



# Home Tips



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## Q & A

### Wireless Security Cameras

Review by Megan Wollerton CNET

Of the DIY security cameras we've reviewed, battery-powered models are not particularly common. That's because you usually have to give up key features like live streaming and HD video quality so you aren't constantly swapping out batteries. The trade-off, of course, is a camera that's plugged into an outlet 24/7.



Interestingly, Netgear didn't do away with those power-hungry options when it made its battery-only, 720p-resolution, motion-sensing, night-vision-equipped, indoor/outdoor Arlo cameras. They retain the resolution and on-demand video feed of a typically-tethered camera and add on the free-roaming flexibility of one that's battery-powered. The result is an elegant solution to a classic security camera conundrum.

Plant these beauties in and around your home for an impressively solid system that's unmoved by shifts in the weather. Just make sure you keep CR123 lithium batteries handy, as battery life will vary a lot based on usage and proximity to the included Netgear Arlo hub. Still, I recommend Arlo to anyone in need of an adaptable indoor/outdoor camera system. The two-camera kit I reviewed here costs \$255, but you can also get a single-camera kit for \$138 and additional cameras for \$145 each at Amazon.

#### Arlo in Action

The kit I reviewed comes with two HD cameras, eight CR123 lithium batteries (four per camera, they can run with just two batteries, though), four magnetic mounts with included

hardware and a hub that connects to the router. The hub and cameras are finished in glossy white plastic. The hub seems unnecessarily large and utilitarian-looking, but otherwise fine.

The palm-sized cameras are much more discreet. Each one has a 130-degree field of view and automatically-adjusting night vision. Netgear claims that Arlo cameras have an operating range of up to 300 feet from the hub and a 4 to 6-month battery life. This is where Arlo's impressive adaptability breaks down a little bit for me.



However, after a week of testing the Arlo cameras mainly in "best video" mode, both cameras still have a full charge. Interestingly, though, when I take the fully-charged cameras outside in the below-freezing weather, the battery status indicators drop swiftly. When I return inside, the status bars go back to their previously fully-charged setting.

Arlo's operating temperature range is 14 to 122 degrees Fahrenheit -- some complaints have surfaced online showing that a cold Arlo camera could claim to have a lower battery life than it really does. Netgear says that this is a known issue that it is working to address.

Even so, I was impressed by each camera's "true" range (closer to 150 feet during testing), the minimal lag time in live streaming mode, the responsive mobile alerts and email notifications, the crisp 720p resolution in day and night mode and the ability to access MP4 files of the clips from the email notifications. I would like to see a speaker and a microphone integrated into its setup, though.

I tested this kit out at three locations and was always surprised by how easy it was to set up. The initial configuration took less than ten minutes and each following attempt less than five. Just connect the hub's ethernet cable and power cord to the router and download the free Android or iOS app. You can create an account on either the mobile or Web app. Then, add the batteries, sync the cameras with the

hub (this requires pressing the sync button on the hub and then on each camera) and you're ready to stick your cameras wherever the hub's range will allow.

**Inside the App**

The app's home screen displays all of your connected cameras. The free, 7-day recording option lets you sync as many as five cameras. There's also a 30-day option that costs \$10 a month and lets you sync up to 10 cameras, as well as a 60-day option that costs \$15 a month and lets you sync up to 15 cameras (you will need more than one hub to accommodate this many cameras, though). Each add-on camera costs \$160.



Unlike some other live-streaming interfaces, this one has play and pause buttons. This sort of forced opt-in design probably helps keep the battery life in check, but it is slightly inconvenient. Still, you can watch multiple live streams at once or watch one camera on a full-screen view. Within live stream mode, you can record or take a photo on-demand as well as adjust the brightness of the shot.

The library section displays a calendar. Select a certain day to get access to saved clips. The mode and settings sections allow you to really customize your cameras. Mode section lets you

set schedules for the motion sensor or simply turn them on or off at-a-glance. Also, access settings to manage your cloud storage, push notifications, video quality and more.

While the Netgear Arlo doesn't currently have an IFTTT channel or integrate with any third-party devices, these small cameras can do so much on their own that they're definitely worth consideration. We haven't reviewed any other battery-powered DIY security cameras that manage to deliver HD resolution from a significant distance -- either indoors or outdoors in either day- or night-vision modes. I'm definitely skeptical about the Arlo's ability to properly handle itself in cold temperatures and how the CR123 batteries would fair after several months, but this versatile security kit is still a win.

See the full article by Megan Wollerton CNET at: <https://www.cnet.com/products/netgear-arlo-smart-home-security-kit/>

If you have a question, comment, or home tip, send it to us at [rod@cbiga.com](mailto:rod@cbiga.com). We reserve the right to edit published questions for length.

***Thought For The Month***  
**NEVER TAKE A SINGLE BREATH FOR GRANTED.**

**A Tip Of The Hat To:**

***Patty Burke***  
*Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices*  
*925 Sanders Road*  
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\*\*\*\* *Thank You* \*\*\*\*

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