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Picks and Tips from Mike the Locksmith

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From the World of Mike-the-Locksmith

Greetings!
Happy Spring & Happy Mothers' Day!

The winter lingered for a little bit longer than my liking.

In this issue, I'll be discussing smart home products and smart locks. The smart home has arrived, but many of us remain confused about what one is. That's because the devices and services that make a home "smart" will be different for every individual.

In fact, whether you know it or not, chances are that you already have some type of smart home device. Learn what types of products are available and about the various smart locks on the market.

This issue will also feature a section called "What's New with Mike-the-Locksmith", which I'll feature from time to time.

Remember that my consultations, assessments and estimates are FREE, so don't hesitate to call. I'm here to help.

Be sure to visit my NEW website:
www.mikes-locksmith.com

Call: 240-506-7500

Remember, at Mike's Locksmith, I put my customers first by offering FREE, NO OBLIGATION, NO PRESSURE ESTIMATES UP-FRONT PRICING and NO TRAVEL FEES.
I look forward to serving you in the future.

The Smart Home Guide



What Is a Smart Home?

We are way past the days of the Clapper. Simply put, a smart home is one that includes some gadget, system or appliance that is connected either to the Internet and/or to your smartphone. You can typically control and interact with these devices using an app.

If you only have a wireless router connected to the Internet with a laptop or a tablet or two connected via Wi-Fi - you have the foundations of a smart, connected home.

In the coming years, you will likely make your home even smarter. Gartner, a leading tech analyst firm, predicts that a typical abode (in a "mature affluent market") could have more than 500 smart home devices by 2022.

Still, the automated home is the exception and not the norm. Acuity Group's 2014 study of the Internet of Things adoption (of which smart home tech is a subset) found that smart technology was in about 4 percent of all U.S. homes. What's the biggest barrier to adoption the study discovered? Unfamiliarity with the concepts of the Internet of Things and smart tech.

Making a House Into a Smart Home

There are two ways to make your house smart: DIY gadgets that you install yourself, such as smart outlets, baby monitors and light sensors; or by subscribing to services such as ADT's security systems or those of an ISPs, such as Comcast. Here's a quick breakdown of some of the most popular options.

Nest and Smart Thermostats

No device exemplifies the DIY smart home as much as the Nest Learning thermostat (\$249 on Amazon). This gadget, designed to be installed by a homeowner, learns your habits, and then adjusts the temperature based on your patterns. The more you use Nest, "the more accurate it gets," said Mike Soucie, product partnership lead at Nest Labs.

But what really makes the Nest smart is that it can interact with a number of other devices in your home and perform a set of actions without you having to lift a finger. For example, if the thermostat is connected to the Nest Protect smoke detector, it can automatically shut off your HVAC system if smoke is detected.

Nest's enormous success in the smart home space can be attributed to its focus on ease-of-use. "We really focus on the end-to-end consumer process," Soucie said. The main goal for

Warm Regards,
Mike-the-Locksmith

Smart Locks: In Review



Smart Phone Enabled Door Locks

Smart phone enabled door locks are the latest must-have items in home innovation technology, and for good reason. These "smart-locks" combine the security and reliability of a trusted deadbolt lock with the innovation and convenience of technology.

Now, instead of fumbling through our bag or pockets for a set of keys, new, proximity technology allows you to unlock your door automatically, as you approach it.

How does it work? In simplest terms, an electronic device attached to the deadbolt 'talks' to an app on our Smartphone, which essentially becomes our key -and why not? We always have our phone with us, right? What better option for the replacement for our house key. If you think about it, our smartphones have already replaced our cameras, watches, calendars, Rolodex. Replacing our key seems pretty logical.

If you're currently looking into your smart lock options, there are several on the market, but only one that we recommend.

Nest is to create products that don't require customers to program things, according to Soucie.

Security Cameras

To date, the most popular type of smart home device, as a category, has been security cameras, also known as IP cameras. iControl's 2014 State of the Smart Home Report revealed that of 1,000 people surveyed, 90 percent said personal and family security is one of the most important reasons for using a smart home system. Revenue from the video surveillance market is expected to reach \$42.81 billion by 2019.

