, your Home screen and suggestions drift toward exactly the sort of thing you reach for — all from a friendly tap of the thumb now and then.

GOOD TO KNOW

Liking is not commenting

A Like is silent and private — you're not writing anything, and you're not posting in public. It's just a tap. If you'd like to actually *say* something, that's a comment, which we cover carefully in Part 5. Plenty of folks happily Like for years and never once comment.

CHAPTER 24

Playlists: Your Own Collections

A **playlist** is your own collection of videos, gathered in one place and played one after another — like making a mixtape, or a photo album, but for videos. It's one of the most satisfying features once you try it. (Sign in first.)

What you might make a playlist for

- A collection of your favorite songs, to play like a personal radio station.
- Gentle exercise videos you return to each morning.
- A set of how-to videos for a project you're working through.
- Hymns or church music; old television clips; a grandchild's recitals, all in one spot.

Making a playlist and adding a video

1. Under a video you'd like to save, tap **Save** (a little bookmark/flag icon, sometimes under the three dots).
2. You'll be offered existing playlists, plus **New playlist**. Tap **New playlist**.
3. Give it a name — "My Favorite Songs," "Morning Stretches" — and tap **Create**.
4. The video is saved into it. To add more videos later, tap **Save** on each and choose that playlist.

Playing a playlist

Find your playlists under the **You** (or **Library**) button at the bottom. Tap a playlist, then tap the first video (or **Play all**), and the videos play in order, one after the next — no need to pick each time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A radio station you built yourself

A music playlist is a small joy: press Play all and your favorite songs roll on through the afternoon, in the order you like, with nothing you dislike. Build one once and enjoy it for years. The same trick works for exercise, hymns, or any set of videos you return to.

CHAPTER 25

Watch Later: Saving Something for Tonight

Come across a video you'd like to watch, but not right now? **Watch Later** is a special ready-made playlist for exactly that — a holding shelf for videos to enjoy when you have the time.

Saving to Watch Later

1. Under a video (or on its thumbnail), tap **Save**, or the three dots then **Save to Watch later**.
2. It's tucked away safely — carry on with what you were doing.

Finding your Watch Later list

Tap the **You** (or **Library**) button at the bottom. Near the top you'll see **Watch Later** with everything you've saved. Tap in, and watch whenever suits you. Each video drops off the list once you've watched it, keeping things tidy.

> **TIP**
>
> **A cure for 'I'll never find that again'**
>
> How often have you seen something interesting, meant to come back to it, and lost it for good? Watch Later ends that. The moment something catches your eye, tap Save — then relax, knowing it's waiting on the shelf for you tonight or next week.

CHAPTER 26

Your History — and How to Clear It

When you're signed in, YouTube keeps a **history** of the videos you've watched. This is mostly a helpful thing — but it's your record, and you're entirely free to view it, remove bits of it, or wipe it clean.

Why history is useful

History lets you **find a video again** when you've forgotten its name ("what was that lovely one I watched Tuesday?"), and it's how YouTube learns to make good suggestions. Find it under the **You** / **Library** button, then **History**.

Removing one video from history

In your History list, tap the **X** (or three dots then **Remove**) beside any video to take just that one off the record. Handy if a visiting grandchild watched cartoons on your account and threw off your suggestions — remove them and your YouTube settles back to normal.

Clearing all your history

1. Go to **You** / **Library**, then **History**.
2. Tap the **three dots** (or a gear) near the top, then **Clear all watch history**.
3. Confirm. Your history is wiped. (You can also **pause** history so YouTube stops keeping it at all, from the same menu.)

GOOD TO KNOW

Clearing history doesn't delete the videos

Clearing your watch history only erases *your record* of what you watched — it doesn't delete any videos from YouTube, and it doesn't affect your subscriptions, playlists, or Watch Later. Think of it as wiping a notepad, not throwing anything away.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your record, under your control

Knowing you can view, trim, or clear your history means YouTube never becomes a mystery that "remembers too much." It's your diary of what you watched, and you hold the eraser. Clear it whenever you like, for any reason or none at all.

PART 5

Joining In (Only If You'd Like To)

YouTube is wonderful as a watch-only pastime — you never have to join in. But if you'd like to leave a Like or a comment now and then, here's how to do it pleasantly and safely.

CHAPTER 27

You Can Just Watch — Joining In Is Optional

Let me say this clearly before anything else, because it sets your mind at ease: **you never have to join in on YouTube**. Millions of people — likely most — simply watch, year after year, and never write a word. That is a perfectly complete way to use YouTube. Watching is not "doing it half-way."

What "joining in" means

Joining in means doing something others can see or that goes out from you, rather than just watching. On YouTube that's a short list:

- **Liking** a video (a private, silent tap — we covered this in Part 4).
- **Commenting** — writing a public note under a video for others to read.
- **Subscribing** — following a channel (also covered in Part 4; the creator sees only a number, not who).
- **Making your own videos** — which we'll touch on, though few folks start here.

