



MAKING YOUR HOME SMARTER

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We all hear the term “smart” all the time now as a descriptive prefix to common items. Smart phones. Smart lights. Smart TV sets. Smart thermostats. Smart homes. Wait... smart homes? How can you get started making your home smarter?

The item you already have that likely counts as a smart device is your TV set. If your set was made in the last four years, it can likely connect to the internet to bring you online services such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Video, and even AppleTV. The ability to connect you to these services is what makes your TV “smart.” If you have that mastered, you are ready to move on to getting more devices that are connected and thus smart. Here are a few that can make your life a bit easier.

For most, if not all, of the items I will review, you will need a smart phone to have the most control over your technology.



Smart Lighting

Lighting is an easy way to get into the smart home lifestyle, you already have

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You can control individual bulbs or multiple rooms of them from your smartphone, and you can schedule bulbs so that they turn on when you wake up or turn off when you go to sleep or leave for work.

them in every room! You can replace your existing bulbs with smart LED bulbs that will last twenty to twenty-five years and start automating your home with them. LED light bulbs also use eighty percent less power than traditional bulbs, so it won't take long for them to pay for themselves. You can control individual bulbs or multiple rooms of them from your smartphone, and you can schedule bulbs so that they turn on when you wake up or turn off when you go to sleep or leave for work. I personally use the Philips Hue bulbs, and bulbs made by GE, IKEA, Cree, and other manufacturers are also available. Many smart lights now connect to your home WiFi without the need of a hub that some older lights needed.

Smart Doorbell

What if you're not home and you're expecting an important package? The Arlo video doorbell lets you answer a ring at your door from your smart phone, you can see and speak to whoever is there! Don't worry, the video is only one way; you can see them, but they can't see you, so if you're just getting out of the shower, you can have a two-way conversation and ask the delivery person to leave the package on the porch. Optional motion alerts send a notification when movement is triggered as well as record the visitor, and you can access a live view of the front door at any



time. If you live on a street with lots of traffic, you can select motion zones that limit false alarms.

Smart Cameras

Having a security camera in the home provides total peace of mind. The Arlo smart home security camera lets you keep an eye on things while you're away on vacation, and lets you check up on your

cats while you're at work. Arlo sends motion-activated alerts to your phone and records activity in HD video. The Arlo also has a siren built into the camera, so if you see something amiss, you can trigger the alarm and call the police! Timeline videos stored in the cloud can be accessed from anywhere using the app (which is how you can know for sure which dog knocked over that vase). The Arlo and other cameras made by Canary, Nest, LG, Logitech, and others connect wirelessly to your home Wi-Fi network, can sit easily on a bookshelf or table, or can be mounted on a wall or ceiling. There are both indoor and outdoor cameras available, and they are a great addition to your home or business security system!



Smart Thermostats

A smart thermostat helps save energy and money and makes sure your home is at just the right temperature when you arrive. It learns your habits and adjusts itself, whether it's turning up the AC or the heat. Nest is the brand I use, Honeywell and

ecobee also make high-rated smart thermostats. If you are away for the summer or just on a cruise, you can monitor the temperature from anywhere and adjust it before you return!



Smart Door Locks

Whether it's arms full of groceries or moving boxes, we've all stood at the front door fumbling to find keys in the dark with one hand. For the ultimate convenience, get a smart lock. The August Smart Lock unlocks your front door lock with the tap of a finger, communicating via Bluetooth with your phone. With the August app, you can even send an electronic key to a relative or house guest. The August Smart Lock installs on the inside of the front door right over your existing deadbolt lock. It offers hands-free entry and guest access and integrates with Apple HomeKit, so Siri can do the unlocking for you.

As you see, there are many options available for changing your home into a smarter home, don't be afraid to try a few light bulbs or change your doorbell. It will give you more control and bring you into the IoT world that is starting to be mentioned more often. (The Internet of Things)



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