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The 2020 Esquire Gadget Awards

The coolest of the cool in tech, for anyone who wants to make a few life upgrades.



By Cameron Sherrill PUBLISHED: NOV 25, 2020 3:39 PM EST

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Even as the sky rained down shards of glass and

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Even as the sky rained down shards of glass and balls of fire, the tech industry stayed the rigorous course in the year 2020. Somewhat shockingly, it put out new stuff. You might wonder, in the worst of times, why would we even care? We care because gadgets make our lives easier, and every single person could use an easier life right about now. Anything to save an hour, teach a skill, or bring a glimmer of newness into a home.

Though, you might've missed out on some cool releases—dodging shards of glass and balls of fire can be distracting. So, I'm going to help you play catchup on the best of the best in gadgetry. While not everything here made its debut in 2020, it all came out after Esquire's Gadget Awards 2019. I'm going off Academy rules. Some of these picks are pricey, but I made sure I didn't flood you with tech from your wildest dreams; none of that "you should buy a see-through glass TV for $30K" nonsense. Other picks are well within a reasonable range. Enough of my ramblings. Check out Esquire's 50 Gadget Award winners below.

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everyday Carry

$999.00



Best Smartphone
Apple iPhone 12 Pro

The biggest, priciest, most mainstream phone on the market reclaims its throne this





Apple iPhone 12 Pro

SHOP AT WALMART

The biggest, priciest, most mainstream phone on the market reclaims its throne this year after being edged out by Google's Pixel 4 in 2019. And it was real close. The Pro, however, has hands-down the best camera I've ever seen in a phone, along with probably my favorite quirk, the magnet on the back. That thing alone makes every action feel better, from snapping on a case to clicking onto a wireless charger. This phone's throwback design with the straight edges actually makes it feel thinner—and that shortens the bevels, too. It is a bit heavier than previous iPhones, but with the amount of power behind it, that's to be expected. It's nice to see Apple smartphones looking new again, as opposed to yet another year of variations on the iPhone 6 or iPhone X's designs. Even if we have to wait for Apple to take one small step at a time.



$349.00



Best Affordable Smartphone
Google Pixel 4a

SHOP AT AMAZON

While the iPhone 12 Pro may be the powerhouse of the market, not everyone can drop a grand on a phone, especially right now. So Google came along and tied up last year's best smartphone winner in a nice, little, affordable package. The Google Pixel 4a may lack some bells and whistles, but trust me when I say: You won't even notice. The camera is top of the line (as we've come to expect from smartphones), the battery life is out of this world, and don't get me started on Google's UI; I'll swoon. The 4a only comes with 128 GB of storage, but with a ton of cloud storage options, there should never be a problem.

bells and whistles, but trust me when I say: You won't even notice. The camera is top of the line (as we've come to expect from smartphones), the battery life is out of this world, and don't get me started on Google's UI; I'll swoon. The 4a only comes with 128 GB of storage, but with a ton of cloud storage options, there should never be a problem. Google also released a 5G version for $150 more—still at half the cost of Apple. Sure, if you're trying to shoot like a photographer or create full-scale designs on your phone, an iPhone is still the call, but if you need something reliable, sleek, and best of all, shockingly cheap, Google's your guy.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

$150.00



Best Wireless Charger
Courant Catch:2

SHOP AT COURANT

If you know me, you've heard me talk too much about the importance of gadgets blending into your home. If you don't know me, buckle up, you're about to. Few companies do it like Courant. Courant designs wireless charging pads encased in beautiful leather that hides seriously impressive coil technology inside. The multi-coil build means you won't have to fidget much to get a charge going, and the Catch:2 specifically allows two devices to charge at a time, so your phone and whatever else can juice up together. That goes a long way to cut down on wires and plugs. A Courant wireless charger actually classes up the joint, the joint being your nightstand or desk.

$69.95



Best for Cars
Scosche

the joint being your nightstand or desk.

$69.95



Best for Cars
Scosche MagicGrip Charging Mount

SHOP AT AMAZON

This mount is a lifesaver. I drive my grandfather's old 2001 Chevy S10, in a sick beige color, I might add, and as you can imagine, it doesn't have a great place to mount my phone. And if I want to listen to music and charge simultaneously, I need a wireless charger. I've been through many mounts (mostly vent mounts that always fell off). Then came Scosche, which not only stays in place, no problem, while wirelessly charging, clean and easy, but it transforms any car into something out of a cartoon. When you set your phone on the charger, those arms close and tighten around it, keeping it firmly in place in a way that I've seen few other mounts achieve. This thing is beyond reliable—the only part of my junker car that is.

$1,499.00



Best e-Bike
RadMini 4

SHOP AT RAD POWER BIKES

Last year, I named the Rad Runner our best e-bike. Then the maker of the Rad Runner went and one-upped itself. While I love the Runner—and a bunch of other e-bikes, for that matter—some of us are living under extreme storage constraints. The RadMini 4 kicks about as much ass, bike-wise, as the Rad Runner, but it can fold up, saving that precious space. And, you can still deck it out with accessories from the Rad ecosystem, including digital screens, crates, extra seats, and more. This is an e-bike is for anyone trying to avoid public transport for the foreseeable future. So, everyone.

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kicks about as much ass, bike-wise, as the Rad Rambler, but it can fold up, saving that precious space. And, you can still deck it out with accessories from the Rad ecosystem, including digital screens, crates, extra seats, and more. This is an e-bike is for anyone trying to avoid public transport for the foreseeable future. So, everyone.

