

6 ways seniors can use Google Home to make the COVID-19 quarantine easier

Any elderly relative in your life can benefit from a smart speaker or smart display, especially if they're stuck at home.

Older family members who are self-quarantined at home during the coronavirus outbreak may find themselves dealing with more solitude than they'd like. Communication can be difficult, especially for seniors who aren't used to turning to technology to socialize. So it might be time to consider a smart speaker like Google Home (\$99 at Walmart) speaker or the smaller Google Nest Mini.



Anyone who's watched an older family member struggle to navigate their phone might completely write off the idea of giving them a smart speaker. It's true, your older relatives might need help with initial setup (you can set up a Google account on their behalf and help out remotely), but once things are up and running, smart speakers and smart displays are simple to use and come with some clear benefits.

We have a similar resource with reasons to buy your parents or grandparents an Amazon Echo.

Easy and hands-free control

Google Home responds to straightforward, natural voice commands, which is not just a convenience, but a real boon for anyone with mobility issues, vision loss or reduced dexterity. Being able to set timers and alarms, play music, read the news and so much more with a voice command can save a senior time and frustration, or give them more freedom to complete a task they otherwise might have abandoned.

Search the internet without a screen

For elder family members who don't already interact with the internet through a smartphone, tablet or computer, the Google Home and Nest Mini provide easy entry into searching the web.

They won't need to fuss with an app or mobile browser to get help or info. People of every age can use a smart speaker to hear the latest news, get weather updates and sports scores, search the web for anything and even make purchases. Grandma can ask Google, "What's in the news?" to get a briefing from her preferred news outlets or ask how later a local store is open.

Check out our full list of Google Home commands to learn more.

Stay connected with loved ones

Outside of emergency situations, the Google Home also works as a great speaker phone to chat with family and friends. These smart speakers can make voice calls. Imagine explaining it to your relative as if it's a simple speakerphone on a land line. The only thing they will need to get the hang of is asking Google to dial the number. It's a lot simpler, in fact, than some smartphone touchscreens.

If your loved one isn't opposed to having a screen, a smart display with a camera (the Nest Hub doesn't have one), like the Nest Hub Max or Lenovo Smart Display means you can enjoy video calls with long-distance relatives.

While the Home cannot call 911 during an emergency, it can call any other phone number. In the event your parent or grandparent needs help but cannot get to the phone, this can be a lifesaver. We have all the details you need to know to make calls with the Google Home here.



Get help around the house

My grandmother got a Clapper in the 1990s to make it easier to control a few of her lamps. While that device got the job done most of the time, there's a more sophisticated option today.

If you get a Google Home or Nest Mini for your grandparent or parent, consider investing in a smart light bulb or plug. With that combo, they'll be able to speak a simple command, such as, "OK Google, turn off the lights," to control their lamps hands-free. The same goes for other devices like fans.



Set reminders to find keys and note birthdays

Did you know Google Assistant has a handy feature that will remember important information for you? Your older loved one can say, "OK Google, remember that my keys are on the hook by the door," or, "Hey Google, remember that Sarah's birthday is April 1."

Later, they can ask, "OK Google, where are my keys?" to get the info. That's just one example of the way Google Assistant can help. Check out other things Google Assistant can remember.

Audio books, jokes, games

No matter your age, a Google Home is a great device for staying entertained. Sure, the assistant can tell really corny jokes, but it can also interact with you in games, quizzes and virtual adventures.

There are hundreds games you can play with your voice to engage the mind. There are classic options like Blackjack and Tic Tac Toe, and even popular real-world games like Jeopardy. Check out our 43 favorite Google Home games.

Whether your parent or grandparent is struggling with vision loss that makes it harder to read books, or they just prefer to listen to them, audio books can be bought through the Google Play and then streamed through the speaker. Learn more about playing audiobooks on Google Home.

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