

# Google Home: You won't regret changing these 5 settings

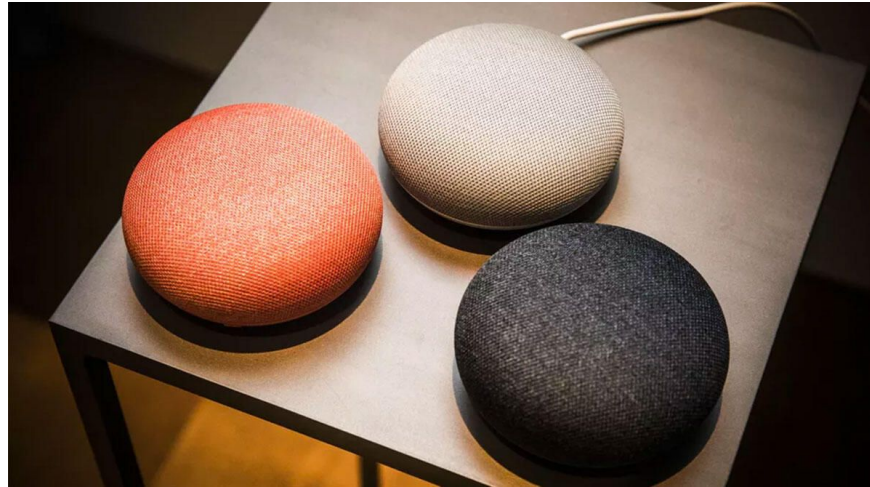
Use notifications to monitor your privacy and security, make speakerphone calls with your primary number and more.

Your Google Home (\$49 at Walmart) smart speaker is only as useful as you make it, and that has a lot to do with how you set it up. But some settings are selected by default and others you may have chosen when you got your first Google Home device but have long since forgotten about, so you might be stuck with choices that aren't your best options.



For example, Google Home tries to get you to sign up for a Google Duo phone number when you first set it up, but did you know you can turn your Google Home device into a speakerphone using your primary phone number -- even if you use an iPhone (\$699 at Apple)?

Whether you just bought your first Google Home smart speaker or you've got them spread across your whole house, here are five settings you should change right now.



## Get notified when someone joins your Google Home group

"I'm the only person in my household," you say. "Why would I want to be notified if someone joins my Google Home group?" Precisely *because* you are the only one who should be authorized to use it, that's why.

This setting isn't just about keeping you informed of changes, it's about security. If your Google account were to get hacked or otherwise compromised, one early warning sign might be an unauthorized user or device being added to your Google Home group.

To get these notifications:

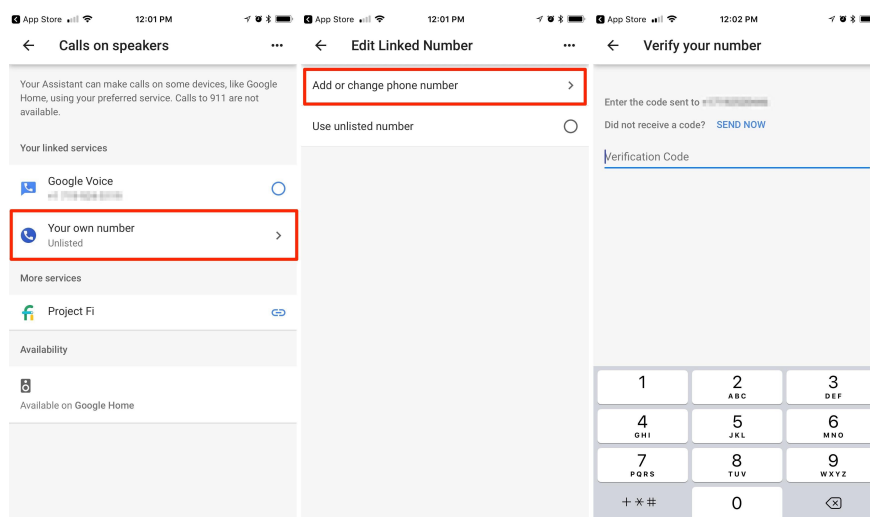
1. Open the **Google Home app** and tap **Settings**, then under **General** tap **Notifications**.
2. If your phone isn't set to allow notifications from Google Home, follow the instructions where it says **Tap here to turn them on in Settings**.
3. Tap General Notifications and toggle on the first option, **People and devices**. If you'd like to receive push notification ads, toggle on **Product updates** as well.



## Speaking of security, when's the last time you checked your privacy settings?

If it's been a long time since you've adjusted the privacy settings in your Google Home app, we have a thorough guide to Google Home security features here. If you're fairly familiar with those security settings but just want to freshen things up a bit, here's how to get to the personal data portal:

1. Open the **Google Home app** and tap your **personal icon** (it could be your photo or a silhouette) in the upper right corner.
2. Select **You** from the menu bar at the top and tap **Your data in the Assistant**.



**Use your primary phone number to make calls from Google Home**

Hands-free calling is one of the greatest Google Home features, but it won't work the way you want it to unless you've set it up right. To make sure Google Home displays your primary phone number when you use it to call out, follow these steps:

1. Open the **Google Home app** and tap **Settings**.
2. Scroll down until you see **Google Assistant services** then tap **Voice & video calls**.
3. Tap **Mobile calling**. If you haven't set it up yet, tap **Your own number** then tap **Add or change phone number**.
4. Google will send a **verification code** to your phone, which you'll need to enter on the next screen.
5. Once your phone number is linked, make sure **Your own number is selected** under **Your linked services**.
6. Under **Contacts**, tap **Upload Now** to sync contacts from your phone.

Now all you have to do to make calls with Google Home is summon Google Assistant ("OK, Google" or "Hey, Google") and say "Call [contact name]."



## **Teach Google Home to call you Captain Beefheart, or any nickname**

My Google Home is currently set to call me Sergeant Pepper for no reason other than I get a kick out of my digital assistant referring to me as a Beatles album. You can have yours call you whatever you want. Note, however, that you may have to spell it out phonetically. To teach Google Home your nickname:

1. Open the **Google Home app** and tap **Settings**, then scroll down and tap **More settings**.
2. Under **You**, tap **Nickname** then under **What should the Assistant call you?** type the nickname you want it to use.

3. Tap **Play** to hear how Google Assistant will say your name. If it doesn't pronounce it correctly, change the spelling until it does.

And yes, you can make it cuss.



## Maximize your musical enjoyment

Not only do Google Home speakers sound great on their own, they get even better when you double or triple or even quadruple them up. In fact, you can add as many speakers as you have in your house to a speaker group. We have detailed instructions on how to use Google Home to create a whole-house audio system here, but here's the simplified version:

1. Open the **Google Home app** and tap the + (plus sign) in the upper left corner.
2. Tap Create speaker group, select the speakers you want to include, then tap **Next**.
3. Under **Name this speaker group**, type a name ("Whole House" or "Living Room," etc.) and tap **Save**.

Another way to uplevel your speakers' sound is to use one as a left and one as a right channel. Here's how to create a speaker pair out of two (of the same) Google Home speakers. You'll want to be sure you've got your music services set up the right way, too. And while you're at it, consider mounting your Google Home or Nest Mini (\$29 at Walmart) on the wall for better sound.

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