$179.00



SHOP AT WALMART

Best Wireless Headphones
Google Pixel Buds

Everyone who's anyone has made a pair of wireless headphones—Apple, Bose, the Dollar Tree, me, you, your nan—all to varying degrees of success. These Buds were Google's answer to the beckoning call of true wireless, and you know what, they turned out pretty damn well. Similarly to Apple's Airpods, they have features tied specifically to Google products, but they still do everything you'd hope for from a pair of buds regardless of the device. What sets these apart is largely their design, battery life, and comfortability. I've worked out, walked around, traveled (pre-pandemic), and more with these suckers and never encountered any problem with them falling out or jostling around. The case, in typical fashion, is a charging case, but its shape fits better in pockets than other options (like the massive Bose QuietComfort case or the squared Airpods case). Obviously I can't use over-ear headphones because that would mess up my hair, and I tend to hate most earbuds, but Google came through.

$379.00



Best Smartwatch
Apple Watch Series 6

Apple Watch Series 6 by no means reinvented the Apple Watch, but it's still the first new-feeling Apple Watch I've messed



Series 6

SHOP AT AMAZON

Apple Watch Series 6 by no means reinvented the Apple Watch, but it's still the first new-feeling Apple Watch I've messed around with in years. I personally love smartwatches; I'm convinced they're the best way to track your health. The Apple Watch has been huge for me during the pandemic, as I took this time to really start working out. It's been a massive help, keeping tabs on my progress when I might otherwise lose track of any improvements due to my isolation. It also has a walkie-talkie feature, which my Apple Watch-wearing friends are required to leave on at all times so I can scream at them at 4 a.m. I am a menace. You too can be a menace with Apple Watch. (Apple, you can use that tagline free of charge.) The Series 6 comes in a new blue that's really gorgeous, as well as a red that's great for those people who really want to show off that they're wearing an Apple Watch.

Screens

$2,199.99



Best TV
LG OLED TV C9 with AI ThinQ

Sometimes instead of watching *The West Wing* for the twelfth time, I sit along the side of this screen and marvel at how thin it is. Like, how do all the people fit

remarkable TV in every sense. It has an amazing picture, killer frame rate, and of course keeps up with the new consoles and HDR gaming. LG's operating system is a lesser known

SHOP AT BEST BUY

screen and marvel at how thin it is. Like, how do all the people fit in there? The LG ThinQ is a remarkable TV in every sense. It has an amazing picture, killer frame rate, and of course keeps up with the new consoles and HDR gaming. LG's operating system is a lesser known one but one that's highly accessible, and the remote even has pointer tech —like the Wii—and a joystick for navigation. The picture is easily the clearest and deepest I've seen in this price range, and while it is by no means a cheap TV, it's the best picture you can get without upgrading to 8K for $3,000-plus, which is a viable option for exactly no one.

$649.99



Best Affordable TV
TCL 6-Series 4K Mini-LED QLED TV

SHOP AT AMAZON

If you're looking for a TV under a thousand bucks, it's this one. I gush over TCL just because it is an affordable brand with some of the greatest quality, UI, and remote design out there. The picture and frame rate are representative of a TV that *should* cost you $500 more, and the outward design, while not as thin as some higher-end boxes, makes use of a really pretty silver frame to blend right in to any type of thoughtful home décor. TCL is quickly becoming a huge competitor in the TV market. Other brands should take note. As should you.

$599.00



Best Tablet
Apple iPad Air

The new iPad Air is the best tablet out there right now, easy. It takes design cues straight from the Pro with the flat edging, full screen (with Face ID and Touch ID), Pencil (with the most accurate writing and



SHOP AT AMAZON

tablet out there right now, easy. It takes design cues straight from the Pro with the flat edging, full screen (with Face ID and Touch ID), Pencil (with the most accurate writing and markup ability in any iPad, except for the Pro), and that brilliant Magic Keyboard. These all help this iPad stake its claim as the most reasonable "laptop replacement" tablet I've seen to this point. So if you're looking for hardware to surf the web, stream stuff, and do basic documentation, plus anything else you would normally do on your phone save for that size issue, the Air's a strong contender, at $600.

$699.00



SHOP AT AMAZON

Best Laptop
Microsoft Surface Laptop Go

Microsoft really took the cake this year with a laptop for those people who are on a budget and yet still need massive tech upgrades to earn their paychecks from home. The Surface Go's deal is that it does amazing computing, courtesy of Windows 10, for a price that undercuts much of the market, all packaged in a way that will have even Apple fans thinking about jumping ship—touched with some really cool colors and a wonderful metallic texture. Nearly $700 sure isn't anything to scoff at, but compared to other similarly priced laptops, it's more than worth it if you're not a designer, gamer, or video editor. For anybody else, it nails the two most important factors: It feels good to use, and it works smoothly. You'll think you're using a Macbook, without paying for a Macbook.

$229.00



Best for Zoom
Facebook Portal Plus

$229.00



Best for Zoom
Facebook Portal Plus

SHOP AT AMAZON

I'm going to try to spare you too many references to how everything is Zoom now, because I'm sure you're aware. Now that that's out of the way: Portal Plus is a wonderful all-in-one video chat system that makes it easy to set and forget your video chat space. Because it's not your laptop, you can simply call from the same place all the time, which actually just makes it a 2020 landline. Yeah, I fell for a revitalized home phone. The Portal video has superb camera and audio quality, and it features automatic zooming and panning, so you can look like you've got a whole film crew producing your work call. Portal also rotates on its axis from landscape to portrait, depending on the type of framing you want. And besides Zoom (sorry), you can video call with Facebook Messenger and Whatsapp. It really cuts down on the setup time required in our constant state of Zoom (sorry again), and for that reason alone it should be on the home upgrade shortlist.

