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Home > Home Security

Nest Yale Lock review: A great smart lock if you've already bought into Nest

We've been waiting on a Nest-Yale collaboration for quite a while, but does this $249 lock live up to the hype?

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7 min read

In this article...

A few years back, the tease of a Nest and Yale smart lock began with the promise of the Linus lock . That project never made it to market, and the two companies regrouped for the Nest x Yale Lock. Specifically designed to work with the Nest line of products, the Nest x Yale Lock is designed to do things like disarm your Nest Secure system when you unlock the door and lock the door when Nest detects you're away.

7.2

Nest Yale Lock

$247 at Amazon

$299 at Crutchfield

$300 at Best Buy

THE GOOD

The Nest x Yale Lock looks good and works with Nest to lock the door when you're away, disarm your Nest Secure alarm system and manage up to 20 passcodes.

THE BAD

There aren't any ZigBee, Z-Wave or iM1 (HomeKit) modules to add this lock to your smart home. The Nest integrations are underwhelming, and there aren't any voice control capabilities yet.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you love Nest products (and especially if you own the Nest Secure alarm system) the Nest x Yale smart lock is a good bet. If you're after voice control or more flexible smart-home hub integration, look elsewhere.

The $249 lock is a collaborative effort between Nest and Yale, not to mention Nest's first foray into smart locks. Add it to the long list of other Nest products: the new Nest Hello doorbell, Nest Secure alarm system, Nest thermostats and Nest cameras, and there's now an entire smart home product suite under one brand. With Yale's solid line of smart-lock hardware and the software pedigree of Nest, this lock is ideal for anyone who's already bought into the Nest ecosystem.

The Nest x Yale Lock keeps the sleek style of Yale's other keyless touchscreen deadbolts.

Chris Monroe/CNET

Compatibility and installation

The Nest x Yale Lock replaces your existing deadbolt. Like the Yale Assure SL Touchscreen Deadbolt we tested last year, the Nest x Yale Lock keeps Yale's keyless smart-lock styling and comes in polished brass, oil-rubbed bronze or satin nickel. Also like other Yale models, it comes with detailed printed instructions and a helpful app called Bilt to walk you through the installation process.

It's important to be sure your door is compatible before you buy any lock. With the Nest x Yale Lock, most wood, metal and fiberglass doors will be fine. However, the lock isn't intended for sliding doors, glass doors, Mortise locks or multipoint locks. The backset of your door also matters. This is the distance between the edge of your door and the center of the hole for your deadbolt. If your deadbolt is more than 2.75 inches away from the edge of your door, it isn't compatible with this lock.

Read more: Google is replacing Works with Nest with Works with Google Assistant and it could make your smart home worse.

The installation process was pretty straightforward and very much like installing any other smart lock. Attach the front plate of the lock, connect its cable to the receptor on the interior piece of the lock, install that piece and insert the batteries. You'll hear a welcome message from the speaker on the side of the lock, followed by a prompt to enter a master code. You'll also calibrate the door by closing it while unlocked, allowing the deadbolt to test its motorized locking. If your door takes a little shove or some force to close completely, you may have issues installing a new lock.

I'd recommend addressing any door hinge or frame issues prior to lock installation. Once the master code and calibration are complete, you'll follow instructions in the Nest app to connect it to your existing Nest products.

Customization options for this lock are nearly identical to the options available in other Yale locks. You can adjust the speaker volume and language, as well as and create and edit passcode settings from the keypad itself or through the Nest app. There's also an autorelock option you can enable from the keypad or the app.

Battery alerts

A pair of 9V battery terminals allow emergency access if standard batteries die.

Chris Monroe/CNET

The Nest x Yale Lock uses four standard AA alkaline batteries. When batteries begin to get low, the Nest app sends an alert. A red, low battery light will also display on the lock's keypad, as well as an audible alert when using the keypad.

If you ignore those initial warnings (like most of us do), you'll be notified again when your batteries are critically low. If your batteries do die, the lock includes terminals on the bottom where you can connect a 9V alkaline battery for emergency access. You can then enter your passcode and unlock the door.

Nest technology

The Nest x Yale Lock doesn't connect directly to Wi-Fi . Instead, it uses Weave, Nest's technology for wireless smart home communication. The Nest Connect or Nest Guard units connect to your Wi-Fi network, allowing your lock to communicate with the Nest service in the cloud and the Nest app on your iOS or Android device. That means you'll need either a Nest Connect module for Wi-Fi connectivity or a Nest Guard (the Nest Secure system keypad) for remote access to your lock.

Using an additional module such as the Nest Connect to enable remote access is pretty common among smart-lock makers. Both Kwikset and August have their own versions.

