

A security camera with no strings attached

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We'd all sleep better knowing our homes were covered by video cameras. A video camera would also be handy so you could know whether your dog is sleeping on the couch when you're training her to stay off the furniture.

There are plenty of live cam and webcam options for your home or office, but almost all of them require wires.

But recent additions to the home security [camera](#) market can be placed almost anywhere in your home or yard that's covered by your Wi-Fi network.

I've been reviewing the Blink Wireless Home Security and HD video monitoring system.

The Blink system uses small battery-powered cameras that can be tucked into almost any shelf or mounted in any spot you'd like to watch.

A Blink setup (starting at \$99, blinkforhome.com) is perfect for renters who would like to keep an eye on things without having to run wires to every camera.

The Blink systems consist of a small sync module (base station) that connects to your home network via Ethernet or Wi-Fi. The sync module is the only piece of the system that needs power, which can be provided by any powered USB port.

CONFIGURATION

You'll need an iOS or Android mobile device to configure Blink through its free app.

The app will walk you through setting up the sync module, which means you'll tell it about your home's Wi-Fi network and password.

You're then walked through setting up each camera. The cameras are powered by two AA lithium batteries, which should last a year with normal use.

Once the camera is powered up, the app will prompt you to enter a number found under the camera's battery cover. Pairing is quick and painless for up to 10 cameras.

Once they're paired, you can place the cameras wherever you like, as long as it's within about 100 feet of the sync module.

The app will show you the live image and a meter showing the camera's signal strength to the sync module, so you can place the cameras in the right spot.

Once you have everything in place, you'll configure recording options with the app.

You might be asking how HD [video cameras](#) can be powered for a year on two small batteries.

It's because they only record when they detect motion and only clips of up to 10 seconds.

When motion is detected, you can choose to get email or push notifications that include a link to view the video clip.

Video is stored in the cloud, and there is no subscription fee. Up to two hours of 10-second clips can be stored. Once you fill up the space, Blink will begin overwriting the oldest clips.

You always have the option of saving the clips to your computer, and there's a USB port on the sync module that will enable local clip storage with a flash drive, but that feature isn't expected until later in the year.

Blink's cameras have a microphone, and audio is recorded with each clip. There is no speaker on the cameras, so two-way audio is not

possible.

Each camera's motion detector has adjustable sensitivity, so you can turn it down so your pets don't set it off so often.

Constant motion does not mean you'll get one long recording broken up into 10-second segments. The system has a delay between recordings. You set the delay, but it must be at least 10 seconds.

10-SECOND CLIPS

This means on motion detection, a clip of up to 10 seconds is recorded, followed by a 10-second delay, and then, if motion continues, another 10-second clip.

You can watch the live view from each camera, but recording during live view is not supported.

Much like with an alarm system, you can arm the cameras, which begin recording on motion detection. Likewise, you can disarm them, which is handy for when you're home and don't want to be bombarded with notifications of video of your family moving about the house.

You can arm the cameras individually, which is great if you don't need to monitor the living room when you're home but you'd like to keep recording motion on your front porch.

Speaking of front porches, the Blink cameras are not weatherproof, nor do the motion detectors work through glass.

If you'd like to keep an eye on your front door, you can mount the camera outside under an overhang or covered porch. As long as it stays out of the rain and in range of the sync module, it should work fine.

The cameras don't have true night vision, but they do each have a single LED light that can be set to illuminate the camera's field of vision. The light turns on when motion is detected. Unlike the green hue of true night vision sensors, the Blink's LED is a white light that shows true colors in your clips.

One other sensor in each camera is for ambient temperature.

In the app, you can see the temperature of the air for each camera. It would be nice if the system could alert you to temperature changes, but that's not a feature yet.

Also coming soon is a separate motion-activated alarm module to sound a loud alert if motion is detected.

The basic system of one camera and a sync module costs \$99. A two-camera system is \$149, and a three-camera setup costs \$199. Blink's best value is a five-camera system for \$299. Individual cameras are \$60 each.

CONCLUSIONS

The Blink system is a cinch to set up, and it provides clear images of what it sees.

The fact that there are no wires to the cameras is fantastic, but you have to live with the limitations of the clip recording method. It's possible a person who is on your porch to steal a package might not face the camera during the initial 5- or 10-second clip, and the delay before recording subsequent clips means you might miss critical moments.

I'd like to see Blink introduce longer clip lengths. A 30-second clip would be welcome, even at the cost of replacing batteries a few months earlier.

This would be an easy system to install for small business owners who want to keep an eye on their stores or offices after-hours.

Pros: Inexpensive, great video quality, cloud storage with no subscription

Cons: Delay between recordings

Bottom line: Can't think of an easier or cheaper system that provides such good-quality video.

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