

# Creating an electriQ Equipped Smart Home for Around £150



## electriQ Smart Home

Smart home gear can be expensive, it's no secret that I've spent a small fortune and countless hours working on my own. Using Philips and LIFX lights can get expensive, and it'll empty your wallet before you finished creating the scene you wanted in your kitchen. Surely there's a more affordable way? There is, and we have the solution... cheaper hardware, what a shocker, bet you didn't see that coming. Of course, lightbulbs are only part of the equation, as you can also control other devices in your home by toggling their power on/off. It's a simple thing, but having your kettle, a lamp, a fan, etc, controllable with your phone or Alexa can be darn handy.



At less than half the price of comparable Philips Hue lights, the **electriQ** range is pretty darn affordable. In fact, I was able to get four B22 bulbs, three GU10 bulbs, all RGB and all for less than three bulbs from Philips. That left some money over to buy two smart plug adaptors and an IP Camera, and I still had some change left from £200, not too shabby.



*“This isn’t just any old lightbulb, it’s the future of lighting! Gone are the days of accidentally leaving the lights on or having to walk over to the light switch to turn it on/off. That’s because with this clever little light bulb you’ll be able to control your lighting from anywhere using your smartphone! Simply replace your existing light bulb with the smart bulb, pair it with your Smartphone using the dedicated app and its ready to use! Once connected you’ll be able to turn the lights on or off, set brightness and adjust the bulbs colour all without having to leave your sofa!” – **electriQ***

## A Closer Look

### electriQ GU10 Features

- UNDER HALF THE PRICE OF PHILIPS HUE
- Choose from over a million colour combinations to match your mood
- Adjust the brightness of the bulb without the hassle of installing a dimmer switch
- Set the lights to come on at a pre-set time, ideal for when you’re not at home
- The bulb works over WiFi so you can operate them from anywhere using your smartphone
- Manage multiple light bulbs all at the same time
- Works with Amazon Echo, Alexa & Google Home so you can control the light with your voice.

### Design

As I said, I got three of these bulbs for testing. At just £13.97 each, they’re shockingly cheap, given that a Philips Hue GU10 is currently £50 per bulb, this setup is over £100 cheaper already.



They keep to the standard GU10 form factor too, and installation will be as simple as plug and play. Of course, you'll also need the required app to pair them with your phone and Google/Amazon smart home equipment.



They're quite lightweight, and while they are "cheap" they don't particularly look it or feel it, which is great!



## electriQ B22 Features

- UNDER HALF THE PRICE OF PHILIPS HUE
- Choose from over a million colour combinations to match your mood
- Adjust the brightness of the bulb without the hassle of installing a dimmer switch
- Set the lights to come on at a pre-set time, ideal for when you're not at home
- The bulb works over WiFi so you can operate them from anywhere using your smartphone
- Manage multiple light bulbs all at the same time
- Works with Amazon Echo, Alexa & Google Home so you can control the light with your voice.

## Design

Again, just like the GU10, the RGB B22 fitting lights are crazy affordable. At just £14.97, they're a fraction of the price of a Hue B22, which are currently £49.99 per bulb. Of course, the Hue gear also requires a hub.



I'm not knocking Hue either, I have a house literally 100% equipped with Hue, it wasn't cheap, but it's a great product. However, how close can you get on a budget? Well, these cheaper bulbs look pretty great to me. The housing is a good size, and there's a large surface area to the lighting end, allowing for a wide dispersal pattern.



Side by side, the Philips Hue do look a little more premium, but it's a bulb... I can't say I spend much time staring at their housing design when they're installed.



