

## Hands On With Locksmart Keyless Padlocks

The humble padlock has been a mainstay of security for a long time. While outwardly simple, these 2,500 year old inventions have been used to secure everything from loads on trading routes to gates into our backyards. But they've now been given the "smart" treat - replacing the lock-and-key with a mechanism that is activated via a secure app on your smartphone. Dog and Bone sell a variety of different Smartlock devices. I've tested their travel lock for suitcases and the Locksmart Mini - which is pretty darn big for something with the "mini" tag.

### Why bother with a smart lock?

When I first heard about these devices, my initial instinct was that they are a silly gimmick. After all, it's not that hard to pop a key in a lock and turn it. But there are benefits to creating a connected padlock.

There's no need to get a separate key cut for each person that needs to open the lock - and the lack of a key does add a potentially layer of security as traditional lock picks won't work on it. The software that operates these locks allows you to track who has been opening the padlock. Effectively, you're adding an administration tool over the use of the lock.

While a smart padlock is not for everyone, there are plenty of good applications for the technology.



### Getting started

Dog and Bone provided me with the Locksmart Travel and Locksmart Mini for review.

In order to set the locks up, I needed to download the Locksmart app from the App Store. I tested it with an iPhone X and there is an Android version in the Google Play Store

Both devices required a firmware update before being usable. I guess this is a sign of the times. Connected devices need to be maintained so it's a good thing that these products are being updated by the creators. However, I did note they iOS app was last updated over a year ago. The Android version was updated in June this year.

The firmware update process went perfectly on the Travel but I did hit a hiccup on the Mini. The

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blue LED stayed lit following the firmware update and stayed lit. However, I couldn't connect to the lock. I feared that the firmware update process had gone a awry and bricked the lock. But I left it alone overnight and it worked perfectly after that.

I'm still not sure what happened but all seems well now.

## Features and functions

Although the iOS app hasn't been updated for a while, it worked perfectly well with FaceID.

The software also allows you to invite other users to use the connected locks. Access to the locks can be unlimited, limited to a set number of uses or on a schedule as well as one-time use. Once a user is invited to use a lock, they receive an SMS with instructions on setting the lock up in their version of the app

In order to conserve battery life, both locks need to be switched on before unlocking. Thus is done by pressing a small button on the bottom of the device. In the Mini's case, this is under a rubber flap - the lock is weatherproof so it can be used outdoors - but it can be pressed without lifting the flap.

The Locksmart travel is powered by a single CR2032 battery that can be easily replaced. There is a small screw to undo but a battery swap should only take a minute or so. When the battery is running low, the app will send you an alert and there's also a battery meter in the app so you can keep track of the juice situation.

The Locksmart Mini has an inbuilt battery and is charged using a micro-USB cable. This could be a hassle. If the lock runs out of juice you may need to bring a battery pack out to charge it before it can be unlocked. Like

the Travel, the Mini does have a battery meter and alerts from the app. Dog and Bone, who make the Locksmart, say the battery is good for two years or 3000 opens between charges. A full charge took about an hour.

Once the lock is activated, you use the app to open it.

As well as unlocking, the app lets you track the location your smartlocks - assuming they are close to your phone. With the travel lock, this can be useful as you can get a notification when your lock comes within Bluetooth range of your phone - handy when you're waiting for your bag to come off the luggage carousel.

## Testing

Unfortunately, I didn't have a chance to try the Travel out in the field but I did test it out on a suitcase at home. All the unlocking, alerts and proximity features worked as promised.

The 3.2mm shackle fitted easily through the zips on smaller and larger cases I have.

I popped the Mini - which is more like the size of regular lock - into my back gate. It has a 7mm shackle and weighs 160g - it is quite hefty. It's weatherproof and made to work in temperatures between -20 to +70 degrees Celsius.

Again - it passed the "just works" test.