Of these, commenting is the only one where you write something in public, so it's the one worth a careful word. We'll spend this part on doing it gently and safely — and you're free to skip the whole thing and go back to happy watching.

> FROM BILL
>
> **No pressure, ever**
>
> If reading this part makes you think "I'd rather just watch," then do exactly that, with my blessing. Joining in is a choice, not a duty. The folks who get the most from YouTube include plenty who never once commented. Watch what you love and leave the rest — that's a grand way to enjoy it.

CHAPTER 28

Leaving a Comment, Safely

If you'd like to say "thank you for this" to a creator, or add a kind word, comments let you. They appear in public beneath the video, with your name and picture. Here's how, and how to keep yourself safe doing it.

Writing a comment

1. Under a video, scroll down a little to the **Comments** section (it may say "Add a comment…").
2. Tap the box and type your note.
3. Tap the **send** arrow. Your comment appears beneath the video for others to read.

Editing or deleting what you wrote

Said something you'd like to change or take back? Find your comment, tap the **three dots** beside it, and choose **Edit** or **Delete**. You're always free to fix a typo or remove a comment entirely — nothing you post is set in stone.

STAY SAFE

Never put personal details in a comment

Comments are **public** — anyone in the world can read them. So never type your full address, phone number, email, or anything a stranger could misuse. A friendly "Lovely video, thank you!" is perfect. Save anything private for a phone call or an email to someone you actually know.

SCAM ALERT

Scammers lurk in the comments

The comment section is a favorite fishing-spot for crooks. Ignore any comment offering prizes, "free" money, investment tips, or a number to call or message — and never reply to one. We cover these tricks in full in Part 7. For now: read comments for enjoyment, but treat any that ask you to *do* something as suspect.

CHAPTER 29

Comment Manners & Protecting Your Privacy

If you do join the conversation, a little common sense keeps it a pleasant place for you. These are the same good manners you'd use in any public room — plus a few YouTube-specific cautions.

A few gentle manners

- **Be kind.** There's a real person behind every video and most comments. A warm word costs nothing and makes someone's day.
- **Don't feed arguments.** Comment sections sometimes turn quarrelsome. You're never obliged to reply, and scrolling past an unpleasant exchange is always the wise move.
- **Assume everyone can see it.** Family, strangers, anyone — a comment is as public as a note pinned to a bulletin board downtown.

Your name and picture

When you comment, your Google account's **name** and **picture** show alongside. If you'd rather not use your full real name in public, you can adjust your name or picture in your Google account settings. There's no need to show your face or full name to comment — a first name or a nickname is perfectly fine.

HEADS UP

Replies from strangers are normal — and ignorable

Once you comment in public, a stranger may reply. Most replies are harmless, but some are rude or are scammers fishing. You are under no obligation to answer anyone. Ignore, scroll past, or — if someone's unpleasant — simply stop reading. You never owe a reply to a stranger on the internet.

CHAPTER 30

You Have a Channel Too (Even If It's Empty)

Here's a small surprise that puzzles some folks: the moment you have a Google account, YouTube gives *you* a **channel** as well — your own little corner. For most people it sits empty and that's entirely fine. Let's demystify it so it doesn't worry you.

What your channel is for

Your channel is simply the home for anything *you* do on YouTube: your name and picture, any comments you've made, your public playlists, and — if you ever chose to — any videos you uploaded. You do **not** have to post a single thing. An empty channel is completely normal and bothers nobody.

Could I share a video of my own?

You could, though few folks start here. If one day you'd like to share, say, a video of the garden or a family event, you'd tap the **+ Create** button (a plus sign, usually at the bottom center) and choose **Upload a video**. YouTube walks you through it. You decide whether it's **Public** (anyone can see), **Unlisted** (only people you send the link to), or **Private** (just you).

TIP

'Unlisted' is the gentle way to share with family

If you ever want to share a video with just the family and no one else, set it to **Unlisted** when you upload. It won't show up in searches or to strangers — only people you send the link to can watch it. A tidy, private way to share the grandkids' concert without putting it out to the whole world.

GOOD TO KNOW

An empty channel is doing no harm

If all of this feels like more than you want, pay it no mind. Your channel can stay empty forever with no downside at all. Knowing it exists just means you won't be puzzled if you ever spot your own name with the word "channel" next to it. That's all it is — your name-plate, whether or not you ever hang anything on the wall.

PART 6

YouTube on the Big TV

The most comfortable way of all to watch — on your living-room television. The built-in TV app, streaming boxes like Roku and Fire TV, and the clever trick of sending a video from your phone to the big screen.

CHAPTER 31

The YouTube App on a Smart TV

If your television is fairly recent, it's likely a **smart TV** — meaning it connects to the internet and has apps built in, YouTube among them. Watching on the big screen, from your armchair, with the sound through the TV's speakers, is for many folks the nicest way of all.

What a 'smart TV' is

A **smart TV** is simply a television that connects to your home internet (your Wi-Fi) and can run apps like YouTube, just as your phone does. If your TV can show Netflix or has a row of app icons on its home screen, it's a smart TV, and YouTube is almost certainly one of them.