## electriQ Smart Plug Features

- Use your smartphone to turn your electrical equipment on or off
- Schedule your devices to come on at a pre-set time, ideal for when you're not at home
- The plug works over WiFi so you can operate them from anywhere using your smartphone
- Set your device to turn on after a set amount of minutes using the countdown timer
- Works with Amazon Echo & Alexa so you can control the plug with your voice
- Compatible with iOS and Android smartphones

*"You must have had that moment of dread at some point, the iron, your straighteners... Will I get home from work and my house is on fire?! Oh for goodness sake I'm turning around! Sound familiar? Well, worry no more, because with the electriQ smart plug you can keep your nerves in check. It lets you use your smartphone to control your electrical devices from anywhere – whether you're at home, at work or even on holiday, so you'll never have to worry about leaving something switched on again! Simply plug the smart plug into a wall socket, connect your chosen device, and download the free smartphone app to control it. It's that easy! And, as if it couldn't get any more convenient, the plug even works with Amazon Alexa and Google Home which means you'll be able to control your devices with your voice!" – electriQ*

## Design

I love smart plugs, they're great for peace of mind, they're awesome for saving power, and they're best at retrofitting non-smart things to becoming smart! These are really nicely designed too, with a slim housing that's a lot less bulky than some of the other smart plugs I've used over the years.



They're a plug like any other, so just pop it in the socket, plug in your device, and it'll work. There's an LED-lit power button on the front to toggle on or off, but you can do more through the mobile app too, which you'll see shortly.



## electricIQ 720p Wifi Monitoring Camera Features

- 24-hour coverage with clear infrared night vision
- Wireless or wired set up
- Fittings included for mounting
- Compact design
- Use as a pet cam, home security, baby monitor and more
- Full control via smartphone, tablet or PC
- Pan: up to 270°
- Tilt: up to 90°
- Resolution: 720p HD
- Wireless range: 50m
- Infrared night vision range: 15m

*“What do your pets get up to while you’re out of the house? Do they behave and wait patiently for you to come home, or do they run riot, knocking things over and chewing things up? Well, now you can find out with the electricIQ pet cam! Whenever I sense my cats are up to no good, I open the app to find out what they’ve done. It’s great! I love how if they are misbehaving, I can even tell them to stop, right from my desk with the two-way audio feature. It’s just like being at home.” – electricIQ*

### Design

This is a simple bit of kit, and it’s pretty affordable too at just £34.97. Now, it’s worth pointing out that this isn’t a home security camera, it’s a monitor camera. If you want to check your kids came home on time while you’re away, make sure your pets are ok, or simply that the house hasn’t exploded, then this will do the trick nicely.



It’s a free-standing unit as you can see. However, you do get a well/ceiling bracket included should you need it. It operates over WiFi, can record to microSD, or be wired to your network using the included RJ45 cable. For a cheap camera, that’s good value right there.



It's just a cheaper plastic camera, but it's got plenty of features and a nice design too. It'll record 720p, has two-way audio support, can pan 270-degrees and tilt 90 degrees. You can leave it in a self-moving mode, preset areas, or drag your finger over the feed in the app to move the camera.

