STAYING SAFE ONLINE IN 2026

The Cyber Hygiene Checklist

Check each one off as you do it. The first two matter most.

- [ ] **Make sure automatic updates are on**
  Most phones do this already. Double-check your computer, and restart when it asks. If your phone no longer gets security updates, it's time for a new one.
- [ ] **Start using a password manager**
  Bitwarden (free), 1Password, Apple Passwords, or Google Password Manager. Move your email and bank passwords in first.
- [ ] **Use long passwords, not complicated ones**
  A few random words beats short and symbol-y. Let the password manager make the rest.
- [ ] **Never reuse or share passwords**
  Every site gets its own. A leak at one site shouldn't unlock the others.
- [ ] **Turn on two-factor for email, bank, and password manager**
  Use an authenticator app or passkey if offered. Never approve a sign-in request you didn't start.
- [ ] **Check your Wi-Fi router**
  Search its model number (on the sticker) plus "end of life." If it no longer gets updates, replace it.
- [ ] **Ignore pop-ups and "press these keys" checks**
  Websites can't scan your computer. Real "are you human" checks never ask you to paste anything.
- [ ] **Only keep browser extensions you trust**
  Remove any you don't recognize or don't use.
- [ ] **Be skeptical of urgent calls asking for money**
  Even if the voice sounds right. Hang up and call them back, or ask something only they'd know.
- [ ] **Turn on automatic backups**
  iCloud Photos or Google Photos for pictures, OneDrive or Google Drive for files. Losing your phone should never mean losing your photos.
- [ ] **Keep gadgets off Wi-Fi if they don't need it**
  Still use them, just don't connect them. Fewer connected gadgets means fewer ways in.

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