

SELF BUILD & DESIGN

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TECHNOLOGY

Wired

As morning breaks across the UK, houses start to awaken; lights turn on, kettles begin to boil, and blinds are drawn. Nothing unusual, you may say, except that humans aren't responsible for any of this – it's the homes themselves. As well as convenience, smart technology can save you money, which explains why a third of Britons over the age of 55 own a smart thermostat, according to a recent survey. Here are some other great gadgets to make your home a little smarter.



New app shows effects of daylight

A new app from Velux gives a virtual view of a real space once roof lights have been installed. Called MyDaylight, the app has been built using new advanced gaming technology, and enables the user to experience the effect of daylight in a room with 360° virtual reality simulations. By selecting parameters such as floor dimensions, roof height and ceiling pitch, the space in question can be customised further by adding windows, floor and wall finishes, the room's location, and other aspects. Then, after approximately 10 minutes, you will receive a personal digital simulation giving a lifelike recreation of the room and the changing effects of daylight inside. The app is free and is available for both iOS and Android.



Air quality monitor

Asthma and other health issues are increasingly associated with allergies in the home. Foobot, a new device from Belgium, allows you to constantly monitor the internal air quality in your home and make the necessary adjustments so you can enjoy 'good air' all the time.

The device is the brainchild of Jacques Touillon who wanted to help his eldest child with his asthma. It can be used in conjunction with other home automation devices or simply to provide 24-hour detailed data of the health of your living environment, with warnings and actionable advice on VOCs, PM2.5s, and CO, as well as temperature and humidity. Measurements are logged in five-minute intervals and the state of the atmosphere is displayed in soft coloured LED light so appropriate action can be taken if required. This can be as simple as opening a window. But Foobot lets you know exactly when it's required and for how long – very useful if it's freezing cold outside. Over a longer period of time, the Foobot app helps you to identify which household products, carpets or even furniture are releasing pollutants.

Foobot can also work closely with other smart-home devices with a connected thermostat, such as Google Nest to control temperature, or can communicate directly with Amazon Echo. Foobot can be an active part of the smart-home ecosystem helping trigger the ventilation, filtration, purification system or appliances. Foobot can also connect to more than 120 home appliances, including Hive, the connected thermostat from British Gas.

Foobot is available for £170 from Amazon.



Norwegian heat

Hailing from Norway, these minimalist electric heaters come in four models, including a convection heater, an oil-filled radiator and two panel heaters controlled by wifi, one of which is shown here. The heaters warm up rapidly and have an integrated timer, controlled via an app from anywhere in the world. Output ranges from 800W to 1,200W, and they plug into a mains socket. Price: from £149.99. (ao.com)



Smart lock and key

This device turns your smartphone into a smart key which can be operated from anywhere to allow visitors entry to your home in your absence. Made in Switzerland, Nuki fits over the lock on the inside of your door and can be turned manually, activated by pressing the central button using a special fob, or with a smartphone app. The Lock and Go function activates the lock after 20 seconds, providing time to leave the house. To install, a mounting plate is either clamped onto the lock cylinder, or glued to the surface around it, on the inside of the door. The lock can be activated via your home wifi to provide access for others in your absence. A quick Q&A on the website shows you whether the Nuki smart lock works on your door. (nuki.io/en)

Inside out

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