

# SMART HOMES



## REDEFINING WELLNESS POST-COVID

Despite early signs that show a return to pre-pandemic life in some regions of the globe, many continue to respond and adjust to living with the threat of COVID-19 — and will be for the foreseeable future. In terms of daily life, as was illustrated in [our “Future of the Home” trends report](#), the home ecosystem is now a broad coalition of competing activities, with remote working becoming the new standard.

So, it's not surprising that even after COVID-19 vaccines have been widely distributed, 60 percent of consumers plan to continue using their home for

activities that were once performed elsewhere, according to [a recent survey by Xiaomi](#).

As we continue spending more time at home, the ability to create a comfortable and effective living and working space is becoming a need more than a desire. [Research continues to show](#) that an unsatisfactory work-from-home experience not only affects productivity and engagement with one's job but leads to poorer mental and physical health on a broader level.

“There has been a significant

shift in the whole population's attitude to mental health over the last five or ten years. This has filtered into the world of design and development,” [says Ben Channon](#), a director at design consultancy Ekkist. “COVID only seems to have accelerated this process, as during the last year many people realized just how much our homes or the spaces around us can impact how we feel.”

Thankfully, innovative solutions are emerging that aim to maintain health and wellness within our living spaces, driven by smart technology and design.



For the past 25 years, Aritco has developed lifts for an infinite number of environments. With a keen interest in how people live and work, we have combined smart technology, stylish Swedish design and cutting-edge security to create elegant lifts for the twenty-first century.

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To keep us moving during our workday, **the Smart One desk** utilizes sensors to determine when to recommend health-related activities. The height-adjustable desk, which can be controlled remotely via a smartphone app, features smart tech that can monitor the amount of time spent sitting and indicates when it's time to get up and stretch the legs. It also has a carbon monoxide alarm and informs users of the general air quality in the room, triggering an alert when it's time to let in some fresh air.

Similarly, a conceptual **smart stretching device called Root** is designed to track and analyze individual movements of those sitting at their home workstations and make suggestions for personalized stretching routines and exercises that consider each user's individual needs. It does this through similar movement tracking technology used in smart devices like Apple watches, but the device itself can also be used for stretching activities that are suggested to the user via an accompanying app.



In terms of mental health, another device concept for the home office aims to combat the loneliness that can accompany remote workers by recreating the office atmosphere. Created by students from the Umeå Institute of Design, **the Hej device** can be set up wherever you work and connects to other devices used by your team. A built-in motion sensor captures movement and translates it into an unobtrusive visualization of your colleagues. This visualization can be interacted with in ways such as waving or signaling, as well as conversation, which is enabled through the speaker and microphone that come as part of the device.



Beyond workspace, smart tech is being used to implement health benefits throughout the home. **The HomeForest digital toolkit** concept leverages smart devices to bring the healing effects of "forest bathing" — the Japanese practice of walking through a forest to stimulate the senses — into the house. HomeForest connects mobile and wireless devices to evoke a variety of sensory experiences, recreating the feeling of a natural environment. The system also monitors air-quality and features audio that stimulates ASMR

(auto sensory meridian response) and Gobo (Go Between Optics) lighting, which changes according to circadian rhythms and the changing seasons.



One can be surrounded by real greenery as well with **the BioBulb smart plant management system** by CREO. The living wall system tracks conditions to automatically water and feed plants as required. Connected to a central Bio-Server via thin, flexible tubing, the artificial intelligence monitors the ideal growing conditions for each type of plant.

"Humans have an innate need to be surrounded by nature, but we spend 90 percent of our time indoors. We are on a mission to bring nature to people," says **Hooman Koliji**, PhD, CEO and founder of CREO.

