How to Detect Hidden Cameras and Microphones

Method 1 of 3: Initial Sweep

Do a physical search of the premises. This involves a slow, meticulous sweep of the room or building you suspect is wired. Look around for anything that seems different or out of place, such as flower arrangements, pictures on the wall out of level or in unusual areas, or lampshades that don't look normal. Check for smoke detectors you didn't add, look for a speaker that might have a camera in it. Look inside flower pots, light fixtures, and other places where a microphone transmitter can easily be hidden. Look under couch cushions, table tops, and shelves. Underneath shelves and table tops are excellent places for miniature cameras. Look for wires that do not seem to go anywhere, such as an appliance or other familiar device. "Hardwired" (that is, not wireless) spy equipment is less common with modern technology, but is still used for permanent surveillance in commercial businesses for loss prevention.

Listen as you walk the entire room quietly. Many small, motion-sensitive cameras make an almost inaudible click or buzz when they operate.

Method 2 of 3: Use Darkness

Turn off the lights and look around for tiny red or green LED lights. Some microphones have "power on" indicator lights, and if the person who sets it up is careless they may fail to cover or deactivate this feature.

While the lights are off, grab a flashlight and carefully examine all mirrors. These can be made transparent from one side so that a camera can see through, but they rely on the observer's side being darker than the area observed in order to keep the other side of the mirror reflective.

Search for pinhole cameras in the dark. A pinhole camera might have a charge-coupled device (CCD) sitting behind a tiny opening in a wall or object. Get an empty toilet paper tube and a flashlight. Put the tube over one eye like a telescope and close your other eye. As you sweep the flashlight over the room, pay attention to any small glimmers that reflect back at you.
Method 3 of 3: Use a Signal Detector

Buy an RF signal detector or other bug detector. If you seriously believe you are being spied on, buy an RF (radio frequency) detector and do a sweep of your room, building, or home. These portable devices are small, simple to use, and fairly inexpensive. However, there are bugs that use multiple frequencies in rapid sequence called "spread spectrum" that an RF detector will not pick up. These bugs are used by professionals and require a spectrum analyzer and an experienced technician to find.

Use your cell phone to pick up an electromagnetic field. Place a call on your cell phone, then wave the device around where you think there might be a camera or microphone. If you can hear a clicking noise on the call, it means your phone might be interfering with an electromagnetic field.

How To Find Hidden Cameras Planted In Any Room

With all the talk about privacy and people snooping into our lives, whether it's by listening to our conversations or recording us on video, it makes me wonder about all the ways people can spy on us. As far-fetched as it may sound, hidden cameras have been found in some private locations. In 2012, a hidden camera was found in a public bathroom in the Omni Hotel in San Diego. It was the hotel's Chief of Engineering who planted it for his own kicks. How do you find hidden cameras?

Hotel rooms aren't the only place where someone might plant a hidden camera. I've been in a store's dressing room changing clothes before and had the feeling I was being watched. It's probably all just paranoia, but then again, you never know. What we need is a way to find hidden cameras. That way, we could detect them before the perp who planted them sees whatever he or she wants to see.

This infographic can help. It's called How To Find Hidden Cameras (by AllSafe), and it explains how to find hidden cameras in unexpected places. Just turning off the lights and looking for a tiny red or green light is not enough. That will only be visible if the person who set it up is inexperienced or careless. You have to assume whoever did it knows what they are doing, in which case they would make sure that light wasn't visible.

When you find hidden cameras, you might find more than you were expecting. In other words, they may also have a microphone or listening device in addition to the camera itself. To a lot of people, this all probably sounds ridiculously far-fetched. However, someday, if you are ever in a situation where you think someone might be watching you, you'll hopefully remember this article and the information will be helpful.
How to Find Hidden Cameras

Hidden Cameras
Protect yourself, your friends and family from peeping cameras with this easy to use, step-by-step guide

- Hidden Cameras – A growing industry to watch so it doesn’t watch you
- Hidden Cameras - in the news and the Internet
- Hidden Wireless Camera Products – Everyday items that can invade your privacy

Use your cell phone to pick up an electromagnetic field.

Purchase a wireless camera detector from the Internet or through a local electronic store.

The red point indicates the position of hidden camera.

Turn off the lights and look around for tiny red or green LED lights.

