

Vision Tech

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home Handbook

18 free step-by-step guides in plain English

Free to print and share.

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Setting up a Google Nest Mini or Nest Hub in the Google Home app

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

A Nest Mini (speaker) or Nest Hub (speaker with a screen) is set up using the free Google Home app on your phone. This guide walks you through it in plain steps. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Before you start

- Plug the speaker or display into the mains and wait for it to start up.
- Make sure your phone is connected to your home Wi-Fi, with Bluetooth and location switched on.
- Have your Wi-Fi password to hand, and a Google account (an ordinary Gmail address is fine).

Set it up

1. Install the **Google Home** app from the App Store or Google Play, and sign in with your Google account.
2. Tap **+** (Add) and choose the option to set up a device. The wording is usually **Set up device** then **New device**.
3. Choose your home, or create one if asked.
4. The app searches nearby. When it finds your speaker, tap **Next**. It will play a sound; confirm you heard it.
5. Pick the room, choose your Wi-Fi network and enter the password.
6. Follow the on-screen offers. You will be asked about voice recognition, music services and permissions. You can skip anything you are unsure about and change it later.

Tips

- Use your home Wi-Fi name and password exactly, including capital letters.
- If the app cannot find the speaker, move closer, switch Bluetooth off and on, and try again.
- Google has been changing its voice assistant and the Home app. Some households are being offered an upgrade to a newer assistant called Gemini for Home. Read the offer carefully before accepting, as Google says it cannot be switched back afterwards.

Try it out

Say "Hey Google, what's the weather?" If you get an answer, setup is done.

When to get more help

Get help if the app cannot find your speaker after two or three tries, if setup stops at the Wi-Fi step, or if you are asked to sign in to an account you do not recognise. Do not factory reset unless advised, as this wipes all settings.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Nest speaker or display says 'Something went wrong' or shows offline

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When a Google Nest speaker or display says "Something went wrong", or the Google Home app says it is offline, it has usually lost its connection to your internet. Most cases are fixed with a restart. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Start with the simple checks

1. Check that other devices (phone, TV) can get online using the same Wi-Fi. If they cannot, the problem is your broadband or router, not the speaker.
2. Look at the speaker. Check it has power and is not showing an error on screen.
3. Make sure the microphone switch has not been slid off, as this stops it listening.

Restart the speaker

1. Unplug the power cable from the speaker or display.
2. Wait 30 seconds.
3. Plug it back in and wait a few minutes for it to start.

Many people skip this. It fixes more faults than anything else.

Restart the router

If the speaker still will not connect, switch off your Wi-Fi router at the mains, wait a minute, switch it on again and wait about five minutes for it to settle. Then check the speaker again.

Check the Google Home app

- Open the **Google Home** app and see whether the device shows as offline.
- Check you are signed in with the same Google account that set the speaker up.
- Make sure the app and your phone are up to date.

If you changed your Wi-Fi

A new router, a new Wi-Fi name or a new password means the speaker must be told. See our guide on changing Wi-Fi on a Nest speaker.

When to get more help

Get help if the speaker stays offline after a restart of both speaker and router, or if it works for a few minutes and then drops again. Avoid factory resetting it as a first step, because it erases your settings and you will have to set it up again from scratch.

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Changing the Wi-Fi network on a Nest speaker or display

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If you have a new router, a new Wi-Fi name or a new password, your Nest speaker or display needs to be told. You do this in the Google Home app on your phone. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Before you begin

- Connect your phone to the new Wi-Fi network first.
- Have the new Wi-Fi password ready.
- Stand reasonably near the speaker. It is easier if the speaker is switched on and still powered.

Change the network

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap the speaker or display you want to change.
3. Tap the **Settings** cog (top right).
4. Look for the Wi-Fi entry. It is usually called **Wi-Fi** under device information or settings.
5. Choose the option to forget the old network, then follow the prompts to choose the new one and enter the password.

Google can change where this option sits. If you cannot see it, look under the device settings for anything mentioning Wi-Fi or network, and check Google's Nest help page for your exact model.

