



Home Security: Invest In It Now

If you were locked out of your house, would you still be able to get in? Maybe you keep an unlocked window in the back, or a hidden key in your mailbox or on top of a window ledge?

You may think this is a good idea, but guess what? If you can break in, so can a burglar!

One out of ten homes will be burglarized this year. For a small amount of time and money you can make your home more secure and reduce your chances of being a victim.

Many burglars will spend no longer than 60 seconds trying to break into a home. Good locks - and good neighbors who watch out for each other - can be big deterrents to burglars.

Check the locks

Did you know that in almost half of all completed residential burglaries, thieves simply breezed in through unlocked doors or crawled through unlocked windows?

- Make sure every external door has a sturdy, well-installed dead bolt lock. Key-in-the-knob locks alone are not enough.
- Sliding glass doors can offer easy access if they are not properly secured. You can secure them by installing commercially available locks or putting a broomstick or dowel in the inside track to jam the door. To prevent the door being lifted off the track, drill a hole through the slide door frame and the fixed frame. Then insert a pin in the hole.
- Lock double-hung windows with key locks or "pin" your windows by drilling a small hole into a 45 degree angle between the inner and outer frames, then insert a nail that can be removed. Secure basement windows with grilles or grates.
- Instead of hiding keys around the outside of your home, give an extra key to a neighbor you trust.
- When you move into a new house or apartment, re-key the locks.

Check the doors

A lock on a flimsy door is about as effective as locking your car door but leaving the window down.

- All outside doors should be metal or solid wood.
- If your doors don't fit tightly in their frames, install weather stripping around them.
- Install a peephole or wide angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. Door chains break easily and don't keep out intruders.



Neighborhood Watch
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Check the outside

Look at your house from the outside. Make sure you know the following tips.

- Thieves hate bright lights. Install outside lights and keep them on at night.
- Keep your yard clean. Prune back shrubbery so it doesn't hide doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that a thief could use to climb to an upper-level window.
- If you travel, create the illusion that you're at home by getting some timers that will turn lights on and off in different areas of your house throughout the evening. Lights burning 24 hours a day signal an empty house.
- Leave shades, blinds, and curtains in normal positions. And don't let your mail pile up! Call the post office to stop delivery or have a neighbor pick it up.
- Make a list of your valuables - VCRs, stereos, computers, jewelry. Take photos of the items, list their serial numbers and description. Check with law enforcement about engraving your valuables through Operation Identification.
- Ask local law enforcement for a free home security survey.

Consider an Alarm

Alarms can be a good investment, especially if you have many valuables in your home, or live in an isolated area or one with a history of break-ins.

- Check with several companies before you buy so you can decide what level of security fits your needs. Do business with an established company and check references before signing a contract.
- Learn how to use your system properly! Don't "cry wolf" by setting off false alarms. People will stop paying attention and you'll probably be fined.
- Some less expensive options... a sound-detecting socket that plugs into a light fixture and makes the light flash when it detects certain noises, motion sensing outdoor lights that turn on when someone approaches, or lights with photo cells that turn on when it's dark and off when it's light.

Burglars Do More Than Steal

Burglars can commit rape, robbery, and assault if they are surprised by someone coming home or pick a home that is occupied.

- If something looks questionable - a slit screen, a broken window or an open door - don't go in. Call the police from a neighbor's house or a public phone.
- At night, if you think you hear someone breaking in, leave safely if you can, then call the police. If you can't leave, lock yourself in a room with a phone and call the police. If an intruder is in your room, pretend you are asleep.
- Guns are responsible for many accidental deaths in the home every year. If you choose to own a gun, learn how to store it and use it safely.

There's More You Can Do

- Join a Neighborhood Watch group. If one doesn't exist, you can start one with help from local law enforcement.
- Never leave a message on your answering machine that indicates you may be away from home now, say "I'm not available right now."
- Work with neighbors and local government to organize community clean-ups. The cleaner your neighborhood, the less attractive it is to crime.



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HOME SECURITY CHECKLIST

Use this as a guide as you check your home for safety measures. Boxes marked "No" indicate areas where you could take action to improve your home's security. These are just some steps that you can take to decrease the likelihood that you or your home is targeted for a crime.

Exterior Doors:	Yes	No
All doors are locked at night and every time we leave the house - even if it's just for a few minutes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doors are solid hardwood or metal-clad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doors feature wide-angle peepholes at heights everyone can use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there are glass panels in or near our doors, they are reinforced in some way so that they cannot be shattered.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All entryways have a working, keyed entry lock and sturdy deadbolt lock installed into the frame of the door.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare keys are kept with a trusted neighbor, not under a doormat or planter, on a ledge, or in the mailbox.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Garage and Sliding Door:	Yes	No
The door leading into the home from the garage is solid wood or metal-clad and protected with a quality keyed door lock and deadbolt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The overhead garage door has a lock so that we do not rely solely on the automatic garage door opener to provide security.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garage doors are all locked when leaving the house.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The sliding glass door has a strong, working key lock.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A dowel or a pin to secure the sliding glass door has been installed to prevent the door from being shoved aside or lifted off the track.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The sliding glass door is locked every night and each time we leave the house.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Protecting Windows:	Yes	No
Every window in the home has a working key lock or is securely pinned.		
Windows are always locked, even when they are opened a few inches for ventilation.		

Outdoor Security:	Yes	No
Shrubs / bushes are trimmed to so there is no place for someone to hide.		
There are no dark areas around our house, garage, or yard at night that would hide prowlers.		
Every outside door has a bright, working light to illuminate visitors.		
Floodlights are used appropriately to ensure effective illumination.		
Outdoor lights are on in the evening ? whether someone is at home or not; or a photocell or motion-sensitive lighting system has been installed.		
Our house number is clearly displayed so police and other emergency vehicles can find the house quickly.		

Security When Away From Home:	Yes	No
At least two light timers have been set to turn the lights on and off in a logical sequence when we are away from home for an extended time period.		
The motion detector or other alarm system (if we have one) has been activated when we leave home.		
Mail and newspaper deliveries have been stopped or arrangements for a neighbor/friend to pick them up have been made when we go away from home for a period of time.		
A neighbor has been asked to tend the yard and watch our home when we are away.		

Outdoor Valuables and Personal Property:	Yes	No
Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are all locked with high-security, laminated padlocks.		
Gate latches, garage doors, and shed doors are locked after every use.		
Grills, lawn mowers, and other valuables are stored in a locked garage or shed, or if left out in the open, are hidden from view with a tarp and securely locked to a stationary point.		
Every bicycle and moped is secured with a U-bar lock or quality padlock and chain.		
Bikes are always locked, even if we leave them for just a minute.		
Firearms are stored unloaded and locked in storage boxes and secured with trigger guard locks.		
Valuable items, such as television, stereos, and computers have been inscribed with identifying number approved by local police.		
Our home inventory is up-to-date and includes pictures. A complete copy is kept somewhere out of the house.		



**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME**

Crime Prevention Tips Provided by:
[National Crime Prevention Council](http://www.nccprevention.org)



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