

The Best Security Options for Your Home

A practical, layered approach to protecting people, property, vehicles, and evidence

The strongest home security plan does not depend on one device. It combines deterrence, detection, verification, recording, notification, and a clear response plan. The right mix depends on your property, budget, neighborhood, household, and whether you want professional monitoring or self-monitoring.

1. Start With a Layered Security Strategy

Deter: Make the property look difficult to approach unnoticed: lighting, visible cameras, maintained landscaping, and clear sight lines.

Detect: Use door/window sensors, motion sensors, glass-break detection, driveway alerts, and cameras to identify activity.

Verify: Use video and properly positioned cameras to determine whether an alert is a person, vehicle, delivery, animal, or actual threat.

Notify: Send alerts to household members and, when appropriate, a professional monitoring center.

Respond: Have a plan for calling emergency services, moving to a safer location, and preserving recorded evidence.

2. Best Home Security Options

A. Professionally Monitored Alarm System

- Best for: homeowners who want 24/7 alarm monitoring and an established emergency-response process.
- Look for door/window contacts, motion detection, glass-break sensors, smoke/CO integration, cellular backup, battery backup, and a mobile app.
- Professional monitoring can add another layer when you are asleep, traveling, or unable to respond to an alert.

B. Exterior Security Cameras

- Best for: monitoring entrances, driveways, yards, garages, gates, and other approaches to the home.
- Prioritize clear day/night video, useful field of view, reliable motion detection, weather resistance, secure storage, and strong low-light performance.
- Position cameras to capture faces and activity rather than only wide scenic views. Avoid aiming into neighbors' private areas.

C. Video Doorbell

- Best for: the front door, deliveries, visitors, and activity close to the primary entrance.
- Useful features include two-way audio, package detection, person alerts, night vision, and recorded event history.
- A doorbell camera works best as part of a larger system; it should not be the home's only camera.

D. Indoor Cameras

- Best for: entry areas, common spaces, detached structures, pets, caregivers, or checking the home while away.
- Choose devices with privacy controls, encrypted accounts, multi-factor authentication, and the ability to disable or physically cover the camera when desired.
- Do not place cameras where household members or guests reasonably expect privacy.

E. Smart Locks and Door Reinforcement

- Best for: improving access control while strengthening the physical entry point.
- A smart lock adds convenience and access logs, but the door, frame, strike plate, hinges, and fasteners still determine much of the physical resistance.
- Use strong exterior doors, quality deadbolts, reinforced strike plates, and long screws anchored into structural framing where appropriate.

F. Motion-Activated Exterior Lighting

- Best for: driveways, side yards, back doors, garages, walkways, and dark approaches.
- Lighting improves visibility and can make covert approach more difficult.
- Aim fixtures carefully so they illuminate your property without creating excessive glare or nuisance for neighbors.

G. Door, Window, Glass-Break, and Motion Sensors

- Best for: detecting intrusion even when a camera does not have a useful view.
- Door/window contacts protect common entry points; glass-break and motion sensors add secondary detection layers.
- For homes with pets, select motion detection designed to reduce pet-triggered false alarms.

H. Garage, Driveway, and Vehicle Surveillance

- Best for: homes where vehicles, tools, equipment, or packages are common targets.
- Use driveway alerts, exterior cameras, garage-door status sensors, and well-positioned lighting.
- A dash camera with parking surveillance can add vehicle-specific evidence when properly powered and configured.

I. Local Recording / Network Video Recorder

- Best for: homeowners who want greater control over video retention and less dependence on cloud-only storage.
- A local recorder can provide continuous recording and longer retention when paired with sufficient storage.
- Protect the recorder itself, use strong passwords, keep firmware updated, and consider backup of important clips.

J. Home Network and Cybersecurity

- Best for: every home using Wi-Fi cameras, smart locks, alarms, or other connected security devices.
- Use unique passwords, multi-factor authentication where available, automatic security updates, a protected Wi-Fi network, and a separate guest or IoT network when practical.
- Remove old devices and accounts that are no longer needed, and review who has access to security apps.

3. Recommended Security Packages

Package	Best For	Core Equipment	Priority
Essential	Apartments / smaller homes	Video doorbell; door/window sensors; 1–2 cameras; smart lighting; strong locks	Cover the main entrance first
Enhanced	Typical single-family home	Monitored alarm; video doorbell; 3–5 exterior cameras; sensors; smart locks; lighting	Layer detection and verification
Advanced	Larger property / higher security need	Monitored alarm; perimeter cameras; local recorder; driveway alerts; access control; backup power	Coverage, redundancy, retention

4. Camera Placement Priorities

1. Front door and porch — capture approaching visitors and packages.
2. Driveway and parking area — identify vehicles and activity around parked cars.
3. Back door / patio — protect a common secondary entry point.
4. Side gates and side yards — reduce blind spots between the front and rear of the property.
5. Garage — monitor the garage door, interior access door, and valuable equipment.
6. Detached buildings — protect sheds, workshops, and other structures when applicable.

5. Features Worth Paying For

- Clear low-light/night video rather than resolution alone
- Person and vehicle detection to reduce unnecessary alerts
- Reliable notifications with adjustable detection zones
- Local storage, cloud backup, or both
- Battery and cellular backup for critical alarm functions
- Multi-factor authentication and supported security updates
- Expandable equipment so the system can grow with the property
- Simple evidence export for saving important video clips

6. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Buying cameras before deciding what areas and events need to be captured.
- Installing cameras too high to obtain useful facial detail.
- Relying entirely on Wi-Fi without considering outages, weak coverage, or backup power.
- Using default or reused passwords on cameras, routers, or security apps.
- Ignoring doors, windows, lighting, and locks because cameras are installed.
- Failing to test alerts, recording, timestamps, storage capacity, and nighttime image quality.
- Keeping important evidence only on a device that may be damaged, stolen, overwritten, or reset.

7. A Practical Buying Checklist

1. Identify the entrances, windows, driveway, garage, and blind spots that need protection.
2. Decide whether you want professional monitoring, self-monitoring, or a hybrid approach.
3. Determine whether you prefer local video storage, cloud storage, or both.
4. Confirm camera power, Wi-Fi/network coverage, and installation locations before purchasing.
5. Choose equipment that can be expanded later.
6. Confirm compatibility between cameras, alarm devices, apps, recorders, and smart-home platforms.
7. Review subscription fees, warranty, return policy, storage costs, and replacement accessories.
8. Enable multi-factor authentication and change all default passwords during installation.
9. Test every sensor and camera in daylight and darkness.
10. Create a household response plan and periodically review it.

Bottom Line

For most homes, the best overall solution is a layered system: a quality alarm with door/window sensors, a video doorbell, strategically placed exterior cameras, strong locks and reinforced doors, motion-activated lighting, secure video storage, and good cybersecurity. The objective is not simply to record an incident; it is to discourage unwanted activity, detect it early, verify what is happening, notify the right people, and preserve useful evidence.

Important: Security requirements vary by property and jurisdiction. Review local laws and community rules regarding cameras, audio recording, lighting, alarm permits, and placement before installation.