If the speaker is offline and cannot be reached

When the old Wi-Fi no longer exists, the app may not be able to change settings. In that case you may need to remove the speaker from the app and set it up again as a new device. See our setup guide. Do this carefully: you may lose settings such as room names, but your Google account stays safe.

Tips

- Most Nest speakers use ordinary home Wi-Fi. If your router offers separate 2.4GHz and 5GHz networks, try the 2.4GHz one if there are connection problems.
- Do the change for every speaker and display, one by one.

When to get more help

Get help if the speaker cannot find your new network, keeps asking for the password again, or you cannot see it in the app any more. Factory resetting is a last resort and wipes the device settings, so check with us first.

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'Hey Google' is not responding on my Nest speaker

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If you say "Hey Google" and nothing happens, the speaker may not be listening, may have lost its internet connection, or may not recognise your voice. Work through these checks in order. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

The quick checks

1. Look at the microphone switch on the speaker. If it is set to off, it will not listen. Slide it back on.
2. Check the volume is turned up.
3. Check the speaker is switched on and shows its lights or screen as normal.
4. Try speaking clearly, a metre or so away, with the TV and other noise switched off.

Check the connection

Open the **Google Home** app and see if the speaker shows as offline. If it does, restart it by unplugging it for 30 seconds, then plugging it back in. See our guide on "Something went wrong" for more.

Check the settings

1. In the **Google Home** app, tap the speaker, then the **Settings** cog.
2. Look for the setting for the wake word, often listed as **Hey Google** or under voice and assistant settings.
3. Make sure it is switched on. You might also see an option to retrain your voice (**Voice Match**).

About Google's recent changes

Google is moving some households from the older Google Assistant to a newer assistant called Gemini for Home, which is being introduced in stages. Google's current help says "Hey Google" should still work. After a change, a speaker may answer differently even when nothing is broken. Google states the move to the newer assistant cannot be undone, so only accept it if you want it.

Other causes

- The speaker is too far from the router. Move it closer or away from thick walls.

When to get more help

Get help if the speaker is on, online and still not responding after a restart, or if you are unsure whether to accept an assistant upgrade offer. We can check the settings with you. Do not factory reset it without advice.

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Setting up a Chromecast with Google TV or an older Chromecast

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

A Chromecast plugs into a spare HDMI socket on your TV. Chromecast with Google TV comes with its own remote and is set up on screen with a phone. Older Chromecast sticks have no remote and use only the Google Home app. Google has stopped selling some models, but existing ones are still in use. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

What you need

- A TV with a free HDMI socket and a nearby power source.
- Your home Wi-Fi name and password.
- A phone with the **Google Home** app.

Plug it in

1. Plug the Chromecast into the HDMI socket on the back or side of your TV.
2. Connect its power cable to the mains plug that came with it. The USB socket on a TV is often too weak, so use the mains adaptor if you have problems.
3. Switch the TV on and choose the HDMI input the Chromecast is plugged into.

Chromecast with Google TV

1. Put the batteries into the remote and follow the on-screen instructions.
2. Pair the remote when asked, then choose your language.
3. On the TV, choose the option to set up with your phone. Follow the steps in the Google Home app, or set up on the TV screen using the remote.
4. Sign in with your Google account and pick your Wi-Fi.

Older Chromecast (no remote)

1. Open the **Google Home** app on your phone.
2. Tap + and set up a new device. The app finds the Chromecast.
3. Confirm the code shown on the TV matches the phone, then choose your Wi-Fi and enter the password.

Good to know

- Keep the Chromecast and your phone on the same Wi-Fi network when casting.
- Give it a few minutes if it installs an update, and do not unplug it.

When to get more help

Get help if the Chromecast is not found by the app, sticks on the logo or update screen, or you do not have the Wi-Fi details. Do not use the reset button until we say so, as it wipes the device and starts again from scratch.

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Chromecast says 'Can't cast' or does not appear in my list

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When you tap the cast icon and your Chromecast does not appear, or you see a message such as "Can't cast", it is nearly always a network problem. The phone or laptop and the Chromecast must be on the same Wi-Fi. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Check these first

1. Is the Chromecast powered on and showing a picture on the TV, with the right HDMI input selected?
2. Is your phone or laptop on the same Wi-Fi network? Many routers have two networks (for example "Home" and "Home-5G"). Casting may fail if the two devices are on different ones.
3. Is a VPN or "guest Wi-Fi" in use on your phone or laptop? These can stop the Chromecast being found. Switch the VPN off for a test.