Opening YouTube on the TV

1. Turn on the TV and find its **Home** or **apps** screen (there's usually a Home button on the remote — often a little house).
2. Look for the **YouTube** icon (the red play-button logo) among the apps. Highlight it with the remote's arrow buttons and press **OK** / **Select** / the center button.
3. YouTube opens. Use the remote's arrows to move around and the center button to choose. The same searching and watching you know, just driven by a remote.

Searching with a remote (the fiddly bit)

Typing with a remote, letter by letter on an on-screen keyboard, is slow and tedious — there's no getting around it. The good news: many TV remotes have a **microphone** button. Hold it and *say* what you want — "Lawrence Welk Show" — and it types it for you. If yours has no microphone, Chapter 30's phone trick saves you from typing on the TV altogether.

> **TIP**
>
> **Sign in once, and your TV knows you**
>
> You can sign in to YouTube on the TV with your Google account, so your subscriptions, playlists, and history all follow you to the big screen. Signing in by typing is a chore, though — so see Chapter 29's code trick, which lets you sign the TV in using your phone instead. Far easier.

CHAPTER 32

Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV & Streaming Sticks

If your television *isn't* smart — or its built-in apps are sluggish — a small, inexpensive gadget can add YouTube (and much else) to any TV with an HDMI socket. These are called **streaming devices**, and they're wonderfully simple once set up.

The common ones

Device	What it is
Roku	A little box or stick. Simple, popular, with a tidy remote. YouTube comes built in.
Amazon Fire TV	A stick that plugs into the TV; Amazon's version. YouTube is available to add.
Apple TV	A small box from Apple, nice if you have an iPhone or iPad. YouTube available.
Google Chromecast / Google TV	Google's own device; works hand-in-glove with YouTube and your phone.

How they work, in plain terms

You plug the device into a spare **HDMI** socket on the back of the TV (the same kind of socket a DVD player or cable box uses), connect it to your Wi-Fi once during setup, and from then on it gives you a home screen of apps — YouTube among them — all driven by its own little remote. To watch, you switch the TV to that HDMI **input** (using the TV remote's **Input** or **Source** button), then open YouTube on the device.

GOOD TO KNOW

They're a modest, one-time cost

A streaming stick is typically an inexpensive gadget bought once — no ongoing fee for the device itself, and YouTube on it is still free to watch. It's a tidy way to bring YouTube to an older television without replacing the whole set.

FROM BILL

Setting one up is a lovely little job to do together

Plugging in a streaming stick and getting it onto your Wi-Fi is a one-time, 20-minute job — and exactly the sort of thing I'm glad to do with you, either in person or talking you through it on the phone. Once it's set up, it just works. Call me at (330) 200-8042 if you'd like a hand.

CHAPTER 33

Casting: Sending a Video from Phone to TV

Here's a bit of everyday magic that delights people the first time they see it. If your phone and your TV are on the same home Wi-Fi, you can find a video on your phone — where searching is easy — and **cast** it to play on the big TV screen with a single tap. The phone becomes your remote control.

What 'casting' means

Casting means telling the TV to play a video you picked on your phone. The video doesn't shrink down the phone's internet — the TV fetches it itself and plays it in full quality. Your phone just points the way, then acts as the remote. You can even put the phone down or use it for something else; the TV keeps playing.

The cast button

The **Cast** icon looks like a little screen with curved lines in one corner, rather like a tiny Wi-Fi symbol tucked into a rectangle. You'll see it near the top of the YouTube app when a cast-able TV is nearby on your Wi-Fi.

Casting a video, step by step

1. Make sure the TV (or its streaming device) is **on**, and that both it and your phone are on the **same Wi-Fi** network.
2. Open YouTube on your phone and tap the **Cast** icon (the little screen-with-corner).
3. A list of nearby screens appears. Tap the name of your TV (it may be "Living Room TV" or similar).
4. Now play any video on your phone and it appears on the TV. Use the phone to pause, skip, change the volume, and choose what's next.
5. To stop casting, tap the **Cast** icon again and choose **Stop casting** — the video returns to your phone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The best of both: easy searching, big-screen watching

Casting gives you the easy searching of the phone (type or speak, no fiddly TV remote) *and* the comfort of the big screen. Find the grandkids' recital on your phone, tap Cast, and there it is on the living-room TV for everyone to enjoy. Once folks try this, it quickly becomes their favorite way to watch.

TIP

No Cast icon? Check the Wi-Fi

If you don't see the Cast icon, the usual reason is that the phone and TV aren't on the same Wi-Fi network — or the TV/streaming device is turned off. Make sure both are awake and on the same home Wi-Fi, and the icon should appear. If it still won't, that's a fine thing to give me a call about.

CHAPTER 34

Linking Your Phone to the TV with a Code

Sometimes — on a hotel TV, a friend's set, or when casting won't cooperate — YouTube offers a tidy alternative: a **pairing code**. The TV shows a code, you type it into your phone (or go to a web address), and the two are linked so your phone can drive the TV's YouTube.

