

The ultimate guide to Google Home: Tips and tricks for understanding and making the most out of your assistant speaker

130



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Khoury

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You just got a Google Home, and after unwrapping it and setting it up, you've asked about the weather, requested a few songs to play, and set a timer for 5 minutes to see how it rings. Now what?

I've been covering Google's smart speaker for more than a year now and I've owned a couple of Google Homes for about a year, yet I still feel like I'm not using them to their full potential. Every week brings new features and integrations that make it tough to remember all that can be done, so for those of you who don't know what to ask beyond playing music, those who are getting confused by hearing a *different* voice sometimes from the speaker, those who are always wondering why some actions work for them but not other members of their household, this is the most accurate tutorial I can write *right now*. Google might do something to make it all outdated by tomorrow, but this is the current state of affairs.



In this post, I will use "Google Home" to refer to Google Home speakers and all speakers with Assistant built-in, interchangeably. This includes for example the [JBL Link series](#), [TicHome Mini](#), [Panasonic GA10](#), [Zolo Mojo](#), [Sony LF-50G](#), and all the [upcoming Assistant speakers](#) announced at CES 2018.



This article focuses specifically on the Assistant that lives in your speaker, but many of the features and options mentioned work just as well from the Assistant on your Android/iPhone device. So you can count this as a special double tutorial for Google Assistant overall.

The basics

The unavoidable requirement for using your Google Home speaker is grabbing the eponymous app from the Play Store, which you should have done already if you've set up the device. Once the app is open, you can slide your finger from the left side of the screen toward the right and reveal the side menu, shown below. There are at least 2 ways to get to *any section* inside the app, but that menu remains the most central way to do so and you should familiarize yourself with it, especially the sections highlighted in a red rectangle in the screenshot.

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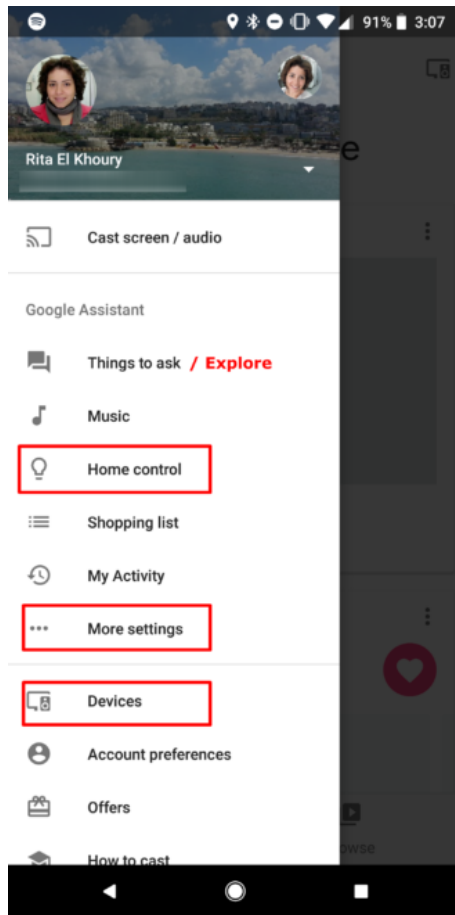
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I'll come back to them again and again in the guide, so keep in mind this menu is where you'll find *Home control*, *More settings*, and *Devices*. You don't see it in my screenshot because it hasn't rolled out to me yet, but some of you will have *Explore* instead of *Things to ask* as well.



[Download](#) QR-Code

[Google Home](#)

Developer: [Google LLC](#)

Price: Free

Voice Match and multiple users

If you bought your Google Home in the past 4 or 5 months, [regardless of where you live](#), the first thing it asked you to do while setting it up is teaching it your voice. This is so that it recognizes you specifically and gives you personal answers tailored to your preferences. Voice Match is obviously important in multi-user households, but it also matters if you live alone in case you don't want visitors to pry on your personal details.



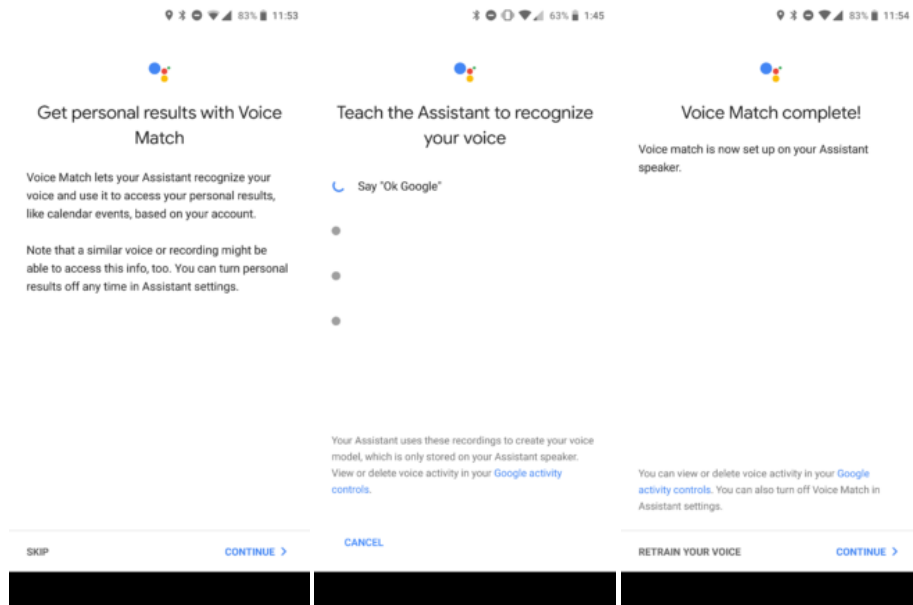
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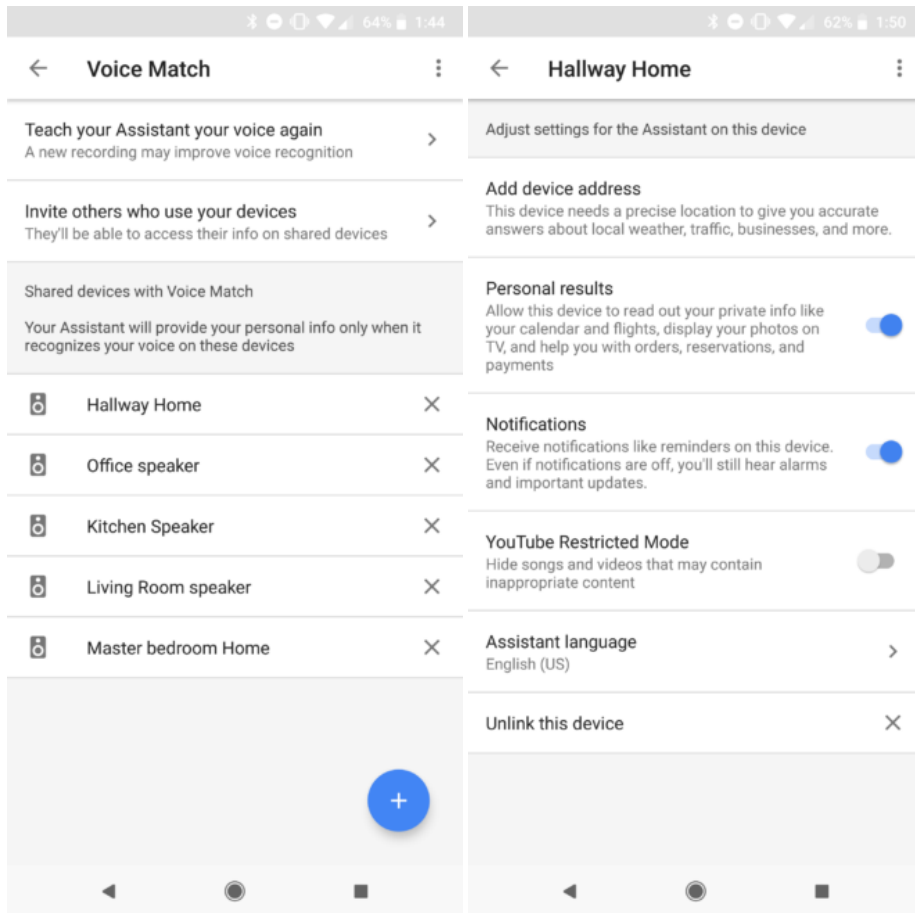
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If you want to retrain the voice model or invite other people to use your speakers, head to *More settings* then tap on *Voice Match*. Teaching your voice brings back the same screens above, whereas inviting new users simply shares a link to download the Google Home app. However, you don't need to use this to add more members.



Anyone connected to your WiFi network can join your Google Home by downloading the app, no link or invitation needed. It's user-friendly, but keep it in mind if you have an open network or if you tend to distribute the WiFi password left and right. The surprising thing is that **there's no user management here**, even for the primary account holder. For example, I set up 5 Google Homes and Assistant speakers in my home and office, and my husband added himself to the 4 at home, yet I can't see his name or email address anywhere should I want to disable his access to one/all of them. Only he can remove himself through the app on his phone.



Left: More settings > Voice match. **Right:** More settings > any Home speaker to get Personal results.

Under *More settings*, you'll also see your different Google Home/Assistant devices and tapping on one of them there will give you the option to turn off *Personal results*, which is important if you don't want to any personal details revealed out loud by your speaker.

Your voice is directly linked to:

- your preferred Google Assistant voice (female Voice I or male Voice II)
- your calendar (though [shared calendars are supported](#)) and reminders
- your *My day* briefing
- your flights
- your work location for traffic info
- finding your phone
- your preferred Music service and Netflix profile ([which was recently added](#))
- your YouTube account
- your Google Photos library
- your Google Play audiobooks
- your shopping list (though it can be shared with others)
- your contacts for phone calls
- your payments, orders, and reservations
- the things you've asked Assistant to remember for you (to be discussed later)
- your favorite sports team and color
- your Assistant Shortcuts (which I'll get to later)
- your signed-in Assistant apps (also to be discussed later).

Other members of the household can't access any of these, except in the case of music and video services for the main (read: first) Home user and sometimes even other members. In that case, anyone whether they're a guest at your house or another user you've added to your Google Home, can play from your music account and watch from your video account.



There are some more intricacies to how media is handled in a multi-user household and for guests. You can read about it [here](#).

Your voice is not linked to requests about:

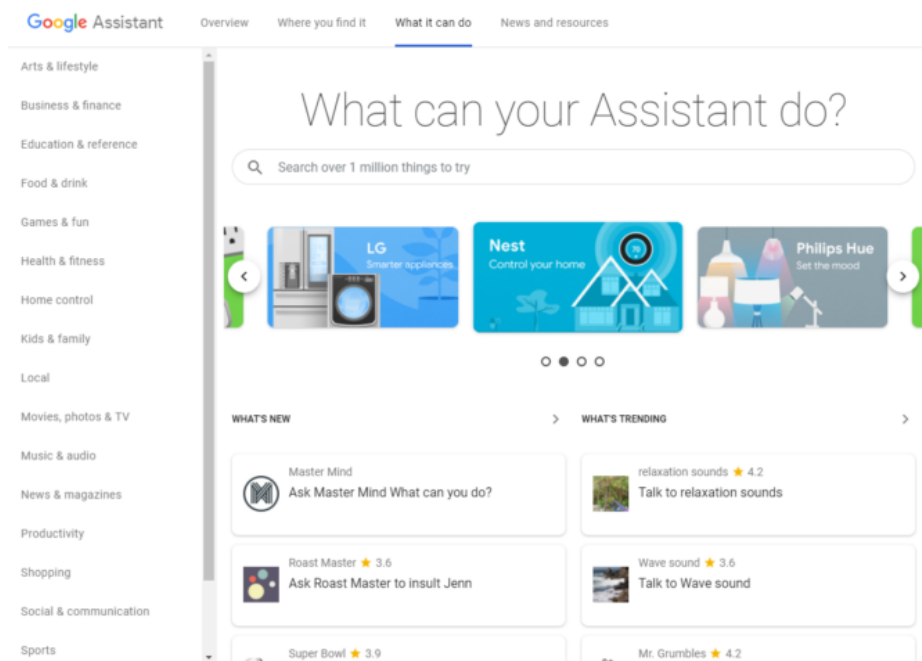
- *Home control* smart home devices and scenes
- setting a timer
- the weather
- traffic and directions
- nearby places
- cooking and recipes
- sports scores
- stock prices
- broadcasts, i.e. intercom-style functionality
- general info like facts, conversions, calculations, translations, definitions, and nutritional info.

In the case of questions that aren't dependent on Voice Match, any person in the household, including guests, can ask these questions and get answers. And yes, that also means that any person in the house, Voice Match user or passing guest, can issue commands to (some of, I'll explain why later) your smart home devices.

Assistant apps

Google opened up Assistant to third-party developers [back in December of 2016](#). It's called "[Actions on Google](#)" on the developer side and on the user side it was previously known as "Services" but is now called "[apps for the Google Assistant](#)," i.e. "Assistant apps" for short. The latter appears to be a new nomenclature Google has settled on, probably because Actions on Google doesn't exactly roll off the tongue (and because it can now be easily compared to Alexa's skills).