Simple fixes

1. Turn off the Wi-Fi on your phone or laptop, wait a few seconds and turn it on again.
2. Unplug the Chromecast power for 30 seconds and plug it back in.
3. Restart the router: switch off, wait a minute and switch on, then wait about five minutes.
4. Close the app you are casting from and try again. Make sure the app is up to date.

Permissions

- iPhone: in **Settings**, open the cast-capable app (or the Google Home app) and check **Local Network** is switched on. Without it, the phone cannot find the Chromecast.
- Android: make sure the Google Home app has the permission it asks for to find nearby devices.

Other causes

- The Chromecast is far from the router and has a weak signal.
- Your router has a feature that stops devices talking to each other, sometimes called "AP isolation" or "client isolation". Changing router settings can be tricky, so ask for help before changing it.

When to get more help

Get help if the Chromecast is never found by any phone or laptop, or if it was working and suddenly stopped after a new router was fitted. Do not factory reset it unless advised, as it wipes all settings.

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Casting to your TV from an iPhone, Android phone or Chrome on a laptop

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Casting means sending a video, music or a web page from your phone or laptop to your TV, using a Chromecast or a TV with Chromecast built in. The phone or laptop does not stream the video itself once it starts. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Before you start

- The TV device and your phone or laptop must be on the same Wi-Fi network.
- Switch on the TV and the Chromecast.

From an app on iPhone or Android

1. Open an app that supports casting, such as YouTube, iPlayer or Netflix.
2. Find the **Cast** icon. It looks like a small TV with Wi-Fi waves in the corner, usually near the top of the screen.
3. Tap it and choose your TV or Chromecast from the list.
4. Start the video. It will appear on the TV, and your phone becomes a remote.

Mirroring an Android screen

Some Android phones have a screen-casting option in the quick settings panel (swipe down from the top). Its name varies between makes, for example **Cast** or **Smart View**. Check your phone's help if you cannot find it.

From Chrome on a laptop

1. Open the **Google Chrome** browser.
2. Click the three dots at the top right.
3. Find **Cast** in the menu. It might sit within a **Save, share and cast** group, depending on your version.
4. Choose your TV or Chromecast, then choose what to cast: a single browser tab is usually best.
5. To stop, click the cast icon in Chrome and choose the device again, then stop.

Things to know

- iPhone does not use Apple's AirPlay for Chromecast. Use the cast icon in each app instead.
- Some services restrict what can be cast, or need an account.

When to get more help

Get help if there is no cast icon, your TV is never listed, or the picture is stuttering even with a good signal. Our guide "Can't cast" covers the common network causes.

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Nest thermostat basics: setting the temperature and schedule

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Google Nest thermostats can be controlled on the wall and from the Google Home app. This guide covers the basics for the Nest Learning Thermostat and Nest Thermostat. Models differ, and in the UK some use a separate box called a Heat Link. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

On the thermostat itself

- On the Learning Thermostat, turn the metal ring to change the temperature, and press the ring to open the menu.
- The Nest Thermostat has a touch strip: slide your finger along the side to change the temperature and press to select.
- The thermostat shows the target temperature you have chosen and sometimes the current room temperature too.

Changing the temperature from your phone

1. Open the **Google Home** app.
2. Tap your thermostat.
3. Use the plus and minus buttons or the dial to change the target temperature.

Schedules and learning

Nest thermostats can follow a schedule you set, and the Learning model can also learn from how you adjust it. If the heating comes on at the wrong time, open the schedule in the app and change it, rather than fighting the dial every day.

Eco and away

Many Nest thermostats have an **Eco** or away mode that lowers the heating when the house is empty. If your heating seems to be staying off, check it has not been left in Eco.

Useful reminders

- Hot water control is not included on every Nest model, so check what you have.
- The room temperature setting is a target, not a speed. Setting it very high does not warm the house faster.
- Check the thermostat is up to date. Updates install on their own when it is connected.