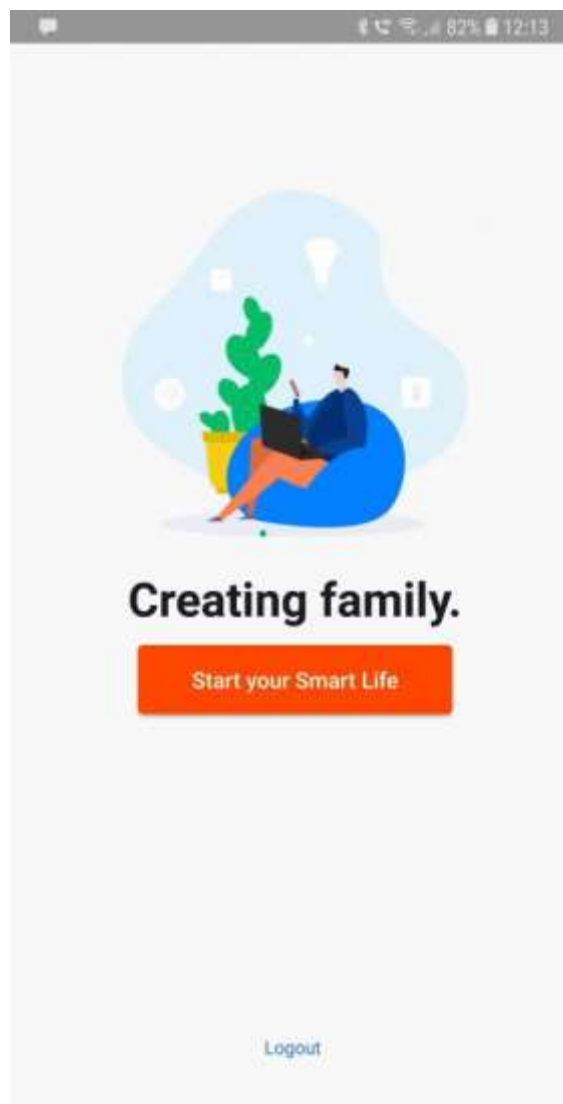


## Installation and Performance

Installing the smart plugs couldn't be easier than it is. You simply plug it into a socket, and then plug your device such as a kettle, lamp, fan, TV, etc, into the block.

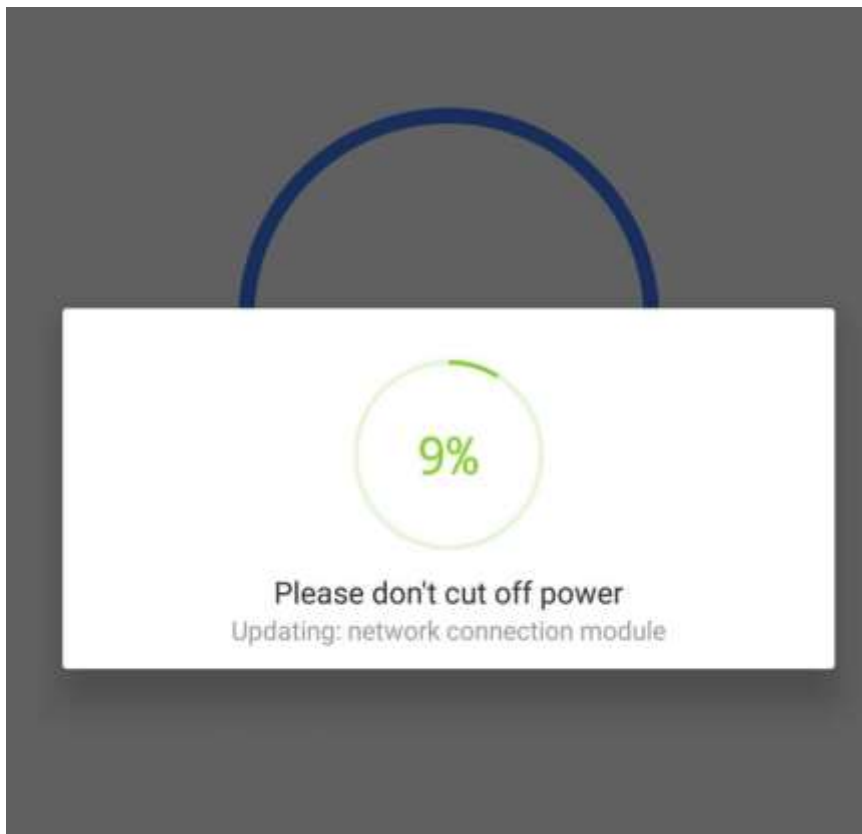


The mobile app is really easy to follow and gives clear advice step by step. What's awesome is that its all-in-one for a huge range of electriQ products. Unfortunately, not the camera, but that does have its own easy to use app also.



