



What Are Smart Light Switches?

Smart light switches replace regular light switches in a home or office. Smart switches offer the convenience of a regular switch – you can toggle lights on and off as you normally would – but their ability to connect to WiFi allows them to perform automated tasks, and to be controlled from afar.

What are the benefits of smart light switches?

Lights paired to smart switches can be turned on and off remotely, or controlled via an app's scheduling feature. A growing number of switches can detect motion and can turn on lights when someone enters a room, and some support geofencing, which will turn on lights as one approaches a house or office. Switches with temperature sensors can connect to smart thermostats and provide more efficient heating and cooling throughout a space. ■

How do smart light switches work?

In addition to working like regular light switches, smart light switches can be controlled by phone apps and even by voice: some have voice control built-in, while virtually all work with separate smart home voice assistants. Integration with services such as IFTTT expand a smart light switch's role in a smart home, enabling them to react (turn on lights, for example) when other actions (say, a window opening) are reported by other sensors. Some smart switches work without a separate hub, which can keep costs down but can reduce the number of different devices the switches will work with. ■

What are the challenges of smart light switches?

Installation of smart light switches isn't trivial: many people will want to hire an electrician. And since some smart switches have different dimensions than traditional light switches, slight alterations to a wall may be necessary as well. Luckily, there are models that require no installation at all; these are simply put onto a wall with adhesive tape or other fasteners. Some switches only work with certain bulbs; be sure to check before you buy, particularly if you've already got smart bulbs you want to continue to use. ■



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