When to get more help

Get help if the screen is blank, the app says the heating cannot be controlled, or the boiler does not respond. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer for anything involving the boiler or wiring. Do not remove the thermostat from the wall or touch wiring yourself.

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Nest thermostat offline or heating not responding

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If your Nest thermostat shows as offline in the Google Home app, or the heating is not doing what you asked, there are a few simple checks to try before calling anyone. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Step one: is it just the Wi-Fi?

1. Check whether other devices can get online on your Wi-Fi.
2. Look at the thermostat display. Does it show a Wi-Fi problem or a message?
3. If it displays a temperature and you can still control it on the wall, the heating may still work even when the app does not.

Step two: restart the thermostat

Restart options sit in the thermostat's settings menu. On the Learning Thermostat, press the ring, choose **Settings**, then look for a **Reset** or restart choice. On the Nest Thermostat, press the touch strip to open the menu and look for settings. Pick only **Restart**. Do not pick a full factory **Reset** if offered, as that deletes your schedule and settings.

Step three: restart the router

Switch your router off, wait a minute, switch on, and give it five minutes. Then see if the thermostat reconnects.

Step four: check the app

- Make sure you are signed in with the right Google account.
- Check the thermostat is in the correct home in the app.
- Update the Google Home app.

If the screen is blank or low battery shows

Nest thermostats take power from the heating system. A blank screen or "battery low" message can mean the unit is not charging properly, or that the heating system or Heat Link has lost power. Check your boiler has power and the display is not frozen.

Not heating

- Check the target is higher than the room temperature.
- Check the thermostat is not set to Eco or off.
- Check the boiler is on and has pressure.

When to get more help

Get help if the thermostat will not come back online after a restart, or if the screen stays blank. Anything involving the boiler, wiring or the Heat Link should be handled by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer.

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Hive heating thermostat basics: temperature, schedule and boost

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Hive thermostats work with the Hive app and a Hive Hub that connects to your router with a cable (some newer or smaller models connect differently, so check yours). They let you change the heating from the wall or your phone. Features depend on your model. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

On the wall

- Press the thermostat's buttons to raise or lower the temperature. The **Boost** button gives a short burst of heat.
- Many models have a screen showing the target temperature.

In the Hive app

1. Open the **Hive** app and sign in.
2. Choose **Heating** on the home screen.
3. Use the controls to choose a mode, usually **Schedule**, **Manual** or **Off**, depending on your set-up.
4. Use **Boost** for a quick warm-up, and pick how long it runs.

Changing the schedule

1. In the **Hive** app, open your heating.
2. Look for the **Schedule** option.
3. Pick the day, then tap a time slot to change the time or temperature.
4. Save the changes.

If it will not respond

- Check the Hub has its power light on and is plugged into the router with the network cable.
- Check your broadband is working.
- Check the thermostat's batteries. Many Hive thermostats run on batteries and show a warning when low.
- Restart the router, then the Hub by unplugging it for 30 seconds.

Good to know

- Setting the temperature very high does not heat a room faster.
- If the heating is on a schedule but not coming on, check the mode is not set to Off or Manual.

When to get more help

Get help if the app shows the Hub as offline after a restart, the heating does not respond, or you are unsure about the boiler. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer for boiler problems, and do not open the receiver or touch wiring yourself.

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Nest or Ring doorbell or camera shows offline

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A video doorbell or camera that goes offline cannot record or send alerts, so it is worth fixing quickly. The cause is usually the Wi-Fi signal or a flat battery. This covers Google Nest and Ring devices. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Check the basics

1. Is the doorbell or camera powered? Wired doorbells need their power supply and battery doorbells need charge.
2. Do other devices work on your Wi-Fi?
3. Has anything changed recently, such as a new router, a new Wi-Fi name, a power cut or a changed password?

Battery devices

- Charge the battery fully using the cable that came with it, or remove it and charge it, depending on the model.

Check the signal

A doorbell is often at the far side of the house, behind a thick wall or metal door. Weak signal is the most common cause of offline cameras.

