**Alexa skills you’ll use every day**

**1. Automated Actions with “Routines”**

In real life, a human assistant doesn’t require separate requests. When you walk into the office, you don’t have to say, “Pat, can I have a cup of coffee?” Then say, “Pat, could you answer the phone?” Assistants already know your morning routine, and they know what you need (well, the best ones do) without you having to ask for every little thing.

Alexa can now imitate this behavior, thanks to its "routines" feature. For instance, you can say "Alexa, I'm home!" and Alexa can greet you, turn on your living room smart lights, read the daily news and play a specific music playlist.

Or you can say "Alexa, good night," and she may reply, "Sweet dreams," lock your doors, set your thermostat to a set temperature, turn off all your lights then play binaural white noise to lull you to sleep.

To create a Routine in the Alexa app, go to the **Menu**then tap **Routines**. Tap the **Plus Sign (+)** to start a new sequence. Select **When this happens**, then choose your trigger. The trigger can be

a phrase, a schedule or a motion sensor event. Next, select **Add Action** to start building the Routine. To wrap it up, choose the device you want to trigger the routine from, then tap **Create**.

**2. Make Announcements**

Another feature you can try with multiple Amazon Echos is to set them up as multi-room intercoms. With this feature, you can use your smart speakers to broadcast an announcement to your whole house, much like in a school, airport or cruise ship.

For example, you can say "Alexa, announce that dinner is ready,” and Alexa will record your voice and repeat your announcement on every Echo in your home.

Amazon Echos also have a feature called "Drop In." This feature lets you connect instantly to any Echo gadgets in your house, hands-free, without having to wait for anyone to pick the call up. Even better, you can also Drop In remotely to your friends' and relatives' Echos.

To set this up, open your Alexa app, go to **Settings**, then select the desired Echo device and tap Drop In. Now, select either **On**or **Only My Household** to enable Drop In conversations. To call an Echo, just say "Alexa, Drop in" followed by the name of the Echo you want to call.

These kinds of commands can also be life-saving in the event of an emergency.

**3. Free Phone Calls**

Much like the Bluetooth speaker in your car, you can use Alexa to place hands-free phone calls. Just link your mobile number to your Echo, and it will let you call anyone from your contacts list.

To activate Alexa calling, you'll need an Amazon account, your mobile number and the Alexa app installed on your phone. Just open the Alexa app, go to the Conversations tab (on the bottom menu, it has a speech bubble icon) then follow the on-screen instructions to verify and link your mobile number.

To make a call from your compatible Echo devices, ask Alexa to call the person or contact you want to reach by name.

Using voice-activated commands does make some users wary, as it’s well known that the Echo records every command you give.

**4. Translate Languages**

For decades, futurists have dreamed of a universal translator. The idea of speaking into a computer and receiving an instantaneous transcription in English has always seemed like a distant dream. But Echo can now do precisely that – which is a paradigm shift for meetings, foreign exchange students or Couchsurfing hosts.

Echo requires a skill called [Translated](https://www.amazon.com/Translated/dp/B01N9BZJPZ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=komandocom-20&linkId=8bcc17bc1d8af28b7c8a126a1ac9a2d3&language=en_US) to interpret one language to another. After enabling this skill, you can say "Alexa, open Translated," then ask how to speak English words and phrases in a specific language. The Translated skill currently supports more than 35 languages.

**5. Control Your TV**

Like Apple and Google, Amazon is smart about developing networks across its many devices. One of the best examples is Amazon's Fire TV stick, which you can control remotely by speaking to your Echo.

To set this up, open your Alexa app, then select **Music, Video & Books**. Select **Fire TV >> Link Your Alexa Device**, then follow the on-screen instructions to select the devices you want to link. To confirm the link, tap on **Link Devices**.

**Note:** If you only have one Fire TV registered to your Amazon account, it will link to your Echo automatically.

To use your voice as a remote control, say "Alexa," followed by a playback command, such as "pause," "fast-forward" or "skip an episode." You can also tell Alexa to search for a specific video and open other apps on your smart TV.

**6. Multi-Room Audio**

If you have multiple Echos in your home (including Echo Dot and Show), you can set them up to play the same music simultaneously, much like having a centralized speaker system in your house. If you're familiar with Apple's Airplay or the Sonos system, the system works similarly.

Here's how you set up multi-room audio. Go to **Settings**in the Alexa app then scroll down until you find **Audio Groups** and select **Multi-Room Music**. Here, you'll see all your **Smart Home Groups**. Select **Add Group >> Amazon Multi-Room Music Group**. Select a name for your new group, then add the Echo devices you want to include.

Once you have your groups set up, tell Alexa the song, artist, album, station or genre you want to play followed by your group name.

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