How the code method works

1. On the TV's YouTube app, go to **Settings** and look for **Link with TV code** (or "Pair device"). The TV shows a **code** — a string of numbers or letters.
2. On your phone's YouTube app, tap your **profile circle** (top right), then **Settings**, then **Watch on TV** (or "Link with TV code").
3. Type in the code shown on the TV and confirm. The phone and TV are now linked.
4. You can now send videos from your phone to that TV, much like casting.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **A code shown on a screen you can see is safe**
>
> Typing a code that *the TV in front of you* is displaying is perfectly safe — it's just the two devices introducing themselves. This is quite different from a code that arrives in a text message or email: never share one of *those* with anyone (that's a scam, covered in Part 7). A code on your own TV screen, that you type yourself, is fine.

CHAPTER 35

Using Your Phone as the TV Remote

Once your phone is casting or linked to the TV, it becomes a far nicer remote than the clicker that came with the television — especially for YouTube. Here's what you can do from the comfort of your chair, phone in hand.

What the phone controls

- **Pause and play** — tap the phone; the TV obeys.
- **Volume** — the phone's volume buttons adjust the TV's YouTube sound.
- **Skip and rewind** — jump back to catch a line, or forward past a slow bit.
- **Choose what's next** — search and queue up the next video on the phone while the current one plays on the TV, so there's no pause between.
- **Add to the lineup** — tap **Add to queue** on videos to build up an evening's worth, playing one after another on the big screen.

TIP

Everyone can take a turn

Because the phone is the remote, anyone in the room with the YouTube app on their phone can (with your say-so) add a song or a video to the queue — grand for a family gathering, where everyone shares a favorite on the big screen in turn. It turns watching into something you do together.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The big screen, the easy search

This is the whole promise of YouTube on the TV: the picture and sound of your living-room set, with the ease of finding things on your phone. No squinting at a tiny screen, no pecking at a remote keyboard. Just comfortable watching, the way television always should have been.

PART 7

Watching Safely

The honest, important part. YouTube is a joy, but scammers crowd into it because so many kind people gather there. A little know-how here makes you nearly scam-proof — and lets you relax and enjoy the rest.

CHAPTER 36

The Lay of the Land: Where Trouble Hides

I'll be straight with you, the way I'd want someone to be with me. The **videos** on YouTube are, overwhelmingly, harmless and often wonderful. The trouble tends to live around the edges — in the **thumbnails** designed to fool you, the **links** tucked under videos and in comments, the **fake giveaways**, and the **advertisements** that aren't what they seem. Know those few hiding spots and you've won most of the battle.

The one rule that covers almost everything

If you remember nothing else from this part, remember this: **watching a video is safe; being asked to leave YouTube and *do* something is where the danger starts.** Scammers can't hurt you through a video you simply watch. They need you to click a link, call a number, send money, enter a password, or hand over a code. The moment anything asks you to do one of those, slow right down and treat it as suspect until proven otherwise.

STAY SAFE

Four things to never do from a video, comment, or ad

Never (1) click a link that promises money, prizes, or urgent fixes; (2) call or message a phone number shown in a video or comment; (3) type your password anywhere you arrived at by clicking; or (4) read out or enter a verification code someone asked you for. Keep those four "nevers" in mind and the vast majority of scams simply bounce off you.

FROM BILL

You can enjoy YouTube and be safe — both at once

I don't share any of this to frighten you off YouTube. I share it because a few minutes of know-how lets you relax and enjoy the good stuff without that nagging worry. Safe and happy go together here. And if anything ever gives you pause, a second opinion is only a phone call away: (330) 200-8042. Asking is always the smart move, never a bother.

CHAPTER 37

Clickbait & Misleading Thumbnails

The first thing you see of any video is its little preview picture (the **thumbnail**) and its title. Some are honest. Others are built to trick you into clicking with shock, outrage, or a wild promise. This is called **clickbait**, and recognizing it saves you time, annoyance, and the occasional real danger.

What clickbait looks like

- Thumbnails with big red arrows, circles, and shocked faces, screaming for your attention.
- Titles IN CAPITALS with words like "SHOCKING," "You won't BELIEVE," or "GONE WRONG."
- A promise the video can't possibly keep — "Doctors HATE this," "the secret THEY don't want you to know," "make $5,000 a week from home."
- A famous person's face next to an outrageous claim they never actually made.

Why it matters

Most clickbait is merely annoying — a video that doesn't deliver what it promised, wasting a few minutes. But some clickbait leads somewhere worse: fake health cures, bogus money-making schemes, or videos stuffed with scam links. The habit to build is simple: when a thumbnail or title feels like it's shouting a too-good or too-shocking promise, be skeptical before you tap.

GOOD TO KNOW

Outrage and 'too good to be true' are the tells

Honest videos rarely need to shout. If a thumbnail is engineered to make you furious, frightened, or greedy — that strong tug on your feelings *is* the warning sign. The stronger the pull to click right now, the more it's worth a pause. Real information can wait a moment for you to think.