- In the **Ring** app, look for **Device Health** to see the signal strength. Ring says the app shows this information.
- In the **Google Home** app, open the camera or doorbell and check its status.
- If signal is weak, try moving the router, or add a Wi-Fi extender or mesh unit nearer the front door. Ring also sells a Chime Pro extender.

Restart

1. Restart the router first (off for a minute, then on).
2. Then restart the camera or doorbell. For Ring, hold the **setup** button for a few seconds, depending on the model. For wired Nest devices, switch off the power at the fuse for 30 seconds. If unsure, ask us before doing anything with fuses.

If you changed the Wi-Fi

You will need to reconnect the device to the new network in its app. In the Ring app, open the device, then **Device Health**, and look for a **Change Wi-Fi Network** option. Names may vary.

When to get more help

Get help if the device keeps going offline after improving the signal, you are unsure about handling wiring, or the device stays dark. Do not factory reset unless advised, as you may lose settings and have to add the device again.

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Doorbell or camera alerts arriving late or not at all

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Alerts that come late, or not at all, are frustrating when you want to know who is at the door. Late alerts are usually caused by phone settings, not by a faulty camera. This applies to Ring and Google Nest doorbells and cameras. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Check your phone first

1. Make sure notifications are switched on for the app. On iPhone, open **Settings**, then **Notifications**, then find **Ring** or **Google Home**. On Android, open **Settings**, then **Apps**, then the app, then **Notifications**.
2. Switch off **Do Not Disturb** or Focus modes, or allow the app through them.
3. Switch off battery saver modes for the app, which can delay alerts on Android.
4. Make sure the app is allowed to refresh in the background.

Check the app's alert settings

- In **Ring**, open the device and look at **Motion Settings** and **Notification** options. Check motion alerts are switched on and any schedule is correct.
- In **Google Home**, open the camera or doorbell and look at its notification and activity settings. Check which alerts you have chosen.

Check the camera

- Motion zones set up wrongly can block alerts. Review them.
- A weak signal slows alerts. See our guide on cameras going offline.
- Low battery may restrict how often battery devices wake up.

Subscriptions

Some features, such as saved recordings or certain alerts, need a paid plan. The details depend on the brand and plan. Check the account page in the app if something has stopped.

Test it

Walk in front of the camera, or press the doorbell, and watch how long the alert takes. Try with phone Wi-Fi on and then using mobile data, to see whether your home network is the issue.

When to get more help

Get help if alerts have never arrived, stopped after a phone change, or are always several minutes late despite a strong signal. We can check settings with you.

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Setting up a Ring doorbell or camera and getting the Wi-Fi right

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Ring devices are set up using the Ring app. Most of the problems people have are down to Wi-Fi or an unfinished charge. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Before you start

- Charge a battery model fully if it came with a battery that needs charging.
- Have your Wi-Fi name and password ready, and a Ring account.
- Stand near the device with your phone, connected to your home Wi-Fi.

Set up

1. Install the **Ring** app and sign in, or create an account.
2. Tap the menu or the add button and choose the option to set up a device. Choose the type, for example doorbell or camera.
3. Scan the QR code on the device or its box when asked.
4. Choose the location (your address), name the device and follow the prompts.
5. Press the **setup** button on the device when told. It is a small round button, and its position depends on the model.
6. Choose your Wi-Fi network and type the password. Wait for the app to confirm.

Wi-Fi tips

- Most Ring devices use a 2.4GHz Wi-Fi band. Some newer models also support 5GHz. Check your model in the Ring help pages.
- If your router has combined names for both bands, try setting up while closer to the router, or temporarily using the 2.4GHz network.
- Keep the Wi-Fi signal strong at the front door. A Wi-Fi extender can help.
- Do not use a Wi-Fi name with unusual symbols, as some devices struggle with them.

After set up

- Test the motion alerts and the live view.
- Check Ring app notifications are allowed.
- Decide whether you want a paid plan for recordings. Without one, you can usually still see live view and get alerts, but video is not saved. Check what is offered when you set up.