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Sound

$99.99



Best Bluetooth Speaker

$99.99



SHOP AT BEST BUY

Best Bluetooth Speaker
Marshall Embertone

Marshall makes fantastic Bluetooth speakers that strike a balance of vintage vibe and modern sound—so, great speakers that double as décor. The Embertone is tiny, weather-resistant, and portable. It can get real loud. It has a battery life that's frankly unbelievable; I use my Embertone every day and only have to charge it every two weeks or so. It'll live on a shelf, it'll travel outside, and it'll get you all the interior design compliments you crave. Case in point, people assume I went antiquing to dig up this gem (which I'm not known to do; I hate dust) and inquire if "it still works," and to their surprise it does, because it is new. Those people would lose so much money on *Antiques Roadshow*.

$799.00



SHOP AT SONOS

Best Soundbar
Sonos Arc

The Sonos Arc is bigger, badder, and bassier than any soundbar you've ever had. It has technology that can map a room's acoustics to cut back on echo and sound swallowing. When I moved this year, I forgot that was even a feature, then remembered, then readjusted the Arc to my new place. Massive, noticeable difference—not that it sounded bad before. Beyond that, more and more video games are using 3D audio, and Sonos is able to replicate a surround sound system. I find myself looking behind me midgame, thinking something has happened in my apartment, but it's just the TV. Finally, consider other Sonos features, like smart home control and a new radio system, which has some rad stations curated by artists who share what they like, along with stories about their music. A personal favorite of mine is Brittany Howard's, which you all should check out. Sometimes I take Sonos's recommendation and play rocket ship sounds on the Arc so it feels

something has happened in my apartment, but it's just the TV. Finally, consider other Sonos features, like smart home control and a new radio system, which has some rad stations curated by artists who share what they like, along with stories about their music. A personal favorite of mine is Brittany Howard's, which you all should check out. Sometimes I take Sonos's recommendation and play rocket ship sounds on the Arc so it feels like I'm escaping this godforsaken planet, and wow, it really works.

$379.00

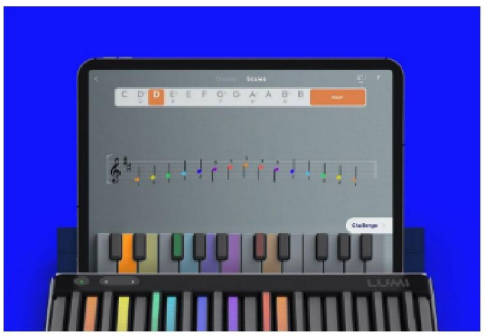


SHOP AT AMAZON

Best Record Player
U-Turn Turntable

I fawned over U-Turn once, I'll do it again. U-Turn makes a ton of different record players, including a "build your own" mode that lets you piece together the package you want for your price point. These have the coolest, most minimalistic design I've seen in turntables—and come in a ton of colors and finishes, which I love—but they also sound phenomenal. I never understood the hype around record players until I had a good one. And though I thought I'd only use it every once in a blue moon, I genuinely put records on all the time. As an aside, my U-Turn has forcibly inserted breaks into the middle of my day to choose new records, which is a nice breather from work, and now that you mention it, it also brought music back into my workday. If you're looking to get a record player, head to U-Turn, and if you're confused by the audio gear (no shame in that), reach out, because it has one of the most wonderfully helpful staffs I've encountered from a tech company.

$269.00



Best for Learning
LUMI Keys

Everyone picked up pandemic hobbies—baking bread, learning a language, just existing (easier said than done). Right now, my thing is getting back into piano with LUMI, a



SHOP AT PLAYLUMI.COM

Everyone picked up pandemic hobbies—baking bread, learning a language, just existing (easier said than done). Right now, my thing is getting back into piano with LUMI, a light-up keyboard that makes learning piano feel like *Guitar Hero* (which, if anyone from Activision is reading this, bring *Guitar Hero* back you cowards, so I can stop learning music and just play video games). It's an intelligent little device that works with most tablets or smartphones to gamify music, but not so much you don't actually pick up the skill. For me, LUMI shook the dust off and helped me improve quite a bit without overthinking it (a perpetual problem of mine), so I can eventually reach my goal of performing the entire *Mario Kart* Wii soundtrack on piano.

$399.99



SHOP AT SAMASH.COM

Best for Musicians
Roland TR-6S

Music is one of those cool—and annoying!—things where anyone who wants can have a SoundCloud, and though I'm obviously in full support of more art, stop DM-ing me your links please; I only listen to ABBA, and that won't ever change. But if you're serious about being a SoundCloud rapper or a sound designer or just making music, Roland's TR-6S is going to be a much-appreciated companion. This beat machine works for beginners and seasoned veterans alike, keeping you in a mesmerizing beat world for hours. Personally I use it to add punchy sound accents to animation work, which is not the intended purpose but goes to show how versatile it is.