The Nest Connect is included in the $279 Nest x Yale bundle sold by major retailers.
Chris Monroe/CNET

If you buy the Nest x Yale Lock at a major retailer such as Best Buy , Home Depot, Target or Lowe's, the Nest Connect is included in a bundled package for $279. If you purchase the Nest Connect separately, it will cost you $69, making that bundle a pretty good deal. If you buy the Nest x Yale lock on Nest's website, you'll have the option to buy only the lock for $249. If you already own a Nest Guard, there's no reason to purchase the Nest Connect.

One of the more interesting features of this lock is its ability to work with the Nest Secure alarm system. In theory, you can enable an option in the Nest app to disarm your alarm when your door is unlocked. We weren't able to test this feature out just yet, as it is a software update yet to fully roll out to every consumer. We'll update once this feature is available.

I was really excited at the thought of doorbell integration with the Nest Hello and the Nest x Yale Lock. In reality, there isn't much there. Yes, the two devices live together in the Nest app, but beyond that, there isn't much communication. If you have a Nest Hello doorbell, the Nest app will alert you to who is at the door and display a live feed. You can speak with them via two-way audio or navigate to the lock's page of the app to unlock the door. For security reasons, the Nest Hello doorbell won't use its Familiar Faces recognition to unlock the door for a homeowner.

The Nest x Yale Lock and Nest Hello doorbell live in the same Nest app, but not much else is shared.
Chris Monroe/CNET

The Nest app

With the Nest × Yale Lock connected to your Nest app, you can lock and unlock your door remotely from your phone. You'll also be able to create up to 20 passcodes for friends and family, receive alerts when any of those passcodes are used, and set expiration dates and times.

How does that stack up? It's average, at best. The Z-Wave version of the Kwikset Obsidian allows 30 user codes. The Yale Assure SL Touchscreen Deadbolt includes 25 user codes. August doesn't limit the amount of guest codes at all. Code expiration and scheduling is a nice convenience, especially for homeowners with short-term rentals, but it's not new. Kwikset and Schlage have offered this option for a while.

With the Nest x Yale Lock you'll also get alerts whenever someone locks or unlocks the door manually, someone tampers with it, or when a user tries to enter an incorrect password five times. The app includes a function called Home/Away Assist, which can lock your door automatically when the rest of your Nest system, like your thermostat or doorbell, detects you're away.

What you won't get

Within this Nest line of products, interaction and shared information between products works pretty well. Outside of Nest, there aren't any smart home integrations. Unlike the Assure SL Touchscreen Deadbolt we tested last year,

The Nest app includes a section for controlling and customizing the Nest x Yale lock.
Screenshot by Molly Price/CNET

the Nest x Yale model doesn't include options for a Z-Wave, ZigBee or iM1 (HomeKit) module. So, it won't work with SmartThings , HomeKit or other smart home hubs. You'll be controlling the lock purely from the Nest app and within the Nest platform.

Voice-assistant compatibility is another feature still in the works. Voice control isn't currently available, but the team at Nest says in the future they would like the lock to be able to work with Google Assistant to check if your door is locked or lock the door for you. That feels like a letdown, given Google's enthusiastic welcome of Nest back under the Google umbrella last month to supposedly add AI to everything, and the fact that Yale's Real Living line of locks has had voice commands since last July.

Voice compatibility would put the Nest x Yale Lock up against players such as August and Schlage, whose locks already use voice assistants for those commands. There aren't any plans to allow voice control to unlock the Nest x Yale Lock, an approach most smart-lock makers seem to be in agreement about for security reasons.

Should you buy it?

The idea of a full smart-home system with every product helping out the others is really attractive. I think it's what we've been wishing for all along. Nest is trying to get there, and the Nest x Yale Lock is a step in the right direction. Still, the lack of integrations with Nest products (other than being able to detect your absence or presence and the promise of future Nest Secure disarming and voice commands) makes it feel less than exciting.

If you're not interested in a full Nest lineup for your home but are a fan of Yale's styling, I'd recommend the Yale Assure SL Touchscreen Deadbolt. You'll get similar styling and more flexible smarts with the purchase of a Z-Wave, ZigBee or iM1 module. If you're after the most flexibility and functionality without replacing your deadbolt, check out August's line of retrofit locks.

Here's the bottom line: you've got to love (and own) the Nest line of products to get the most out of this lock. You'll need the Nest Secure system or Nest Connect to give you remote access to your lock. Plus, you can't integrate this lock into a smart home you've already built with a hub like SmartThings or Wink . Even so, if you love everything Nest is doing, like the new Nest Hello Doorbell we gave an Editors' Choice, then the Nest x Yale lock is the one for you.

Nest Yale Lock

$247 at Amazon

SCORE BREAKDOWN

Features	**6**
Usability	**7**
Design	**8**
Performance	**8**

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YOUR GUIDE
TO A BETTER FUTURE

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