When to get more help

Get help if the app cannot find the device, setup times out at the Wi-Fi step, or you are fitting a wired doorbell and are unsure about the electrics. Do not factory reset unless advised.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Medium | 2 min read

Setting up a Tapo camera, plug or bulb and fixing connection problems

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Tapo is a brand of smart plugs, bulbs and cameras made by TP-Link. All Tapo devices are set up with the Tapo app. This is not official Tapo advice, but follows the usual steps. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Before you start

- Plug in or power the Tapo device and wait for the light to flash. A flashing light often means it is ready for setup.
- Connect your phone to your home Wi-Fi, ideally the 2.4GHz network.
- Have your Wi-Fi password to hand.

Add the device

1. Install the **Tapo** app and sign in or create a TP-Link account.
2. Tap + (Add device) and choose your device from the list.
3. Follow the on-screen steps. The app tells you when to connect, and may ask your phone to briefly join the device's own Wi-Fi.
4. Choose your home Wi-Fi and enter the password.
5. Give the device a name and room.

If it will not connect

- **2.4GHz.** Many smart plugs and bulbs only work on 2.4GHz Wi-Fi. If your router combines 2.4GHz and 5GHz under one name, try setting up while your phone is close to the router, or use the router's settings to give the 2.4GHz band its own name. Ask us if you are unsure.
- Move closer to the router.
- Switch off any VPN on your phone.
- Check location and nearby device permissions for the app.

Try again

1. Switch off the device, wait 10 seconds and switch on.
2. If the light is not flashing, a reset is needed. Check the instructions for your model before doing this, as reset methods differ. A reset removes its settings, so do not do it unless needed.
3. Retry the setup.

When to get more help

Get help if the device still will not join after trying 2.4GHz, or if your router needs settings changed. A factory reset removes all settings on the device, so ask us first if you are not sure how to do it.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Easy | 2 min read

Apple HomePod basics: set up, Siri and AirPlay

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

HomePod and HomePod mini are Apple smart speakers. They work with iPhone and iPad and use Siri for voice commands. This guide covers the basics. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Setting up

1. Plug in the HomePod and wait for a white light to pulse and a chime to play.
2. Unlock your iPhone and hold it close to the HomePod. A set-up card should appear on the phone.
3. Tap **Set Up** and follow the steps. Choose a room, accept the settings and allow it to use your Apple account.
4. Wait for it to finish. It may then say it is ready.

You need an iPhone or iPad. HomePod cannot be fully set up with an Android phone.

Everyday use

- Say "Hey Siri" followed by what you want, for example "Hey Siri, play some music" or "what's the weather?".
- Tap the top of the HomePod to pause or play. Touch and hold to talk to Siri.
- Tap the plus and minus on top to change the volume.

Playing music

You can ask for music from Apple Music if you subscribe. Other services depend on settings and what Apple supports. You can also play anything from your iPhone using AirPlay, covered in our AirPlay guide.

Managing it

Open the **Home** app on your iPhone, then tap and hold the HomePod to see its settings, including its name, room and Siri options.

If Siri does not respond

- Check the HomePod has power, a light shows when you speak, and it is connected to Wi-Fi.
- Unplug it for 10 seconds, plug back in and wait for it to restart.
- Make sure your iPhone, with the same Apple account, is on the same Wi-Fi.

When to get more help

Get help if the card does not appear on your iPhone, the HomePod says it is having trouble connecting, or you wish to share it with others in the home. Avoid resetting it unless advised, as it will wipe the settings.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Medium | 2 min read

AirPlay or HomePod not showing up on my iPhone, Mac or TV

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

AirPlay lets you send music, video or your screen from an Apple device to a HomePod, Apple TV or AirPlay-compatible speaker or TV. If you cannot see your device in the list, the cause is usually the network. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Quick checks

1. Make sure both devices are switched on and awake.
2. Make sure they are on the same Wi-Fi network. If your router has two networks, check both devices are on the same one.
3. Check Wi-Fi is turned on, and Bluetooth is on, on your iPhone or Mac.
4. Update both devices if updates are available.

On an iPhone

1. Swipe to open **Control Centre**.
2. Use the AirPlay icon in the music panel, or the **Screen Mirroring** button.
3. Choose your device from the list.

On a Mac

- Click **Control Centre** in the menu bar and look for **Screen Mirroring** or the AirPlay icon in the sound or music section.