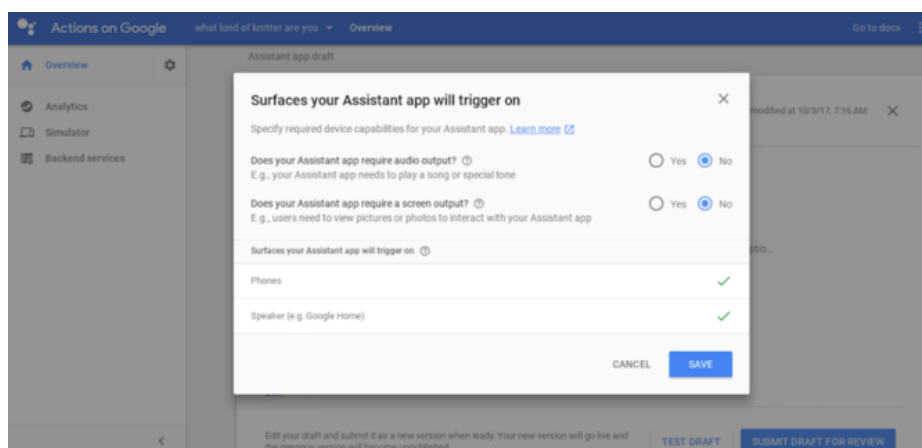
Some examples of Assistant apps include [Daily Motivation](#), [Today's Word](#), [Dog Facts](#), [busuu](#), [Beer Guru](#), plenty of trivia games and quizzes, [Logitech Harmony](#), [Somfy](#), [Roomba](#), and thousands more.



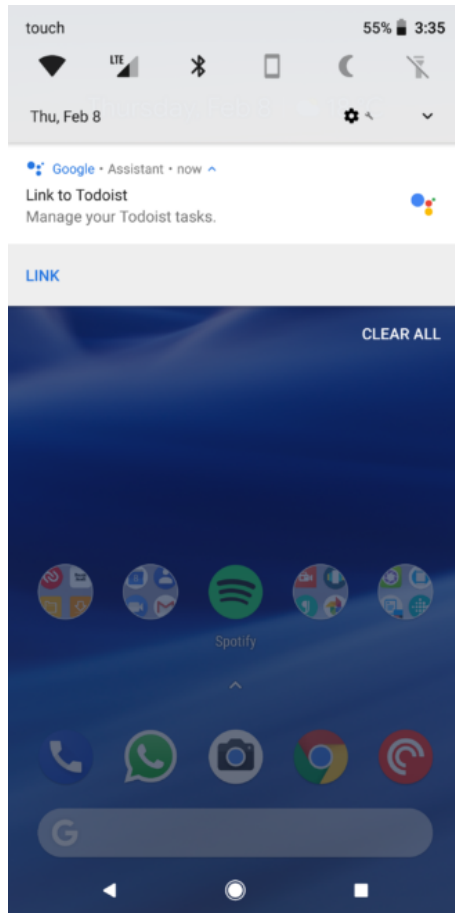
Google Assistant apps web directory.

Important distinctions about Assistant apps

- You must use "talk to X" or "tell X" or "ask X" when issuing an app command to your Google Home. You can't simply say, "Hey Google, turn up the volume," you have to say, "Hey Google, ask Harmony to / tell Harmony to turn up the volume." Alternatively, you can also start by saying, "Hey Google, talk to Harmony," and then issue the volume command after it.
- Assistant apps talk back to you in a different voice than the one you're used to hearing from your Google Home. It's jarring at first, but Home will respond with, "Alright, getting X," and another voice will come up and tell you what this particular app/service can do and will continue answering you until you're done with it and want to go back to the regular Home voice and commands. (If you're using Assistant on your phone, you'll also notice that Assistant apps change the title bar to black.)
- Developers can specify on which version of Assistant each of their apps will work. This sounds weird, but some apps will be functional on Google Home but not on Assistant on your phone, or vice versa. That's not to mention Auto, Wear, tablets, Chromebooks, and all the other variants of Assistant. It's a sad state of affairs that there's no consistency in the experience, but some of it might be related to safety (distracting visuals on Auto), some might still be limited by privacy (sending messages on Home), and some could be a form-factor limitation between different screens and interfaces. **Update:** To clarify, apps work everywhere by default but developers can specify if theirs requires audio output or a screen output ([Surface Capabilities in the documentation](#)) which might then limit where it works or not. Google also has a review process in place to ensure safety and privacy, as is the case for Android Auto where audio-only apps are allowed.



- Some apps require you to link an account but others don't. So you can easily talk to [Bitcoin prices](#) or [AccuWeather](#), but you'll have to link your account before you can control your [Logitech Harmony](#) or add tasks to your [Todoist](#).
- The easiest way to tell if a service requires your account to be linked or not is to ask Google Home to talk to it, and if it does need your details, a notification will pop up on your phone asking you to sign in and link it.



Assistant apps are Voice Match-dependent

If I link/sign in to Todoist to my Google Home, **only I can use it** and talk to Todoist on my Google Home. Anyone else in the house can try issuing a voice command to talk to Todoist, but they'll just be asked to link their own account. They can't add or manage tasks.

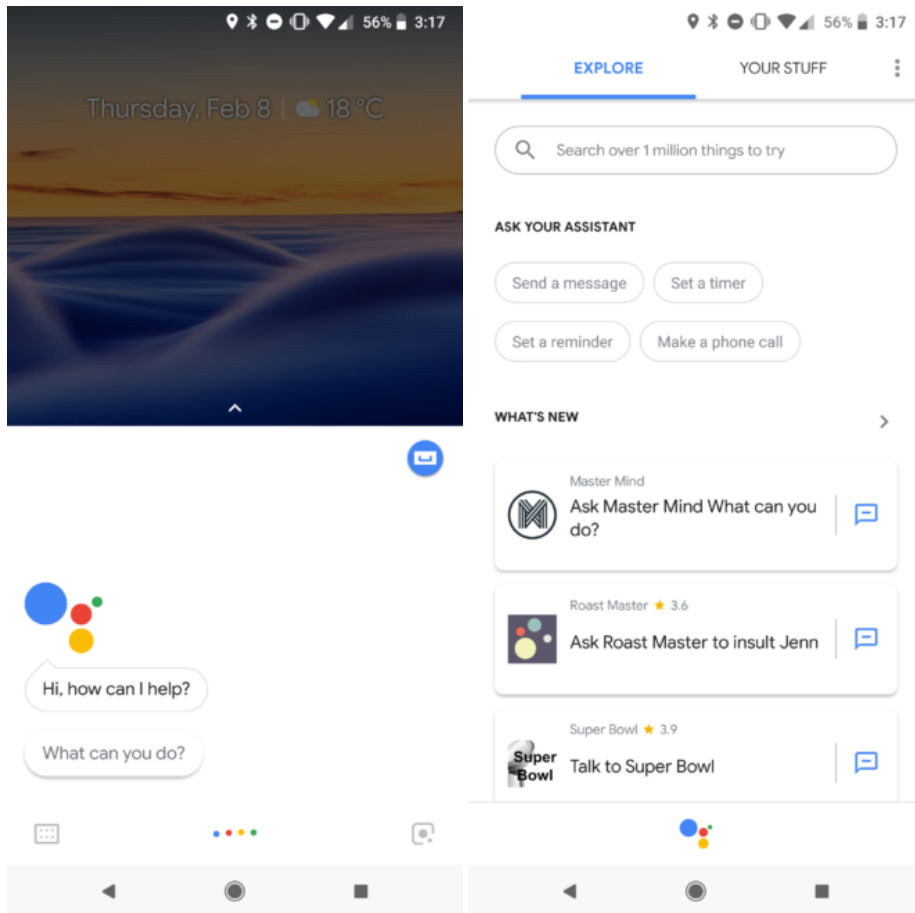
This is, most notably, the case for Logitech Harmony. It's an Assistant app so it will only answer to your voice. If it **doesn't recognize you**, it **won't execute the command**. And if you want other members of the household to control it, you will need to link the Harmony account from their device through their account.



Where to find Assistant apps

There are several ways you can browse and search all the Assistant apps:

- The full directory is on the web at: assistant.google.com/explore
- On your phone, go to the Google Home app, open the side menu, and tap *Explore*. (If you see *Things to ask* in the side menu, it means you get the limited directory: the full-blown *Explore* hasn't replaced it yet for you. That's the case for me as shown in the screenshot at the top of the post.)
- On your phone, trigger Assistant and tap the blue envelope-like icon on the top right of the white overlay. This will open the *Explore* section where you can browse and search for all apps just like on the web directory.



This directory, regardless of how you accessed it, contains **both the general Assistant apps and the more special *Home control* apps** that I'll explain below. You can tell the difference by the voice commands in each one: Assistant apps have "talk to/ask/tell" before every command, *Home control* apps don't.

Regardless of how you got to it, every Assistant app has a dedicated page that shows the different supported voice commands and which devices it's available on. In the example below, you can see [Todoist](#) which, if you followed the explanation above, is an Assistant app.



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Add and organize your Todoist tasks without ever entering the app. You can ask Google Assistant to...

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ASK YOUR ASSISTANT

"Let me talk to Todoist"

"Talk to Todoist"

"Ask Todoist to add a task to call John"

"Tell Todoist to read my tasks"

"Tell me what is my next task with Todoist"

AVAILABILITY

Android 6.0+ TVs

Google Home

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Smart "Home control"

There's a special breed of Assistant apps that developers can aim for called Smart Home devices, but they'll show up under *Home control* in your Google Home app. These defy the rules of Assistant apps almost altogether and for good reason. Some examples include Nest, SmartThings, Hue, Wink, and more.

Home control is for a few device types only

Not every smart home device can be in the Home control category. According to the [developer documentation](#), these are the types of devices supported:

- Cameras
- Dishwashers
- Dryers
- Lights
- Outlets
- Refrigerators
- Scenes
- Switches
- Thermostats
- Vacuums
- Washers

However, we also know that [locks were recently added](#), and I've seen hints of window shades and fans coming later. Others are probably also a work in progress.

What's special about Home control devices

Properly integrated smart home devices show up in their **dedicated section in the Google Home app under *Home control*** in the side menu. They're grouped according to the mother service they come from and show a **personalized icon** next to them so you always know what's a light and what's an outlet, what's a scene and what's a speaker/TV ([Google Homes and Chromecasts](#)), and so on.

