SAFETY · 9 min read · October 27, 2026 · By Kelly Stratton

ChatGPT and Claude Privacy Settings: The 3 to Change Tonight

Keep your health questions, your money, and your work between you and the screen. The three settings to change tonight, how long Claude and ChatGPT keep what you type, who else is signed in to your account, the shared links anyone can still open, and the rest of the checklist for both apps.

You use ChatGPT or Claude for the real stuff: the symptom you didn't want to ask anyone about, the budget, the message to your boss, the thing you're building on the side. That's exactly what makes it worth ten minutes tonight. Three settings decide who else can see those chats and how long they stick around, and most people have never opened any of them. This guide walks you through all three, step by step, on your phone and your computer, then gives you the rest of the checklist so both apps are set up the way you'd want them.

> IN A NUTSHELL
>
> AI privacy settings are the settings inside ChatGPT and Claude that decide how long your chats are kept, whether they're used to train the next model, who is signed in to your account, and which of your chats are open to anyone who has a link. Each one takes about a minute to check.

> WHAT YOU NEED
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> Your phone or your computer, signed in to ChatGPT and Claude. Nothing to install. Every setting below is already in your account, on the free plan and the paid ones.

PART 1 Why Your AI Chats Aren't a Private Diary

Everything you type into ChatGPT or Claude is saved on the company's servers, and three things can happen to it from there.

It can become training data. Both companies ask whether they can use your chats to teach future models. ChatGPT's setting is on by default. Claude asks you to choose, and the choice changes how long your chats are kept.

It can be read by someone else. Anyone signed in to your account can open every chat you've ever had. So can anyone holding a link to a chat you shared, long after you forgot you shared it.

It can end up in a courtroom. In the fall of 2025, a federal judge ordered OpenAI to hand over 20 million ChatGPT conversations to the lawyers suing it over copyright. OpenAI objected, and in January 2026 a second judge upheld the order. The conversations are de-identified, but they're real chats from real people who thought they were typing into a private box. My guide 20 Million ChatGPT Chats Went to Court tells the whole story and has the list of things never to paste into any AI.

You can't change a court order. You can change the three settings below, and they take care of the first two problems in about three minutes.

PART 2 How Long Does Claude Keep Your Chats?

Of the three, this one has the biggest difference between on and off. Claude's Free, Pro, and Max plans have a setting called **Help improve our AI models**. When it's on, Anthropic can use your new chats to train future models and keep them, in a de-identified form, for up to five years. When it's off, your chats are kept for 30 days, and they're never used for training.

1. Open Claude on your computer at claude.ai, or in the Claude app on your phone.
2. Click your name or initials, then **Settings**.
3. Open **Privacy**.
4. Find **Help improve our AI models** and turn it off.

That's it. Your past chats stay in your history for you. From here on, new chats are kept for 30 days instead of five years.

> THREE THINGS WORTH KNOWING
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> This setting only covers chats you start or continue after you turn it off, so anything already used in a training run stays there. Deleting a chat removes it from your history right away and from Anthropic's storage within 30 days, and a deleted chat is not used for future training. And Incognito chats, the ghost icon at the top of a new chat, are never used to improve Claude, even when the setting is on.

If you use Claude through work on a Team or Enterprise plan, this setting isn't there. Those plans don't train on your chats, and your company's admin controls retention.

PART 3 Who Is Signed In to Your ChatGPT Right Now?

Think about every place you've ever signed in to ChatGPT. The old phone you traded in. The laptop at work. The browser at your parents' house. The friend who "borrowed" your login for a week. Any of those that's still signed in can read every chat in your account. ChatGPT now shows you the full list.

1. Open ChatGPT, click your name or initials, then **Settings**.
2. Open **Security**.
3. Under **Active sessions**, you'll see every device and browser signed in to your account, with a rough location and when it signed in. Your current device is marked so you know which one is you.

4. See one you don’t recognize, or one you don’t use anymore? Log it out right there.
5. If anything looks wrong, or the list is longer than you expected, choose **Log out all**. Your current session ends right away, and OpenAI says the others can take up to 30 minutes to sign out.

Then close the door behind you. If a stranger was in your account, logging them out isn’t enough, because they still have your password. Do two more things while you’re on the Security page:

- **Change your password.** Pick one you don’t use anywhere else.
- **Turn on two-step sign-in.** On the same Security page, under **Multi-factor authentication**, pick a method. An authenticator app or a passkey is the strongest. A text message is better than nothing. From then on, a password alone won’t get anyone in.

