

Password and Privacy Tips

Every Older Adult Should Know

Programs @ The Blue Marble

Keeping your personal information safe online can feel overwhelming, especially with so many new technologies and threats. Older adults often face unique challenges when it comes to protecting their privacy and managing passwords. This guide offers clear, practical advice to help you stay secure and confident while using the internet.



Password manager open on laptop keyboard

Why Passwords Matter More Than Ever

Passwords are the first line of defense against unauthorized access to your accounts. Weak or reused passwords make it easier for hackers to steal your information, leading to identity theft or financial loss. Many older adults use simple passwords or the same password across multiple sites, which increases risk.

Strong passwords should be:

- At least 12 characters long
- A mix of letters, numbers, and symbols

- Unique for each account

Using a password manager can help you create and store strong passwords without needing to remember them all.

How to Create and Manage Strong Passwords

Creating passwords that are both strong and memorable can be tricky. Here are some tips:

- Use a phrase or sentence you can easily remember, such as a favorite quote or song lyric, and turn it into a password by adding numbers and symbols. For example, "I love to walk my dog at 7pm!" could become **IL2wMd@7pm!**
- Avoid using personal information like birthdays, names, or addresses.
- Change passwords regularly, especially for important accounts like email and banking.
- Use two-factor authentication (2FA) when available. This adds an extra step, like a code sent to your phone, making it harder for others to access your accounts.

Protecting Your Privacy Online

Privacy goes beyond passwords. It means controlling what information you share and who can see it.

- Be cautious about sharing personal details on websites or social media.
- Check privacy settings on your accounts and adjust them to limit who can see your information.
- Avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments from unknown sources, as these can contain malware.
- Use secure websites for online shopping or banking. Look for "https://" at the beginning of the web address and a padlock icon in the browser.



Smartphone screen displaying privacy settings menu

Recognizing and Avoiding Scams

Scammers often target older adults by pretending to be trusted organizations or family members. They may ask for passwords, money, or personal information.

Signs of a scam include:

- Urgent requests for money or information
- Unsolicited phone calls or emails asking for passwords or account details
- Offers that seem too good to be true
- Poor spelling or grammar in messages

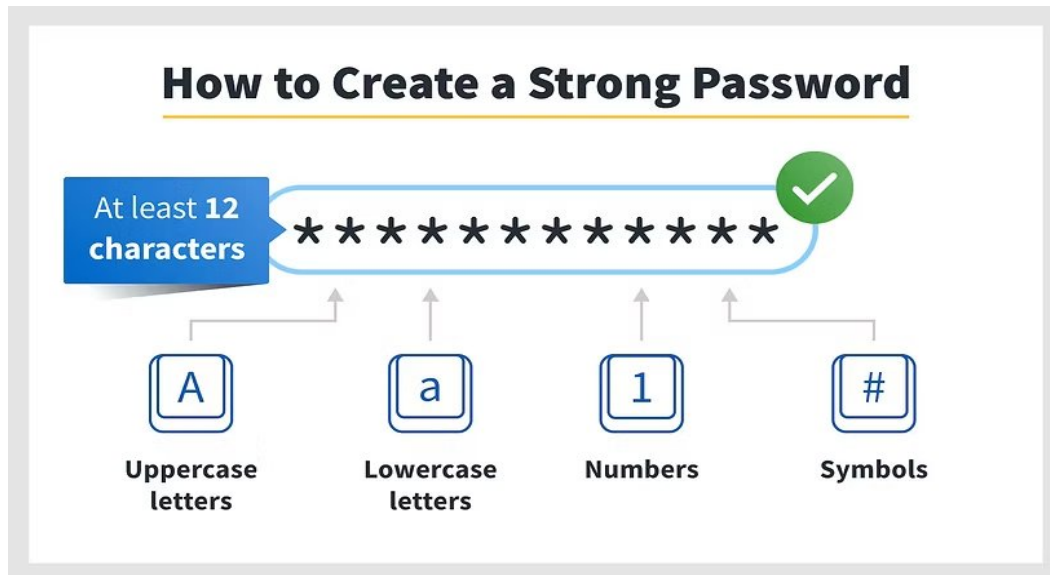
If you receive a suspicious message, do not respond or click any links. Instead, contact the company or person directly using a phone number or email you know is real.

Using Technology Safely

Technology can improve your life, but it requires safe habits:

- Keep your devices updated with the latest software and security patches.
- Install antivirus software and run scans regularly.
- Use a firewall to block unauthorized access.
- Log out of accounts when finished, especially on shared or public computers.

- Avoid using public Wi-Fi for sensitive activities like banking.



To create a strong password, use a minimum of 12 characters, incorporating uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

Getting Help When You Need It

If you feel unsure about managing passwords or privacy settings, ask for help. Trusted family members, friends, or local community centers often offer support or classes on internet safety. Many websites also provide easy-to-follow guides.

Remember, staying safe online is a skill you can learn. Taking small steps today can protect you from bigger problems tomorrow.