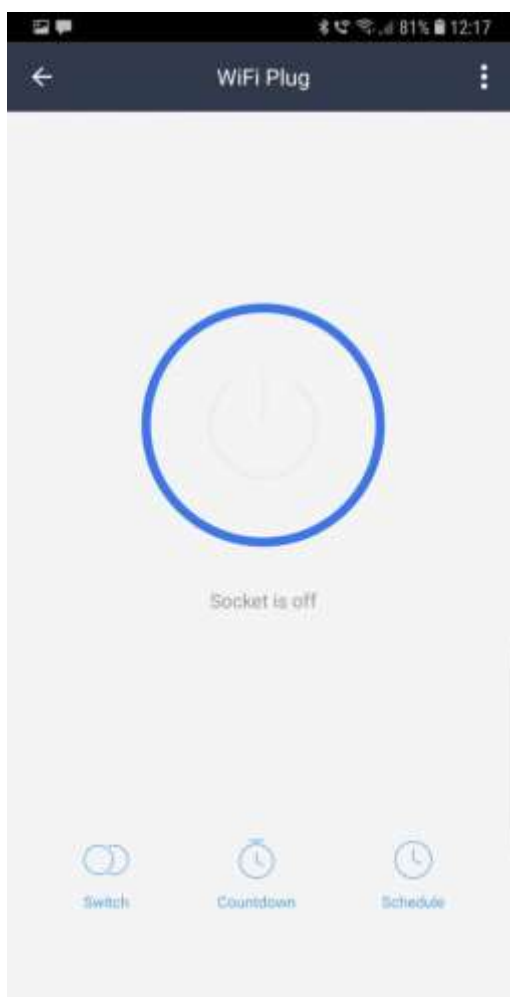


Once it finds your device and you pair your WiFi with it, it'll likely update. Best to do this straight away, as many updates could be security and stability related.