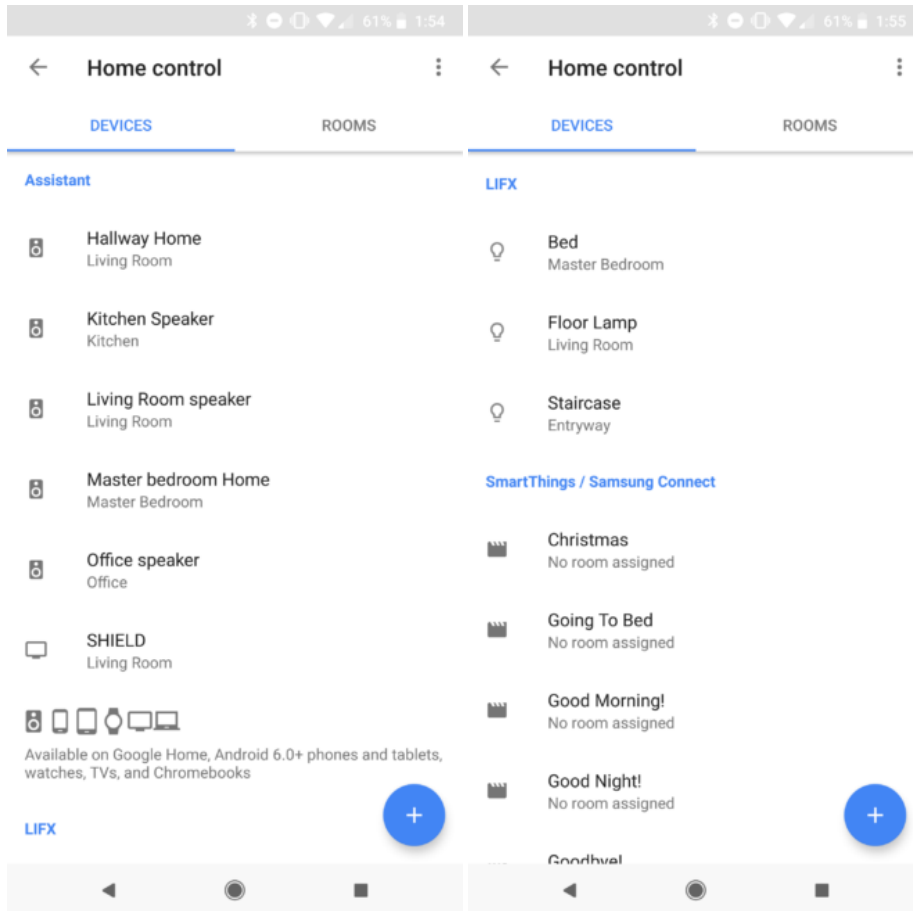


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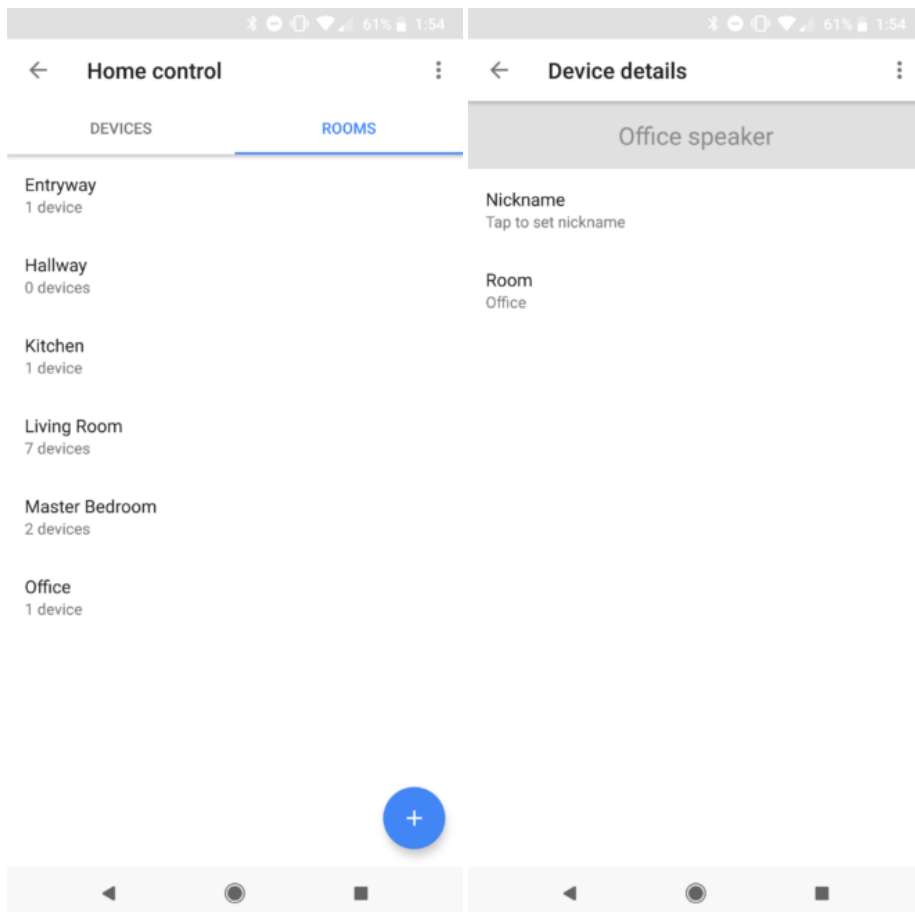
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If you buy a new device from a brand you've already linked here, like a new Hue light to augment your existing Hue arsenal, it may take a while for it to show up in *Home control*. In that case, saying "[Ok Google, sync my devices](#)" (for all device types) or "sync my lights/outlets/cameras/etc" (for specific device types) will force them to show up right away.

Each device can be **given a nickname**, so even if I had called a light "Bed" in the LIFX app, I can nickname it "[Luxo Jr.](#)" here and ask Google Home to turn on Luxo Jr. Also, each device can be **assigned to a room**, which lets you easily group lights and speakers and appliances in the living room for example and turn them off in one go.



Unlike Assistant apps, smart home devices that fall in the *Home control* section, **don't require you to "talk to X"** so for example you don't need to preface your request by asking Hue to turn on the light or telling Nest to lower the temperature. You simply issue the command and Google Home will *instinctively* know which service and device to call upon. And since there's no talking to a separate service, you will get the answer from the **same voice as the regular one on your Home**, no jarring second persona showing up.



Update: *Home control* sync is an all-or-nothing deal. Once a device is synced and shows up in the list under *Home control*, **you can't manually remove it or hide it**. The only way to remove it is to take it out of the main app/service that brought it. That's annoying when you have dozens of scenes or devices and you just want to be able to voice control a few of them. Or when you get duplicates because, for example, your Hue lights are added through the Hue account and through SmartThings. That's why SmartThings implemented a selection screen for the Google Assistant inside its own app where you can choose which devices get synced and which don't.

They are not dependent on Voice Match

Despite the fact that you absolutely have to sign in with your account to add a smart home device to this section, these are not dependent on Voice Match. So once you've added your Hue account (for example), **anyone in the house can control it** and turn on or off the lights, **including guests and other members** of the multi-user household.

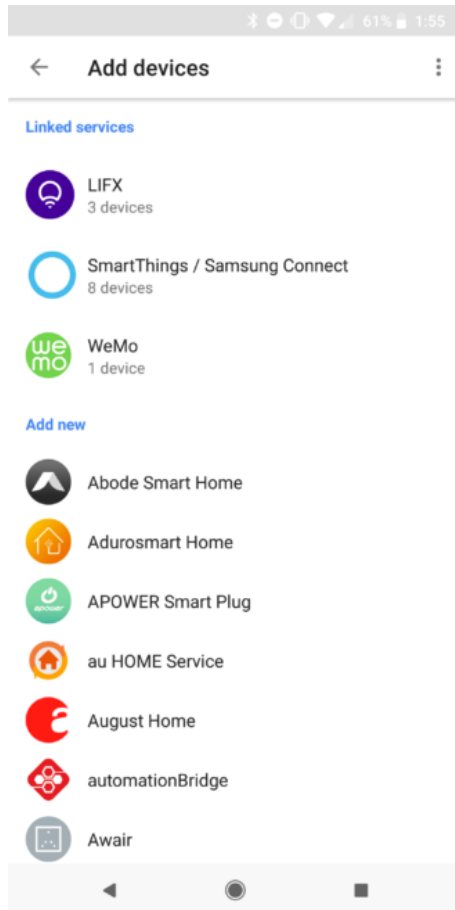
That's mostly beneficial as you don't have to go and link your Hue account from every other family/household member's Google account, which saves you unnecessary work. It also makes it possible for guests, kids, and elderly people to control those lights without any fuss. The downside obviously is that any guest can prank the entire house by issuing commands and anyone standing outside your front door might be able to shout "turn off the lights" and hope that a nearby Google Home inside will answer it. I wager that this is why [smart locks only support locking and not unlocking](#)

and aren't officially documented yet, and why security systems like Nest's Secure aren't integrated in Home control yet.

Where to find Home control devices

As I mentioned in the *Assistant apps* section, the general directory also lists Home control integrations, but you have to check each and every app to see if it has a "talk to/ask/tell" or not, which isn't the most straightforward thing.

The best way to find specifically which devices have direct Home control integration is to go to *Home control* in the Google Home app, and tap the floating blue button to add a new device. This gives you the list of all devices and services that can be added.



However, this list only includes the service names and doesn't have the exact device types and models that are supported. Maybe Google can improve that by adding an info button next to each one where developers can list those models and the different functions available. That would go a long way toward discoverability.



It's worth noting that there is indeed a [more detailed list of Google Home smart home partners](#) which includes the different device types under each company's name with links to their official page, but that list has **both Home control and regular Assistant apps partners**. So you'll see security systems, garage door openers, TVs, sensors, remotes, bridges, and more device types that aren't directly integrated in Home control but that are still supported as third-party Assistant apps.

Shortcuts and Multiple commands

As you get used to talking to your Google Home, you start thinking that some commands take a lot of time and that a few things could be done faster. Luckily, there are two ways to speed up the process: multiple commands and Shortcuts.

Multiple commands

Only a couple of months ago, Google Home started [understanding two separate commands linked with an "and."](#) So you can say, "set the light to 50% and play my Slow Jazz playlist" when you're ready for some romantic times. However, keep in mind that you need to **say the full command for each one**, so "turn off the living room and bedroom light" won't work, but "turn off the living room light and turn off the bedroom light" will. Here's a more [thorough explanation of what works and what doesn't](#).

Shortcuts

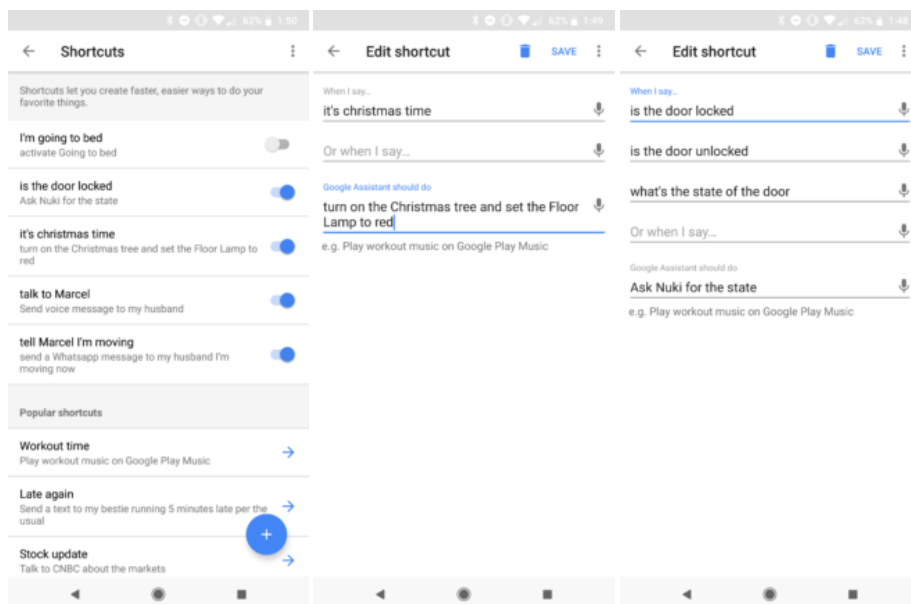
As for Shortcuts, [they've been here a while longer](#) and let you create voice shortcuts to any command you want to make faster. You can make your own shortcuts in the Google Home app under *More settings*, and scrolling down to *Shortcuts*.



Shortcuts are Voice Match-dependent. Any shortcut you set up on your account won't carry to other members of the household so don't assume that everyone will be able to use them.

The app has a few popular shortcuts you can get inspiration from, but for me the three best uses of shortcuts are:

- **Creating a faster way to talk to an Assistant app** without "ask X to do this". Example: When I ask "is the door locked?" it's as if I had said "ask Nuki for the state." (Nuki is my smart door lock.) The first rolls off the tongue and makes more sense.
- **Replacing multiple commands with one.** Example: "It's Christmas time" is the equivalent of asking to turn on my Christmas tree and set my Floor lamp to red.
- **Making Google say anything you want in response to a question** by using "repeat after me" commands. Take your pick as to the limitless possibilities, but one of my friends is taunting his little daughter with it. He has: "Has Mia been a good girl?" = "repeat after me Mia has been a good girl today, maybe we should give her some candy," and "Has Mia been naughty?" = "repeat after me Mia has been very naughty today. She gets no candies." Since all of this is linked to his voice, only he gets to ask Google and he can choose the sentence structure he wants to elicit the response he wants. Parenting at its most genius.

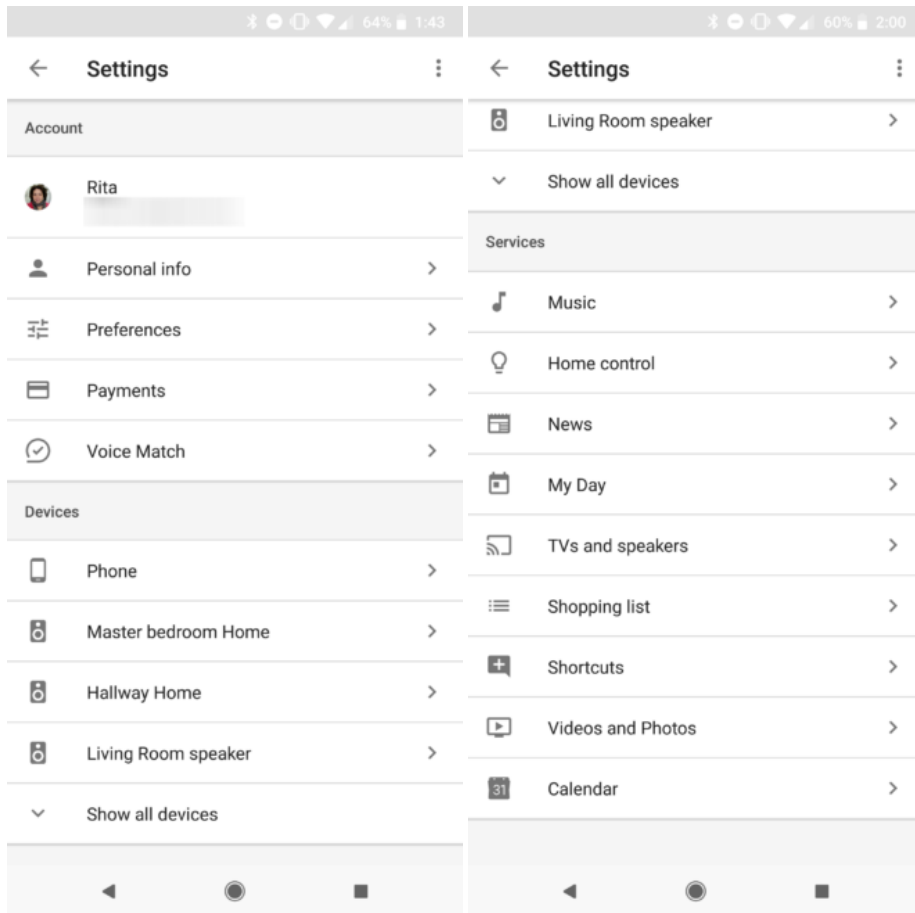


My shortcuts (left) include one for multiple commands (middle) & one for an Assistant app (right).