TIP

A clickbait video isn't dangerous just to watch

To be fair: clicking a clickbait video on YouTube itself won't harm your device — worst case, it's a letdown. The danger comes only if that video then pushes you to click a link, call a number, or buy something. Watch with a pinch of salt; just don't follow where it tries to send you.

CHAPTER 38

Scam Links in Descriptions & Comments

Beneath every video sit two places where crooks love to plant bad links: the **description** (the creator's own notes under the video) and the **comments** (what viewers write). Both can be perfectly innocent — and both are favorite hiding spots for trouble. Here's how to tell the difference.

Links in the description

Honest creators often put useful links in their description — to their website, a recipe, a product they mentioned. But scammers (or crooks who've hijacked a channel) plant links to fake stores, bogus "free gift" pages, or sites that try to steal your details. You **cannot** tell a good link from a bad one just by looking — so the safe rule is to be cautious with *any* link, and never click one that promises money, prizes, or urgent action.

Links and numbers in the comments

Comments are even riskier, because anyone can write them. Among the genuine remarks you'll find scam comments offering prizes, investment "tips," miracle cures, or a phone number or messaging handle to contact a "support agent" or "the creator." **These are fakes.** Real creators almost never put a personal phone number in the comments, and YouTube's own support never does.

SCAM ALERT

The fake 'reply from the creator'

A very common trick: under a popular video, a comment appears that looks like it's from the creator — same name, same little picture — saying "Congratulations! You've won — message me on WhatsApp/Telegram to claim." It is **not** the creator. It's an impersonator who copied the name and photo. Real creators do not pick winners in the comments and send them to a messaging app. Ignore it, and never message the number.

STAY SAFE

How to check a link before trusting it — or just don't

If you must follow a link, the safe habit is to reach the company *yourself* instead: open a new browser and type the official website address, or search for the business by name, rather than tapping the link. That way, even a cleverly disguised bad link can't send you somewhere false. When in doubt, don't click at all — you lose nothing by skipping it.

CHAPTER 39

Fake Giveaways & 'You've Won!'

"Congratulations — you've won!" is one of the oldest tricks there is, and it's alive and well on YouTube. Fake giveaways turn up in comments, in videos, and even on whole channels built to look like a famous company handing out prizes. Let's take the bait off the hook.

How the fake giveaway works

1. You're told you've won something grand — cash, a new phone, cryptocurrency, a gift card — often "selected" from viewers of a video.
2. To "claim" it, you're told to message a number, click a link, or visit a site.
3. There, you're asked for a "small fee," "shipping," or "taxes" up front — or for your bank or card details, supposedly to "send the prize."
4. You pay or hand over details — and the prize never comes. The fee is the scam; the prize never existed.

The iron rule of prizes

You cannot win a contest you never entered, and a real prize never requires you to pay to receive it. Those two sentences defeat every giveaway scam ever invented. If you have to send money, a gift card, or your bank details to "claim" a prize — it's a scam, every single time, no exceptions.

SCAM ALERT

Crypto and 'double your money' giveaways

A popular version shows a video (sometimes a hijacked channel, even using a real celebrity's face) promising that if you send some cryptocurrency or money to an address, they'll send back double. It's a complete fraud: whatever you send is gone instantly, forever. No legitimate person or company doubles your money for sending it first. Not ever.

FROM BILL

When in doubt, it costs nothing to ask me first

If you ever see a "you've won" message and feel even a flicker of hope or doubt, call me *before* you do anything — (330) 200-8042. I will never make you feel foolish for asking. A two-minute phone call has saved folks a great deal of money and heartache. Checking first is exactly the right instinct.

CHAPTER 40

Impersonation Channels & Fake Verification

Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust — a famous creator, a big company, even YouTube itself. They copy the name, the picture, and the style closely enough to fool a quick glance. Learning to spot an impersonator protects you from a whole family of scams.

How impersonators try to fool you

- A channel or commenter uses the **same name and picture** as a creator you like, with a tiny change — an extra letter, a number, a space, or a look-alike character.
- They send you to message them "privately" on another app to claim a prize or get "help."
- They pose as **YouTube support** or a well-known company, warning your account has a "problem" you must fix at once.

The verification badge — and its limits

Big, genuine channels often carry a small **check-mark badge** next to their name, showing YouTube has verified they're the real article. Its absence on a "famous" channel is a red flag. But be careful: a badge **alone** isn't proof of safety, and scammers try to fake the look of one. Treat the badge as one clue among several, never a guarantee.

STAY SAFE

Real companies don't chase you in comments or private messages

Neither YouTube nor any reputable company will contact you through a comment or a private message demanding urgent action, prize claims, or your password. If a "creator" or "support agent" messages you first, asking you to move to another app or act quickly — that's your signal it's a fake. Genuine help is something *you* go and seek out, not something that comes chasing you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reporting an impersonator helps everyone

If you spot a fake channel or scam comment, you can **report** it: tap the three dots beside it and choose **Report**, then pick "Impersonation" or "Scam/fraud." It's quick and anonymous, and it helps protect the next person who comes along. A quiet good deed.

