

Doors



Hinged doors - Entry doors should be Solid core wood (at least 1 3/4 inches thick) or metal. Most hollow core doors can be easily broken through. They offer little protection, no matter what locks you use.

Your door should fit its frame tightly--with no more than 1/8 inch clearance between the door and frame. If the gap is too large, replace the door. If that is too expensive, bolt a sturdy metal strip to the door edge. You boost your protection and save energy. Any hardware dealer can show you the kind of strip to use.

Doors with decorative glass panels or windows are an easy mark. It takes only seconds to break the glass and unlock the door. If you do not want to replace the door, install a break-resistant plastic panel or decorative grille over the glass. Attach the grilles with non-removable screws.

Most door hinges are on the inside, safe from a burglar's tools. If hinges are on the outside, the hinge pins can easily be removed and the door taken out of the frame. To protect such doors, replace hinges with new ones with non-removable pins.

Sliding Glass Doors - Burglars look for sliding glass doors because they are easy to open. Several types of locks are made especially for these glass doors. The existing lock can be bolstered by placing a solid strip of wood in the track of the closed door. That helps block the door even if the lock is broken.

Determined thieves may lift the door off its tracks. Use these preventative tips:

- * Adjust rollers so the door cannot be pushed up enough to lift it off the track.
- * Insert screws along the upper track of the door. Leave enough room for the door to slide, but not enough space to lift the door out.
- * Drill a hole and insert a nail through the metal door frame. You can remove the nail, but a burglar cannot.

Locks

Deadbolt Locks - A deadbolt lock can provide good protection. When you turn the key, the lock mechanism slides a strong metal bolt from the door into the frame.

When you buy a deadbolt lock, make sure:

- * The bolt extends at least 1 inch from the edge of the door (has a 1-inch throw).
- * The connecting screws that hold the lock together are on the inside of the door.
- * The strike plate is attached to the door frame with screws that measure at least 3 inches.
- * The cylinder has a steel guard--a ring around the key section. The cylinder guard should be tapered or rotate around the key to prevent wrenching if twisted.

Double Cylinder Deadbolt Locks - To improve security on a door with glass panels, use a double cylinder dead bolt lock. These locks can be opened only with a key from either side. Keep the key near the door, but not reachable from the glass panel. That way intruders cannot get in, but you and your family can get out quickly in case of fire or other emergency.

Padlocks - Padlocks are typically used for garages, sheds, and workshops. Look for a sturdy padlock that does not release the key until the padlock is locked. Be sure the padlock is case-hardened with a 3/8-inch shackle so it can resist bolt cutters. A double locking design can prevent the shackle from being pried away from its case. Remember that a padlock is only as good as the hasp on which it is mounted. The hasp should be secured with bolts that are concealed when the padlock is locked. Remember, *always use your locks*. Even a five minute trip to the store is long enough for a burglar to enter your home.

Keys

Victims report that as many as half of all burglaries take place without forced entry. In many cases, the burglar used a key. Be sure your keys do not fall into the wrong hands.

* Never carry identification tags on your key ring or holder.

* When you move into a new home, have the locks re-keyed or changed. A locksmith can do this or, if you are handy with tools, you can change the lock yourself.

* Know who has every key to your home. Do not give keys to maintenance or delivery people.

* Do not hide your key outside. Burglars know all the hiding places.

All the hardware in the world will not protect you if you open your door without checking who is on the other side. Buy an inexpensive viewer. Tell your children and their babysitter not to open the door to strangers

Outside Your Home



Protect your home by starting where the burglars usually start--outside.

Landscaping - Look around. Are large trees near the house? Prune lower limbs that could help a thief climb in second floor windows. Trim trees and bushes so a burglar cannot use them for cover. High wooden fences also allow a burglar to work unnoticed.

Remember to lock up ladders and tools. Ask your neighbors to do the same. Trellises look great, but place them where they cannot be used as ladders to second floor windows.

Lighting - Criminals avoid the spotlight. Porches, yards, and all entrances to your home should be well lighted. A combination of motion sensor lights you control from inside your home is a good idea.

Your House Number - Make sure law enforcement or fire agencies can locate your house in an emergency. Your house number should clearly be visible from the street day and night. Use numbers that are 6-inches high and made of reflective materials or black numerals against a white background. Avoid script numbers--they can be confusing. If your house is some distance from the road, post the number at the driveway entrance. If you live on a corner, make sure the number faces the street named in your address.

Windows - You can buy special key locks for windows at hardware stores. As for locks best suited to your type of windows and get the installation instructions. Keep the keys away from the windows, but make sure everyone in the house knows where to find them in case of an emergency.

An easy, inexpensive way to secure double hung windows is to use a nail. Drill an angled hole through the top frame of the lower window partially into the frame of the upper window. Then insert a nail or an eyebolt. The window cannot be opened until you remove the nail. Make a second set of holes with windows partially open so you can have ventilation without inviting intruders.

For sliding windows, try the preventative tips for sliding doors.

Security Alarms - If you desire additional security, you might consider a burglar alarm system. Be sure you deal with a reputable firm that provides approved systems. Check with the Better Business Bureau

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