

# Preventing Burglary

There are several ways the homeowner can begin to prevent a burglary by making the outside of the home less of an inviting target:

1. Never leave that extra set of house keys in a hiding place you think no one will find; the burglar's business is to know those places.
2. Always keep your garage door closed and locked. Never leave those three inches open for the family cat. The opening will allow the burglar to accumulate even more "loot" from the house without neighbors noticing anything out of the ordinary.
3. Keep all your hedges and bushes trimmed. The burglar will have less chance to conceal his entry into the home.
4. Install outside lighting to brighten areas around doors and windows. Install a motion detection light around corners of the home.
5. Plant thorny shrubs under windows that could provide easy access into a home. Why not pit that perpetrator against an extra thorny pyracantha bush.
6. If you plan to be away from your home for an extended time, always remember to give your home the "lived-in look." Ask a neighbor to collect newspapers and mail, to turn your outside lights on and off, and to even cut the grass.

When it can take as little as six seconds to break into a home through the front door, a solid core or metal-clad door fitted with both inside hinge pins and a minimum 1" throw deadbolt lock is the best deterrent. Decorative window panels on either side of a door should be equipped with non-breakable glass. Otherwise, the burglar could reach up to 40" for easy access to an inside door handle. All other outside doors, such as sliding glass door should be burglar-proofed with special locks and bolts. Both sliding windows and double-hung windows should be secured with either a sturdy pin secured in the window sill or an extra lock for the best protection. In the some areas, homeowners opt for grill work on lower floor doors and windows as a deterrent to burglary. This mode of deterrent must allow quick and easy exit for the residents of the home in case of a fire. One last tip: It is estimated that 25% of burglaries are "free" because of a door or window left unlocked. Homeowners should make it part of their routine to check that all doors and windows are securely locked before leaving home.

Also, visit the Crime Prevention Units at your local police stations. Often times they have a wealth of information on the prevention of residential burglaries. They can supply a homeowner with booklets, pamphlets, and pertinent information to assist them in helping to burglar proof their home. In some cases officers will meet with both groups of concerned homeowners or individuals. As one officer tells us, "We can't emphasize enough that we are always ready to make either single home visits or visits to small neighborhood gatherings." These visits can provide a home security check guaranteed to bring an approach that will be both individualized and professional. They can help identify "security leaks" often overlooked; encourage neighbor awareness and cooperation to protect against home burglaries; and assist them in joining Operation Identification.