All those Google Home settings

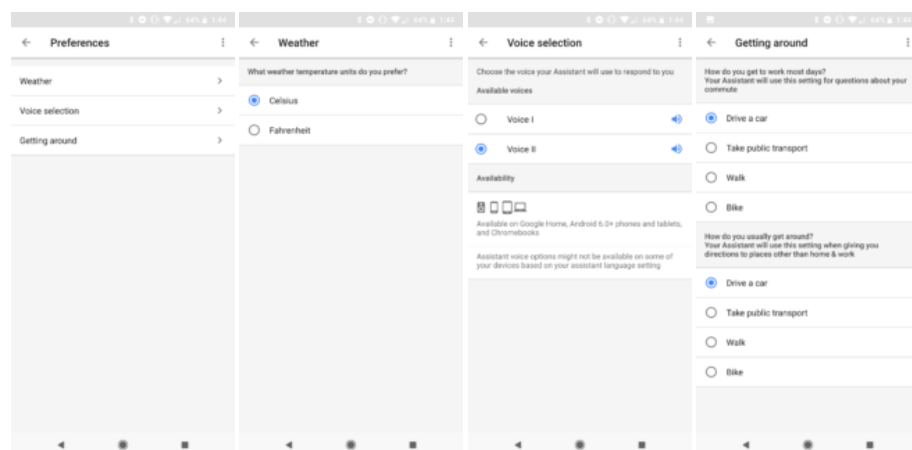
While all of the things I discussed above are super cool and interesting, it's worth going back to the often-forgotten basics and reminding you that there are several options and preferences for

customizing your Google Home experience. Unless otherwise specified, all of the following settings can be reached in *More settings* in the Google Home app.



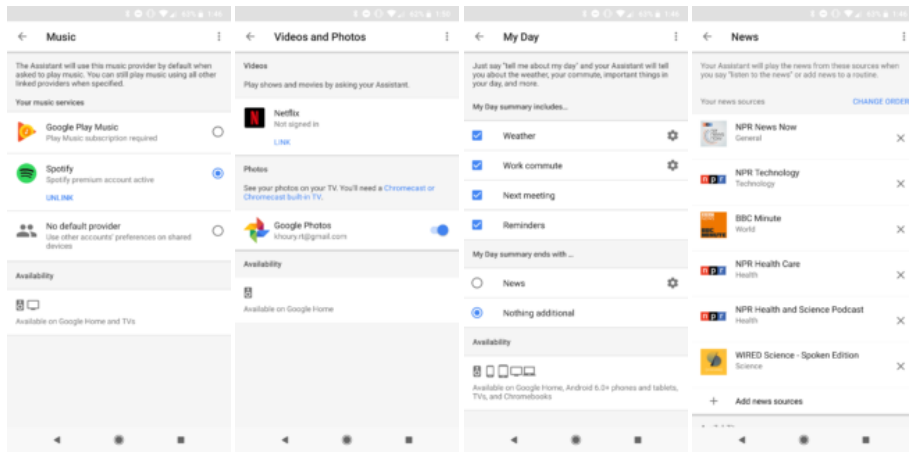
Your personal preferences

Under *More settings* (above), the *Preferences* subsection lets you choose the weather temperature unit, how you get around usually and how you go to work, as well as [change your Google Assistant's voice](#). The latter offers either the default female voice or Voice II, a male one. These are Voice-Match dependent, so I'm able to get a male voice to answer me but my husband gets a female voice on the same Home speakers.

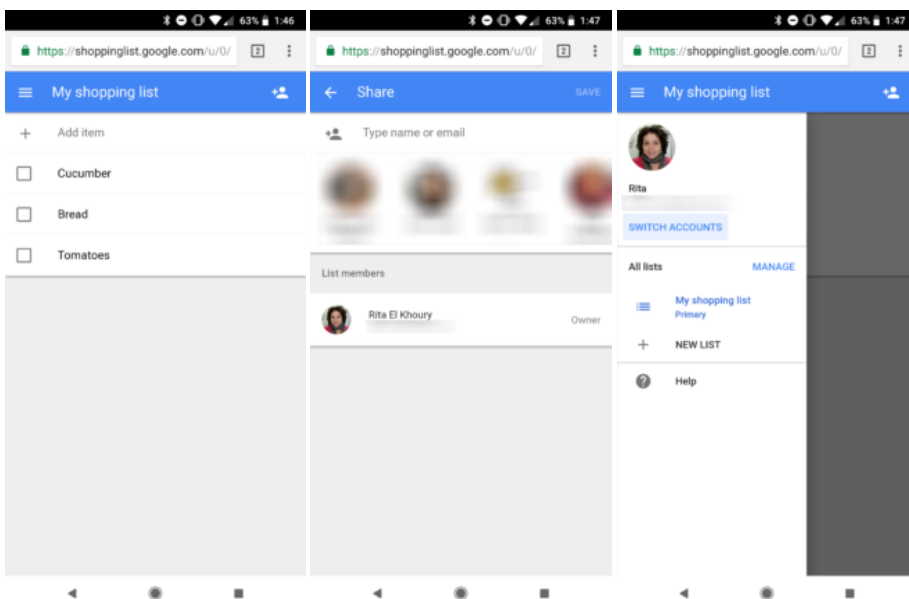


Services settings and preferences

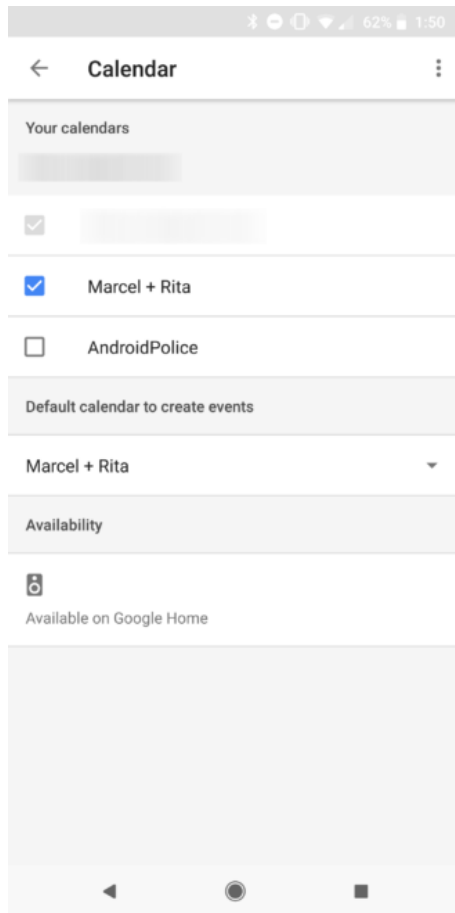
At the bottom of the *More settings* screen, there's a list of different services you can control with your Google Home. These include linking your music and video services and choosing the preferred one if you have several, setting the pieces of your *My Day* news briefing and the different news sources you're interested in, and a couple more options I'll now detail.



One of them is the new Google Express shopping list, which [replaced Google Keep](#) to the [dismay of many](#). I personally don't use it as both my husband and I are quite attached to our dozens of tightly organized Google Keep lists for everything, not just shopping. (It's annoying that we can't add items to Keep by voice, but we chose Keep over Express and that's the price.) However, the Express shopping list isn't half bad, and if you want to use it, keep in mind it supports sharing and multiple lists.

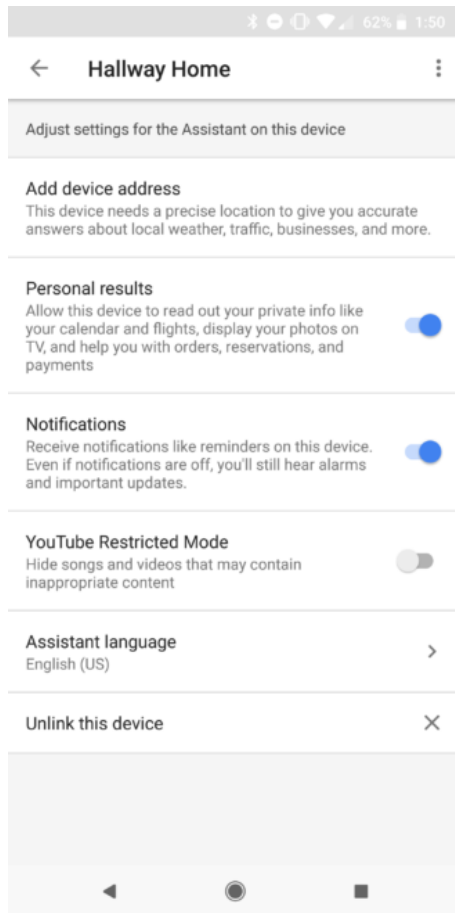


The other is **multiple calendar support** which [rolled out at the end of last year](#). If you have several calendars you'd like your Google Home to see appointments and events in, this is where you can enable them. For example, I have a shared calendar with my husband where most of our tasks and events go and enabling it lets Home tell me about them when I ask it. Even better, I can set that shared calendar to be the default one events get created in, so when I ask my Home to add an appointment, it goes straight into it and my husband sees it as well.

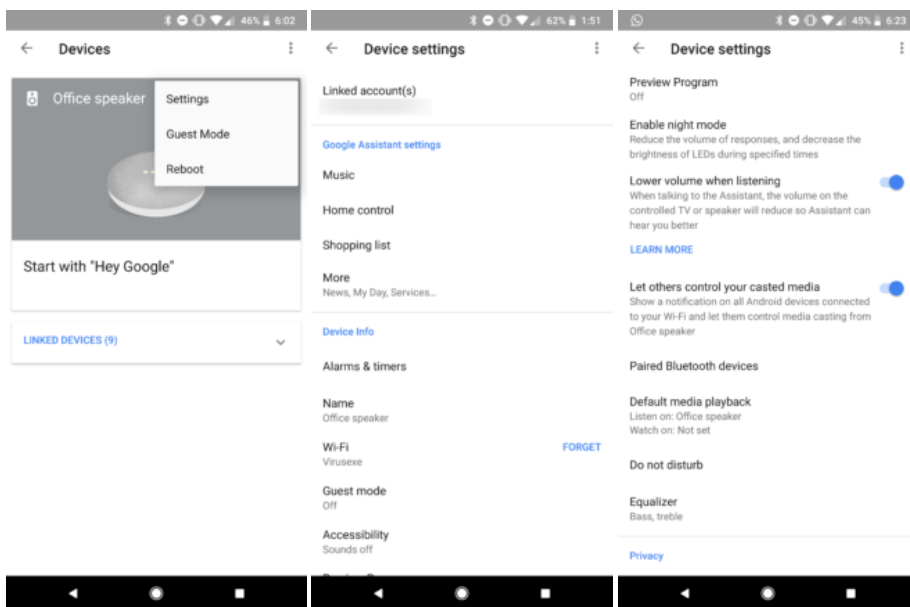


Specific settings for each Google Home

Tapping each Google Home (or Assistant speaker) device name in the Home app's *More settings* reveals this one screen where you can give it an address (useful for directions and traffic requests), toggle personal results, toggle notifications, restrict YouTube from showing inappropriate content in case you have kids, and change the Assistant language. The two most noteworthy are the **personal results**, which I discussed in the Voice Match section at the top of the post, and **notifications** which are Google Home's way of getting your attention when there's a pending reminder.



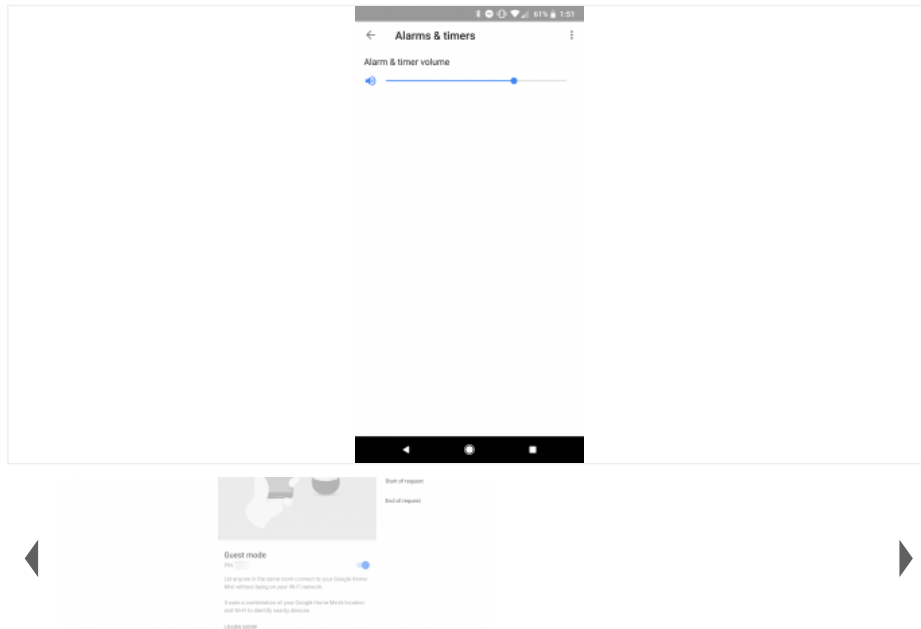
However, if you're not familiar with the app, there's one slightly hidden way to access way more settings for your device. (Google doesn't like making things straightforward.) This one is under the *Devices* section (side menu) of the Google Home app. By scrolling to your speaker and tapping the overflow menu, you'll see a *Settings* option that will open up a bunch of other options.