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Style

$549.00



Best for Hairstyling
Dyson Airwrap

SHOP AT BED BATH AND BEYOND

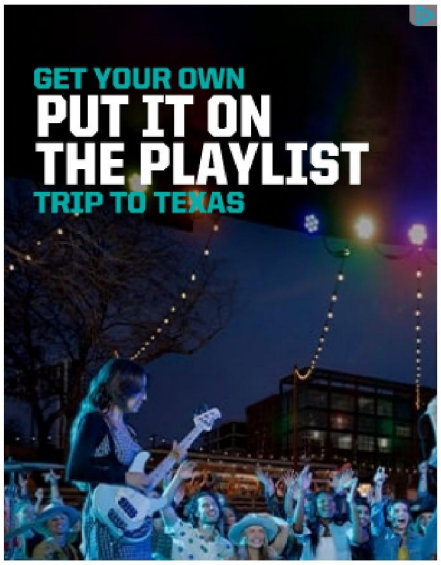
The shutdown really showed a lot of us we could rock some *long* hair. Thing is, many of us, myself included, didn't know how to take care of it. Dyson already ruled the market with a non-damaging hair dryer, and this year, it released the Airwrap, the only hair styler you'll ever use. This multitool works as a hair dryer, sure, but also as a heated style brush, curling iron, straightener, all of it. Anything you'd need to get those luscious lockdown-locks under control. I should know. I have insanely wavy hair, and the Airwrap took my look from "mad scientist" to "James Dean without the jawline, talent, or money."

$1,1820.00



Best Bidet
Toto Washlet

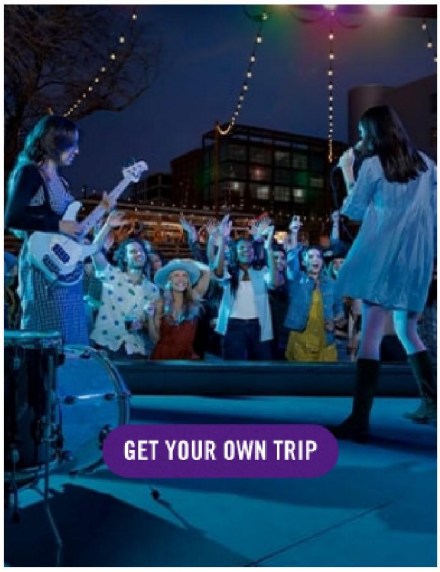
I gotta level with you here. I never was, never wanted to be, a Bidet Guy. Bidet people talk about toilets at horrifying length. But if you're a bidet person, or looking to become a bidet person, or a secret bider-





SHOP AT TOTOUSA.COM

a Bidet Guy. Bidet people talk about toilets at horrifying length. But if you're a bidet person, or looking to become a bidet person, or a secret bider-er, then Toto's your people. Yeah, there are cheaper bidets out there, and I'm sure they get the job done, but this system is intense yet easy to control, and if you're going to bidet, you must bidet with class. The Washlet turns the biggest skeptics, *ahem*, into bidet people. I can't help what I'm becoming.



$249.00



SHOP AT AMAZON

Best Smart Accessory
Bose Frames

These things are about the coolest wearable tech out there—glasses with tiny speakers that play music only you can hear. Freaky, right? This year, Bose expanded the Frames line with glossier and sportier looks, rounding it out to genuinely make a pair for anyone hankering for Bose-quality audio while they walk around outside. I for one hate when I'm unable to hear what's going on around me while listening to music, and the Frames negate that issue. It's like having a movie soundtrack to your life, and yes, that feels as rad as it sounds, unless you're me and that soundtrack is ABBA, because apparently I perpetually want to live on a Greek isle trying to find my true father. (I know my father, he's a wonderful man, but it's fun to pretend.)



Best Smart Shoes
Nike Adapt

Back to the Future gave us such high hopes—too high for our year-on-fire, save for one piece of gadgetry: tech-heavy Nikes. Folks already cracked the code on self-



Back to the Future gave us such high hopes—too high for our year-on-fire, save for one piece of gadgetry: tech-heavy Nikes. Folks already cracked the code on self-lacing shoes, but these go further. The shoes self-lace and change LED color, which is not nearly as ridiculously showoff-y as I assumed it would be. They're comfortable as all hell. And Nike Adapt can tap into any smart assistant to tighten the shoe exactly to your foot. I'm biased to Google Assistant, but Nike and Apple have a longstanding history of working together, especially on the Apple Watch, and that Nike app is the most functional Apple Watch app I've seen. A massive bonus to these shoes is the way they power up on a wireless charger, which should be coveted for any sneakerhead's sneaker wall. I mean, the charger has to sit on a shelf, but let's be real, a sneaker wall is just a shelf; read my expose on that next week.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Eat & (Drink)

$999.00



Best Big Kitchen Appliance
June Oven

The June Oven is the only thing you need in a kitchen. It's an air fryer, a dehydrator, an oven, and just about any other appliance you'd want. Billed as a 12-in-one machine with

SHOP AT JUNEOVEN.COM



SHOP AT JUNEOVEN.COM

The June Oven is the only thing you need in a kitchen. It's an air fryer, a dehydrator, an oven, and just about any other appliance you'd want. Billed as a 12-in-one machine with cameras to recognize any food you put into it, quick-heating elements to cook that food correctly, and pre-programmed settings, it is the showstopper of my apartment. Anyone who has every visited me has been forced to sit through a presentation that involved sticking a frozen waffle into the oven, just to prove that the oven knew it was a frozen waffle. This showcase is about the equivalent of running Tamagotchi software on a gaming computer, but hey, that's show biz. The June Oven, and I can't stress this enough, fixed my food-ordering compulsion, because it made cooking so accessible.

