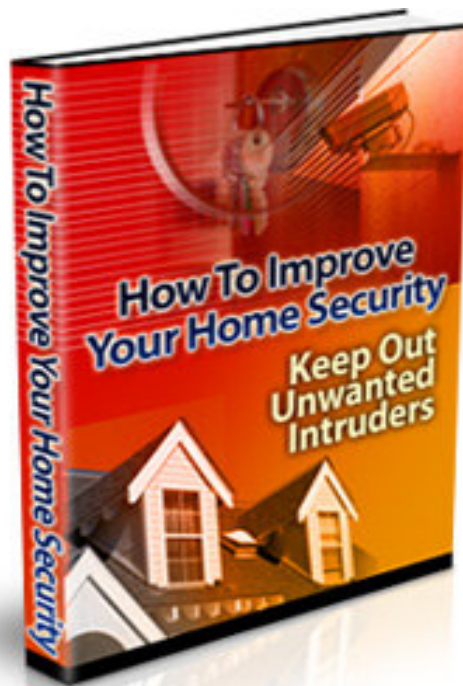


How to Improve Your Home Security

(A guide to provide you with ways to improve the
security of your home)



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Introduction

It has been reported that a burglary now happens every 15 seconds. As such, the chances of your own home actually being at risk from a break in are greatly increased, and it does not matter where you live.

However, when people think of a break in, they think of someone gaining entry in to their home through breaking some glass or smashing down doors. Yet there are certain things which could actually extend an invitation to those unwanted intruders to make an attempt at getting into your home.

There are many places which are vulnerable to attack from an intruder to your home, and therefore you must set up a routine which will then provide them with less opportunities of attempting to break in. Below, we look at what are considered to be some of the weak areas in your home security routine which could help to prevent any kind of break in from occurring.

Keys

Although you may think it is a great idea, lending keys to family and friends, as well as those people carry out work in your home, greatly increases the chances of your keys being placed into the wrong hands. Although the people you provide a key to might be completely trustworthy, you can not control where the keys are once they are out of your hands, and the chances of them being duplicated are greatly increased. So it is important that you think about whom you are issuing keys to, and keeping an eye on the master one that you have with throughout the day. Also, never place keys in those secret places outside the home, as the smart burglar will know where exactly to look for them.

Locks

Those doors which have handle locks are very easy for a burglar to get into, as all he requires is a plastic credit card. Therefore it is best if you install good quality deadbolts to all entry points (doors) into your home.

Doorways

Although you may have installed a very good lock to your front or back door, they are only as effective as the actual strength of the door itself. Unfortunately, the weakest area around any door is where the lock is located, and this is especially true for wooden doors.

Sliding Patio Doors

These security doors have several distinct disadvantages to them when compared to other doors. The main reason is that they come with much less sophisticated

locks on them. There are even some much older models which, unfortunately, can be easily lifted off of the tracks that they run on and provide any intruder with a way of gaining easy access to a home.

Windows

Windows which are left open and unattended not only provide intruders with access, but they allow them to quickly view what is available to them.

Gardens

Both shrubbery and trees provide a way of allowing intruders to gain access to your property. Not only do they provide ideal coverage, but can also provide them with ways to gain access to your home easily and quickly.

Above we have looked at areas of the home where assistance can be provided to would be intruders to your property. But in this book, we will be taking a closer look at some ways of improving your home security, and hopefully help to prevent intruders from wanting to try their luck and break in.

Chapter 1 – Just How Secure is Your Home

Everybody thinks that their home is secure. Today, most homes are now fitted with good quality doors and windows which have good quality locks and bolts upon them. Often when we are going out in the evening, we will draw the curtains and leave a few lights on to give the appearance that there is someone in. However there are occasions, especially on those late summer evenings when it is still light as you are going out, that you decide not to do this, and this unfortunately is when you are providing an opportunity to any would be burglar to gain access to your home.

Often a would be intruder, rather than trying to gain access through the front door as they are likely to be seen by your neighbours, will then try to gain access to your property at the back. Unfortunately, it will only take them a few attempts, and they can actually gain access to your home very quickly without your neighbors becoming aware that anything has occurred.

When this type of break in occurs, then the burglar will only take things that are easy to carry, and in most cases can be placed inside a pillowcase. Generally, they will often only steal much larger items like TV's, DVD players and stereos if they feel that they have enough time and are not likely to be spotted any time soon.