Baby Cams

An offshoot of security cameras, baby cams not only provide live feeds and motion detection, but also two-way audio and other features tailored to this segment.

Smart Lights

Lighting is also getting smarter. Smart LED bulbs can be controlled with an app and dimmed, turned on and off, and, in the case of the Philips Hue system (starting at \$199.97 for starter kits), even change color to set a room's mood. Other smart lights can do more than just brighten a room. For example, the Sengled Pulse (\$179, Amazon) has a built-in wireless speaker.

Smart Plugs

Smart plugs sit between your electrical outlet and the appliances in your home (smart or not). The plugs then connect to an app on your phone, allowing you to remotely turn those appliances on and off. Some plugs, such as the StickNFind (\$49), will even monitor how much energy an appliance uses.

Smart Locks

Smart locks such as the Yale Real Living High-Security with Z-Wave (\$600) allow you to control when your home is locked or unlocked, great for scheduling access for babysitters and dog walkers

Appliances

When it comes to making appliances smarter, companies such as Whirlpool and GE are seeking to discover what people want to automate.

"Say you want to be one step ahead of dinner prep," said Lou Lenzi, director of industrial design for GE Appliances. "Just tell your oven to 'preheat 350 degrees' from your mobile device

Goji - not recommended

The Goji is a full replacement for your current deadbolt hardware that can be opened with your smartphone. On the exterior there is a digital display that greets the entrant by name and an integrated camera that sends the owner a photo of the entrant. This display can be flipped down to reveal a traditional mechanical lock.

Issue: quality of the mechanical cylinder, an off-brand, 5 pin Kwikset knockoff

Though the integrated camera feature is a clever one, this lock is not secure by any means

Lockitron- not recommended

The Lockitron requires no hardware replacement whatsoever. It fits over the thumb-turn on your current deadbolt. It can be opened with your smartphone in front of the lock, remotely via a web app, or even with a text message.

Issue: by not requiring any hardware replacement, the Lockitron is at the whim of the existing hardware and a common issue is that a door or lock may have been installed poorly and the bolt winds up misaligned.

UniKey- not recommended

UniKey are best known for the **Kevo lock**, sold by Kwikset. This is a full replacement for your current deadbolt that opens with a touch when you carry either a key fob or their iPhone app. The Kevo also hosts a Kwikset Smartkey, a mechanical cylinder that uses a normal key.

while you're heading home from the office. Or maybe check your refrigerator's ice maker to see how much ice you have in the dispenser - and tell it to make more before those unexpected house guests arrive."

Bottom Line

If you're interested in automating your home, the best way to go about it is in steps. Try starting with smart plugs, which will convert many existing household items such as lamps into smart devices.

Also, consider investing in smart home technology that can save you money. Automating lights and appliances can result in real energy savings. Nest looked at a year of its users' data, and discovered that the Nest thermostat could save customers about 20 percent a year on home heating and cooling costs.

It pays to crunch the numbers and do a little introspection. Are you a gadget geek who likes to explore and fiddle with tech? You can save money and make life a little more convenient by selecting DIY smart devices. If you are the type who wants a device that you set and forget, investing in an automated service may be worth the extra cost.

[From Tom's Guide: Tech for Real Life](#)

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Stop by our store at: 12410 Washington Ave, Rockville, MD 20852 (by the Twinbrook Metro Station) or call 240-506-7500 and mention this newsletter.

What's New at Mike's Locksmith

Issue: Kwikset is not a quality product and the lock can be easily compromised, allowing unwanted entry into your home.

The lock also has been known to fail.

Yale Real Living - recommended

The Yale Real Living smart lock is a full hardware replacement, touchscreen keypad lock. We sell this lock with a high-security mechanical cylinder. Using Z-Wave Technology and coupled with a home automation system, it can be opened with your smartphone. Their parent company, ASSA Abloy, already had a strong digital lock business in Europe and has been innovating in higher security access control for decades.

With a 98% customer rating, we've the only locksmith company chosen in Montgomery County by this high-selective report.

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* The award honors excellence among service and health providers who maintain a superior service record

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Mike's Locksmith is happy to have helped Habitat for Humanity of Frederick County in Thurmont, MD.



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