

## Advice

# SMARTEN UP

Mention the term 'smart home' and a number of things immediately spring to mind: security, energy management, lighting and audio-visual systems – all designed with the aim of making life easier. No longer do we have to worry needlessly about whether we locked the door, switched off the iron or turned down the thermostat when we are away on holiday. These can be taken care of at the switch of a button or via your smartphone. Such advances are accessible to anyone. Here are just a few ways you can turn your house into a smart home.

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## SMART SYSTEMS

**Wondrwall** is an intelligent home system which uses past behaviour to adjust the home to fit the user's lifestyle. Features include automatic light control when the house is unoccupied, efficient heating automation, built-in Amazon Alexa in each light switch to enable voice control technology and an additional key fob which gauges when inhabitants are due to return to home, therefore activating certain settings. Wondrwall gives the home a brain and the intelligence to control itself, which heightens security, increases energy efficiency and assists daily life through one simple installation. (wondrwall.co.uk)

For the ultimate immersive smart audio, the **Amazon Echo** is an obvious choice. It not only plays music, answers questions, reads the news and more using the Alexa Voice Control service, but it is able to control lights, switches and thermostats with any compatible connected device, such as those from Philips Hue, Tado or Nest. (amazon.co.uk)



## Energy

Monitoring and cutting down energy consumption is a priority to many families, and there are various products on the market designed to do just that. The Smart Thermostat starter kit from **Tado** has multi-room control, which can reduce energy costs by up to 31 per cent. It works by noting the whereabouts of all household members, turning the heating off when nobody is home, and heating up as soon as the first inhabitant is back. Tado boasts climate forecast integration, which uses local weather forecasts to control heating as efficiently as possible. The system can be controlled from a smartphone app and is compatible with 95 per cent of heating systems. (tado.com)

**Nest's** Learning Thermostat monitors the habits of the house occupants and programs a schedule accordingly, automatically turning the heating down when the home is empty. Temperature control is enabled via wi-fi from a phone, tablet or laptop, and hot water schedules can be adjusted from anywhere when necessary. The Nest is available in a range of colours. (nest.com)

Nest Learning Thermostat.

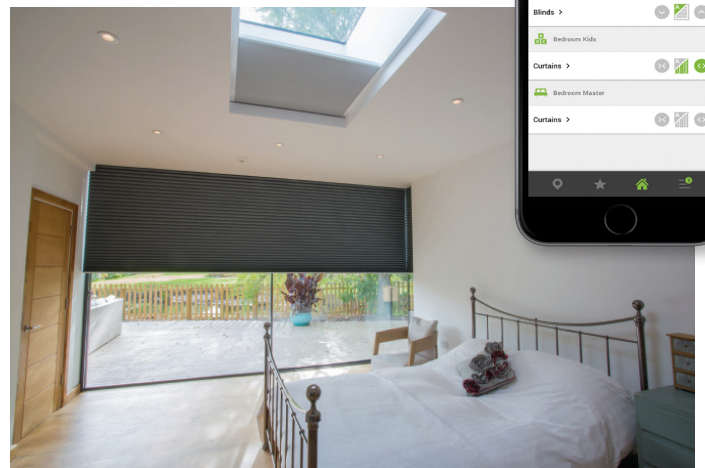




Loxone Smart Home and Geiger automatic blind system.

## BLINDS

**Loxone Smart Home** has teamed up with **Geiger** to create an automatic blind that can be operated as part of an overall smart home system. Philipp Schuster, MD of Loxone UK, explains that there is much more to blind control than being able to open or close them through an app. "They can be intelligently automated based on room function, weather conditions, light levels and more. Should a room become too cold, a truly smart home should decide whether to turn the heating on or to open the blinds to let in the warmth of the sun, thus saving energy. Similarly, blinds can close to prevent overheating or UV damage. They can also improve security, opening to reveal anyone outside the home which, coupled with flashing lights, aims to deter potential intruders. (loxone.com)

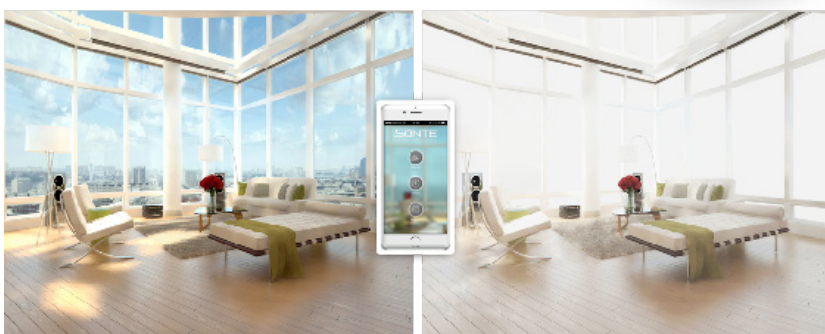


## Light control

This smart home wireless system from **Philips Hue** allows the user to control the lighting through an app. Three types of smart lights – Hue white, Hue white ambiance and Hue white and colour ambiance – can be combined to offer a variety of colour palettes and synchronised with music and film. Using an internet connection, it is possible to control the lights from anywhere in the world. The app is able to wake up the user and create routines, with various functions to dim or flash lights as desired. (meethue.com)



Smart home wireless system from Philips Hue.



