



Your guide to keeping your home secure

MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE BURGLAR

Most burglaries are carried out by opportunist thieves. In two out of ten burglaries, they don't even have to use force – they get in through an open door or window.

Look at your home through a burglar's eyes.

- Are there places where they could break in without being seen?
- Have you fitted strong locks on your doors and windows?
- Would they have to make a lot of noise by breaking glass?

Reduce the risk of your home being burgled by making sure you've taken these simple and inexpensive precautions.



WINDOWS

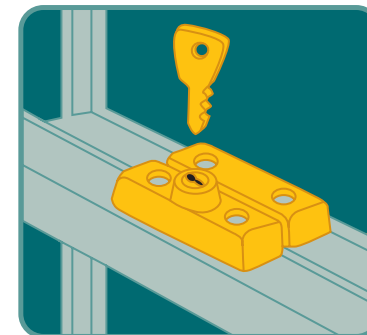
A third of burglars get in through a back window. Window locks which can be easily seen may put some thieves off, because a window lock forces the thief to break the glass and risk attracting attention. DIY shops sell inexpensive locks with keys to fit all kinds of windows.

- Fit window locks with keys to all downstairs windows, windows which can't be seen from the street and easy-to-reach upstairs windows, for example, those above a flat roof or near a drainpipe.
- Even small windows such as skylights or bathroom fanlights need locks - a thief can get through any gap that is larger than a human head.

Remember to remove keys from locked windows and keep them out of sight in a safe place.

- Louvre windows are especially vulnerable because thieves can easily take the slats out of the frame. Glue the slats into place, and fit a special louvre lock. Better still, replace them with fixed glass.
- If you are replacing windows, consider using laminated glass.
- Before fitting locks to UPVC windows, talk to the installer to make sure this will not affect your warranty.
- Consider fitting security grilles to vulnerable windows. Many DIY shops now sell decorative wrought-iron grilles.

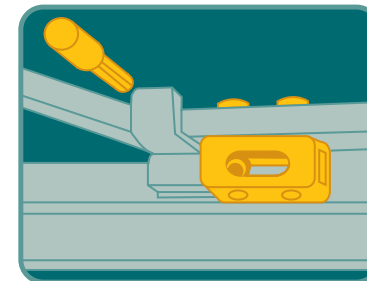
Fanlight locks have a metal bolt to secure the metal arm which is used to open and close the window.



Casement locks make it impossible to open windows without the correct key.



The lock shown here locks the two windows together. A more discreet version is embedded into the wooden frame. Or there are devices to stop the window opening beyond a certain limit.





AROUND THE HOME

LIGHTING

Good lighting can put off a thief. Some outside lights have an infrared sensor that switches the light on for a few moments when it detects something moving nearby. You can buy the sensors separately to convert an ordinary outside light into a security one.

Make it look like you are at home when you are out.

Remember, most burglaries happen when a house or flat is empty.

- Use time switches to turn on lights, radios and other appliances when you're out. You can buy these from DIY shops.
- Keep all valuable items out of sight.
- Don't advertise your absence when you're on holiday, or even when out at work or shopping. Most burglars will only tackle an empty house.
- If you can, get a friend or neighbour to look after your home while you're away. Ask them to collect your post, draw your curtains at night and in the mornings, and generally make the place look lived-in. Be prepared to do the same for them.



BURGLAR ALARMS

If a burglar can see a burglar alarm, it will make them think twice about breaking into a property.

There are many alarm systems on the market, ranging from fairly cheap alarms which you fit yourself, to more sophisticated alarms costing hundreds of pounds. You can buy 'wire-free' alarms where you fit sensors around your home to transmit signals to a control system. These are easy to install and usually take three to four hours to fit. Wired alarms are cheaper but take longer, around a day, to install.

If you are thinking about installing a burglar alarm, you should do the following.

- Ask the crime prevention officer at your local police station for advice before you buy an alarm.
- Get a number of quotes and specialist advice from companies supplying alarms.
- Talk to your insurance company about the alarm companies they recommend before you decide which best suits your needs.



The system should meet standard BS4737 (professionally installed) or standard BS6707 (DIY).

- Get professional help to install the alarm to make sure that it will work properly.

Remember, an alarm which is not fitted properly can create problems in itself. Don't fit an alarm yourself unless you have the electrical knowledge and practical skills to do so. If you don't, it could end up costing you more.