$1,799.95



SHOP AT WILLIAMS SONOMA

Best Coffee Machine
Saeco Xelsis Espresso Machine

Having an in-home espresso machine is a luxury, one I fully vouch for, and the Saeco is a luxury machine. It makes a cup of coffee similarly to your favorite $5 latte from the coffee shop, even if you have no clue what you're doing, thanks to a color touchscreen and adjustable settings that take into account the bean you're using. Plus, a milk frother for quick and easy specialty coffee drinks. While it may be pricey, if you spend the amount I do on coffee a year, it more than pays for itself. Because I'm a cold-blooded person, I normally make an iced americano or straight espresso shots. But I'm being inspired to change it up. I even steamed eggnog in it. What a treat.

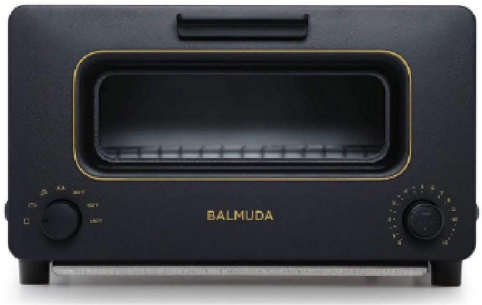
$329.00



Best Small Kitchen

make an iced americano or straight espresso shots. But I'm being inspired to change it up. I even steamed eggnog in it. What a treat.

$329.00



SHOP AT AMAZON

Best Small Kitchen Appliance
Balmuda Toaster

You never quite realize how comforting well-toasted carbs are until you test out this toaster. The Balmuda uses steam, along with heating units and a variety of different programs, to perfectly rehydrate and toast bread. I normally freeze my bread, because I can't ever get through a loaf as quickly as the mold, and this toaster makes that dry, ice-burned texture vanish. It is the only toaster on the market that can do that. Buy it for yourself, buy it for your parents, but it for anyone you love, because perfectly toasted bread is the most important love language.

$299.99



SHOP AT BEST BUY

Best Cocktail Machine
Drinkworks Home Bar by Keurig

I love making drinks, but I *really* love when other people make me drinks. They're just better when mixed by a bartender. Now, this device won't chat with you or pity you with heavy pours, but it will make a worthy cocktail. Drinkworks works just like Keurig, which makes sense, since Keurig made it. You take a concentrate pod, which has quite a bit of alcohol in it, drop it into the machine, and *bam,* you have a cocktail. I was skeptical at first. *How could this possibly be good?* It's not like getting a cocktail from a favorite bar—I doubt anything could replace that—but it does produce a refreshing, and

cocktail. Drinkworks works just like Keurig, which makes sense, since Keurig made it. You take a concentrate pod, which has quite a bit of alcohol in it, drop it into the machine, and *bam,* you have a cocktail. I was skeptical at first. *How could this possibly be good?* It's not like getting a cocktail from a favorite bar—I doubt anything could replace that—but it does produce a refreshing, and surprisingly not-weak, drink. There are pods for classics like Moscow Mules, Old Fashioneds, and Margaritas.

$129.88



SHOP AT AMAZON

Best for the Adventurous Chef
Dash Sous Vide

Sous vide may seem way out of your league, but it's really quite simple. I mean, it's normally not simple, but this cooker makes it a breeze, because it just does it for you. For those of you who don't yet know, sous vide is a method of cooking where an ingredient, usually a protein like steak or chicken, is sealed in an airtight bag and cooked in rigorously temperature-controlled water for long periods of time. It is touted as a way to keep meat particularly flavorful, since you don't lose any juices or moisture during cooking. The Dash makes this method accessible to an average (even below-average) home cook. Just plug in what you want; you don't need to babysit it.

$149.99



Best for the Busy Chef
Chef iQ Pressure Cooker

Pressure cooker recipes are everywhere. Hell, I made a pressure cooker cake this week. But the Chef iQ pressure cooker in particular really is an independent appliance. It works even if the user has no idea



SHOP AT AMAZON

everywhere. Hell, I made a pressure cooker cake this week. But the Chef iQ pressure cooker in particular really is an independent appliance. It works even if the user has no idea what they're doing, and as someone who prides himself in never knowing what he's doing, the chef iQ is perfect. It makes choices for me, leading me through the cooking process. Plus, the built-in sensors really do keep me from overcooking a meal into a rubbery mess. In other words, this is the adult version of the Instant Pot.

Work

$649.99



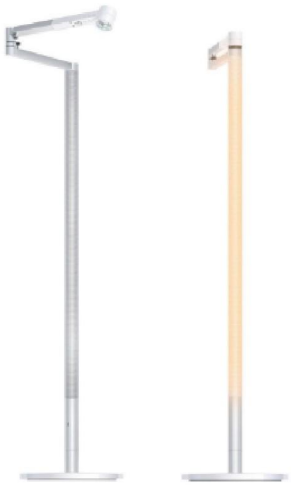
Best WiFi
Netgear Orbi 6

SHOP AT AMAZON

The number of calls I've received since the beginning of quarantine from friends and family asking why their Zooms are only showing up at 140p or why their downloading times are awful...*man*. I had and still have only one answer for them, and that's "mesh networks." I'll spare you my ramblings about mesh networks (seriously, it'll turn this already-long article into a Dickens novel), and simply say they're probably the fix you're looking for, what with their ability to unclog a network and boost strong signals. No one this year perfected the mesh network like Netgear. Its Orbi system uses the new-ish Wifi 6 technology to amplify signal without requiring you to shell out more to your internet provider. It creates several clear access points so Zoom school, Zoom meetings, and Netflix streaming

looking for, what with their ability to unclog a network and boost strong signals. No one this year perfected the mesh network like Netgear. Its Orbi system uses the new-ish Wifi 6 technology to amplify signal without requiring you to shell out more to your internet provider. It creates several clear access points so Zoom school, Zoom meetings, and Netflix streaming aren't all clogged into one. And it has an easy-to-use, exhilarating (if you're a nerd like me) app, where you can boot up a guest network on a whim, monitor device usages, restrict web-surfing times, and protect your browsing data. Even when there's no nationwide stay-at-home order, do yourself a favor and invest in good internet. Especially so you all can stop bugging me about it.