CHAPTER 41

Ads That Lead to Scams

YouTube is free because it shows **advertisements** — and while most ads are ordinary commercials, scammers buy ad space too. A scam ad can look as polished as any other, so a little caution with *all* ads keeps you safe.

Scam ads to watch for

- Famous brands at wild, "today only" discounts, or "going out of business" sales from stores you've never heard of.
- "Miracle" health cures, weight-loss pills, or treatments that sound too good to be true.
- Investment or "get rich" schemes, especially anything mentioning cryptocurrency or "guaranteed returns."
- An ad claiming your phone has a "virus" or a "problem," urging you to tap at once to "fix" it. (This one is always a scam — ads cannot scan your phone.)

Handling ads safely

Most ads can be skipped after about five seconds — watch for the **Skip** button and use it. Never buy from an ad in a hurry. If a product genuinely interests you, **look the company up separately** — search its name, read about it — before handing over a penny or any card details. A real, honest business will still be there after you've checked.

SCAM ALERT

The fake 'virus warning' is always a lie

If an ad (or a page) suddenly shouts that your device is infected, your account is at risk, or you must call a number **right now** — it is a scam, 100% of the time. Don't call, don't tap, don't panic. Close it (your phone's back button or Home button), and carry on. No honest warning ever arrives as a flashing ad demanding you call a number.

TIP

Premium removes ads entirely — one honest fix

If scam-flavored ads trouble you, remember that **YouTube Premium** (Chapter 4) removes *all* advertisements. It's a paid choice, not a requirement — but for some folks, peace of mind from never seeing a dodgy ad again is worth the monthly cost. Only you can weigh that up.

CHAPTER 42

Deepfakes & 'Too Good to Be True'

A newer trick worth knowing about: scammers now use computers to create fake videos of real, famous people — a doctor, a celebrity, a trusted news anchor — saying things they never said. These are called **deepfakes**, and they're used to lend a familiar, trusted face to a scam.

What a deepfake is

A **deepfake** is a video (or voice) made by a computer to look and sound like a real person. The technology has got good enough that a quick look can fool anyone — so a famous face endorsing a product or a "money opportunity" is **no longer proof** that the person really said it. The crook borrows a trusted face to make a lie more believable.

How to stay a step ahead

- Judge by the **ask**, not the face. If a video — however familiar the person — ends by asking you to send money, buy crypto, or click to claim, it's a scam regardless of who appears to be speaking.
- A genuinely famous person does not need you, personally, to send them money or join a secret money scheme. That's never how real life works.
- If a claim is important, check it the ordinary way: a reputable news site, the company's real website, or by asking someone you trust — not the video itself.

GOOD TO KNOW

The golden rule still holds

You don't need to become an expert at spotting fakes. The old rule outlasts every new trick: **if it sounds too good to be true, it is** — no matter whose face is on the screen. Keep that rule and the fanciest deepfake in the world can't separate you from your money.

CHAPTER 43

Protecting Kids & Grandkids: YouTube Kids

If little ones watch YouTube at your house, a word on keeping their viewing gentle and safe. Regular YouTube holds the whole world — not all of it suitable for children — so Google makes a separate, friendlier version for them: **YouTube Kids**.

What YouTube Kids is

YouTube Kids is a separate free app, with a bright, simple design, that shows only videos judged suitable for children, with far stronger controls for the grown-ups. It's the right place for a grandchild to watch, rather than handing them regular YouTube.

Handy controls for grandparents

- **Age settings** — choose a content level to match the child's age (preschool, older, and so on).
- **A timer** — set how long they can watch; the app gently stops when time's up. A blessing at bedtime.
- **Blocking** — if a video isn't to your liking, block it or its channel so it won't come up again.
- **A grown-up lock** — the settings are tucked behind a simple sum or passcode, so little fingers can't change them.

On regular YouTube, a few safeguards

If an older grandchild uses regular YouTube, you can turn on **Restricted Mode** (found in Settings, sometimes under "General") which screens out more mature content. It's not perfect, but it helps. For younger children, though, YouTube Kids is the safer and simpler choice.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind when the grandkids visit

Setting up YouTube Kids once means you can hand a grandchild the tablet without hovering — the videos are gentle, the timer ends the session for you, and the controls are locked away from curious fingers. A little setup buys a lot of relaxed afternoons.

FROM BILL

I'm glad to set this up with you

Getting YouTube Kids installed, the ages set, and the timer and lock in place is a quick, friendly job — and a popular one before the grandchildren come to stay. If you'd like it done right the first time, give me a call at (330) 200-8042 and we'll sort it together.

PART 8

Handy Extras & When to Call Bill

The useful odds and ends — sharing a video, the mini-player, YouTube Music, and quick fixes — plus a plain cheat-sheet, a glossary, and an honest word about when to pick up the phone.

CHAPTER 44

Handy Extras: Sharing, Mini-Player & Saving

A grab-bag of small, genuinely useful features that make everyday YouTube nicer. None are essential — but each is a pleasant trick to have up your sleeve.