Some microphones have “power on” indicator lights, and if the person who sets it up is careless they may fail to cover or deactivate this feature.
Find and defeat hidden cameras

Q. Help, Kim! I found cameras hidden in my ceiling and I'm really freaked out. What do I do with them?
- Marie from Sheboygan Falls, WI, listens to my national radio show on WHBL 1330 AM

A. I don't blame you for freaking out, Marie. The thought that someone could be spying on you in your private space is terrifying. Unfortunately, modern technology makes it easy. There are hundreds of catalogs and online stores selling tiny wireless cameras. A snooper can hide these in smoke detectors, electrical outlets, teddy bears, ceiling lights and plenty of other places. Or you can find everyday objects with cameras built in. They're great for watching your house while you're away, but not so great if someone else is watching you.

You don't have to be a victim though. There are ways to fight back. To start, don't touch any hidden cameras you find. In fact, do your best to ignore them. If the person watching doesn't realize their cover is blown, they're easier to catch. Plus, you don't want to compromise any evidence.

If you're in an apartment or rental home, I wouldn't inform the manager or landlord just yet. They could very well be suspects. Instead call the police or sheriff's office. They should respond fairly quickly. If they can't make it out right away, you might stay over at a friends' house until they show up.

In fact, you might want to make plans to be away from home while the police investigate. Generally, if someone puts a camera in your home, that person lives close by and has access to your property. You don't want to risk your safety. And you'll definitely want to get your locks changed.

The police will be able to confirm the cameras are recording and collect the appropriate evidence. They'll probably remove the cameras and send them to a lab for analysis. Hopefully, they can nail the snoop quickly so you can get on with your life.

Now, let's talk about finding hidden cameras. There are a few ways to go about it. You can use a gadget called a radio frequency camera detector. This picks up wireless cameras. It'll beep if it detects any wireless signals that cameras typically use. So you'll know something is in the area.
Another type of camera detector uses infrared LED technology. You look through a lens and press a button to release a flash of infrared light. The light bounces off the image sensor of the hidden camera, giving off a telltale flare.

Hidden camera detectors are available online and at electronic stores. They can range anywhere from $20 to several hundred dollars, depending on their features.

Not surprisingly, there are also hidden camera detector apps. They use your camera’s flash to cause a reflection from the lens of a hidden camera. The app then highlights possible spot with cameras so you can investigate.

The Hidden Camera Detector is available for iPhones for $5. The Glint Finder is free for Android. Then there are low-tech ways to uncover hidden camera threats. Turn off the lights and shine a flashlight around. Again, you’re looking for reflections where there shouldn’t be.

Motion-sensitive cameras will typically make a low buzzing or clicking sound. As you do look around, listen for any unusual sounds.

Look for holes in walls and ceilings where a camera could be stashed. Peek into vents, especially in the bathroom.

Check any furniture, mirrors or decor that looks out of place. It might have been moved.

Earlier I mentioned security cameras built into everyday objects. These aren’t usually wireless and rely on local storage. You can look for SD card slots, USB ports or video connections. If the gadget shouldn’t have these, that’s a sign it might be a hidden camera.

Of course, snoops sometimes use your own cameras against you. I told you in the past about hackers breaking into webcams and smartphone cameras. Learn how to keep your cameras safe. They can also tap into security cameras, baby monitors and other high-tech household appliances. Learn more about that growing threat.

Hidden cameras aren’t the only way snoops can invade your life. Here are three more tips for keeping prying eyes at bay.

How to locate pinhole cameras

The method for locating pinhole cameras is the same as the method for locating field spiders. All you need is a source of light like a flashlight and decent eyesight. It also helpful to have a toilet paper tube.

Step 1: Get a tube

Find a tube that’s good for looking through. A cardboard tube from a roll of toilet paper or paper towels is best.

Step 2: Get a flashlight

All you need is a flashlight or something that you can use to focus a beam of light in a dark room. Attaching a couple of directional LEDs to the outside of the cardboard tube can work also if you don’t have a flashlight.
Step 3: Look through it.

With one hand, hold up the toilet paper tube to your eye. With your other hand, hold up the flashlight at about eye level and point it away from you. With one eye, look through the tube and scan the room. If there are any small points of light bouncing back, inspect it further. It might be a camera.

Step 4: I found one.

If you found a camera, it can be easily disabled simply by putting something in front of it. If it is in the wall, hang a poster over it. If it is in something like a flower pot, put a box in front of it. Or you could just unplug it, but that would make it very clear that you know they're spying on you.