$849.99

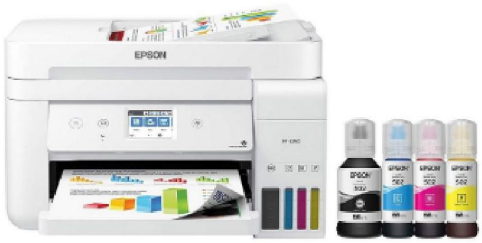


Best Lamp
Dyson Lightcycle Morph

SHOP AT BEST BUY

This lamp is straight out of a spaceship. It can be a reading light or a spotlight or the coolest pole light you've ever seen—Dyson wasn't kidding when it said Morph. There's even a daylight feature that mimics the sunlight outside through the day, which, now that we're stuck inside, is a godsend. Go for a floor version or a desk version, in silver or black; both are subtle.

$499.99



Best Printer
Epson EcoTank ET-4760

SHOP AT AMAZON

Long gone are the days of stealing your company's paper and ink to do all your printing in the office (not that I ever did that, if HR is reading this). Ink cartridges are a pain—the



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BUILD & PRICE



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stealing your company's paper and ink to do all your printing in the office (not that I ever did that, if HR is reading this). Ink cartridges are a pain—the biggest pain being running out of one color and shelling out for a whole set to make it worth your money. But Epson reinvented the process over the last few years with ink tanks that boast an 80-times longer life than a normal cartridge. While the ink bottles are more expensive, it's much easier to replace each individual bottle, and it happens so rarely that you won't clock it. Beyond just the EcoTank system, Epson makes a great printer—crisp detailing, no bleed, and all those features like wireless and Bluetooth. It's truly an end-all-be-all device.

$199.99

Best Webcam
Logitech Brio



SHOP AT B&H PHOTO

Maybe your built-in webcam isn't doing it for you. Maybe you want some control over the look and effects. Logitech Brio is not only an ultra HD 4K webcam, but it also uses Logitech Capture UI, which allows for a ton of customization. You can zoom, change contrast levels, insert dumb face effects, and more. Be the class clown of your Zoom meetings, or I mean, use it for professional reasons. The Brio is going to be an upgrade for almost any laptop webcam, and it'll seem like Christopher Nolan is directing your video calls.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below



$299.99

Best Laptop
Accessory



instacart Shop groceries now

$299.99



Best Laptop Accessory
SideTrack Portable Monitor

SHOP AT WALMART

SideTrack is a slide-out monitor that sticks right to the back of your laptop. Fold it out whenever and wherever to make full use of your desk space, and fold it back when you have none. It uses a USB slot to power itself and extend the screen like an absolute charm. My job often requires two monitors, mostly for balancing animation with other photo editors, but also for when I'm working on long-ass articles like this one and want to watch *30 Rock* while I write. So SideTrack comes in handy.

$239.98



Best Keyboard and Mouse
Razer Pro Type and Pro Click

SHOP AT RAZER.COM

Razer is known by gamers everywhere for its top-tier, low-latency keyboards, mice, headsets, and gaming PCs. But this year it broke out of its gamer-only chains, partnering with Humanscale, a design firm famous for minimalist but ergonomic products, on a striking mouse and keyboard set. The keyboard is as comfortable as you can find without committing to one of those massive ergonomic monsters, and features a white backlight and some subtle metallic accents that look clean on any desk. The mouse is designed with programmable buttons and a thumb rest. Branching out from gaming sure worked.

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$549.00



SHOP AT LOUPEDECK.COM

Best for Digital Creatives
Loupedeck CT

If you're a digital creative, Loupedeck will give you warm fuzzies. It's an intuitive tool for making programmable quick keys. To minimize design jargon: With design and editing work, oftentimes I'm stuck clicking two or three keys for cutting, moving, rotating, scaling, and more. It's like copying and pasting, plus about 7,000 other commands, and I'm always hitting the wrong keys at the wrong times. What Loupedeck does is create a menu for all those shortcuts, which a designer like me can customize to their workflow, saving endless time and frustration. You could also use Loupedeck to change camera effects for meetings or switch between multiple screens for an online presentation.

Work out

$1,219.00



Best for Boxing
FightCamp

I can't be the only one who wakes up wanting to punch my

$1,219.00



Best for Boxing
FightCamp

SHOP AT JOINFIGHTCAMP.COM

I can't be the only one who wakes up wanting to punch my way out of 2020. FightCamp is a subscription with gear that teaches you how to punch with punch trackers, which get inserted into a wrap right on your wrist and can fit under any gloves. These punch trackers monitor how your workout is going, while also opening up a massive library of boxing techniques you can learn on your own, including kickboxing. The workouts are fun but tough. Honestly, they've been one of the only things that actually gets me excited to work out. So get your aggression out by punching the crap out of this big bag, and I guess get in shape, too.