Therefore it is wise that whenever you leave your home for any length of time, both during the day time, and at night, that you make sure everything is secure, and nothing can be seen which is likely to tempt the burglar to try to gain entry to your property.

Also, if you are having any work carried out on your home, it is not wise to leave the work men alone at the home. I know the majority of work men today can be trusted, but there are going to be occasions when the company you are using are new to you, and you have no idea with regard to the people that they employ. Therefore when having work carried out on your home, arrange for either yourself or a partner or a close friend or family member to supervise them while they are in your home.

Unfortunately a lot of people today will often arrange to install a burglar alarm or home security system after an intruder has gained entry to their property. This is a bit like closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. It is therefore important that you start looking at ways to improve your home security to ensure that you do not just become another statistic.

Chapter 2 – Steps to Help Improve Your Home Security

Most people, when they consider improving the security to their home, will immediately think about getting an alarm or security system installed. Although they do play a major role in helping to ensure that an intruder is less likely to try to gain access to your home, there are some other things that you can do which take very little effort, and do not cost too much to implement. Below we provide you with a number of things that you can do which will help to improve the security to your home immediately.

Keys

If you are someone who likes to leave a key for their home hidden under, say the doormat or above the door on top of the frame, then you really are invited someone to take their chances and break in. In fact, the first thing any burglar will do is look close to the home to see whether a key has been left, and so gain entry to a person's home very quickly and without causing too much disturbance.

Therefore it really is not a good idea to leave your key hidden outside your home. However, if you do need to, then hide it in a position that is some distance from your home, and in a location where you think an intruder is unlikely to look for it.

Windows

The easiest and most common way that many burglars or intruders gain access to homes today is through a window, which has either been left unlocked or open. So if you are someone who does like to have their windows open, then fit safety locks which will allow them to open part way, but not enough so that an intruder can actually climb through it. Plus, when you do actually leave your home for any amount of time, then ensure that all windows have been shut and that they are locked.

Garden

Every house you drive past will often have some kind of shrubbery or trees which can be found quite close to the property. These then provide any would-be intruder or burglar with places where they can hide away from prying eyes until such time as they feel comfortable and are unlikely to be seen by others as they try to gain entry into your home.

Therefore, take some time and look at your garden very closely and see which shrubs and/or trees you have in yours can act as camouflage for these would-be intruders. Ask yourself the following questions:-

1. Just how easy is it for them to get close to your home without them actually being seen by others?
2. Are they able to gain access to your home by the upper floors because of a tree that is close to your property?

So it is extremely important that you eliminate any potential hiding places of ways for them to gain access to your property without being seen. Any trees that are close to your home should be well pruned and cut back to ensure that there are no branches within easy reach to areas of the upper floors of your home. Keep all bushes and shrubs at a level that there is no chance for a would be intruder to be able to hide behind them or in them. Certainly prevention is the best way of ensuring that your home remains safe at all times.

If you really feel it's necessary to have shrubs or bushes near your house, try to find those with thorns. Few burglars are willing to risk their personal health (not to mention the kind of evidence this would leave behind) when there are easier houses to go for.

Lighting

Most break-ins to homes occur during the night, as the darkness helps to conceal the intruders from prying eyes. Therefore, having lights installed are an ideal deterrent to any would be intruder. A great way of preventing and helping to deter would be intruders is by installing some motion detection lights. These are very cheap, as well as being easy to install, and in a matter of hours, you could soon have a very effective way of helping to prevent a break in from occurring.

Keep your Possessions out of Sight

It is best if you try to attract as little attention as possible to what you actually have in your home. So if you happen to have a nice car, and you do own a garage, then make sure you put it in there each night. Unfortunately, a lot of burglars or intruders who see a home with a nice car parked outside are more likely to take chances and move in closer to see what else is on view for them to possibly take. Also, invest in getting some kind of coverings over your windows so that it makes it much harder for the would-be burglar or intruder to see what you have inside. Plus, when at home in the evenings, make sure as soon as it starts to get dark, you close your curtains or shades, as this provides them with less opportunity to actually see what is on show in your home.

Above, we have provided you with a few simple ideas which can help to ensure that the level of security on your home is increased. The great thing about these particular ideas are that they are very easy to implement, and are not actually going to cost you that much to carry out.