> THE ONE EXCEPTION
> If you sign in to ChatGPT through your company's work login, the Active sessions list isn't available to you. Your IT team manages sign-ins from their side. Everything else in this guide still applies.

PART 4 Which of Your Chats Are Still Open to Anyone With a Link?

Every time you’ve shared a ChatGPT conversation, ChatGPT made a web page for it that opens for anyone holding the link, no login needed. That link doesn’t expire. It keeps working after you’ve forgotten about it, after the chat scrolls out of sight, even after the person you sent it to forwards it to someone you’ve never met. In the summer of 2025, thousands of shared ChatGPT chats turned up in Google search results because of a checkbox people ticked without reading it. That checkbox is gone now, but every link anyone created still works until they delete it.

1. Open ChatGPT, then **Settings**.
2. Open **Data controls**.
3. Find **Shared links** and click **Manage**.
4. Read the list. This is every chat you've ever shared, with its title and the date.
5. Click the trash icon next to any link you don't need. If the list is long, open the three-dot menu at the top and choose **Delete all shared links**.

Deleting a link doesn't delete the chat itself. It's still in your history for you. It just stops being a public web page.

> BEFORE YOU SHARE THE NEXT ONE
> Scroll the chat first. People share a chat for the answer at the bottom and forget the question at the top, the one with their name, their numbers, or their coworker in it. If the top is personal, copy the answer into a message instead of sharing the whole chat.

PART 5 The Rest of the Checklist

The three settings above are the ones where someone else could be on the other side. These finish the job. Do them top to bottom, ChatGPT first, then Claude.

ChatGPT: five more minutes

Stop training on your chats
Settings, then Data controls, then turn off "Improve the model for everyone." It's on by default for every personal account, Free, Plus, or Pro. Your chats stay in your history. They stop being lessons for the model.

Read what it remembers about you
Settings, then Personalization, then Memory. ChatGPT keeps a running summary of what it has learned about you across chats. Read it, correct it, or open the three-dot menu and choose "Delete and turn off memory" if you'd rather it kept nothing.

Use Temporary Chat for the sensitive stuff
The "Temporary" button in the top-right corner of a new chat. A Temporary Chat doesn't go in your history, doesn't create memories, and isn't used for training. OpenAI may keep a copy for up to 30 days for safety checks. If you'd lower your voice to say it, type it here.

Lock the chats you want to keep but not show
New in October 2026. Open a chat's more-options menu and choose "Lock chat." Locked chats move under Projects, then Locked chats, behind a 4-digit PIN or Face ID, out of your history and search, with their own separate memory. It's rolling out gradually, so if you don't see "Lock chat" yet, check back in a week.

Delete the chats you'd rather not keep
Hover over a chat in the sidebar, click the three dots, then Delete. It's removed from OpenAI's systems within 30 days, unless a legal hold pauses that clock.

Claude: three more minutes

Use Incognito for the sensitive stuff
Click the ghost icon at the top of a new chat. An Incognito chat isn't saved to your history or your memory and is never used to improve Claude, whatever your training setting says.

Delete the chats you'd rather not keep
Open the chat, click its name at the top of the screen, then Delete. To clear a batch, hover over the left side of the window, choose View all under Recents, check the box on each chat you want gone, and click Delete Selected. A deleted chat leaves your history right away and is gone from Anthropic's storage within 30 days.

Check what Claude is connected to
If you've ever connected your email, your calendar, or your files to Claude, open Customize, then Connectors, and disconnect anything you're not using. My guide on privacy settings to check before you try an AI agent has the steps for ChatGPT, Claude, and Google.

LOCKED ISN'T THE SAME AS ENCRYPTED

ChatGPT's Locked Chats hide a conversation from anyone who picks up your phone. They don't change how OpenAI stores it, and they don't put it behind encryption. And if you ever reset your PIN, every locked chat is permanently deleted and support can't get it back. Treat the PIN like a key you can't copy.

PART 6 Your Checklist for Tonight

Screenshot this part, or print the PDF and tape it next to your screen. Check off each one as you go.

Tonight, in order

☐ **Claude: Help improve our AI models is off**
Settings, then Privacy. Off means 30 days, not five years.

☐ **ChatGPT: every active session is one I recognize**
Settings, then Security, then Active sessions. Log out anything else, or Log out all.

☐ **ChatGPT: password changed if anything looked wrong**
Settings, then Security. One you don't use anywhere else.

☐ **ChatGPT: two-step sign-in is on**
Settings, then Security, then Multi-factor authentication.

☐ **ChatGPT: shared links list is empty, or only the ones I mean to keep**
Settings, then Data controls, then Shared links, then Manage.