$1,299.00



Best All-in-One Home Gym
The MYX

SHOP AT MYXFITNESS.COM

Gyms are closed, training sessions are canceled, and video workout classes can be weird because of the lack of equipment. The MYX bike may look like a normal exercise bike, but it comes with everything you need for full training sessions: a huge library of classes specialized to not only the bike but also the weight set and other additions that come with it, a heart rate monitor, and assessment tools to help personalize workouts. No one, especially this year, should feel like they need to tone up or drop weight, but if you're like me and need some kind of activity to soothe your nerves, this is another phenomenal choice for guided at-home workouts.

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$139.00



SHOP AT AMAZON

Best for Core Strength
Stealth Core Trainer

Remember when planking went viral and was funny, I guess? Well, it's not funny, it's hard. Good for you, but hard. Stealth gamifies planking to make it a bit easier, asking players to balance in a plank and use their cores to swing their bodies through a variety of games streaming on the Stealth Fitness app. I was genuinely shocked how much a game upped the length I was able to hold a plank just by distracting me. My favorite forces you to control a ball's trajectory onscreen by shifting left and right while holding the plank, which as you may imagine, burns quite a bit. I can guarantee no one has had this much fun planking since 2010. I've made myself sore trying to get high scores.

$149.00



SHOP AT HYFITGEAR.COM

Best for Small Spaces
Hyfit

Maybe you don't have the room in your apartment for a big piece of equipment and planks aren't your thing. Chances are if you've been Googling around for a home workout solution, resistance bands have come up quite a lot. My problem with resistance bands—and a lot of exercise equipment, actually—is



SHOP AT HYFITGEAR.COM

you've been Googling around for a home workout solution, resistance bands have come up quite a lot. My problem with resistance bands—and a lot of exercise equipment, actually—is that normally I need some kind of guidance for a while before I really get the hang of it. I avoided resistance bands for that exact reason. But a Hyfit membership, with bands and an app, brings guidance into resistance workouts. It helps you understand how and why you're doing this or that, and walks you through workouts, in addition to tracking your progress.

$249.00



SHOP AT LUMEN.ME

Best for Learning About You
Lumen

It's a breathalyzer, but for your health and diet. Lumen analyzes your breath to give valuable input on your wellness habits (or lack thereof). It'll help you understand if you're burning carbs or fat during a workout, for example, and give tips on how to reach your goals. It can narrow down what dietary habits may be keeping you from a goal. But most importantly, it never feels judgmental. It just lays out facts without getting preachy. It's a positive, reassuring, undaunting experience. I was blown away by this technology, and after using Lumen for over six months, I can attest it does exactly what it advertises. I definitely feel healthier.

$449.00



Best Percussive Massager
Therabody Theragun Pro

Nothing quite beats the shit out

Massager
Therabody Theragun Pro



SHOP AT THERAGUN

Nothing quite beats the shit out of my shoulder, in the best way, like a Theragun. And the Theragun Pro is the most tricked-out gun on the market, especially when paired with the new Therabody app. Percussive therapy was an overnight hit, and if you've never done it, it may seem painful or just wrong, but trust me when I say it helps. The Theragun Pro is definitely made for those who need something heavy duty, but there are much cheaper, less intense options out there, too. Regardless, if you struggle with muscle pain or tight shoulders (who doesn't?), definitely look into Therabody.

$129.99

Best for Relaxation
Sharper Image Realtouch Massager



SHOP AT AMAZON

Percussive massagers are great, but a heated massage cape is a dream. Sure, this is far more for comfort than athletic rehabilitation, but man, there are few things as blissful on a stressful day as setting this device on my shoulders. The heating is beautiful, and the massager is surprisingly flexible. It works on shoulders and lower back; I'm sure those areas just winced in pain the second you read that. Basically, it's a massage chair that you can walk around with.

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shoulders and lower back; I'm sure those areas just winced in pain the second you read that. Basically, it's a massage chair that you can walk around with.

Hang out

$49.99



Best Streaming Stick

Chromecast with Google TV

SHOP AT B&H PHOTO

This year, Google unveiled a brand new Android TV operating system and a Chromecast with that new OS. I can't swoon over this UI enough. It's like Netflix's near perfect interface, but for everything, expertly streamlining what you've been watching and what you're watching next. I get wildly annoyed with a lot of the streaming service UIs (like Hulu's, which looks so pretty but needs to stop moving my shit around in its aggressive number of tabs), so it was a brilliant move for Google to cut out the middle men. Beyond that, it comes bundled with the plug-and-play Chromecast and a new remote—one I want to leave on my coffee table instead of hiding away in a drawer.

$179.99



Best Universal Remote

Logitech Harmony 950

Logitech deigned a remote for anyone whose media console looks like a Best Buy. This

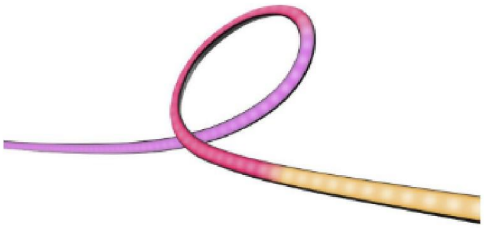


Logitech Harmony 950

SHOP AT BEST BUY

Logitech deigned a remote for anyone whose media console looks like a Best Buy. This quintessential universal system cuts down on the tech clutter that I hate—the wires and plugs and remotes—with a touch screen and programmable buttons to control even your smart lights. No more lost remotes. No more switching through remotes. That's the dream.