Chapter 3 – Ways to Prevent a Break in to Your Home

A lot of people today think that they are unlikely to be a victim of an intruder gaining access to their home. But unfortunately where burglars are concerned, they don't care that you may be a law abiding citizen, all they are looking at is a home which they can easily gain access to and take what ever they like, and which is likely to provide them with a bit of money once they sell it on.

Therefore, if you are worried that your home is likely to be the next target of a break in, there are some steps you can take to help ensure that this does not occur. Although these tips will help to try and prevent a break in from occurring, they will not actually stop the most determined of burglars from gaining access to your home if they really want to.

Doors

Instead of fitting traditional deadbolts to your doors, now install ones which are much longer in length. This will make it more difficult for any burglar to break them down. Also if you can, renew the main doors of entry into your home with ones which are much sturdier. If you want wooden ones, there are some which you can now purchase that come with reinforcements within them...especially look to not just reinforcing your door, but also the frame which it fits into.

As for patio doors, if you can, a very quick and simple way of helping to prevent a burglar gaining access through these is using a sawn off broom handle or a metal pole. The only way a burglar would actually now be able to gain access to your home through these doors is by smashing them. This they won't do, as it is too much noise and is likely to alert neighbors to what is happening. You could also use this method on windows which slide open.

Burglar Alarms and Home Security Systems

Only use a system that has come from a source that you trust, or from a manufacturer who is well known to you. Also, place signs around your home to show that you have a security system in place, and this can often deter a burglar very quickly from trying to break in to your home. You can either install such systems yourself, or arrange to have a company install it for you, but check their credentials and obtain any references you can for them. Plus, why not look at having a system, such as those supplied by ADT, which are monitored 24 hours a day 7 days a week?

Pets

Probably a very cost effective way of providing a deterrent to your home is having a pet that is noisy, especially when people get very close to your property. Often, a dog barking will generally prevent any would be burglar from trying to gain access to your home, whether you are in it or not.

When it comes to making your home secure, at the end of the day, it comes down to you using your common sense. Look closely at those areas of your home which you feel are most vulnerable, and increase the amount of security that you have on them. But whatever type of security improvements you decide to make to your home, you must remember to keep them within the requirements of the law, as you do not want to find yourself faced with a law suit after a would be burglar has been injured after trying to gain access to your home, and you have used something which can be construed as a weapon to prevent them doing so.

Chapter 4 – Fit Locks to Help Make Your Home More Secure

Often the locks that are typically fitted to doors and windows will provide little or no protection at all against a burglar breaking in to your home. In fact, most professional burglars will be able to gain access to a person's home very quickly just through using a plastic credit card or a screwdriver.

Below, we provide some helpful information on the different kinds of locks that you should consider having installed, either by yourself, or an accredited locksmith in your home. By doing this, you will be making your home more secure, and also providing far less opportunities for a burglar to break in.

Cylinder Deadlock

This type of lock actually provides a great deal of protection to your home, especially when in conjunction with the locks you already have in place.

There are surface mounted cylinder deadlocks which can easily be mounted on to any kind of door in a matter of minutes.

Tubular Deadlock

These types of locks add more protection to your home, without actually looking unsightly, and they can be installed in any kind of door. They often require a person to have a key in order to unlock from either side. Keep in mind that this may cause problems when you are actually trying to leave the property in an emergency situation. But there are some now which can be opened without a key being used on the inside.

The reason why these types of locks are so effective is that, when in the locked position, they have a bolt which comes through several holes before it goes into the strike. This particular type of lock then makes it more difficult for a door to be jimmied. However the surface mounted cylinder deadlocks do not actually offer the same kind of protection as those that are mounted within the door and frame.

Therefore you need to take time out to examine the locks you already have in place in your home, and if you find them either to be old, wearing out or have failed, then it is about time that you replaced them. In order to provide you with better protection for your home, install either new, or additional locks as soon as possible (immediately preferably). Although you may consider this to be a waste of time and money, which would you prefer:

Knowing that your home is secure and everything is well protected, or letting any burglar know that they can gain access to your home anytime that they want to...

Chapter 5 – How to Make Your Windows More Secure

Certainly glass in windows can be easily smashed, like any other form of glass. But any burglar would prefer to provide a much quieter way of gaining access to property, without having to resort to such a noisy method as breaking glass.

Unfortunately, when breaking glass, a burglar knows that it makes a very distinctive noise, and is therefore likely to attract them unwanted attention. Also, there is a high risk of them actually cutting themselves while they are carrying out the procedure. They know that the chances of them being caught are highly increased because of the use of DNA samples, which provide law enforcement agencies with a very good way of identifying any intruder into a property.