IF YOU LIVE IN A FLAT

The easiest way for a thief to get into your flat is likely to be through the front door.

- Think about replacing your front door. It should be as strong as the main entry door.
- Fit hinge bolts which stop the door being pulled off its hinges.
- Fit a steel strip to the door frame to strengthen it.
- Consider having a telephone entry system fitted to your door. Never 'buzz' open the door for strangers or hold the door open for someone who is arriving just as you are leaving the building.



KEYS

- Never leave a spare key in a convenient hiding place such as under the doormat or in a flowerpot – a thief will know all the usual hiding places.
- If you move into a new home, consider changing the front- and back-door locks immediately – other people may have keys that fit.
- Never leave your house or car keys on a table or ledge near a door or window. Some thieves have been known to use a fishing rod or magnet on a stick to steal them through the letterbox.

PASSAGEWAYS AT THE SIDE OF YOUR HOME

- Fit a strong, lockable, high gate across the passageway to stop a thief getting to the back of your home where they can work undisturbed. If you share a passageway with a neighbour, ask their permission and for help with the cost.



GARAGES AND SHEDS

Garages and sheds are often full of expensive tools which are ideal for breaking into the rest of the house. They are also often left unlocked.

- Never leave a garage or garden shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. A thief could get in and work on the inner door without being seen.
- Fit strong padlocks to shed and garage doors, and make sure that the doors are solid enough not to be kicked in.
- Lock ladders inside your garage or shed to stop a thief using them to reach upstairs windows. If there is no room in your garage or shed, chain or padlock them horizontally to a sturdy bracket on an outside wall.
- Consider having lockable steel boxes fitted to the floor to store your tools in.



GATES AND FENCES

- Check for weak spots where a thief could get into your garden, for example, a low or sagging fence, or a back gate with a weak lock.
- A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put thieves off. But make sure that passers-by can still see the front of your home so that a burglar can't work without being seen.



DOORS

SECURE ALL DOORS

If your front and back doors are not secure, neither is your home.

- Make sure the doors and frames are strong and in good condition. Doors should be solid and at least 44mm thick.
- Glass panels on or around doors are especially vulnerable, so replace them with laminated glass.
- Fit back and front doors with five-lever mortise deadlocks – and make sure you use them.
- Fit bolts to the top and bottom of all outside doors. Remember to fit all security devices with strong screws or bolts.
- Get specialist advice before fitting locks to patio doors.
- Fit mortise locks and bolts to the top and bottom of both French doors.
- Before fitting locks to UPVC doors, check with the installer to make sure this will not affect your warranty.

If you're thinking of buying uPVC or metal framed windows or doors, make sure that they come with good built-in locks and a fitted chain.

Look in your phone book for the names of local locksmiths who are members of the Master Locksmiths' Association.

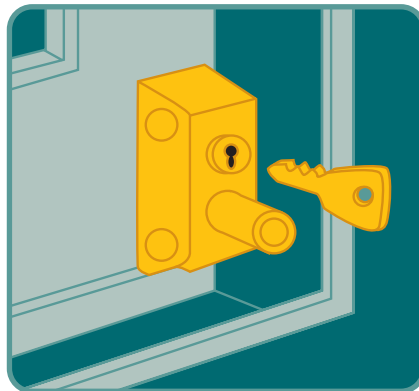
DOOR VIEWER

Look through this to identify callers before you open the door.

