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REAL HOMES

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The latest home security updates

If you're going on holiday soon, keep your property secure with these safety systems says Emily Peck.

Aside from the obvious measures you can take to secure your property, there's a host of new gadgets and smart systems to deter potential intruders.

Choose from out-of-the-box technology, such as a doorphone video intercom or a motion-and-sound sensor camera, or a professional integrated security system – the latter will not only give you control over your home's safety, but will also work in harmony with any automatically controlled window treatments, lighting and audio/visual features.

'It's important to consider the type of security you want,' says Simon Minor of Go-Green Electrical Brighton, a member of RatedPeople.com. 'Do you want video surveillance? Would you pay a monthly fee to have a linked security service system that sends alerts to the police? And how much would you be prepared to spend? For example, a simple PIR (Passive Infrared) light can be very effective at giving excellent security coverage for large areas, and in some cases just one PIR can detect intruder movement in several areas. These systems cost from £80 for very basic to around £300 for good four-to-five-bedroom house coverage, but this increases as you add accessories.'

However much you plan to spend, here's a range of products to consider.



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No key, easy access: Want to go for a run without having to take your keys, or perhaps your keys are too bulky for a clutch bag on a night out? The solution is the **Keyless Digital Rim Door Lock** (above left), £129.99, from Yale, which lets you open your door at the touch of a button. It enables you to access and secure your home using a four-to-12-digit PIN of your choice; a temporary code can be created if you want to let other users into your home. It can be fitted on timber doors and comes in polished brass or chrome or satin nickel.

Garage check: **Garador**, the garage door company, has brought out a new range of remote controls that make it easy to check automatically whether an out-of-sight garage door is closed. This means you won't have to go outside and brave the weather to check the door at night. The remotes come in black or white high-gloss piano lacquer finishes, and are sold with Garamatic operators, which open garage doors automatically when triggered by a hand-held transmitter. The Garamatic 10 operator plus the new remote control costs £492 (above right).



Picture-perfect footage: If you want the very latest in security surveillance with outstanding image quality, you might want to consider an option that will record footage in full high-definition 1080p in your home. Choose a system such as the new **Swann Security Platinum-HD system** (above), which costs £1,199.99. It features four cameras that connect to a powerful digital video recorder capable of recording high-definition videos, with real-time live viewing on your smartphone or tablet, and video playback.

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Choose a fully-integrated solution: Ideal for people planning a renovation or a new build, a smart home system will let you monitor your entire property from virtually anywhere. For example, a **Crestron system** (above left) can stream live footage from cameras to your smartphone or computer, wherever you are, and can be used as a video intercom system to check who is at the door. You can disarm alarm systems remotely – to let a neighbour into the house to feed the cat while you're out, for example – and reactivate it when they leave. You can also link it to a touchscreen gadget to set the alarm when you're in bed. Prices start from £2,850 and depend on the project size.

Floodlight alert: For a quick-fix measure, install a PIR (Passive Infrared) light in your front and back garden to illuminate your property's exterior when anyone approaches. The **Steinel HS300 300W PIR Sensor Floodlight**, £84 from Wayfair.co.uk, has a time setting of up to 15 seconds and provides an angle of coverage of up to 240 degrees, with a maximum reach of 1.2 metres.

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What to consider

Kris Hogg, MD at home technology company **Konnectiv**, gives his expert advice on choosing an alarm system.



- First, consider why you want an alarm. Is it to be a deterrent to keep burglars away, or is it to secure your home and alert the police should it be activated? Or, do you want to integrate it with CCTV and the rest of your house?
- A simple DIY kit will offer some security, usually with occupancy sensors fitted in your rooms to detect if someone is in there. These kits are easy to fit but won't cover all areas of your home. They are fine if your neighbours are at home all day and would come and investigate if they heard the alarm go off in your absence.
- You may ask what happens if you are in bed and someone breaks in. Yes, you may have a panic button by the bed, but what happens when it's pressed? To offer complete peace of mind, you should be looking for a monitored system, one that notifies a control centre where they verify the alarm and call the police should the need arise. So, if you hit the panic button, the police are called immediately. If an alarm goes off because you made a mistake, they will call you to confirm, via passwords, that it was an error. If you are not in or they get the wrong response then the police will be called.
- The most advanced systems are installed by a professional, who will survey your home to identify the access points and install a system that covers all vulnerable areas. If you have pets, they can fit sensors that ignore them, and they will build intelligence into the system, including the ability for your alarm to text you if triggered.