

Secured by Design

Home Security Tips and Advice



Burglars are opportunistic. They look for easy ways to get into a home that won't take long or arouse suspicion. Homes that look unoccupied and insecure are more likely to be targeted.

Here's a list of some of the things you can do to improve the security in and around your home.

Doors, windows and locks

- When replacing a door it is better to buy a new "door set", the complete assembled frame and door, certified to British Standard PAS 24-1 'Doors of Enhanced Security'.
- Make sure doors are solid enough and can't be easily kicked-in
- Install windows which are certified to British Standard BS7950 "Windows of Enhanced Security".
- Glass panels on or around doors and in ground floor or accessible windows are vulnerable; it's worth replacing them with laminated glass as it holds together when shattered.
- When installing patio doors ask for the sliding section to be on the inside and for anti-lift blocks.
- Existing patio doors can be fitted with additional security bolts to stop lifting or forced entry.
- Mortise locks fit into a slot cut into the edge of the door and usually can only be opened with a key. These should be upgraded to 5-lever locks tested to BS: 3621.
- Rim locks are screwed to the face of the door and latch automatically when you close the door, unless held open with the snib. These should be tested to BS: 3621.
- Multi-point locking involves several hooks or bolts holding the door into the frame. The lock cylinders should be tested to BS EN 1303 Grade 3.

Around the front and back of your home

- Prevent easy access to the back and sides of your home by installing locked gates, 2 metre minimum fencing or walls. Trellis topping also makes climbing difficult.
- Security lighting can be used to make offenders feel vulnerable and observed. Illuminate high risk areas and make sure it's easy for you to see people approaching.
- Fit padlocks and hardware to shed and garage doors.
- Securely lock all doors before leaving the house. It's easy to forget when you're in hurry, but it's the simplest way for a burglar to enter your home
- Never leave keys anywhere near the front door, including your letterbox; burglars know where to look
- Make sure that passers-by can see the front of your home so that a burglar can't work without being seen. Remove and secure items that may be used to break in or climb up such as ladders and garden tools

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Shared entrances

- If you are living in a shared building or flats be careful of granting entry to people by entry phone systems if they you do not know them.
- Be cautious of people seeking to follow you into the building.

Inside your home

- Visibly and permanently marking your belongings helps you and the police identify them if they are stolen. It can also make it difficult for the thief to dispose of the property

Doorstep callers

- Beware of bogus callers; use your spy hole and a door chain until you have seen their ID and are satisfied you want to let them in
- Never discuss your security requirements or existing arrangements with a doorstep caller or salesperson

Are you at home?

- A home that looks empty is far more likely to be targeted by a burglar, so it's worth making sure your home looks occupied
- Do not close your curtains during the daytime; this can suggest your home is empty.
- Use automatic timer-switches to turn on a light and perhaps a radio when it goes dark, even if you are just out for a couple of hours
- If you're away for longer periods of time, cancel any newspaper or milk deliveries.
- A pile of post on the doormat is a clear sign that you are away. Ask a trusted neighbour to clear your post away, or use Royal Mail's "keepsafe" service; they will keep your mail for up to two months.
- A neighbour may also be able to help you by opening and closing curtains and even parking their car on your driveway
- Work with your neighbours to keep an eye on each other's security, Neighbourhood Watch groups are good for this
- And of course, Make sure that you lock all doors and windows and set your burglar alarm if you have one