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Starter · 10 min to do

A gentle start with AI

For anyone who feels everyone else got the memo. No jargon, nothing to install, nothing to pay. One small win in ten minutes, and honest answers to the worries people don't like to ask out loud.

You are not late

A 2026 survey of 2,000 UK employees found that more than half of those aged 45 and over had been given no AI training at all. If you feel behind, it's because nobody showed you, not because you can't do it.

If you can send a text message, you can use AI. You type a question in ordinary words, and it types back. That's all it is. You can't break it, nobody is marking you, and no question is too basic.

What it actually is

An AI chat tool is a computer program that has read an enormous amount of writing and learned how words usually follow each other. It is very good at drafting, explaining and tidying up. It doesn't know you, it doesn't think, and it is sometimes wrong while sounding sure. Treat it like a keen assistant on their first week: helpful, quick, and worth checking.

Open one. It's free

You only need one. Pick whichever is easiest for you.

IF YOU HAVE	OPEN	HOW
Any phone or computer	ChatGPT	Go to chatgpt.com in your web browser
A Google or Gmail account	Gemini	Go to gemini.google.com
A Microsoft account or a Windows computer	Copilot	Go to copilot.microsoft.com

IF YOU HAVE	OPEN	HOW
A phone and you'd rather talk	Any of them	Tap the microphone and speak

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TYPE

Every one of these has a microphone button. Say what you want in your own words, as if you were asking a helpful neighbour.

Your first ten minutes: three things to try

Do these in order. Each takes about three minutes. Swap the [brackets] for your own words.

PROMPT 1

1. Ask it to explain something

Start here. There is no wrong way to do this one.

> Explain **[something you've always nodded along to, e.g. what a pension drawdown is, how contactless payment works]** in plain English, as if I were a clever friend who has never been told. Keep it to five sentences.

PROMPT 2

2. Get help with a letter you've been putting off

Everyone has one.

> Help me write a short, polite letter to **[who, e.g. my energy company, the council, my landlord]** about **[the problem]**. I want them to **[what you want to happen]**. Keep it firm but friendly, under 150 words. Leave a gap in square brackets wherever my personal details go.

Tip: Leave out account numbers and anything private. Put those in yourself afterwards.

PROMPT 3

3. Ask it to plan something

Now try something from your own week.

> I need to **[something real, e.g. plan a family meal for eight with one vegetarian, organise a weekend away, sort the garden for winter]**. Ask me three questions first, then give me a simple step-by-step plan.

Then do the most important thing: answer back. Type "shorter", "simpler", "that's not quite right, I meant…" or "give me three more ideas". It's a conversation, and the second answer is nearly always better than the first.

Honest answers to five worries

- **Will I break something?** No. Nothing you type will break it. The worst you'll get is a poor answer, so ask again in different words. The only thing worth guarding is private information, covered below.
- **Is it listening to everything?** It only sees what you type, say or upload. It can't see your bank, your messages or your other apps unless you deliberately connect them, and you don't need to. Free versions may use what you type to improve the tool, so keep to what you'd write on a postcard.
- **Does it cost money?** The free versions are enough for everything on this page. You don't need to enter card details. If a site asks you to pay before you've tried anything, close it. You're in the wrong place.
- **Can I trust what it says?** For wording and ideas, mostly, and still read it before you use it. For facts that matter, such as health, money or the law, treat it as a first opinion and check with a proper source or a person.
- **Is it going to take my job?** It is changing how many jobs are done. The people who cope best are the ones who learn to use it, and experience counts for a lot: you know what a good answer looks like.

Three things never to type

- **Passwords, PINs and bank or card details.** No real AI tool needs them.
- **Other people's private details.** Names with addresses, health information, anything told to you in confidence.
- **Anything you wouldn't write on a postcard.**

WATCH FOR FAKES

Use the web addresses above, or the official app from your phone's app shop. Ignore adverts, texts and calls offering "AI help" that ask for payment or remote access to your device.

If you're looking for work

AI is now part of many job applications, on both sides. Our free guide shows how to use it for your CV, cover letters and interview practice, honestly and in your own voice: AI for your job hunt.

Keep going, gently

1. Use it once a day this week for one small thing. A message, a recipe, a question.
2. Show one other person what you did. Teaching it is the fastest way to learn it.
3. When you're ready, try Your first hour with AI.

Ready for the next small step?

Tell doingit.today one thing you do every week, at work or at home. We'll turn it into plain steps, show where AI can help, and teach you each one in a short lesson. No tech background needed.

Free to start. No tech background needed.

Start free at doingit.today

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