

Expert Advice – How to keep the burglars out?

Burglary is something that concerns us all – wherever you live in the UK. But the chances of a burglar smashing glass to gain entry to your property is fairly slim when you look at the statistics.

As many as 70% of burglaries are committed with the burglar entering via a door, with almost a third forcing the lock to gain access* to the property. It can take just a few seconds to force a front, back or patio door not equipped with the necessary security. And reality is the better visible security you have, the less likely a chance burglar is going to have a go at your door.

Only one in ten burglaries in the UK is carried out by gaining access through a locked window but this figure rises significantly if the window is left open or unlocked. While the risk might be lower than gaining access through a door – effective home security is all about ‘layering’ the security – the more you have, the more put off a burglar will be from gaining access to your property.

However, there is no need to live in a fortress. This 'Help and Advice' section will tell you about many simple measures you can take to help you feel safe and sound without feeling like a prisoner in your own home.

* Source: Crime Reduction Toolkit: Point and Method of Entry



Top tips to keep the burglars out

1. Window locks with keys should be fitted to all downstairs windows
2. Don't forget locks on easy-to-reach upstairs windows. Burglars will use drainpipes or flat roofs to break in via a window
3. Any gap that is larger than a human head will provide access for a thief. Even small windows such as skylights or bathroom fanlights need locks
4. Remember to remove keys from locked windows and keep them out of sight, in a safe place

5. If you are replacing windows, you may want to consider using laminated glass
6. Louver windows are particularly at risk from being used to enter properties as thieves can easily remove slats from the frame. If replacing them, fixed glass is not an option, glue the slats into place or fit a special louver lock
7. Before you think of fitting additional locks to PVCu windows, talk to the window installer to make sure new locks won't affect your warranty
8. As a strong security measure, consider fitting security grilles to vulnerable downstairs windows. There are lots of different decorative wrought-iron grilles available from UK DIY shops
9. Never leave upstairs or downstairs windows open when you go out – you're inviting burglars into your home
10. Make sure that your door hinges are strong and are fitted with long screws. It is possible to fit hinge bolts, which will reinforce the hinge side of the door against attempted forced entry.
11. Fitting an anti-jemmy SecuStrip will stop thieves from crow-barring open your door.
12. Patio doors should have special locks such as push bolts fitted to them.
13. Fitting bolts to the top and bottom of outside doors, especially back doors, provides great added security.
14. Home security is a balance between convenient access to your property and an appropriate level of security. Remember – a chance burglar isn't going to tamper with your property if he can see a number of security devices built into the frame itself.
- 15. THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP - Once you've increased your security measures, make sure you USE THEM**