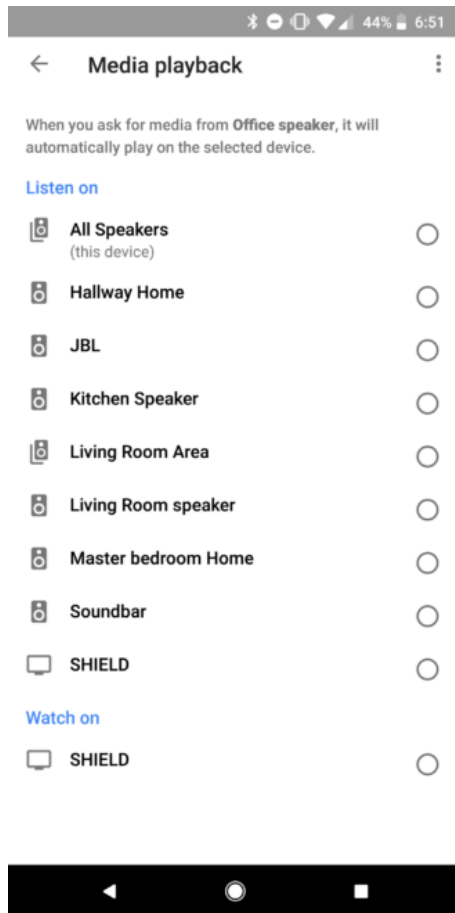
Some of the features are pretty standard like changing the name or choosing a volume for alarms, but the interesting ones let you:

- Turn on/off **guest mode** which allows anyone with the PIN to cast to the Google Home (it's a Chromecast target as well).
- Enable a **small beep when you start and stop talking to Google Home**. This can be super handy if you sometimes talk to your speaker without looking at it, or if you can't always see the lights when you're talking to it. The rounded shape of the Home Mini and the slope of the regular home make the lights tough to see from all angles, so the beep gives you audible feedback when your Home is listening to you.

- Join the **preview program**, where you can [test new features for Google Home](#) by sometimes running beta firmware.
- Set up a **night mode** so that your Home [talks back in a more hushed tone at night](#).
- Let Google Home **lower the volume when you're talking to it**, even the volume of a [controlled TV, Chromecast, or other Chromecast speaker](#).
- **Disable the media playback notification on all devices on the network**, which is great if you don't want others [inadvertently pausing or stopping your music or video](#).
- Change the **equalizer settings** of [bass and treble for the speaker](#).



One setting in this list worth pointing out by itself is the option to assign a **default music and video target (including groups)** for each Home. This hidden gem is [relatively recent](#) and is great if you have multiple Google Homes and Chromecast speakers, and/or multiple Chromecasts and Android TVs. Say you want your Home Mini in the living room to always play music on the Chromecast-enabled soundbar, or you want your Google Home in the hallway to always play music on all speakers, or you want your bedroom Home Mini to play videos on the bedroom TV not the living room one, this lets you set defaults so you don't have to specify the target every single time.



Cool things you can do



Google has [a neat Support page](#) (and [another one](#), *because Google*) that is almost always up to date and lists nearly everything you can do with your Google Home or Assistant speaker. You should bookmark it... along with this guide, of course!

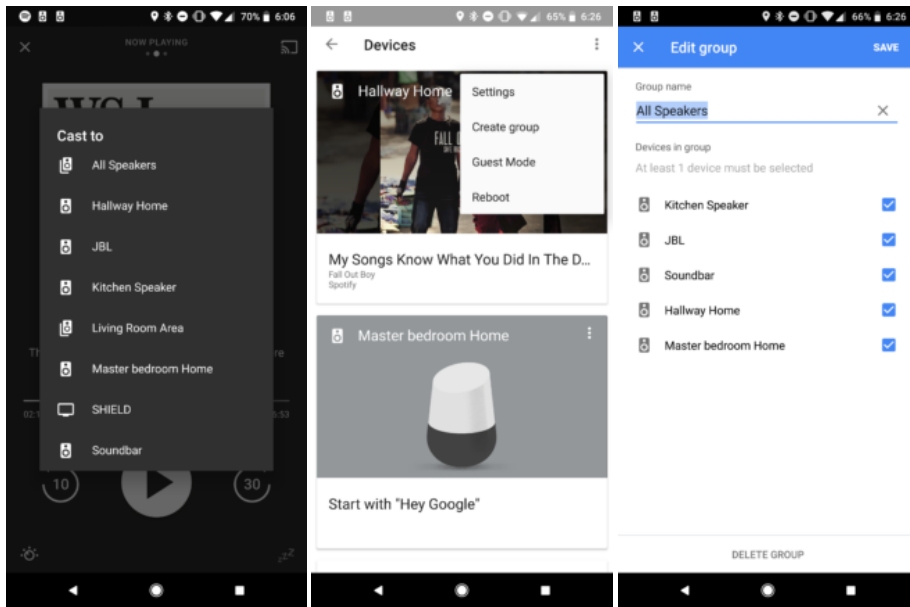
Now that you're familiar with the intricacies of Google Home's peculiar modus operandi, it's time to get to the fun side of the equation. Regardless of whether you paid \$29 to buy a Home Mini or \$399 for a Home Max, or somewhere in between, you can get the most out of them in the same way, sound quality aside.

For music and audio

Use it as a Chromecast with multi-room grouping

Any Google Home or Assistant built-in speaker is also a Chromecast speaker. So you can use it as a Chromecast and cast to it from any compatible app, without having to use voice commands if that service is not supported on Home officially or if you don't want to shout at your speaker for some reason. For me, this is particularly useful when I want to listen to music on Plex and podcasts on Pocket Casts. What's better is that [pause, resume, stop, and volume commands work](#) even for casted audio so once I use my phone to start something, I can set it aside and control playback with my voice. Oh and asking "What's playing" gets me an answer as well.

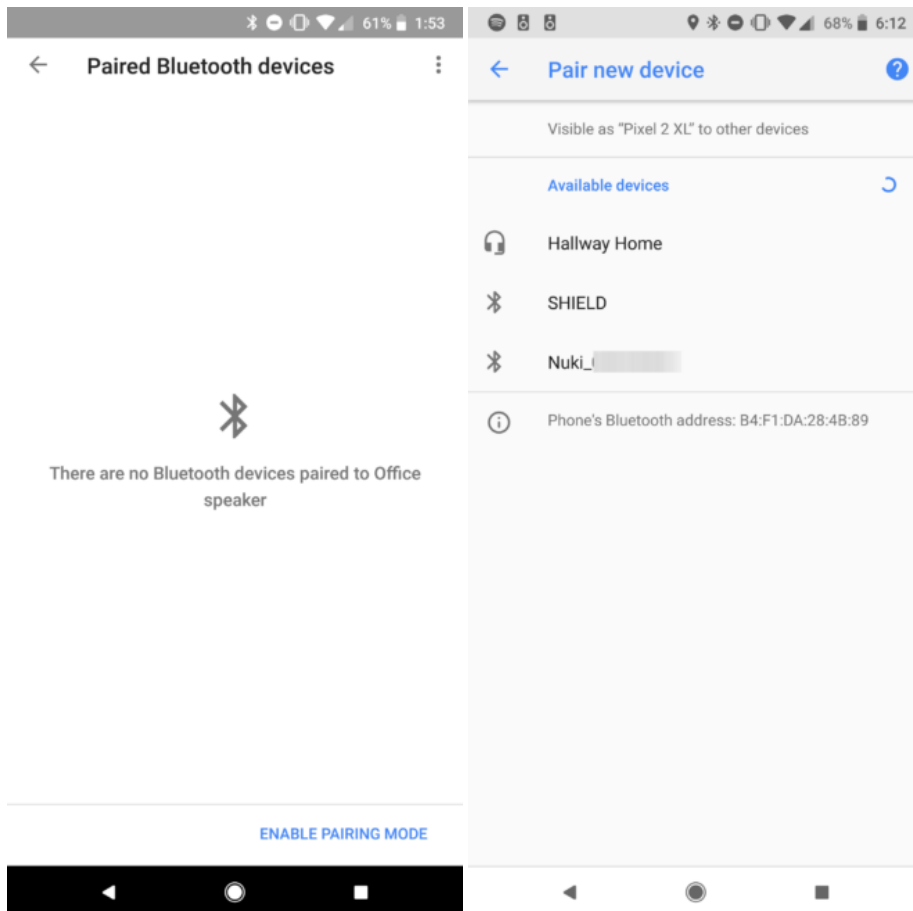
And since it's a Chromecast inside, it can be grouped with other Chromecasts for multi-room listening.



Casting to Home speakers from Pocket Casts (left) and multi-room grouping (middle and right).

Use it as a Bluetooth speaker

Another way your Google Home is like any other speaker is with its **support for Bluetooth**. This option wasn't available at first, but was [added later on](#). In *My Devices*, tapping the overflow menu of any Google Home speaker (where you can turn on guest mode and night mode, explained above), there's a *Paired Bluetooth devices* option where you can enable pairing mode and then head over to the Bluetooth menu on a phone or computer and pair it. Bluetooth still feels a little like an afterthought on Home, but it's there should you want to listen to audio from a device or app that doesn't have any cast capability.



Use it as a white noise machine

An often forgotten feature of Google Home is that it has a [built-in library of white noise and relaxation sounds](#). Simply saying "help me relax" starts the sounds, but you can ask for a specific genre of sounds by asking to "play [x] sounds / white noise." The currently available sounds include relaxing, nature, water, running water, outdoor, babbling brook, oscillating fan, fireplace, forest, country, ocean, rain, river, and thunderstorm.

Wake up and fall asleep to music

Just a week ago, Google added the option to [set up a music or radio alarm on your Google Home](#). So instead of groggily opening your eyes to a soulless beep, you can now ask to "set a music/radio alarm at 7am," for example, and Google will ask you what music or radio station (if available in your locale) you want to wake up to.

Also available is a [sleep timer for your music and audio](#), so you can say, "set a sleep timer for 30 minutes / 11pm" and the audio will stop after the specified duration or at the specified time. You can also combine the playback and sleep timer in one command by directly asking to "play [x] for [y] minutes / until [z] pm," so your audio will start playing right away and stop when you want it to.

Use it as an intercom

Broadcasting messages from one Google Home to others is a [relatively recent feature](#), but it works super well whether you just want to send a custom voice message to all speakers or you want to use the Home's preset library of recorded messages. Try "broadcast time to wake up" to hear a rooster and a perky "Morning, time to rise and shine," for example. Or "broadcast breakfast is ready," for a chime and a happy "It's time for breakfast, come and get it." There are others for different meals, time to leave, movie or TV time, bedtime, and more.

Others

Beside using streaming services on your Google Home, keep in mind that you can [play your own music](#) if you've already uploaded it to Google Play Music, [play audiobooks](#) purchased on Google Play, [play podcasts](#), and [ask Google to play a music key](#). The latter was half-broken about a year ago, and I have zero musical abilities to distinguish if it's now working or not, but it's there should you want to test it.

For media consumption

You know how to ask your Google Home to play something on Netflix or YouTube if you have a Chromecast connected to your TV or an Android TV, but here are a few more tricks you can do to make the best of that Home-to-TV link:

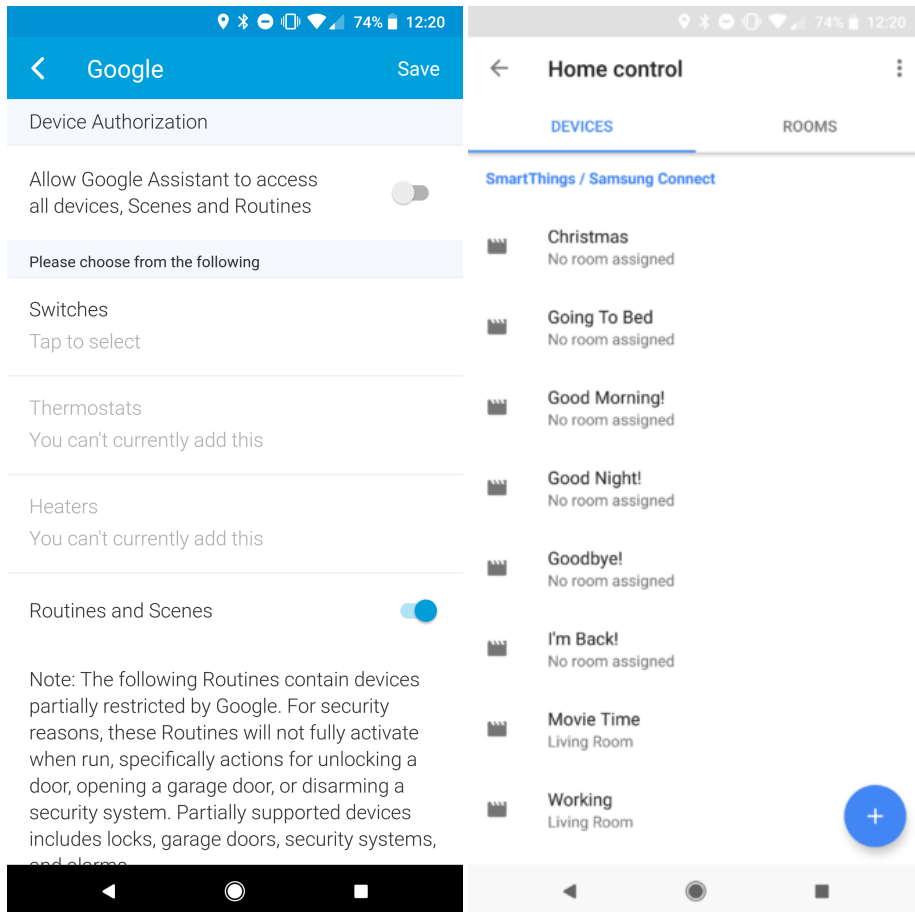
- Ask Home to [play news videos on the TV](#).
- [Turn your TV on and off](#) with your Home.
- [Live stream your security cams on your TV](#), which currently works for Nest and Logi, though support for more cameras is on the way.
- Control subtitle and [dubbing settings](#) for services and movies/shows that support it. At the moment, this should work for Netflix and YouTube TV, but it doesn't for CW, CBS, HBO NOW, Viki, or Crackle.
- [Look up tv schedules](#) so you know when the next episode of your favorite show is airing.

