



## Home security: how smart can it go?

Beyond a standard burglar alarm, there are many more ways to protect your home's contents – and they can now be controlled via your smartphone. But what's out there? Yvette Murrell investigates...

If you're anything like me, you've probably left home and panicked that you forgot to lock the door – and once you've thought it you have to go back and check, right? The good news is that smart home hubs now allow you instant peace of mind through your phone, without the need to return home. Panic over. Smart devices such as the Amazon Echo, Google Home, and Apple's HomePod are making our spaces more connected, and at least 40% of UK households are expected to own one by the end of 2018\*. But if you have one, do you use it past novel requests such as "tell me the weather forecast"? So much more is possible, particularly when it comes to making our homes safe. A touch of a button on your phone or a simple voice command can control cameras, motion sensors, lighting, and keyless entry systems.

"When it comes to voice-controlled devices, simple tasks like controlling heating are most popular – but there is also a strong demand for camera



surveillance, allowing you to monitor what's going on in your home from anywhere," says Thomas Kruse, product manager at Reichelt. And with the Office of National Statistics reporting a 9% increase in police-recorded burglary offences last year, it is reassuring to know a smart camera can protect your home and immediately alert you of an intruder when you're away.

If that already sounds pretty high-tech, there's more – think smart doorbells linked to your phone and keyless entry systems. One of the latest is Klevio, an intercom using your smartphone to open your doors, with no need to replace existing locks. Using a secure router, it works through an app with 'virtual keys' controlled based on time



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1. Philips Hue LED lights, Hue Bridge, dimmer, £169.99, Lighting Direct. [lighting-direct.co.uk](http://lighting-direct.co.uk)

2. Blink XT battery powered outdoor camera, £149.99 each. [blinkforhome.co.uk](http://blinkforhome.co.uk)

3. Klevio router, £249, plus £150 for single door installation and £150 for an intercom. [klevio.com](http://klevio.com)

and location – so your cleaner can only open the door when in front of it and access can be quickly revoked, too, for example.

Like a quarter of Brits, you may already have invested in smart lighting which, when programmed to switch on and off, could deter burglars.

"Of those who don't yet have smart lighting, half are considering it in the near future," says Kathryn Middleton of Lighting Direct. "And security is increasingly becoming the main reason for it."

All of this may sound costly, but it's surprisingly affordable compared to regular alarm systems. "There is no obligation to spend lots of money on a complete system," says Nathalie Bernce, CEO of Smartech. "You can purchase singular devices that work as standalone products and build a full system later."

Home insurance provider Neos is the first to offer smart tech as part of its standard policy, giving you even more peace of mind. Sound systems, TVs, computers – houses filled with high-value mod cons are targets. Don't you think it's about time we brought security up to the same advanced standard?

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