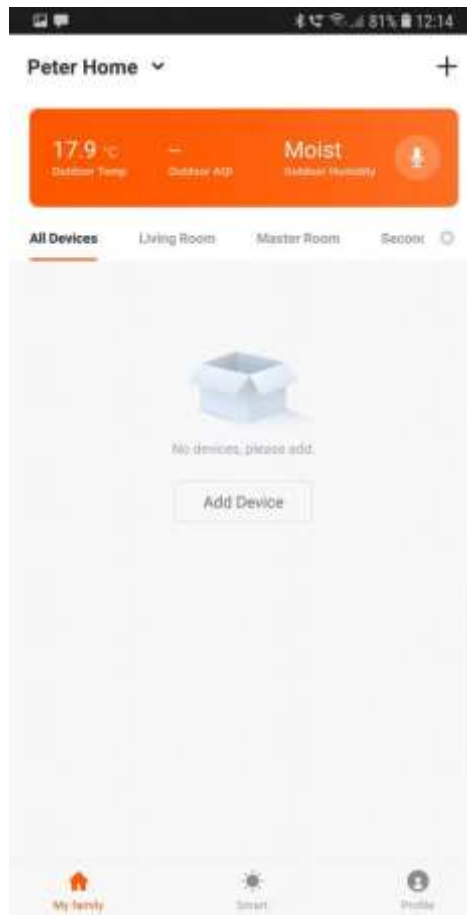


## Alexa, Turn on the Lamp!

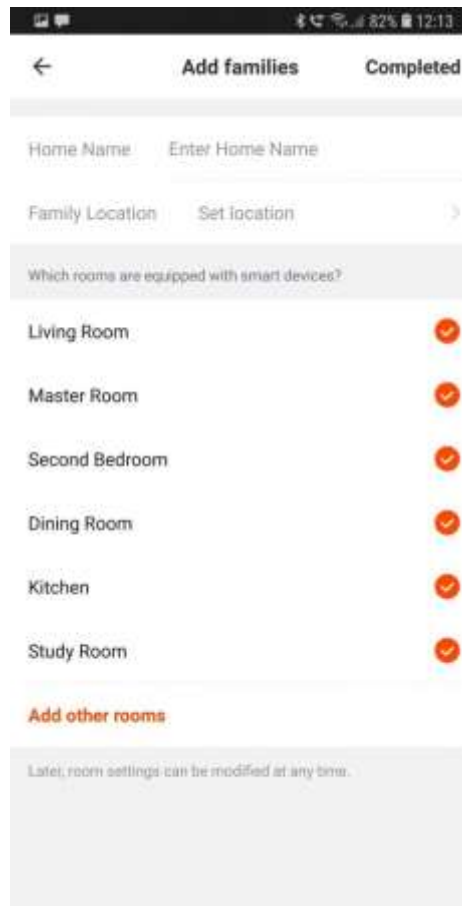
Now that's done, my phone is the remote control for the plug. I can still use it manually, or I can now turn it off or on from anywhere in the world. I don't need to turn my kettle on from Taiwan, but it's fun to do from the couch. Of course, there are more practical applications than that, but it's a fun experiment.



In the setup process, you can add a home name, location and more, allowing you to manage multiple locations. Furthermore, you can apply multiple product categories to multiple rooms.



This means you can add lots of lights, switches and other electriQ products to each room, allowing for easier control overall. You can rename everything too, so don't worry if the defaults don't match. These names will be tied up into Amazon/Google too. Of course, saying "Alexa, turn off living room" or "front light, back light, lamp, fan, TV" you get the idea, all work if you name them right too.



The lighting control is awesome. It's a simple touch interface to pick colours, and a separate one for white ambience too. Of course, you can set scenes for multiple lights, with a fair few presets, shut off timers and more. Overall, it's got all the same core features as Philips Hue, so again a big win for electriQ. The interface is the same for GU10, B22 and other lights in their range.



## Lights!

For a "cheaper" bulb, and again I use that term in a positive way, the brightness is pretty fantastic. The colours look much better in real life and far less blown out, but hey, you try to take a picture of a lightbulb! The brightness is strong on the white mode, more than enough for reading and working. Of course, you can dim it down to as low as 1% if you want to only entertain moths with supervision.

