



Digital safety guide

YouTube privacy & security



The settings that keep your account, your viewing history, and your family's videos to yourself. Go one section at a time — no need to do it all at once.

Before you start

Your account	YouTube uses your Google Account . Your password, two-step verification, and history all live there, at myaccount.google.com .
Find Settings	In the app, tap You (bottom right), then the gear. On a computer, click your profile picture (top right) > Settings .
Can't find it?	Menus move. Look for the closest match, or search your Google Account.

✓ Do

Turn on 2-Step Verification for your Google Account (page 2).

Upload family videos as Private and share them with chosen people (page 3).

Read the comments on anything you post, and hold them for review.

Keep an eye on what children watch, even with filters on.

✗ Don't

Let children post Public videos. Strangers can find, follow, and comment.

Show your home, street, or a school in videos.

Click links in comments or messages promising prizes or "support."

Trust a "YouTube" email about your channel without checking it inside YouTube Studio.



01 Lock your Google Account

Visit myaccount.google.com/security-checkup and follow each step. Turn on **2-Step Verification**, add a **passkey**, and make sure your recovery phone and email are current.

02 Set your YouTube privacy

Subscriptions and playlists

Profile picture › Settings › Privacy

On a computer, make sure **Keep all my subscriptions private** and **Keep all my saved playlists private** are on. They're private unless you changed them.

Ads

YouTube ads follow your Google ad settings. Turn off personalized ads at myadcenter.google.com.

03 Manage your history

Where it lives

YouTube app › You › Settings › Manage all history

On a computer: myactivity.google.com/product/youtube.

Auto-delete

Choose **Auto-delete** and pick 3 months, so old history clears itself.

Delete or pause

Use **Delete › All time** to clear your watch and search history. Under **Controls** you can also stop saving it.

© *Good to know*

If you turn watch history off completely, YouTube's home page stops recommending videos. Auto-delete is a good middle ground.



04 Decide who sees your videos

Every video you upload has one of three settings:

SETTING	WHO CAN SEE IT
Private	Only you, plus people you invite by email. No comments. Best for family videos.
Unlisted	Anyone with the link. It won't show in search, but a link can be passed along to anyone.
Public	Anyone. It shows in search and recommendations, and copies can spread even after you delete it.
Change a video	On a computer, go to studio.youtube.com › Content and click the arrow under Visibility . In the app, tap You › Your videos , then ⋮ › Edit .
New uploads	In YouTube Studio, go to Settings › Upload defaults and set Visibility to Private .

05 Control comments

Hold for review

YouTube Studio › Settings › Community

Choose **Strict** or **Hold all comments for review**, so nothing appears until you approve it. Add words and links to your **blocked words** list.

Why it matters

Scammers post comments posing as the channel owner or "support," often with a link or a phone number. Holding comments for review keeps them off your videos.



06 For families with children

Young children	Use the separate YouTube Kids app, or a supervised account set up through Google Family Link . Both let a parent choose what's allowed.
Restricted Mode	Filters out most mature videos. In the app: You › Settings › General › Restricted Mode . On a computer, it's at the bottom of the profile-picture menu. Set it on each device; Family Link can lock it on.
Teens	In the US, YouTube uses AI to estimate whether a signed-in user is under 18 and, if so, turns on teen protections such as no personalized ads. Teens can still post, so talk with them about keeping videos Private.

07 If something goes wrong

A video or comment bothers you	Tap  next to it and choose Report . On your own videos, you can also remove the comment or hide the user.
You can't get in	Go to g.co/recover to recover your Google Account, then run the Security Checkup on page 2.

Want a hand with this?

We'll walk through every setting in this guide with you, at your pace.

watchstander.tech hello@watchstander.tech

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