Smart Thermostats: Top 3

A smart thermostat is a thermostat you can control from your phone. Change the temperature from the couch, from bed, or from across town.

Do you even need one?

- It can lower your bills. Heating and cooling are about half of the average home energy bill. Certified smart thermostats save around 8% on that, according to ENERGY STAR.
- It adjusts itself. These thermostats learn when you are home, away, and asleep — then set the temperature for you.
- Honest advice: if your current thermostat works fine and you are happy with your bills, you do not need to rush. This is a comfort upgrade, not an emergency.

1. Google Nest Learning Thermostat (4th gen) — about $280

- The one that learns. It studies your routine for a week or two, then builds its own schedule. The big round dial is easy to turn and read.
- Room sensor included. A small sensor goes in another room, so the temperature is right where you spend time — not just in the hallway.
- Phones: the app works on iPhone and Android. It also answers to Google Home and Alexa.
- Wiring: works in most homes without a C-wire. Use Google's compatibility checker before you buy.

2. ecobee Smart Thermostat Premium — about $250

- The all-rounder. Big color touchscreen, and it works with Alexa, Google Home, and Apple Home — the only one here that does all three.
- Room sensor included. It can even tell when a room is empty, so it does not waste energy heating it.
- Bonus: a built-in air quality monitor, plus an Alexa speaker in the thermostat itself.

- Phones: the app works on iPhone and Android.
- Wiring: includes a Power Extender Kit, so most homes without a C-wire are covered.

3. Honeywell Home T9 — about $170

- The value pick. Room sensors and a clear color screen for about $100 less than the top two. From Honeywell, a name heating companies have trusted for decades.
- Phones: the app works on iPhone and Android. It works with Alexa and Google Home.
- Wiring: this one needs a C-wire (or an adapter). Check before you buy.

Note: The C-wire, in plain words A C-wire is an extra wire behind your thermostat that gives it steady power. Some homes have one, some do not. Sean can check your wiring before you buy anything — a quick look behind the thermostat tells the whole story.

Good to know for seniors

- Big, clear displays. All three are easier to read than the tiny screens on old thermostats.
- Simple apps. One big temperature number, plus and minus buttons. That is most of what you will ever tap.
- Voice control. “Set the temperature to 74” works with Alexa or Google on all three.
- Prices change. All three go on sale often — check the current price before you buy.

When to call Sean instead

- You want to know if your home's wiring works with a smart thermostat.
- You bought one and the screen will not power on.
- You want it installed and set up without the hassle.
- You are not sure which of the three fits your heating system.

Call Sean at (813) 770-6082.

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