$199.99

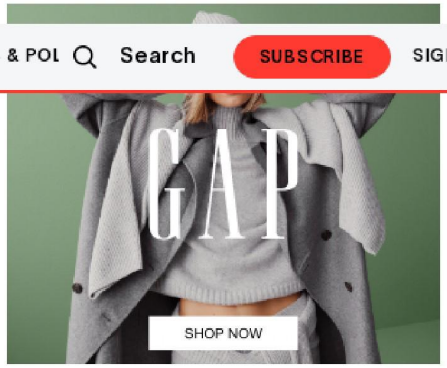


Best Smart Lighting Philips Hue Play Gradient Light Strip

SHOP AT BEST BUY

If you're looking for smart lights, chances are you're looking at Phillips. It's been the

thick rope that attaches to the back of your TV, giving you some vibey mood lighting—or wild light effects—as four different colors flow and blend along it. Pair the rope with one of last year's award winners, the Hue Box, and whatever you're watching or playing bleeds off the screen and right into your room in the form of light.



$179.99



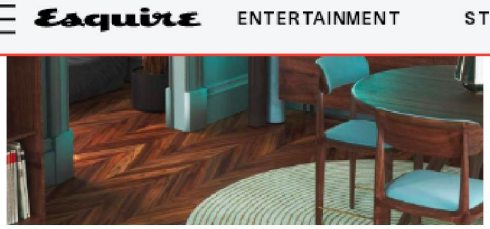
Best Interactive Lighting Nanoleaf Shapes

Long gone are the days when Nanoleaf was only seen on the walls behind Twitch streamers and Youtubers. Last year saw



Nanoleaf Shapes

Long gone are the days when Nanoleaf was only seen on the



the release of Canvas: gorgeous and interactive light squares. This year, it's Shapes: triangular and hexagonal panels that work together to make on-the-wall light mosaics, almost like stained glass you can design yourself. The panels respond to touch, sound, and smart home commands. Because nothing says "tech genius" like swiping a wall of lights to activate your smart speaker.

SHOP AT BEST BUY

$299.00

Best VR Headset
Oculus Quest 2



VR is cool, VR is fun, VR is now for everyone. Seriously, the world blows right now, so why not buy into a way to leave for a while? Somehow, Oculus took the Quest headset from last year and made it insurmountably better with the Quest 2. And beyond just making it better, Oculus also somehow made it cheaper. And not just cheaper, but three-quarters of the price. You can now get a playable VR headset for $299—no need for a computer, camera, or anything else. The visuals are better, the CPU is better, and wow, is that a breath of fresh air. Behind us are the days of gimmicky VR games too, as you can see for yourself with titles Like *SuperHot*, *Beat Saber*, and the up and coming *Medal of Honor: Above and Beyond*. The Oculus Quest 2 is the perfect VR experience, at least until the Quest 3 comes out.

SHOP AT AMAZON

$599.99



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$599.99



SHOP AT ATGAMES.US

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Best for Game Rooms
Arcade Legends Ultimate

Home arcade machines are big right now, and there are a million and one modern takes, but none are as expansive as the Arcade Legends Ultimate. This cabinet comes with 300 games, and they're good games, too, like *Tetris*, *Star Wars*, and *Metal Slug*. Beyond the 300 installed games, there's an online portal that constantly gets updated with more. There are also USB and HDMI ports built right on the front that'll let you install and play modern titles with the arcade controller. Similarly, there's a bring-your-own-game feature, which lets you play games off Steam, and let me tell you, *Cuphead* was made for a cabinet. I could go on about the features for hours, but the long short of it is this system is amazing. It's also useful to know that this cabinet is thinner than your standard arcade cabinet, so it'll better hug the wall, out of the way.

The hidden story behind
The Macallan Fine & Rare 1926
DISCOVER NOW



$99.00



Best Tabletop Game
Blinks by Move38

$99.00



Best Tabletop Game
Blinks by Move38

SHOP AT MOVE38.COM

Credit:

Blinks is the single coolest tabletop game. It uses light and touch to create a vast and ever-changing group of puzzle games, asteroid games, zombie games, and more, and it all happens with these little pucks. Each Blink has magnets on its corner that snap together, as well as touch sensors and lighting effects. It's amazing how complex some of these games get, despite the simplicity of the product. The ergonomic design is also addicting; each Blink is like a fidget toy mixed with a massive gaming catalog. And they're portable, something a lot of tabletop games struggle with.

$119.00



Best Gaming Headset
Astro A20

SHOP AT WALMART

Astro seemed to burst onto the gaming scene out of nowhere, and now it's one of the most respected gaming companies around. Look to its PlayStation Elite controller or phenomenal headsets to see why. Speaking of, now it has released the A20 headset, one of the most comfortable and amazing-sound wireless options you'll encounter. It rarely needs to charge. The built-in mic is crystal clear. There are headsets out there for massive chunks of change that surely sound impeccable, but for the price you can't get much better than the A20. Seriously, it works better than some wired headsets I've tried.

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$99.99

Best Game for the Family
Mario Kart Live



SHOP AT GAMESTOP

There've been some high-tech gadgets on this list, and then there's this: an RC car with a camera. And guess what? I can confidently say it's the most entertaining gadget out of anything here. *Mario Kart Live* sees you control a Mario or Luigi RC car, turning your living space into a *Mario Kart* course, for which you can build ridiculous levels. You use your Switch to control the car from the camera's POV, which is a blast, I don't care how old you are. Nintendo really knows how to make "family fun" that's genuinely fun.