☐ **ChatGPT: Improve the model for everyone is off**
Settings, then Data controls.

☐ **ChatGPT: I've read my Memory summary**
Settings, then Personalization, then Memory.

☐ **Both: I know where Temporary Chat and Incognito are**
The "Temporary" button in ChatGPT. The ghost icon in Claude.

☐ **Both: old chats I don't want kept are deleted**
Gone from both companies' systems within 30 days.

PART 7 How to Tell It Worked

Claude. Open Settings, then Privacy, on your phone after you changed it on the computer. Help improve our AI models should show off there too. If it doesn’t, you’re signed in to a different account on one of them.

Active sessions. Open Settings, then Security, again tomorrow. The list should be only the devices you used today. If a device you logged out is back, someone still has your password. Change it and turn on two-step sign-in if you haven’t.

Shared links. Settings, then Data controls, then Shared links, then Manage. The list should be empty or short. Open one of the links you deleted in a private browser window. It shouldn’t open.

Training in ChatGPT. Settings, then Data controls, on your phone. Improve the model for everyone should show off there too, because it applies to your whole account.

PART 8 What These Settings Don't Do

They don’t override a court. If a judge orders a company to keep or hand over conversations, your settings don’t change that, and a legal hold can pause the normal 30-day deletion clock. The protection there is what you choose to type in the first place.

The never-paste list in 20 Million ChatGPT Chats Went to Court is the short version: no passwords, no card or account numbers, no Social Security numbers, nobody else's medical details, and swap real names for roles.

They don't turn off safety review. Both companies let a small number of people look at a chat that trips a safety check, even with training off, even in a Temporary or Incognito chat. Anthropic can also keep a flagged chat longer than 30 days. It's a small number of people looking at a small number of chats, and it's real.

They don't protect you from the person holding your phone. If someone can unlock your phone, they can open your AI apps. A phone passcode, and ChatGPT's Locked Chats for the conversations that matter, close that gap.

They don't undo a screenshot. Anything you've already shared, forwarded, or pasted somewhere else lives on in that other place. The settings protect what happens from tonight forward, and tonight forward is most of it.

> DO THIS TONIGHT
>
> Open Claude, go to Settings, then Privacy, and turn off Help improve our AI models. Open ChatGPT, go to Settings, then Security, and read your Active sessions list. Then go to Data controls, click Manage next to Shared links, and delete what you don't need. Three minutes, and the three doors someone else could walk through are closed. The rest of the checklist can wait for the weekend. You can keep using both apps for the important things, and now you're the one deciding who else gets to see them.

FAQ Questions People Ask About ChatGPT and Claude Privacy

Straight answers

How do I see who is logged into my ChatGPT account?
Open ChatGPT, go to Settings, then Security, then Active sessions. Every device and browser signed in to your account is listed, with a rough location and when it signed in, and your current one is marked. If you see a device you don't recognize, log it out right there, then change your password.

How do I log ChatGPT out of all devices?
Go to Settings, then Security, and choose Log out all. Your current session ends right away, and OpenAI says other devices can take up to 30 minutes to sign out. Do this if you ever shared your password, sold a phone, or see a session you don't recognize, then change your password and turn on two-step sign-in.

Does Claude train on my data?
Only if you let it. On the Free, Pro, and Max plans, Claude has a setting called Help improve our AI models under Settings, then Privacy. When it's on, new chats can be used to train future models. Turn it off and they aren't. Chats you delete are not used either, and Incognito chats are never used, even with the setting on.

How long does Claude keep my chats?
It depends on one setting. With Help improve our AI models turned on, Anthropic can keep your chats in a de-identified form for up to five years. With it turned off, the retention period is 30 days. When you delete a chat, it leaves your history right away and is removed from Anthropic's storage within 30 days.

Does ChatGPT train on my data?
By default, yes. Every personal ChatGPT account, Free, Plus, or Pro, starts with a setting called Improve the model for everyone turned on. Open Settings, then Data controls, and turn it off. Your chats stay in your history for you to use. They stop being used to train the model.

How do I delete my ChatGPT shared links?
Open Settings, then Data controls, find Shared links, and click Manage. You'll see every link you've ever created. Click the trash icon next to any link to delete it, or open the three-dot menu at the top to delete all of them. Deleting a link doesn't delete the original chat, which stays in your history.

Are my AI chats private?
Not the way a private diary is. Your chats sit on the company's servers, they can be used for training unless you turn that off, a small number of employees can review chats that trip a safety check, and a court can order them handed over. The settings in this guide close every door that has a handle on your side.

SOURCES Where This Comes From

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