Although some burglars will break windows in order to gain access to people's homes, most prefer to use a window which is already open. The problem is that, in a lot of burglaries, the actual burglar has not even had to try to open one, as the home owner has left one open (whether by mistake or deliberately).

But even people who do have locks on their windows which are closed, these are often very weak, and in a lot of cases, people only have latches fitted to their windows. With these installed, a burglar will have no difficulty at all in breaking in to a person's home in just a matter of seconds or minutes.

However today, there are plenty of good quality window locks now available which a person can install, and do not cost an arm and a leg to buy. But although there are plenty of window locks now available, just which are the right ones for you to buy for your home in order to protect your windows from being a potential access point for a burglar? Below we will take a look at the various different types of window locks a person can now use.

Thumb Turn Locks

These types of locks are not secured using a key, and are great way of preventing the windows on your home from being opened from the outside. The only way a burglar could attempt to try and open one of these would be from them having to smash the glass in the window in order to gain access to the lock itself, and then operating it. Although they may have to smash the glass to gain access to the lock, once they have, they will lessen their chances of being cut by any glass afterwards because they can then open the window completely.

Key Locks

These are the best kind of locks for helping to secure windows. It is best that you remove the key from the lock once the window has been closed, but ensure that it

is in a location where it can easily be reached, and ensure that all members of the family know exactly where it is. You don't want any members of your family being caught when there is a fire in the home and they can not find the key to get the window open. You may also find that if a certain window has been designated as an escape route from your property in case of a fire or other sorts of emergencies, then you may find that the local building codes actually prevent you from fitting a key lock to this particular window. Therefore you need to confirm through your local building authority what the codes are, and what they require you to do.

The other reason for fitting key locks to windows, especially on the upper floors of your home, is that they could prevent young children from falling out of them. Unfortunately, as children grow older, they become a little more inquisitive, and it will only take them a matter of seconds to be able to undo the lock and open the window.

The great thing about installing good quality window locks in your home is that they are visible to those outside your home. Once a burglar sees these, he then knows what he is going to be facing, and certainly if he feels that it is going to be difficult to gain access because it is likely to draw attention to them, then they may well decide it is best to go and look elsewhere and see what the next house can offer them instead.

You may well find that you might have to fit more than one lock on each window, but this will depend on the actual size of them. Therefore, the larger the window, then the more strain is going to be put on the lock as the burglar attempts to gain access by forcing it. Also do not forget to place locks on even small windows you have in your home, as there are some burglars who can gain access through very small spaces, or who will use a child as an accomplice in order to help them gain access into your home.

Also, never forget to install locks on the windows on the upper floors of your home. Although you may not think this is necessary because a burglar will not attempt to use one in order to gain access to your home, they will. Remember, a burglar will use a ladder if necessary, and often it has either come from your own backyard, or that of your neighbors.

Certainly the chances of a burglar going elsewhere to gain access to a home to take a person's possessions are greatly increased if you have good quality window locks fitted on your own home.

Chapter 6 – Lights Are a Good Deterrent

One of the best deterrents a person can install in order to help improve security on their home is lights. You have the choice of either mounting floodlights, or spotlights at each corner of your home, which will then flood the walls of the property and provide no shadow or area where a burglar can sit or stand undetected.

All lights are relatively easy to install, and can be quite inexpensive to buy, but they are an extremely effective way of helping to prevent a break in from occurring at your home.

Spotlights

These can either be single or double models, but generally most security consultants will suggest that you have the double versions installed.

Floodlights

Again, as with the spotlights, these come in single and double models, and again it is recommended that if you are going to install floodlights, you install those which have a double floodlight on them. This type of light actually provides more light around a property than a spotlight, as spotlights are directed towards a particular area.

But which ever kind of light you decide to install outside your home, it is best that you place them high enough so that they burglar can not gain access to them easily. Generally, spotlights are mounted around about half way up the sides of a home, while a floodlight can be mounted much higher up and at the end of the house.

When installing your lights, you should mount them at the corners, or ends, of your home, and should placed in such a way that they illuminate the various areas of your garden where a burglar is likely to hide. So aim them towards bushes, walls, screens and trees. Also, mount the lights in those locations around your home which you feel are going to provide any would be burglar with a place that they can hide. Say, for example, your garage is separate from your home, and there is a walk way in between, make sure to mount one to illuminate this space. Also, if you have any form of shed or gazebo in your garden, then arrange to have a light mounted that is directed towards this area.

