

# Google Home: 5 strange but delightfully useful places to put your smart speaker

Branch out from the living room and discover how handy Google Home can be where you least expect it.

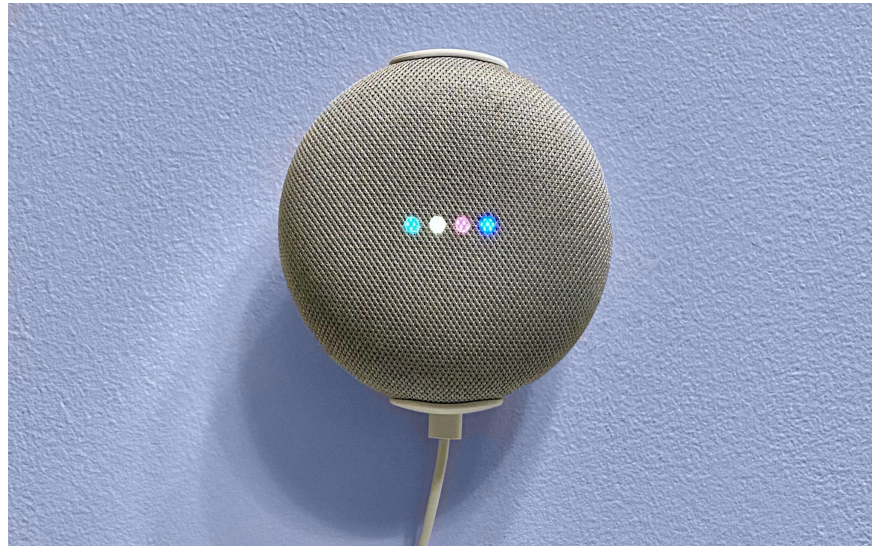
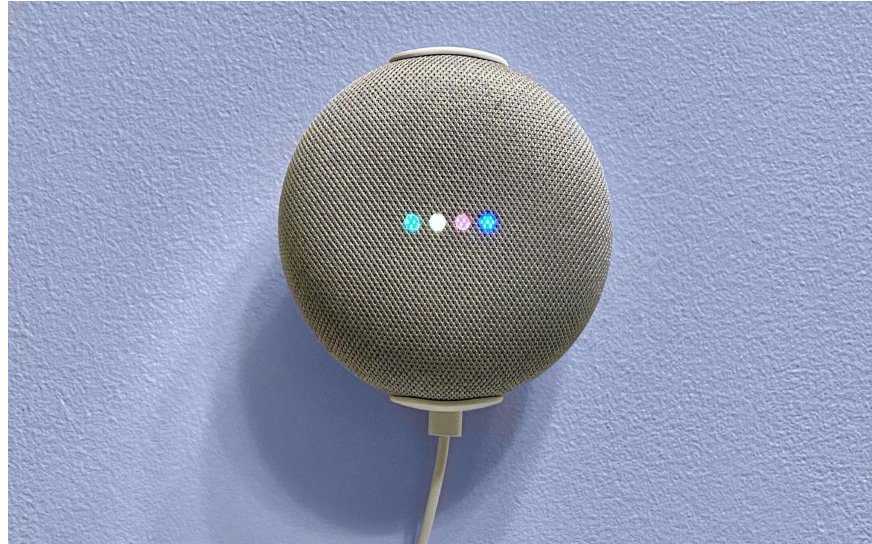
Some spots in your house make obviously good places to put a Google Home. The kitchen (timers), your bedroom nightstand (alarms) and the living room (dance party) jump out as great choices. But I find that sometimes the smart speakers I put in the more off-the-wall (or on-the-wall) locations are the ones I get the most use out of. Like the original Google Home (\$100 at Best Buy) that flanks my stairwell (ambient music), or the Nest Minis (\$50 at Best Buy) in my garage (podcasts while I'm woodworking).