Augment your Google Home's potential

If you thought that the Assistant apps and Home control services are the end of the Google Home's integrations, you are completely mistaken. There are dozens of ways you can augment the capabilities of your Home and control more devices and services that are not officially and directly supported. For the sake of brevity, and because we can't spend hours discussing all of them, I will highlight only a few ones here.

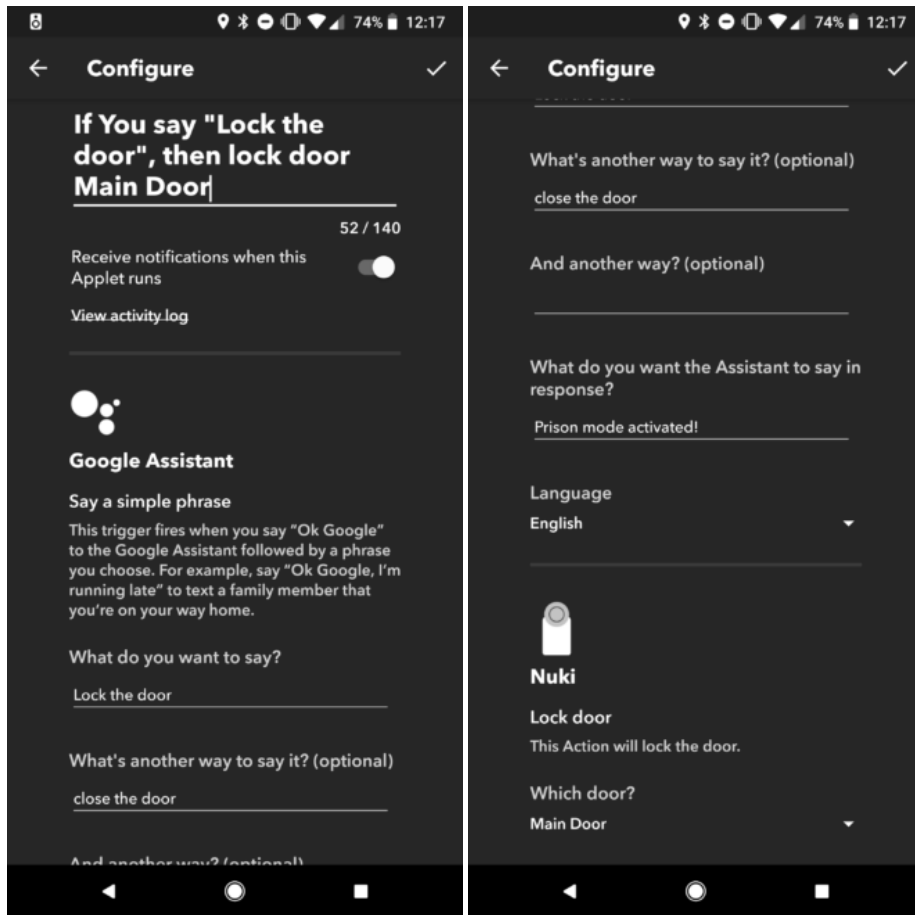
- **Get a smart home hub** like Wink or SmartThings (including the [SmartThings Link for NVIDIA SHIELD](#)). A hub often lets you add sensors, create automations for your house, add multiple services and devices that may not be officially supported by Home, and have a visual interface for turning on and off things. The benefit as a Google Home owner is that Home control direct

integration is available for [Wink](#), [SmartThings](#), [Vera](#), [Insteon](#), and [HomeSeer](#) so anyone in the house can control devices connected to the hub by voice. Other hubs are supported, though through the less practical voice-dependent Assistant apps integration, are [Nexia](#) and [Harmony](#).



I only turned on Scenes and Routines in my Google Assistant integration for SmartThings.

- **Use a software hub to bridge your devices together** and create automations and scenes. Examples include [Yonomi](#) ([direct Home control](#)) and [Gideon](#) ([regular Assistant app](#)), both of which can be installed and set up on your Android or iOS phone. Yonomi, for example, lets you [launch scenes that circumvent the lack of direct Sonos integration](#) on Google Home.
- **When all else fails, use IFTTT.** The [Google Assistant IFTTT channel](#) lets you create applets to merge *any* voice commands (1 to 3), get any response you want, and trigger any action on another IFTTT channel/service. IFTTT commands **do not depend on Voice Match** so keep that in mind if you're trying to control a secure or private device. For example, since [my smart door lock, Nuki](#), only has an Assistant app that my husband can't control with his voice unless I sign him in as well, I use IFTTT to let both of us lock the door. The applet is set so that if either of us says, "lock the door," or, "close the door," Google Home responds by saying, "Prison Mode activated," and locks Nuki. I *could* make another applet to unlock the door, but I don't want anyone and everyone to be able to do so by voice.



My IFTTT applet for bridging Google Assistant and Nuki.

- If you're not afraid of creating your own automation system and getting your hands dirty with code, you can check out the open-source [Home Assistant platform](#) and OpenHab ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)), both of which have some form of Google Home integration.

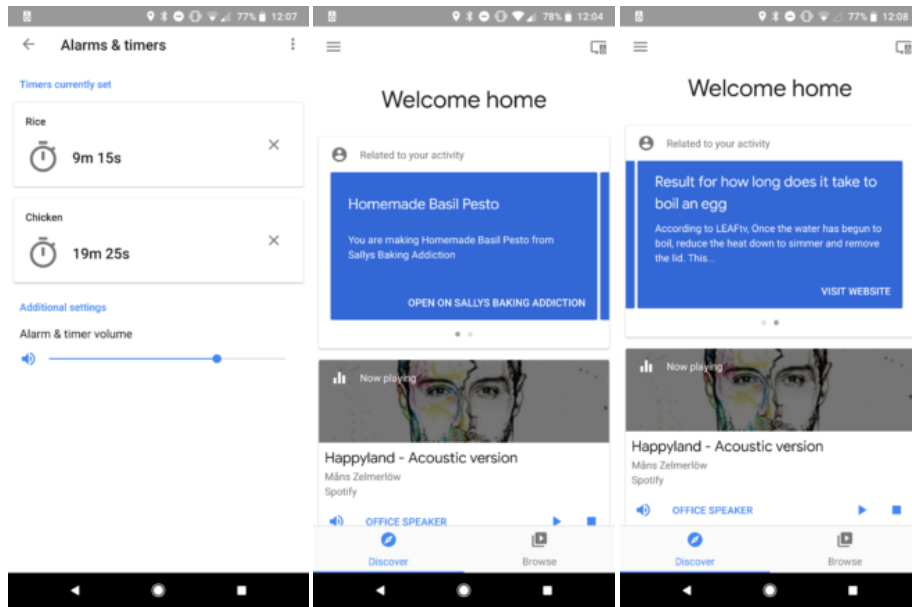
How I use my Google Home

I have a couple of Google Home speakers in my apartment as well as the JBL Link 20 and Link 300, and a small Google Home Mini at work. Beside the usual music playback (including multi-room in the entire house when we're feeling happy), smart home control, and questions, I thought I'd let you in on a few ways I've found the speaker to be super useful in my everyday life.

In the kitchen

Getting a Google Home in the kitchen was definitely the best decision we made. My husband and I love doing the dishes while listening to music and it's awesome to be able to control playback with our voice while our hands are soapy, wet, and holding a glass cup. I also call upon it a few times to ask questions when cooking. "What's 2 ounces in grams?" and "How long does it take to boil an egg?" or "How do you make pesto?" are only a few examples. The latter not only offers user-controllable step-by-step guidance to get each ingredient and follow the instructions, but also sends a card to the Google Home app on your phone, so you can browse and see the result/recipe if you need to.

I can also have **multiple timers running at the same time**, with a name for each. It's easy to say, "set a chicken timer for 20 minutes," and have the Home understand that this is a new timer named Chicken.



Multiple timers (left), easy to follow links related to my questions (middle and right).

In the laundry room

OK look, this isn't the most sophisticated use of a Google Home, but my husband and I *absolutely love* it. When the washer is done and we're taking out the laundry, our hands full of a large bedding or tens of socks, and we're wondering if we should use the dryer or we can hang them on the outdoor clothes line, a simple "Hey Google, will it rain today/tonight?" gives us the answer straight away. It's the simplest of things, but it may be one of our favorite uses of the Home.

Setting reminders and shared calendar events

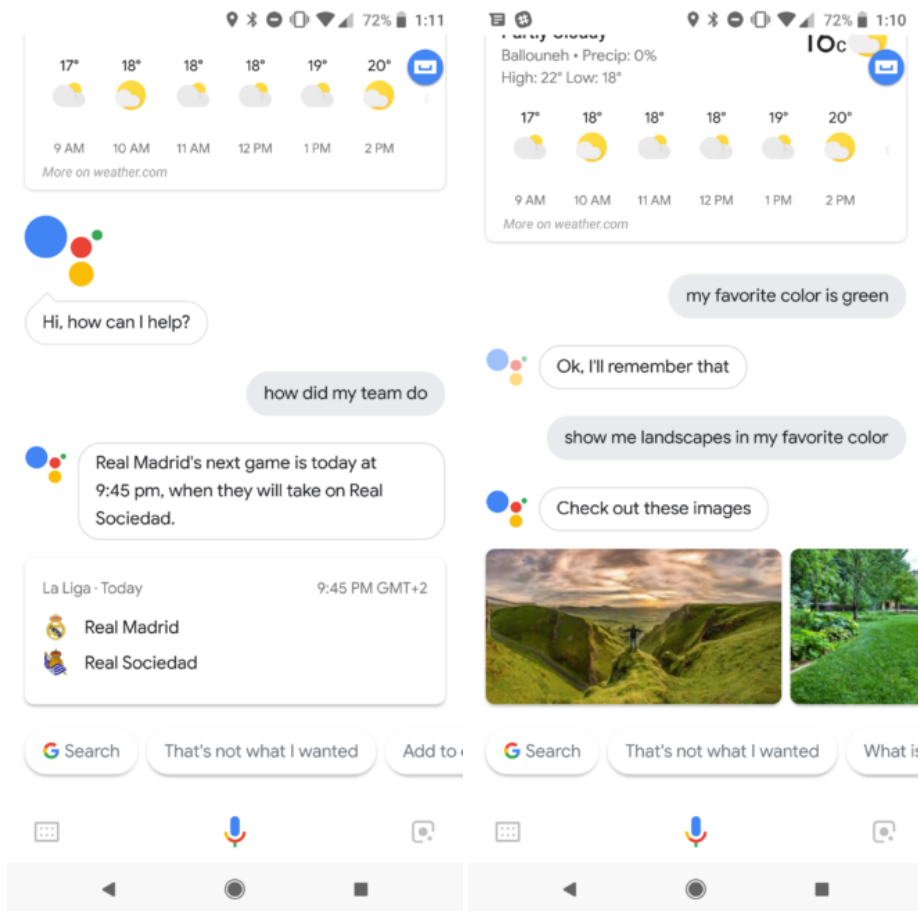
When we're talking about our days or planning something at home, a to-do item pops in our head often. No reaching for a phone or writing something down, we set reminders and we add events and appointments to our shared calendar so that we both know what's due and when, even if only one of us has to attend/take care of it.

Find my phone

We're only two people living at home, but we keep misplacing our phones. "[Find my phone](#)" is a super handy command and saves us a lot of pointless looking around and rummaging. This is Voice Match-dependent so when I ask it, it finds my Pixel 2 XL, and when my husband asks, it finds his Nokia 8. Even better, it rings my phone despite it being on Do Not Disturb all the time.

