

8 Simple Common Sense Home Security Tips



Your home is your sanctuary. It is a place where fond memories are made and relaxing evenings are spent after a busy day. Your home is a safe haven where you and your family feel most at ease. If your home is under-protected or you've had a recent burglary, this may compromise your security.

There were more than 2 million burglaries in the United States last year. While that number is down from the previous year, it is still a statistic that no one wants to become a part of. Using a few simple home security tips and tricks, you can protect your belongings, thwart would-be thieves and increase your feeling of security while home and away.

Prevention begins outside your home from the minute it comes into view. Take a walk around your property with a critical eye to see what changes it needs.

Here are a few you may have missed:

1. Don't provide places for thieves to hide: Trim trees and bushes that may give someone a place to hide or unnoticeable access to your windows.



You should trim back any shrubs that are high enough to block a window.

You will also want to consider the lighting of your property. Look for places around your home that are very dark and may allow a thief access to your home under the cover of darkness. Consider installing lights in various places that can light up entrances. Motion detection spotlights are the best option to conserve energy and not annoy your neighbors or yourself with the bright lights.

2. Don't let thieves know you are not home: If you are planning to go on vacation, never announce it beforehand. We are a society that likes to share, and thieves love that about us.



Sending a tweet that you've arrived at the airport or posting a status update on Facebook indicating that you can't wait to leave for your cruise is a great way to alert thieves that your home is empty. Save all updates about your vacation and picture sharing for when you return.

In addition, if you are planning to vacation, have a trusted friend or neighbor stop by every day to pick up the mail, newspapers and any fliers that may be left at the door. If a flier has been sitting on your front door for days, a thief could take notice and know you are on an extended leave.

Any time you are going to be gone during the night, even if it's just returning from work after it gets dark, you should have interior lights set to a timer. Having lights on will keep thieves guessing and will let you feel safer when you come home.

3. Keep your yard clean to prevent giving thieves an advantage: Many times, thieves



will gain access to your home through a window they have broken. It is best that we don't give them a tool to do that. Clean up your yard of broken tree limbs after a storm. Ensure your kids put away their toys after playing outside. Never leave a ladder outside in the yard; a thief could use your ladder to gain access to a higher window that is more likely to be unlocked. Use the same precautions for tools, whether they are gardening or for the barbecue; lock them up when they aren't in use.

4. Install a home alarm system: While an alarm may not keep burglars from getting inside your home, it will deter some and bring the police to your home quickly, limiting what a thief is able to take.



Home security systems will only work if you always remember to engage the alarm. You should have your alarm engaged while you are away or while you are at home as many thieves will attempt to break into one part of your home while you are busy in another. Also, some insurance companies may lower your home insurance premiums for having a home alarm system installed. Check with your insurance agent to see what your discount will be.

5. Take precautions to protect windows:



If you are purchasing new windows for your home, it might be worth the upgrade to buy shatterproof glass. This would prevent anyone from breaking a window to gain access to your home. If new windows aren't in the budget, consider adding a security film to windows. This will prevent the glass from shattering upon breaking and may deter thieves from continuing their attempt to break in.

6. Secure sliding glass doors: Sliding glass



doors have incredibly flimsy locks. A thief can easily pop them in an instant, giving quick access to your home. Installing a security bar for sliding doors would make gaining access to your home more difficult. This measure of protection is a must-have for all sliding doors and windows.

7. Always lock doors and windows: Keep



windows locked when you are not home, when you go to bed at night and when they are not in use. If you like to sleep with a window open at night, install window locks that only allow the window to open a few inches.

You should also keep your garage door down, even during the day. Having the garage door open invites thieves inside to look around. It gives them quick, easy access inside your home. Even if they can't take something at the time, they can get enough of a look to see if your home is worth a visit later.

8. Change the locks as necessary: If you've



just purchased a home from someone, your first order of business should be to meet the locksmith at your new home. You have no idea who is out there with a key just waiting for the moment to use it. In addition, if you've had a breakup recently, it is time to change the locks. The person may give you the key back, but you have no idea how many copies are out there. Having the locks changed is good for the peace of mind.

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