Sharing a video with family

Found something your daughter would love? Under the video, tap **Share**. You'll be offered ways to send it — a text message, email, or an app like Messenger. Pick one, choose the person, and off it goes. They tap the link and the video opens for them. A lovely way to say "this made me think of you."

The mini-player — keep watching while you browse

If you swipe a playing video **down** toward the bottom of the screen, it shrinks to a small **mini-player** in the corner and keeps playing while you browse for the next thing. Tap it to bring it back to full size, or swipe it off the screen to close it. Handy for lining up what's next without stopping the current video.

Saving (downloading) for no-internet watching

If you have **Premium** (Chapter 4), you can **download** a video — tap the **Download** arrow under it — to watch later with no internet at all. Wonderful for a long car trip, a flight, or a cabin with no Wi-Fi. The video waits in your Library until you're ready.

GOOD TO KNOW

Downloading isn't the same as keeping forever

Downloaded videos live inside the YouTube app for offline watching, and they need Premium. They're not saved into your phone's photo album like a picture, and they tidy themselves away over time. Think of it as borrowing a video to watch on the plane, not owning a copy forever.

CHAPTER 45

YouTube Music & YouTube Kids, Briefly

Besides the main app, Google offers two close cousins you may hear about. Here's what each is, in a nutshell, so the names don't puzzle you.

YouTube Music

YouTube Music is a separate app devoted to music — rather like a radio you fully control. Search for a song, an artist, or an era and it plays, builds playlists, and suggests more you'll like. It's free with ads, and it comes *included* if you pay for YouTube Premium (so Premium folks get it at no extra cost). If music is your main reason for YouTube, it's worth a look — but you can also just play music on regular YouTube and never bother with it.

YouTube Kids

YouTube Kids we met in Part 7 — a separate, free, child-friendly version with gentle videos, a timer, and grown-up controls. It's the right place for little ones to watch. If grandchildren visit, that's the app to put on their tablet.

> **TIP**
>
> **You don't need every app**
>
> Don't feel you must install Music and Kids and all the rest. The one main **YouTube** app does everything most folks ever want. Add the cousins only if you have a specific reason — lots of music-listening, or grandchildren who watch. Otherwise, one app is plenty, and simpler is better.

CHAPTER 46

Making YouTube Easier to See & Hear

If the writing feels small or the sound is hard to follow, you have more control than you might think — and nothing here is permanent, so try things freely and change them back.

Bigger text and a clearer screen

The simplest fix lives in your *phone's* own settings and makes text bigger everywhere, YouTube included. Open your phone's **Settings**, look for **Display** or **Accessibility**, and find **Text Size** — then drag the slider until the words are comfortable. (My iPhone and Android manuals walk through this in detail.)

Captions — read along with everything

We covered **captions** fully in Part 2, but they bear repeating here: turning on the **CC** button puts the spoken words on screen as text. For anyone whose hearing isn't what it was, this one feature transforms YouTube. You can even enlarge the caption text in the gear menu. If you try one thing from this chapter, try captions.

Dark mode — easier on the eyes at night

YouTube can switch to a **dark** background with light writing, which many folks find restful in the evening. Tap your **profile circle** (top right), then **Settings**, then look for **Appearance** or **Dark theme**, and try it. Don't care for it? Switch it right back — no harm done.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Set it up for your eyes and ears, not someone else's

There's no prize for squinting or straining to hear. A few minutes making the text larger, the captions on, and the screen comfortable turns every video into a pleasure instead of a chore. Make YouTube fit *you*.

CHAPTER 47

Quick Fixes: When Something Won't Work

Now and then YouTube acts up — a video won't play, the app freezes, the sound's gone, it keeps pausing to load. Before you worry, try these simple fixes, which solve the great majority of everyday hiccups.

The six things to try, in order

1. **Check your internet.** YouTube needs Wi-Fi or data. If other things won't load either, that's the culprit — move nearer your router or check your connection.
2. **Check the volume.** No sound? Make sure the phone isn't muted (side switch or volume buttons) and the video itself isn't muted (tap it, check the speaker icon).
3. **Lower the picture quality.** Keeps pausing to load? Tap the gear, then Quality, and pick a lower number or "Data saver" (Part 2).
4. **Close and reopen the app.** Fully close YouTube and open it fresh. This clears most little glitches.
5. **Restart the phone or TV.** Turn it off and on again. It's the oldest fix in the book because it so often works.
6. **Update the app.** An out-of-date app can misbehave. Check your phone's app store for a YouTube update and install it.

TIP

"Have you tried turning it off and on again?" really is the answer

It sounds like a joke, but restarting the app — or the whole device — genuinely fixes most everyday problems. It's the first thing I try on a call, and nine times in ten it's all that's needed. It never deletes a thing, either — your subscriptions and playlists are safe.

FROM BILL

When the quick fixes don't do it, that's what I'm for

If you've tried these steps and something's still not right, don't spend your whole afternoon wrestling with it. That's exactly the moment to call me at (330) 200-8042. A fresh pair of eyes often sorts it out in minutes, and you get your afternoon back.

