# Supporting Seniors with Technology

Supporting a senior with technology requires moving beyond simple "how-to" instructions and focusing on building their confidence through patience, relevance, and repetition.

## 1. Optimize the Device for Accessibility

Before starting any lessons, adjust the hardware and software to account for physical limitations:

- **Visual Adjustments:** Increase font sizes and icon visibility in the device's **"Accessibility"** or **"Ease of Access"** settings.
- **Simplify the Interface:** Remove unnecessary apps and shortcuts from the home screen. You can also use **"Easy Mode"** on many Android devices or **"Assistive Access"** on newer iPhones to create a highly simplified, high-contrast menu.
- **Voice Control:** Set up voice assistants like Amazon Alexa or Siri to allow hands-free task management, such as setting medication reminders or playing music.

## 2. Effective Teaching Strategies

- **Explain the "Why":** Seniors are more motivated to learn when they see the immediate benefit. Instead of explaining "browser navigation," show them Google Earth to find their childhood home or a video call with a grandchild.
- **Avoid Technical Jargon:** Replace terms like "sync," "cloud," or "cookies" with relatable analogies. For example, compare a web address to a street address.
- **Let Them Drive:** It is tempting to take over when things get slow, but seniors learn best by doing. Guide them verbally while they perform the clicks and swipes themselves.
- **Create "Cheat Sheets":** Write out simple, step-by-step instructions in large print for common tasks (e.g., "How to open a text message") so they have a reference when you aren't there.

## 3. Prioritize Safety & Security

- **Address Scams Early:** Teach the **"Stop. Think. Verify."** rule—remind them never to click suspicious links or give out personal info over the phone.
- **Password Management:** Use a physical notebook kept in a secure location or a password manager so they don't have to memorize complex logins.
- **Safe Browsing:** Help them identify secure websites and configure social media privacy settings to "Friends Only".

## 4. Specialized External Resources

If family dynamics make teaching stressful, these professional and community resources offer dedicated senior support:

- **Senior Planet from AARP:** Provides a free national tech hotline (888-713-3495) and daily online webinars on everything from basic internet use to online banking.
- [Cyber-Seniors](#)**:** Pairs older adults with tech-savvy student mentors for free one-on-one training sessions.
- [Candoo Tech](#)**:** A paid service offering remote and in-home tech concierges who specialize in supporting seniors.
- **Local Libraries:** Many public libraries offer free "computer coach" sessions or digital literacy workshops.