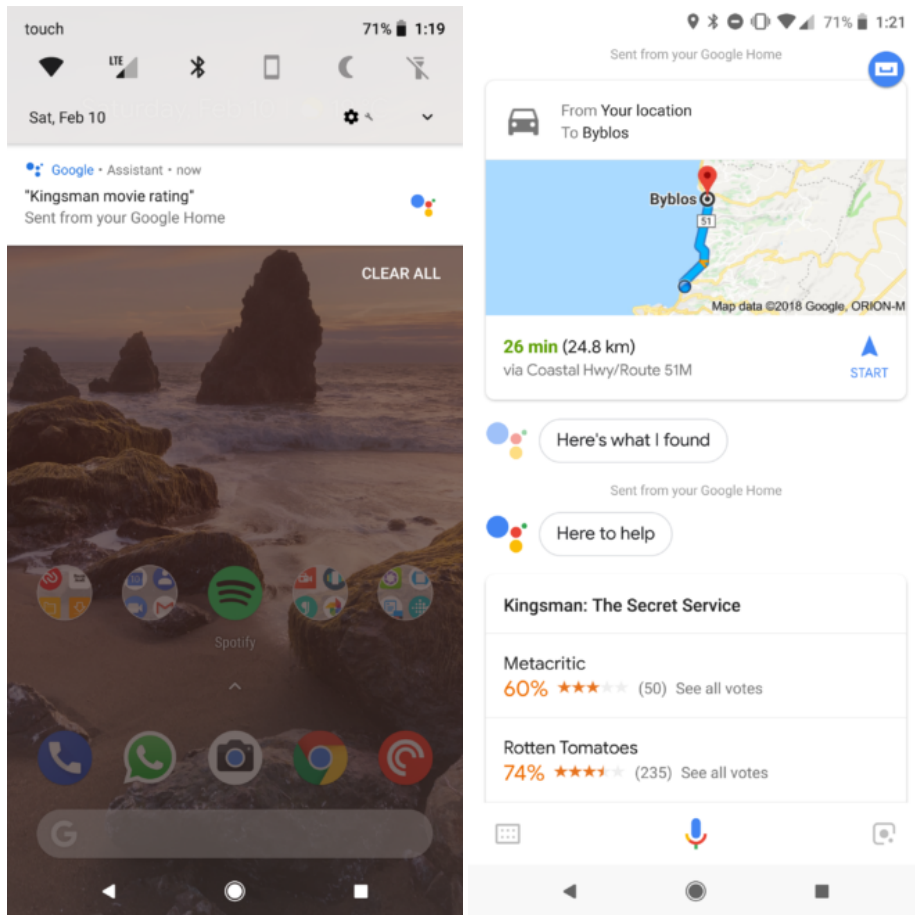
Other miscellaneous cool things

- If "Ok Google" and "Hey Google" sound too boring to you, follow in the footsteps of [this delightful Italian grandma](#) and use "Hey Goo-Goo" instead. Guaranteed to cheer you up and feel more personal than "Google."
- If you see your Google Home's lights on, it means [it wants your attention](#) and has a reminder or warning for you.
- Google Home has a [special set](#) of over 50 games and activities for children that can help them learn, play, and listen to stories.
- If you tell Google what your favorite color or team is, you can then easily ask "how did my team do?" without having to specify the name each time, or "show me landscapes in my favorite color," and you'll get the appropriate ones.

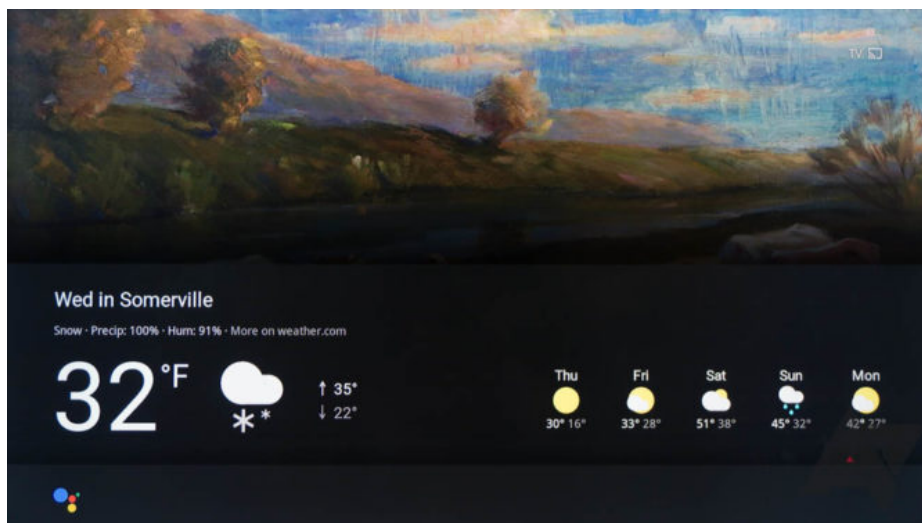


Thanks for not reminding me they sucked against Levante.

- You can ask Google Home to **remember anything for you**. It's perfect if you want to [commit a specific piece of information to Google's memory](#) and you don't have time to jot it down. Consider this a voice-activated notepad. You can read more about it [here](#).
- If you ask your Google Home for directions, movie ratings, sports scores, and [a few other queries](#), you can then follow up by saying, "Hey Google, send it to my phone," and a notification will pop up on your phone which opens the corresponding result. It's quite handy if you didn't catch the full answer or if you want more details without having to manually search again.



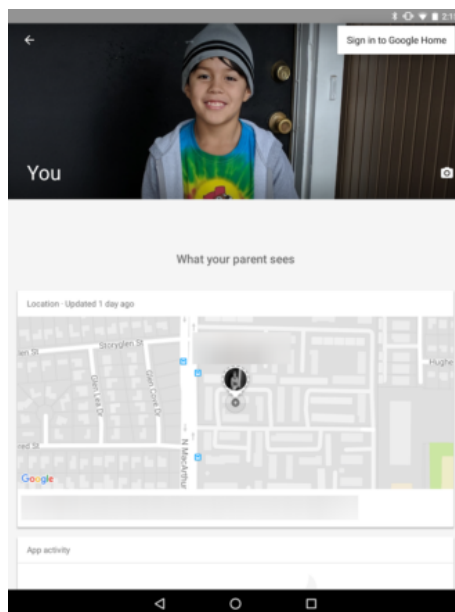
- You can [plan trips](#) with your Google Home.
- [Some HP Printers](#) let you print sudoku puzzles, coloring pages, word search games, and a few other types of documents with a voice command.
- Google always has timely Easter eggs for Google Home. We've already seen it [get spooky for Halloween](#) and add [personal heart-warming stories for Christmas](#), so keep your ears open for more.
- If you live in a country that supports it, you can [make calls](#) with your Google Home (even [using your own phone number](#)) and shop and order items for delivery through [Google Express](#) (US) or Tesco ([UK, via IFTTT](#)).
- And finally we know Google Home will soon start [providing visual answers](#) through a connected Chromecast TV, and the first of these is already live: [weather](#). If you say "show me the weather on my TV," you get something like the screen below on your TV.



Inconsistencies, missing features

There are thousands of potential uses for the Google Home, but these "smart" speakers also come with at least dozens of inconsistencies in the experience and missing pieces and parts that I can dwell on for days and days. Instead, I'll just list them below and in no particular order.

- If it takes nearly 1600 words to explain the difference between Assistant apps and Home control, and there's no proper documentation for it anywhere, then something needs to be done about this, pronto. This is by far my biggest pet-peeve with Home and the complaint/confusion I come across the most often in articles, podcasts, comments, and emails. It even took me a while to get my husband to understand this and he's a super tech savvy software developer. I still get many eye rolls and "this is stupid" remarks from him when he comes across a limitation of one of them.
- There's no easy way to see which specific smart home device models are supported by Google Home and which functions are available for each one. Better proper documentation is needed in that regard.
- You can't assign a *Home control* device to more than one room. So if you add four smart lights to your "Living Room," you can't also put them in the "Downstairs" room.
- The first/primary user on a Google Home can't see which other users have added themselves to it and can't manage them or limit their access.
- There's no proper parental control on Google Home. You can [restrict content in YouTube and Play Music](#), but that's it unless you're using [Family Link](#) (US, New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland only for now). In that case only, ~~when a child with Family Link logs into the Google Home app and teaches it their voice, the Google Home will know to only give them access to age-appropriate content.~~ **Update:** Thanks to Steve in the comments, we now know this isn't how you link a child's voice to Home. Instead, you need to do it in the Family Link app on the child's phone, by going to *More > Sign in to Google Home*. The detailed instructions can be found [here](#).



- Even though I said at the start that this guide applies to Google Home and third-party Assistant speakers interchangeably, you may sometimes notice that the latter can't do certain actions. Placing calls, for example, appears to be one limitation for now. That's most probably due to the fact that Assistant speakers always run a firmware version a little older than the one on Google Home.
- The guide here is relevant for most Google Home languages, but some functionalities are limited to a few locales or languages. It's quasi impossible to detail what will work where and in which language variant, so your best bet is to try and hope it works.
- Google Assistant works differently on each device type, so if you tried a command and it worked on your phone, that won't mean it will work on Google Home. Most notably, right now, is the Home's inability to send messages. I'd love to be able to use it to send WhatsApp messages like I do on my phone, but I can't yet.
- The distinction between which features and commands require Voice Match and which ones don't does make sense, overall. But there are some instances where it's baffling that certain actions aren't universal and applied to everyone, or at least that there's no option to make them available to other validated users. For example, Shortcuts and linked Assistant apps should be

- easily transferable from one account to another, but for now you have to manually set them up for each user.
- If a command works on a Chromecast, there's no guarantee it will work on an Android TV, either at all or consistently. This is jarring to me, as Android TV has a built-in Chromecast functionality, so telling my Home to "turn on the TV," should work flawlessly. Instead, I get "Sorry, I can't do this yet," but... get this, my SHIELD TV does indeed turn on. And turn off works 1 time out of 5.
 - You can't have separate multiple locations, which is a little annoying for the broadcast/intercom function. So if you have a few Homes at home and some at work, and maybe you even set up one for your parents on your account, broadcasting a message at home will do it on all your speakers, everywhere.
 - There are at least 2 ways, even sometimes 3 or 4, to get to anything inside the Google Home app. The interface looks nice and was [recently remodeled](#) but it still needs a revamp. It's not straightforward, things are hidden and duplicated and divided in weird ways. You must have noticed how hard it was for me to explain where everything was through this guide.

And this is where I leave the ~~floor~~ comment section to you. What are your favorite uses or tips for the Google Home? What are the most annoying inconsistencies that make you reel each time or the difficulties you had to learn to overcome while using it? Which feature or improvement are you looking forward to?



TAGS	ASSISTANT APPS	BEST USES OF GOOGLE HOME	COOL THINGS FOR GOOGLE HOME	GOOGLE ASSISTANT
GOOGLE HOME	GOOGLE HOME GUIDE	GOOGLE HOME TIPS	GOOGLE HOME TRICKS	GOOGLE HOME TUTORIAL
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
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**Joseph Ferraro** • 7 months ago

Thanks Rita,

Very well done. And just what I needed to help put the finishing touches on my smart home. I am looking forward to being able to add my own Google Assistant "keyword" whenever they get around to changing it. Too many false inquiries use "Hey or Okay". This must have taken you a while to write up. So well done you must do your pharmacy work while sleeping. 🙄

10 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share >

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **Joseph Ferraro** • 7 months ago

Thanks! I have to be honest and say I mostly neglected the pharmacy work over the past 3 days and relied on my assistant (a real life person, hahaha) to do most of it as I hammered the keyboard on my computer for hours on end.

11 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share >

**Cnayl Rainbow** • 7 months ago

For me, living NOT in the USA means I have to wait months in the hope that a feature may eventually appear on my home device - its crazy that so much that is available in the US isn't available still in the UK and frustrating that so many tech bloggers tell me about new features that I can't get :-)

7 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share >

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **Cnayl Rainbow** • 7 months ago

My Google Home is set to US English and still I don't get a few functions because my Google account itself isn't in the US and/or the Home detects it's on an IP outside the US. This kind of differentiation is really confusing. Multiple language support should be a thing, for houses where multiple languages are spoken and to make it possible to access some US(eng)-only actions even for those who most times speak to their Home in a different language.

1 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share >

**Maxr1998** → **Cnayl Rainbow** • 7 months ago

Yeah, it's even worse in Germany, so many features that exist in the US are missing.. The Google Home is still already pretty useful though.

^ | ▾ • Reply • Share >

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Stanley Konowal • 7 months ago

Useful hint for people with a mild OCD: you can turn on an audio cue to play when Google Home starts listening to you in the accessibility settings

6 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Rita El Khoury AP Staff → Stanley Konowal • 7 months ago

Yes, it's one of my favorite little things and I mentioned it here. It's esp good if you don't always look at your Google Home straight (the slope makes the lights difficult to spot from a few directions) or if you have multiple Homes and want to know which ones are being triggered.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Stanley Konowal → Rita El Khoury • 7 months ago

Oh, sorry, to be honest I did not read the whole thing. I just tried to search for some keywords and couldn't find it :(

Anyways, great work!

^ | v • Reply • Share >



Robin • 7 months ago

Thank you very much for this! I've been using Google Home for almost a year but still I now know a lot more about what I can do with it thanks to this article!