CHAPTER 48

Your YouTube Cheat-Sheet

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

Getting around

To do this…	Do this
Go back to the main screen	Tap the house (Home) at the bottom
Find a video	Tap the magnifying glass (Search), type or speak it
See new videos from channels you follow	Tap Subscriptions at the bottom
Find your playlists, history, Watch Later	Tap You / Library at the bottom
Go back one step	Tap the back arrow (top-left) or your phone's Back button

While watching

To do this…	Do this
Show or hide the controls	Tap once on the video
Pause or play	Tap the video, then the bars (pause) or triangle (play)
Go back ten seconds	Double-tap the left side of the video
Turn on subtitles	Tap the video, then the CC button
Make it fill the screen	Tap the video, then the full-screen corners icon
Slow it down or speed it up	Tap the gear, then Playback speed
Fix a video that keeps loading	Tap the gear, then Quality, pick a lower number

Following & saving

To do this…	Do this
Follow a channel	Tap Subscribe on the channel or a video
Save a video for tonight	Tap Save, then Watch later
Make a collection	Tap Save, then New playlist, and name it
Send a video to the TV	Tap the Cast icon, pick your TV
Share with family	Tap Share, choose a person

Staying safe

Situation	What to do
"You've won a prize!"	Ignore it. You can't win what you never entered
Asked to pay to claim a prize	Stop — it's a scam, every time. Send nothing
Link or phone number in a comment	Don't click or call. Reach companies yourself
Ad says your phone has a virus	It's a lie. Don't tap or call. Close it
"Double your money" / crypto offer	A fraud. Whatever you send is gone
Not sure about something	Call Bill first — (330) 200-8042.

CHAPTER 49

A Plain-English Glossary of YouTube Words

YouTube has a vocabulary all its own, and the words can make simple things sound harder than they are. Here's a plain-English dictionary of the terms you'll meet. Keep it handy for the first few weeks; soon you won't need it.

Word	What it means
Video	A moving picture with sound — the thing you watch. The whole point of YouTube.
Channel	One creator's collection of videos — their own "TV station" you can follow.
Creator	A person or company that makes and posts videos.
Thumbnail	The little preview picture of a video, which you tap to play it.
Subscribe	To follow a channel so its new videos come to you. Free.
Subscriptions	Your feed of new videos from channels you follow.
The bell	Sets how often a channel notifies you of new videos.
Playlist	Your own collection of videos, played one after another.
Watch Later	A ready-made list for saving videos to watch another time.
History	YouTube's record of what you've watched (you can clear it).
Home	Your main screen of suggested videos.
Shorts	Very short videos, flicked through one after another.
Like / Dislike	A thumbs-up or thumbs-down to signal your taste. Private.
Comment	A public note you write beneath a video.
Captions / CC	The spoken words shown on screen as text (subtitles).
Full screen	Making the video fill the whole screen.
Quality	How sharp the picture is (480p, 1080p…); higher uses more internet.
Autoplay	YouTube automatically starting another video when one ends.
Cast	Sending a video from your phone to play on the TV.
Premium	The paid version — no ads, background play, downloads, Music.
Algorithm	YouTube's automatic guessing of what you'd like to watch.
Clickbait	A thumbnail or title built to trick you into clicking.

Word	What it means
Verified badge	A check-mark showing YouTube confirmed a channel is genuine.

CHAPTER 50

When to Call Bill

I built this book so you could do most things on YouTube yourself, at your own pace, with confidence. And you can. But part of doing things well is knowing when a task is worth handing to someone who does it every day — so you can spend your time enjoying YouTube instead of wrestling with it. Here's my honest take on when to pick up the phone.

Good reasons to call

- You'd like help **signing in** with a Google account, or you're **locked out** and the recovery steps aren't working.
- You got a **"you've won" message, an odd ad, or a suspicious link** and you'd like a **second opinion** before you do anything — always a good call, never a bother.
- You want to **watch YouTube on your TV** and would like help setting up a streaming stick, casting, or a smart-TV app.
- You'd like to set up **YouTube Kids** — ages, a timer, and the grown-up lock — before the grandchildren visit.
- You'd like to sit down and **learn** — searching, subscriptions, playlists — with a patient person beside you.
- Something just isn't working the way this book describes, and you've tried once or twice.

What working with me is like

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

How to reach me	
Call or text	(330) 200-8042
Book online	billshometech.com/book
Where I serve	Portage County, Ohio and nearby
What it costs	Fair, honest, and told to you up front — no surprises

FROM BILL

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

Some folks hesitate to call because they don't want to be a nuisance. Please don't feel that way. Helping you is not an interruption to my work — it *is* my work, and it's work I love. Whether it's a five-minute question or setting up YouTube on your TV from scratch, I'm glad to help. That's what I'm here for.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you reach my website, you may meet Sophie

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

Thank you for letting me be your guide through YouTube. Take your time, enjoy the music, the memories, and all the learning the world has to offer, stay safe, and remember — you really can't break it, and you're never stuck alone. I'm proud of you for learning something new.

— Bill