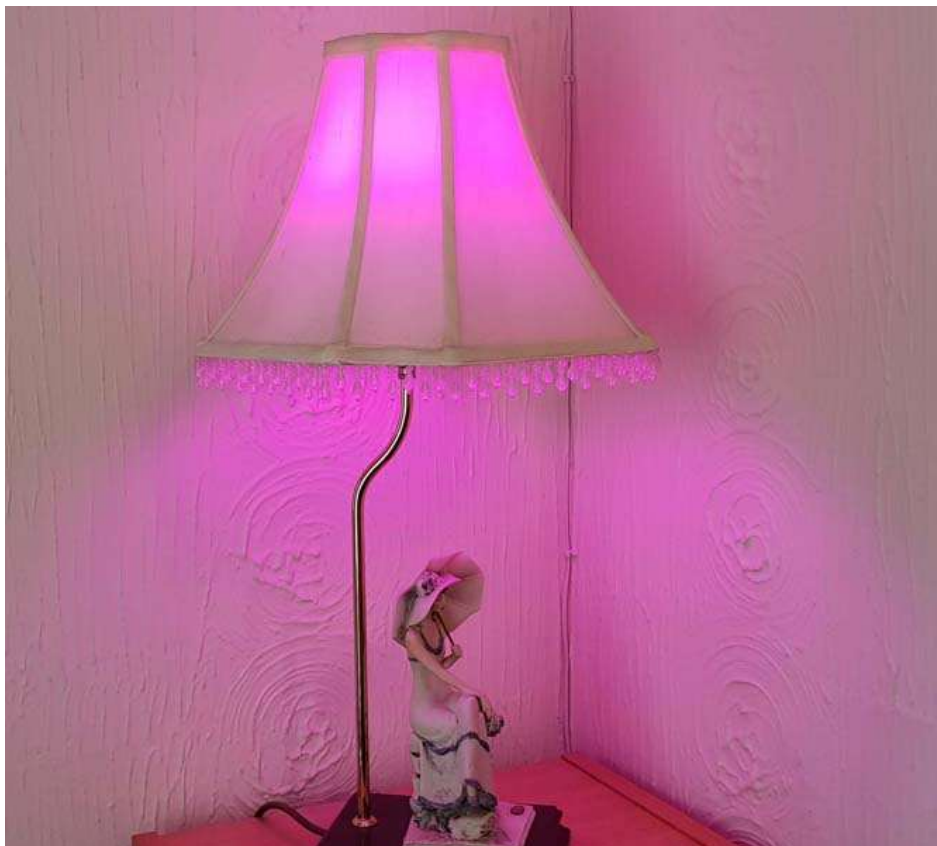


With a full RGB colour wheel, you can get pretty darn funky with the choices too.



## Psychedelic

You can set each bulb in the room to its own brightness and colour too, so you can get pretty psychedelic very quickly too.



The GU10 is great for recessed and spot fixtures. We can a small fitting above our cooker, and the GU10 are very directional, making them perfect for the job. For lighting larger areas, they're not ideal, unless you have lots of GU10 fittings of course.



It's pretty bright too, maybe a little less so than a Hue one, but it's certainly more than bright enough compared to most standard LED bulbs.



Not that my kitchen calls for it, but you can get the colours going here too. If you have a fancy GU10 fitting with angled spots, you could get quite the disco lighting effect going. For parties and general ambience, this is a lot of fun to play around with.





Setting up the camera is much the same, but again with its own app. Just pair the device and you're good to go. While you can view the live feed, there are some basic options to save clips and images, as well as a two-way intercom feature. I'll be honest, it's nothing fancy, but it does get the job done. I put it in the hall and was able to move the camera around remotely, listen in, and that's about it really. For checking in on your home it's great, but don't expect any advanced security features here



# Final Thoughts

## How Much Does it Cost?

- electriQ GU10 RGB WiFi Bulb – £14.97
- electriQ B22 RGB WiFi Bulb – £14.97
- electriQ WiFi Smart Plug – £14.97
- electriQ HD 720p Monitoring Camera – £34.97

## Overview

When I set out on this little project/review my aim wasn't "haha, here's the killer product for the smart market!" because realistically, I didn't think these were the products to topple the big names in the market. Philips, Nest, Netatmo, LIFX, etc, they're premium brands and command premium prices too. electriQ are not the household name, but that reflects in their extremely affordable prices. For those who wanted to get their first taste of smart home gear, without the premium prices, they're the best option around right now. Furthermore, they're shipping from the UK, and while Amazon and eBay offer lots of cheap unknown brands, many of them are China imports with long shipping times, none of those issues with electriQ.

## Performance

I must admit I'm pleasantly surprised with the hardware. The performance is exactly what was promised, but I'm still quite surprised how well it all performed respective of their price ranges. The lights are less than a 3rd the price of Hue lighting, but they're certainly not a 3rd of the performance. The features are plentiful, particularly the scheduling, themes, multiroom configurations, it's all great. They do lack 3rd party support, such as additional switches and hub controllers, but Alexa and Google support soon sorts that out. You can control everything via voice commands and groups through those respective services, making them easy to integrate.

## Build Quality

I was expecting the products to feel much cheaper. They do feel less premium and even look a little less premium than the top brands, but not by much. Everything is as it should be, fits well, setup was a breeze, no connectivity issues, and the quality was better than you'll find with many other brands at this price range.

## Should I Buy One?

If you're looking to build a smart home, you don't have to start with a big budget or a full house project. Changing the lights in one room, retrofitting a couple of smart plugs, and even adding the monitor camera can be done cheap. Even the whole bundle we tested clocking in at around £150. Start with one or two lights and a plug, keep the budget low, and build from there. Be warned though, it's an addictive habit and after a few bulbs, you may want to quickly expand to your whole home.

