Safety Advantages with Home Automation

Rapid advances in technology and stiff competition between manufacturers of home automation systems have created a boon for homeowners. Wireless systems that communicate through radio waves or infrared technology have fallen in price by twenty-five to fifty per cent the past five years. Residential customers can now have burglar alarms, surveillance systems, smart meters for energy saving modes, motorized window shades and remote lighting controls installed without cutting into the drywall to rewire. Home automation systems maximize the energy efficiency of a home, reducing utility bills and enhancing the safety of the occupants.

The new simplified control panel uses large easy-to-read icons which are displayed on a handheld universal remote control, a T.V. or computer screen, an iPad®, a smart phone or a wall switch. With one integrated system “wall clutter” is reduced. The elimination of floor cables for the T. V., computer and printer means less chance of tripping. Clients can now control all the lights, window coverings, audiovisual equipment, and temperature from the comfort of their recliner or bed with a simple single remote control.

For seniors, those who live alone or those with small children, remote door locks provide security. The face of the guest at the door is displayed on the control panel, allowing for identification prior to opening the door. If the house is left unlocked, the client can check the status of the door locks remotely, even securing the home after departure by using a signal from their cell phone.

A simple surveillance system installed in a kitchen allows adult children who live a distance from their elderly parents make sure they are up and moving around at a certain time of the day. Parents also enjoy the option of monitoring a baby’s room or child’s play area in a different zone of the home with a video camera.

Occupancy and vacancy sensors installed in bathrooms, hallways and stairwells turn on the lights to a pre-set level of brightness when motion of body heat is detected from a person entering the space. In other rooms of the home the vacancy sensors utilize complex algorithms to ascertain whether a person is performing such fine motor skills as writing or using a computer; and the sensor won’t turn off the lights until the person vacates the space.

Clients don't have to remember to turn lights off and aren't stumbling around in the dark on the way to the bathroom. This significantly reduces the risks of falls while making sure that a light is not using electricity to illuminate and unoccupied space.

The materials for the simplest systems of remote lighting control (as well as occupancy/vacancy sensors) are available from electricians for around $100. Motorization of window shades for large or hard to reach windows (over the bathtub or skylights) adds about $300 to the cost of the window covering. That is a small investment for the ease and comfort of controlling the light level in a room when for a client with arthritis or decreased mobility.

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