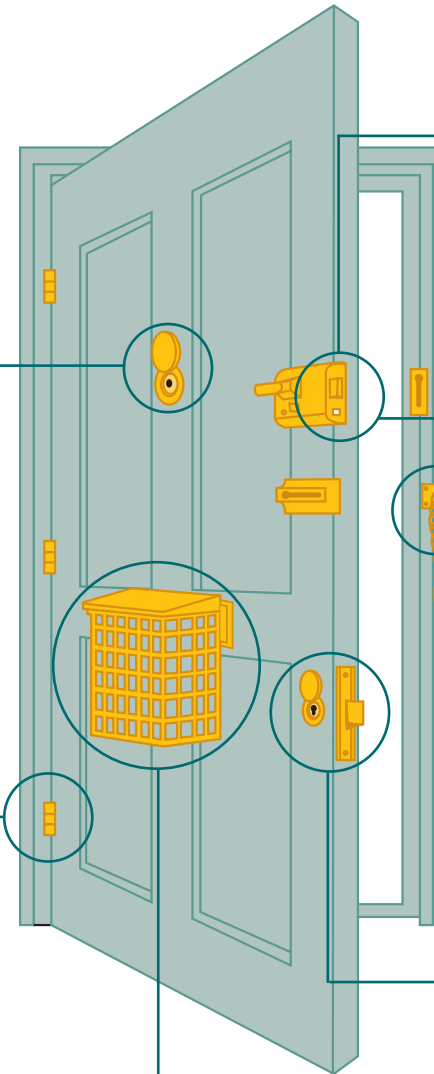
HINGES

Check that the door hinges are sturdy and secured with strong, long screws.

For added security, fit hinge bolts. These are cheap and help to reinforce the hinge side of a door against the use of force.



Patio doors should have special locks fitted to the top and bottom unless they already have a multi-locking system.



RIM LATCH

Most front doors are fitted with a rim latch which locks automatically when the door is closed. You can open these from the inside with a key.

For extra protection you should consider installing the following.

AUTOMATIC DEADLOCK

This locks automatically when the door is closed.

CHAINS

These help you to speak to strangers at the door without letting them in.
Remember, if in doubt, keep them out.
Buy a chain and use it **every time** you open the door.

MORTISE DEADLOCK

Fit a five-lever mortise deadlock about a third of the way up the door. Most insurance companies are happy with one Kitemarked to at least BS3621.

You can only open a deadlock with a key, so a thief can't smash the nearby glass panel to open the door from the inside. If a thief gets into your home through a window, they can't carry your belongings out through the door.

LETTERBOXES

Never hang a spare key inside the letterbox. This is an obvious place that a thief will check.

Consider fitting a letterbox cage which prevents thieves from putting their hands through the letterbox and trying the latches from the inside.

DON'T FORGET

MARK YOUR BELONGINGS WITH YOUR POSTCODE

Mark your belongings with your postcode. This may put burglars off as it will make your belongings harder to sell, and can help the police to return them if they are found.

Mark items with permanent ink - showing your postcode and the number of your house or flat or the first two letters of its name. Only use an ultraviolet marker pen when other methods would reduce the value of the object, because the mark can fade.

Take pictures of all valuable items like jewellery and silverware and write down the serial numbers of your TV, video, stereo or CD player, home computer and camera equipment, to help the police identify them if they are stolen. If you have many valuable items, keep them in a safe.

Ask your local police station for stickers to display in the front and back windows of your home to show that you have marked your belongings.

INSURANCE

Insurance will take away the financial worry of replacing stolen goods and many insurance companies offer reduced premiums for people with good home security. Ask your insurance company which security systems it recommends.

SMOKE DETECTORS

When you are fitting security devices, you must consider the risk of fire and means of escape. Fit at least one smoke detector on every floor of your home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

If you see anyone acting suspiciously in your neighbourhood, call the police. Join a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – there are over 150,000 in this country. Anyone can start up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – ask at your local police station for details or look on the internet. www.neighbourhoodwatch.net

IF YOU ARE BURGLIED

Good security will reduce the chance of your home being burgled. But, if you get home and notice signs of a break-in:

- don't go in or shout as the intruder could still be inside;
- go to a neighbour's to call the police.

ADVICE ON PREVENTING CRIME

Your local crime prevention officer will be able to give you helpful advice. You can contact them at your local police station.

Some police forces will check your home or business premises and recommend ways of improving the security. This is a popular service and if there is a waiting list, they may send you an information pack so you can check your property yourself. You can get useful advice at

www.crimereduction.gov.uk

SECURITY CHECKLIST

Here's a quick reminder of some of the things you can do to improve the security around your home.

- Fit mortise locks to all front and back doors and locks to all downstairs windows or windows which are easy to reach.
- Keep your house and car keys safe and away from door and windows.
- Ensure your burglar alarm is installed properly and works.
- When you are away from home, use timer switches to turn on some lights when it goes dark.
- Cancel any milk or newspaper deliveries when you go away.
- Keep your garage and garden shed locks with proper security locks, and keep any tools secure and out of sight.
- Trim back any plants or hedges that a burglar could hide behind.
- Make sure you have up-to-date contents insurance.

If you have information about any crime, phone

 **CRIMESTOPPERS**
0800 555 111

- Your call is free
- You are not asked for your name
- You may receive a reward