Today, most spotlights and floodlights can actually be directly wired into the wiring system that you already have in your home. If you are unsure what you need to do, you can hire a qualified electrician who will be able to carry out the wiring for you.

When it actually comes to installing any kind of external lighting, you should install as many as you possibly can without actually causing a nuisance to your neighbors. Certainly, the more lighting, the more effective it will be at helping to prevent the possibility of a burglar breaking into your home. Also, use plug in timers which can then turn the lights on and off while you are away from the property (say on vacation). But as well as using timers for external lighting, you can also use them on internal lights as well. However, when using timers, it is best to ensure that you set them so that they do not all come on at the same time and at the same time each day. Instead, set them at various intervals. Say you set one to come on at 8 in the evening, then you can set the next one to come on at, say, 11 at night. By using these variations, it provides any casual observer with an idea that there is someone in the home at all times.

Or if you want, with the outside lights, especially if you use spotlights, you can get automatic timers installed into the main power line to your home. Through these timers, a person can then set the lights to come on at set intervals. However, these kinds of timers can only be installed by a qualified electrician.

Certainly, installing good quality lighting to the outside of your home is one of the most inexpensive, yet very effective ways, of helping to reduce the chances of a break in occurring in your home. However, it is important that any time any of the bulbs burn out, they should be replaced immediately, or else your lighting will become completely ineffective in helping to prevent a break in.

Chapter 7 – Some Simple Door Alarm Systems

There are different kinds of battery operated door alarms which a person can now install into the doors of their home.

These work on the principle that, as soon as the door is opened or has been forced open, then the alarm goes off. Certainly, once it has been triggered, it is loud enough to wake up anyone inside the house, and is also a great way of scaring off the burglar.

It is important, however, that the alarm you do install is a good quality one, and will work for extended periods of time. Also, you should only use high quality strong batteries in the alarm so it remains functioning correctly. Unfortunately, a battery that is dead will not keep the system working properly, and in fact, the system will be completely useless, and this is when the burglar will have more opportunity to gain access to your home.

There are now also ultrasonic alarm devices available for doors which, although are expensive compared to the battery operated ones, are very effective indeed.

This particular type of alarm is placed in the corner of a room and it contains a transmitter and receiver, which then saturate the room with ultrasonic sound waves. These waves bounce off the walls in every direction, and when these waves then are broken, the alarm is triggered. This particular system, once triggered, can then turn a light on, or sound an alarm, or do both at once.

You may also want to consider a wireless intercom unit in your home, as this allows you to hear certain key noises as they occur around the home. Such systems often require no wiring to take place, and usually they can be plugged directly into an electrical socket in any room in the home. Also these systems allow a person to communicate with other people in other rooms in the home, as well as allowing you to hear what is happening throughout the home. There are various different systems now available, and as mentioned, some do not need wiring (they are wireless), while others do.

The great thing about many of these systems is, however that they are pretty inexpensive, and quite easy to install. If you are unsure about what you are doing, and where exactly you should be installing them, contact a very reputable home security service, and they should be able to provide you with the assistance that you require.

Conclusion

All homes today contain items that we feel are extremely valuable to us, and so it seems only sensible that we should ensure that our home is well protected against any possible attempts for a person to try and gain access to your home.

Certainly, in this book, we have provided you with some very simple ways of helping to make your home much more secure, and which will hopefully help to prevent a burglar as seeing your home as an opportunity to gain access and remove your prized possessions from it.

Adding a burglar alarm or home security system is one way of helping to ensure that the chances of your home being broken into are greatly reduced. But at the end of the day, it will also provide you with peace of mind that you would not have if you did not take appropriate measures to ensure that your home is secure.

Around a third of all burglaries occur because the burglar or intruder has been able to gain access to your home through a back window or a door. However, by installing locks to these areas, you can help to prevent a burglar from gaining access to your home.

Hopefully the ideas we have provided in this book will help you to find ways for improving your home security. This, in turn, will not only make your home secure, but ensure that those who dwell inside are safe and secure also.

Many burglars today are opportunistic, and they will look for homes that they feel offer them the best opportunity to get in and out of without being seen. So it is important that you take time to look at your property as if you were a burglar, and make improvements to those areas of your home which you feel may offer a burglar with the most opportunities to break into your home.