This is one of the articles that really makes Android Police my favorite Android blog by far!

9 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



lamsecond • 7 months ago

Uses / tips:

- 1) You can simply say "turn Bluetooth on / off." Way, way easier than digging through the menus.
- 2) You can leave feedback "Hey Google, send feedback: this product is wonderful and yet half-baked - like everything you do." *
- 3) It is great for enabling my 3 year old. He can turn on the lights, play his music, ask the time, ask Google "what noise does a lion make," or even ask Google for a joke (that he doesn't understand). My 1 year old shouts at it too, but as his vocabulary mainly consists of the words "toast" and "up" Google has not yet responded to him. **
- 4) I find the command "wake me up in [X] minutes / at [X] (time)" very useful. Especially when I faceplant my bed with exhaustion during their mid-afternoon nap.
- 5) The shopping list mentioned can be accessed on the go by asking "show me my shopping list." Reasonably handy, although a simple app or shortcut would be even better. It also only lists items properly if you add them one by one, you can add multiple items in one command, but they will only show up on one line with one checkbox for everything!

[see more](#)

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Rita El Khoury AP Staff → lamsecond • 7 months ago

Nice list of tips! I didn't know the turn bluetooth on/off one.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



benkxda • 7 months ago

Wow. This is a Bible for Google Home. How much work this must be... Thanks so much. Bookmarked. Rita, you're awesome.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



durham_minion • 7 months ago

Love google home, I have a google home mini and it's ace!!

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Hypnotoad • 7 months ago

Very good article, I was a little disappointed when you mentioned that you still can't add items to Google keep lists.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



lamsecond • 7 months ago

Annoying inconsistencies:

- 1) Even if you assign a home control device and the Home itself to the same room, you still sometimes have to specify which room you're talking about. For example, if I ask the Home in

my living room to turn off the table lamp it says "it can't as I have two devices called table lamp;" I have to specify I mean the living room table lamp. Stupid.

2) Home in the UK does not support voice calling (itself stupid), but it also intercepts the command so that I can't place calls on my phone using voice commands. Gah.

3) When I cast music to my Chromecasts using my phone I get easy volume control using my phone's volume rocker, and I can see what music is playing. When I cast using Home I can't do either of those things, despite it knowing it's my account doing it.

4) No casting of Google Play Movies. Really?!?!?

5) Just like every other Google product, random features are US-only. For example, why are there only two games available in the UK? No family control? No voice calling? No YouTube Red? No support for video streaming services aside from Netflix and YouTube? Google needs to

[see more](#)

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



WretchedGenius → iamsecond • 7 months ago

My #1 complaint about my Google Home(s) is what you said in your #1: lack of room context. Similar to you (based on your other post), I have a 4 year old and a 1 year old who love using the Google Home, but always just say "Turn on/off the lights" and not specifying a room. As a result, the light in my driveway post is often running in the middle of the afternoon.

I can cast movies from my Google Play Movies library using my Home. I'm in the U.S. though, so maybe that's another instance of feature disparity between regions.

When I cast from my Home, I get volume control, but it's only within the Home app and not on my lock screen.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



iamsecond → WretchedGenius • 7 months ago

In the car today I wanted to say something to my son, but instead of saying "OK [his name] I automatically said 'OK Google.'

My wife was not pleased.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Rita El Khoury AP Staff → iamsecond • 7 months ago

Oh boy... I was joking with my husband yesterday that when we have a child, he'll be telling him/her "OK x, stop" and if he/she doesn't respond to him like Google Home does, he'll turn to me and say "this one is defective, we need a replacement."

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



iamsecond → Rita El Khoury • 7 months ago

Nope, your only option is to reprogram them, but that takes a while!

^ | v • Reply • Share >



mattcoz • 7 months ago

"Assistant apps are Voice Match-dependent"

This is so annoying. So many times it will fail to recognize my voice and then go through it's long spiel about training my voice and it won't shut up. All I wanted to do was turn off my TV while in bed, now I have this voice going on and on and the TV is still on and I want to sleep. Argh!

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Droid_Dude • 7 months ago

Let me also say thank you, Rita for this thorough article on the Google Home ecosystem. I think I have 10+ Home/Chromecast devices in my home and you inspired me to dig deeper into all of their settings as I read your guide. Page bookmarked for future reading :)

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Gaurav Arora • 7 months ago

Rita, this is an absolutely amazing piece of work! Your hard work shows here :) Please keep doing what you do!

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



verboze • 6 months ago

amazing article! thanks for this Rita, I just got a google home mini, and this is very helpful!

"This is, most notably, the case for Logitech Harmony. It's an Assistant app so it will only answer to your voice. If it doesn't recognize you, it won't execute the command"

☹️ This is a bummer! Google should really allow the user to decide what they wish to share, Make it only accessible to the user by default, but have an option to allow unauthenticated access to the app via voice commands. If two people have the same app installed, their authenticated account takes precedence. Seems straight-forward to me, but I'm sure the technicalities of this approach are not as simple ☹️

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Tyler Shortt • 7 months ago

The one thing I really want to know how to do or be ABLE to do is disable "hey Google" on mobile devices. More than anything, I hate having ALL my devices get triggered when I specifically want the Google homes doing the work. It's even worse when I go to another Google home enabled house and all the commands start making my phone and tablet do stupid things.

I want it to go back to how it was, pre-chaos, when "hey Google" was for the homes and "ok Google" for mobile devices .

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Steven Spink • 7 months ago

Thank you SO much for this article. I've learned more in the last 10 minutes, about what my device can do, than I've known in the past 10 months. THANK YOU!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Rita El Khoury AP Staff ➔ Steven Spink • 7 months ago

Hahaha, glad it helped :)

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Phazonclash • 7 months ago

That was a great read! You rock Rita

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Android Lover • 7 months ago

Wow!

Fabulous very Informative and Good Work Keep It Up...

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



MarsT • 7 months ago

Thank you for the comprehensive article on making the most of one's Google Home. I currently have my feet in two camps: Home and Echo. There are pros and cons to both and I'm not at a point where I can choose between them. Google Home has been great for music because I've been able to upload my entire digital music collection to Google Play Music (due to their generous upload limit of 50,000 songs), and with Google Play Music family plan we get music from YouTube Red too - which my youngest kid love for all the anime and video game music that's available on YouTube. And I like that it's the same assistant that's on my Android phone that I can interact with in my car with Android Auto.

The three features I wish GHome had that the Echo does are:

1. Drop-in: Broadcast is nice if you just want to make an announcement to the whole house, like "Dinner's ready!", but if you want to ask a question or get an acknowledgment response, having an two-way intercom is way better.
2. Both GHome and Echo enable you to assign their smart speakers and other smart devices to rooms, but Echo is smarter in that you can say, "Alexa, turn off the lights" (without specifying which room) and Alexa knows that the Echo I'm speaking to is in the master bedroom and will turn off the lights assigned to the master bedroom. Try that with GHome, and the assistance turns off ALL the lights in the home.
3. I wish the Home Mini had an output jack like the Echo Dot. Yes I can spend an additional \$35

[see more](#)

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Rita El Khoury AP Staff ➔ MarsT • 7 months ago

Agreed on all 3 counts. I've gone for Chromecast built-in speakers in all my house so that third issue is moot for me, but that's only because I recently furnished my entire place. If I had existing speakers, I'd want a 3.5mm option.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



WretchedGenius • 7 months ago

I think one of the under-sung praises for the Google Home is its ability to completely ignore you when you've accidentally bungled your command. Many times I've issued a command to one of my Homes while half-paying attention to what I'm asking, only to verbally stumble and give up. "Hey Google, set the light on my side of...uh, wait...um...nevermind." And instead of spinning for a moment before telling me it has no idea what I'm trying to ask, it instead just quietly goes back to waiting for the next command.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **WretchedGenius** • 7 months ago

As a non-native English speaker, I couldn't agree more. We often mix up our words in English or stumble with a command so the "uh forget it/nevermind/nothing" at the end helps a lot.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**rpitera** • 7 months ago

Brilliant piece. Sifting through all of the disjointed and sometimes conflicting data out there was a herculean task. Making it readable, giving it a flow and unifying all in one place even more so.

Rita, you continue to amaze me. I still can't believe at times that technical writing and journalism isn't your primary job. Not to mention that your primary job isn't an easy or mindless task in itself; you are actual responsible for people's lives and well being!

As if all of that wasn't enough, you also have an excellent sense of humor. You are truly the whole package. And that's why I follow you ardently. I always learn something and often end up with a smile for my day!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **rpitera** • 7 months ago

Oh, stop making me blush!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**rpitera** → **Rita El Khoury** • 7 months ago

It's the truth and why I follow you. Also one of the reasons I use AP as a primary source of verifiable information. You folks update your articles if something is wrong or not clear. If I see a rumor, I check AP first.

Your followers are high quality too as verified by the valuable info you can often glean from your comment threads too. Hope AP recognizes that drawing power.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**ericshmerick** • 7 months ago

Damn, epic post! Thanks for the info!

I really wish they would add "OK Google, Play Howard 100 on SiriusXM" or whatever.

SiriusXM linking/automation is the only reason my sole Echo is in my bathroom. It's irritating you can't do it on Google Home...yet?

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **ericshmerick** • 7 months ago

I hope they open up audio services soon. The workaround, as mentioned here, would be to cast to the speaker and then use voice to pause and play.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**ChicagoPete** • 7 months ago

Wow, what a great reference article! I would like to nominate this for the 2018 AP Post of the Year award

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**Noel Borthwick** • 7 months ago

The broadcast feature is a blast. I'm traveling abroad and just freaked my wife out by broadcasting a message to my Google home remotely lol.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**ssallen** → **Noel Borthwick** • 7 months ago

If my wife has the day off and I have to work I always set a music reminder for 9:30AM to play Rick Astley.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

**Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → **Noel Borthwick** • 7 months ago

Hehe yes, it can be evil sometimes. Try broadcasting "I seeeeeee you" when you're away and you're guaranteed to get scowls when you come back home... I may be speaking from experience ;)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›


**Noel Borthwick** → **Rita El Khoury** • 7 months ago


Haha I did exactly that as well as dinner is served :)


Anything more sinister might have resulted in a 911 call so I refrained!


1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›


**Noel Borthwick** → **Rita El Khoury** • 7 months ago


 Is there a way to send a voice message from the home to a phone?
If so that would be a cool way to communicate back...
^ | v . Reply . Share >


 **Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → Noel Borthwick • 7 months ago
Not yet, calls are supported but messages aren't yet.
^ | v . Reply . Share >

 **Lee** • 7 months ago
I wish they would allow users to play their Google Play Movies and TV shows library using the Google Home. You can control the Google Play Movie once you've started casting it with the Google Assistant but you can not start it using The Assistant.
Something else that was promised is the ability to arm and disarm ADT security system with the Google Assistant, like you can with Alexa, so I'm still waiting on that.
1 ^ | v . Reply . Share >


 **Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → Lee • 7 months ago
I think security system support, like smart locks, is in the works. You have to imagine that the disarming part is a security concern and needs to be validated somehow. I don't like Alexa's solution of asking for a PIN so I hope they're working on something else.
1 ^ | v . Reply . Share >

 **makapav** • 7 months ago
It's amazing what you've put together. The work into this must have been monumental not to mention the frustrations. However, this also goes to show how complicated and a stopgap the current AI and home control situation is. It needs to be WAY more autonomous, contextually self-aware and relationally integrated for this to truly become seamless.
1 ^ | v . Reply . Share >

 **Rita El Khoury** AP Staff → makapav • 7 months ago
One day, one day the "smart home" will actually be smart and understand how you do things and start doing them without you manually inputting automations. Plus, the other letdown now, imho, is room presence. Google has all the elements (phones, watches, chromebooks, speakers, etc) to understand when you're in a room and when you go out, and when someone else is in the room but not you. It should be able to put those together to create tailored presence actions.
1 ^ | v . Reply . Share >

 **makapav** → Rita El Khoury • 7 months ago
> Google has all the elements

But the people leading these areas work in silos. This is Google Achilles heel. We need a new company to do this right. By now two Nest devices should have been interconnected through the cloud and preemptively adjust heating to gain efficiency by understanding the hourly forecast and desire for room temperature. Nest should also have included simple barometer, motion and temperature sensors in Home devices to gather that data in various rooms. For eg, heat in my master bedroom rises first. If all of us are stealings a movie at night in the room and I want a temperature of 70, it should know all that and then shut off the heat even if the temperature by the Nest downstairs is 66 knowing that in a few minutes heat will climb in the Master faster based on historical data.
^ | v . Reply . Share >

 **Steve Wilson** • 7 months ago
This is a very thorough and well-organized piece of documentation, and as you allude, something the manufacturer is remiss in providing. I was surprised to read the part about Family Link members being able to register their voice via the Home app. It may be because mine is <13, but he's unable to even download the Home app ("This app isn't available for kids at this time"). This limits the things he can do, which is ironic in that he's the most frequent user of our Homes, Minis, Chromecasts, and Hues. Still, thanks for bringing a bit of order to the wonderful AI chaos we're living through.
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KOLIO — +1 for the Jabra 65t's.I also had connectivity issues with the Zolo Liberty+,had to re-pair each time I used them.That was

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