It started as a happy accident, really. I had to find somewhere to put all my six Google Home speakers and two Nest Hubs (\$90 at Best Buy) displays, right?

Why, you might wonder, do I need so many smart speakers for a two-bedroom townhouse? For one, Google Home is useful anywhere and everywhere you put it, but I might not have added a smart speaker to some of my favorite locations were it not also for my addiction to killer deals on great tech.

There are a couple pitfalls to look out for when you own a menagerie of smart speakers. Beware of too many ringing alarms (you can fix that) and check out my list of typical Google Home pet peeves. But if you do have an extra one or two, you won't regret experimenting with new places to put them. Here are my five favorite unexpected places where I've put my Google Home speakers and displays.



## Sorry, rubber ducky. Google Home is more fun

I first discovered the joy of having a Google Home in the bathroom when I spent a week discovering all the different ways to mount a Google Home Mini. This is definitely a situation where you want to keep electronics out of the splash zone, so I highly encourage putting any smart speakers either on a wall or shelf away from the sink, bath or shower. Once you do, however, here are some of the advantages to having a Google Home device in your bathroom:

1. While getting ready at the beginning or end of the day, you can: Play music, get the weather report, hear the news or listen to podcasts.
2. Set toothbrush timers ("**OK, Google, set a timer for two minutes**"), and not just for the kiddos -- two minutes of brushing is a lot, even for grown-ups.
3. Timing your shower, either with a timer or alarm (or even just asking, "**Hey, Google, what time is it?**") so you're not late.

4. Talk to others in your household by using the Broadcast feature. Say, "**OK, Google, broadcast,**" followed by your announcement and every speaker in your house will play the message. Replies, however, will only go to the speaker you broadcast from.



## **Park Google Home where you park your car**

Even though I sometimes only spend a grand total of about four minutes per day in my garage, there's usually a lot going on in those four minutes. Whether I'm coming or going, it's nice to have a Google Home speaker in the garage for any last minute tasks before I leave (and a little extra help when I arrive). For example, with a Google Home speaker in the garage you can:

1. Turn off any smart bulbs or other connected smart home devices before you leave (and on when you get home).
2. Find out if it's going to rain while you're out and about (so you can grab an umbrella).
3. If you have a smart garage controller, close your garage with your voice.
4. Find out the traffic situation and drive time before you leave by asking, "**Hey, Google, how long will it take me to get to [destination].**"



## **In my home office, it's like a smart second screen**

One of my most frequently used Google Home devices is the Nest Hub I keep on my desk at home, right beside my computer display. Which is weird, right? Not at all, and here's why:

1. I can play music, listen to podcasts or control my smart home without switching away from what I'm doing on my computer.

2. With music and podcasts, I can control the volume separately from my computer, so my notifications don't deafen me (or worse, go unheard).
3. The screen is absolutely gorgeous as a photo frame.
4. I like being able to glance over to see the time and outside temperature.

## Better than a butler in the foyer

A Google Home speaker in the foyer is useful enough just for being able to play a sound when someone rings your Nest Hello Doorbell. But the best thing about having a smart speaker at the entrance to your home is what you can do with it in the next tip.



## Get Google Home outdoors

A Google Home in your foyer means a speaker right near your front porch, where you can move it during weekends, holidays, get-togethers and special events. For example:

1. Listen to music or podcasts while you tend to your front garden.

2. Play quiet, relaxing music for pedestrians walking past your home.
3. When lockdown orders are lifted and we can visit each others' homes again, you can welcome guests to birthday parties with birthday songs, or graduation celebrations with marches like Pomp and Circumstance, or national holidays like Memorial Day and Fourth of July get-togethers with patriotic music.

Do you still have more Google Home smart speakers than you know what to do with? Double up identical Google Home speakers to create a stereo pairing or use them all to build a whole-house audio system. And with all those speakers in your house, you'll probably want to adjust the wake-word sensitivity so the one you want can hear you.

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