If it is missing

1. Restart the device you are playing to. For HomePod, unplug for 10 seconds. For an Apple TV or smart TV, restart it from its settings.
2. Restart your iPhone or Mac.
3. Restart your router, waiting five minutes afterwards.
4. On iPhone, check **Settings**, then **Privacy and Security**, then **Local Network**. Make sure the app you use has access.
5. Turn off any VPN while testing.

On a TV

Some TVs have AirPlay switched off in their settings. Look for AirPlay or Apple Home options in the TV's settings menu. The exact location depends on the TV make.

Other tips

- Guest Wi-Fi can block AirPlay.

- Some routers stop devices from seeing each other. If so, ask us to check, as the router settings can be fiddly.

When to get more help

Get help if the device is never listed, or it appears and then keeps disconnecting. Do not factory reset the HomePod or the TV unless we advise it, as this removes settings.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Medium | 2 min read

Selling or giving away a smart speaker, display or camera: wiping it first

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Before you sell, give away or recycle a smart speaker, display, doorbell or camera, you should remove it from your account and wipe it. A factory reset puts it back to how it was in the box. Otherwise the next owner could see your Wi-Fi details, or you could be locked to the device. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Warning

A factory reset erases the device settings and cannot be undone. Only do it when you are sure you no longer want to use it.

Step 1: remove it from your account

- **Google Nest or Home:** open the **Google Home** app, tap the device, tap the **Settings** cog and look for an option to remove the device or reset it. Names change, so look for **Remove device** or **Factory reset**.
- **Apple HomePod:** open the **Home** app, tap and hold the HomePod and scroll down to find the option to reset the HomePod or remove the accessory.
- **Ring:** open the **Ring** app, tap the device, open its settings and look for the option to remove the device from your account. A device that is still on your account usually cannot be set up by someone else.
- **Tapo or Hive:** remove the device in its app first.

Step 2: factory reset

Methods depend on the model. Look up the steps for your exact model on the maker's help page. If the app offers a reset option, use it.

Step 3: tidy up

1. Check the device no longer appears in your app.
2. Remove any linked music accounts.
3. Download any camera clips you wish to keep before wiping a camera or doorbell.

When to get more help

Get help if the device will not appear in the app any more, you do not know the account it was set up on, or the reset does not work. We can help you check your account before you hand it over.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

Google Nest, Chromecast & smart home | Easy | 2 min read

Choosing between Alexa, Google Home and Apple HomeKit for beginners

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

All three of the big voice assistants can play music, answer questions and control lights and heating. None is the best for everybody. The right choice mostly depends on the phone you already own and what you want to control. This is an honest, neutral comparison. Apps change their wording and menus from time to time, so what you see may differ slightly from the steps below.

Amazon Alexa

- Works with the widest range of smart plugs, bulbs and gadgets.
- Speakers are usually the cheapest.
- Works well with iPhone or Android.
- It is a good first choice if you want lots of different devices.

Google Home

- Good at answering general questions and works well with Android phones.
- Works with Chromecast and many TVs.
- Google is changing its assistant at the moment, introducing Gemini for Home, and some features and subscriptions are changing, so check what is offered at the time of buying.
- Works fine on iPhone, but needs the Google Home app.

Apple Home (HomePod)

- Works best if you already have iPhones, iPads or Macs.
- Siri can control your devices, and the Home app is simple.
- HomePod speakers sound very good but cost more.
- Fewer third-party gadgets are supported, though this has improved.

How to decide

1. Which phone do you have? Choosing the same maker often feels smoother.
2. What do you want to control? Check the box of a plug or bulb for the words "Works with Alexa", "Works with Google Home" or "Works with Apple Home".
3. Do you care about privacy? All three collect some voice data. Look at the privacy settings in each app and decide what you are comfortable with.
4. What is your budget? Include any subscription costs.

A tip

Sticking to one system at home is simpler than mixing them. Some newer devices work with a standard called Matter, which is meant to let devices work across systems, but it does not remove all differences.

When to get more help

Get help if you are not sure whether a gadget will work with your chosen system, or you already have a mixture and want it tidied. We can help you decide before you buy.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.