Switchable film can be retro-fitted and easily controlled via wall switch, remote or smartphone app.

**Sonte UK** has introduced a film which can be applied to glass to control light and UV for the purposes of privacy, cleanliness and security. Crystals within the film can be controlled by an electric current to alter their alignment so that the glass is either clear or opaque. The film, which can be retrofitted, is particularly useful for creating privacy in rooms and in areas where cleanliness is paramount, such as hospitals. The film is available in three widths, a range of colours, and can be cut to length. It is easy to install without the need to be hard wired to a mains supply and can be controlled by a smartphone app. (sontefilm.co.uk).



## SECURITY

The **Canary Flex** can be used to monitor the exterior area around your home. It records HD video and audio and a wide-angle lens and automatic night vision. Built to withstand severe weather, it can be plugged in or wireless. The flex comes on a 360° magnetic swivel base, allowing it to be placed on a flat surface and twisted in any direction. It can be used with a mobile app to monitor a home at any time. (canary.is)



**SmartSecure** is an electronic door locking and smart access system from Carl F Groupco. At its heart is the FUHR multitronic locking system, which secures all points of entry using a patented twin motor. The traditional key is replaced by a range of access options including a smartphone or a sensor concealed within the handle. Radio-based access is another option, which combines a radio keypad, transponder and fingerprint scanner. Carl F Groupco's Phil Rice says the system is the ultimate in safety and security, simple to fit and extremely stylish. (smartsecure.co.uk)

**Blink** is a battery-powered affordable internal security monitor. Using HD video technology, motion and temperature sensors are concealed within a sleek, wireless design to provide instant observation of the home. Cloud storage is free with no subscription needed, and the long-life cameras come in one-, two- or three-camera systems, with additional cameras available. (blinkforhome.co.uk)



The **Conexis L1** smart door lock is a bluetooth solution from Yale's Smart Living range. The sleek chrome handle may be fitted onto any Anglian PVCu or composite door and uses bluetooth for quick access via a smartphone app. With no need for a conventional key, the app can also grant temporary access to family and friends, which is disabled when no longer required. Mark Farmer-Wright, product development Manager at Anglian Home Improvements, describes the system as "a game changer for many customers". (yale.co.uk)



**Ring** offers an easy-to-install video doorbell connected to your wi-fi network which allows you to see who is at your door at all times. The HD camera offers a clear view with a wide-angle video, while infrared LEDs enable surveillance at night. Motion sensors activate the camera, triggering instant mobile alerts, and the homeowner is able to communicate with visitors via the built-in speakers and microphone. Cloud recording is optional, and the unit is resistant to heat, humidity, rain, sleet or snow, so it won't damage easily. (ring.com)



**Dyson's** new 360 Eye intelligent robot cleaner uses a 360° vision system to view the room. The camera takes up to 30 frames per second to build a detailed floorplan so it can intelligently navigate around a room. It tracks its position so it is aware of where it is and where is yet to be cleaned. Infrared sensors detect obstacles, allowing the robot to move systematically. The linked app then gives the user the option of scheduling, stopping and pausing cleaning patterns remotely. (dyson360eye.com)



A smart home isn't just about installing expensive automation systems. Almost any electrical appliance can contribute to the efficiency of your home. For example, the Family Hub fridge from **Samsung** has a wi-fi enabled touchscreen to stay in contact with family and friends as well as facilitating daily routines such as finding online recipes, ordering shopping, listening to music and storing photos and notes on the hub. It also comes with three built-in cameras allowing you to view the contents of your fridge from your phone to simplify the shopping process. (samsung.com)

## SMART Kitchen appliances



**Smarter's** FridgeCam, launched this spring, not only records what is in the fridge, but tracks expiry dates, automatically adds items that are low in stock to your shopping list, and suggests recipes based on the food available. Smarter claims it could save families up to £400 a year. The company has also introduced the iKettle and coffee machine, which enable you to create drinks before you get up each morning or during your commute home, keeping temperatures constant and monitoring water levels for your convenience. (smarter.am)



Featuring built-in wi-fi, the **Samsung** NV73J9WIFI Electric Smart Oven can be controlled remotely via a smartphone and the dedicated app. Set it to start or stop whenever you need to, no matter where you are. The oven can send you notifications so you can make adjustments, avoiding overcooked food or even preventing accidents. Download recipes from your smartphone to expand your cooking options. (samsung.com)