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Paranoids Home Defense System

Introduction

It doesn't matter where you live – in a city, suburb, or rural area – crime is on the rise. Some estimates report a new home burglary occurring every 15 seconds.

When you think of a home burglary what comes to mind? A masked intruder crashing through a window or breaking down your back door to get in? If so, your home is likely at risk of being burglarized. Why? Because you don't realize how vulnerable your home really is. To help keep your home and your family safe, it is vital that you tighten up weak security points like:

Keys

Keeping a close watch on your keys is vital to home security. Giving keys to friends, family and neighbors (or even workmen you trust) should be kept to a minimum. Even though you may trust the key keeper completely, once you hand over that house key you no longer have control over who can get their hands on it. A trusted neighbor may have an untrustworthy grandson who uses the key to get in your house while you are on vacation.

Also, never hide a spare key anywhere near your home. Burglars know exactly where to look and will find it, no matter how well you think it is hidden.

Locks

Install a high quality deadbolt at every entrance point. A good burglar can get through any other handle lock.

Doorways

A great lock can only offer so much security. Unless that lock is attached to a high quality metal security door, the odds are a burglar can – and will – break through.

Patio Doors

Watch those sliding glass doors that lead out of basement and kitchen areas. Most feature cheap locks that can easily be compromised and some can even be lifted right out of their tracks. It only takes seconds for a knowledgeable burglar to have the entire door off. This creates a fast and easy way to break into a home.

Windows

Window locks and alarms are only detriments to criminals if windows are actually closed. Left open or unattended, they offer an easy entry point.

Gardens

Shrubbery, trees and flowerbeds look nice, but they can also be a security hazard, providing coverage for a hiding intruder.

These are just some of the common areas to fortify in order to keep intruders out. But, it is only the beginning; there are many more steps to take to keep criminals out and your family safe.

Chapter One: Just How Secure Is Your Home?

Is your house secure? You probably think so, especially if you have invested in quality doors, locks, windows and alarms. Unfortunately, in many cases this simply is not enough. Here are a few other security measures to employ:

- Close window shades and curtains. Every time you leave your home for an extended period of time, be sure to close shades, curtains and drapes. The less a would-be intruder can see, the less tempting your home will be.
- Secure the windows and doors in the back of your house. Burglars rarely break in through the front of the house (they are too easily seen). They look for hidden and but of the way entry points that neighbors and passersby can't see.
- Keep jewelry, wallets and cash away from entry points. If your front door is left unlocked and you regularly throw your wallet and keys on a table in the foyer when you come home, a thief can easily step in, grab your wallet and car keys and be gone within seconds. Unattended back doors leading to kitchens too can be a hazard since most women leave their rings on the windowsill when they do the dishes; or their purses on a desk or countertop. The average burglary takes less than three minutes, so find more obscure places to leave easy to grab valuables.
- Never leave workmen alone in your home. Even a trusted company could hire an untrustworthy employee.

Protecting your home requires thought and diligence. Taking the time to look at ways you can improve security is well worth the effort.

Chapter Two: Steps to Help Improve Your Home Security

The first thing most people do to improve the security in their home is to install a security system. While they do work, some systems can be expensive and even a hassle to use. Before installing a complicated security system in your home, consider trying these simple – and cheap – security measures first.

Keys

We've already warned you about hiding spare keys outside of your house. So what do you do if you are prone to locking yourself out? Find a place away from your house, like above a neighbors door or in their flowerbox. That way, if the key is found, it won't work where the burglar thinks it will. And, allow your neighbor to hide theirs on your porch or property for the same reason.

Windows

Leaving windows locked or left slightly ajar for air ventilation is welcoming a burglar into your home. These make the wisest access points for criminals. If you do like a bit of fresh air, consider installing a safety lock that allows the window to be opened an inch or two, but no further.

Garden

Take a good look at your home's landscaping. Are there areas where an intruder could hide from sight? Shrubs and trees should never be planted right next to the house, (especially near grade level windows and doorways). Larger trees should be kept trimmed away from upper floors, to keep intruders from gaining access to your upper floors and balconies.

If you do insist on planting shrubs near the house, opt for prickly ones with thorns. This will discourage an intruder from using it as camouflage.

Lighting

Break-ins are common at night, especially when a house appears to be empty. Intruders love the cover of darkness so take away that advantage with plenty of lights; both inside and outside. Motion detector light can be very effective.

Keep Your Possessions Out of Sight

It is always best not to attract attention to what you own. That means keeping your nice car safely out of sight in the garage, while you leave your teenager's old junker in the driveway; or putting the box to your new computer in a bag before throwing it to the curb.

Although large windows are very in vogue these days, install window coverings that allow the natural light in but keeps your possessions out of sight of nosy criminals. The more stuff a criminal can see through your windows, the more likely they will target your house.

These are just a few of the ways that you can boost your home's security without a lot of time or expense.

Chapter Three: Ways to Prevent a Break In to Your House

Burglars are a persistent bunch. If they want to get into your home, there really isn't much – if anything – you can do to stop them. The key to deterring criminal activity is to make it as hard as possible for a thug to gain access to your home unnoticed.

Be Prepared – “Burglarize” Yourself

Here's a shocking statistic: early one third of all break-ins are unforced. That means that the burglars gained access to the home through an open door, lock or hidden area like a garage or basement.

Burglars act on opportunity and if you take away their opportunity to get in easily, they will move onto a better target. How can you make your home less appealing to a criminal? Start thinking like one! Make your home as strong and unattractive to the criminal element as you can by adding strong reinforcements to make their job harder.

Make Them Skip Your House – Common Mistakes

Don't make the mistakes most victims do. Instead follow these basic tips:

- Make it look like you don't have anything worth stealing. Keep your nice car in the garage and your teen's clunker in the driveway. Store the nice patio furniture where it can't be seen and leave a rickety old rocker on the front porch. Keep blinds and windows closed (especially after dark). The more you advertise the nice things you have, the more likely you will find yourself the victim of a burglary.
- Keep tall thick shrubs and trees trimmed back from doors and windows
- Install motion detector sensor light that blares when someone comes close to the house. The suddenly glare of light will be unexpected and noticeable.
- Don't install doors with glass windowpanes near doorknobs
- Never let strangers into your home. Always verify identification by calling the company if an unexpected meter reader or other professional arrives on your doorstep.
- Keep ladders in the garage
- Set you alarm every time you leave the house. Having a security system is great; but it will be useless if it isn't set.
- Change your habits. Criminal watch for regular habits like going for a run at the same time every day or taking the dog at the same time every day. Remember, a good burglar can be in and out of your house before you reach the corner. Being inconsistent with your arrival departure times can safeguard your home.

Inside the Burglars' Mind – Discover Their Habits and Traits

Once you have taken the steps to anti-burglarize your home, it is important to get into the criminals mind to see what other steps you can take protect your home and family. To do this, let's look at some important trends that burglars follow:

- Most burglaries occur between 10 am and 3 pm when people are at work and their homes are left unattended. One way to combat this is to use timers to turn on lights and appliances throughout the day. Ask a neighbor to keep their extra car in your driveway or let your pet out midday.
- The average burglar is a young male teen. That means he wants quick cash and things he can resell easily. Keep wallets jewelry, iphones and small electronics away from entryways and windows
- Most break-ins take less than 60 second and the burglar stays in the house less than 5 minutes. That means they are looking for things they can grab quickly, so keep valuables in out of the way storage areas for safety.
- Houses without a security systems are much more likely to be broken into. Even if you can't afford the monthly fee for a quality system, you can install one for your own or even place generic or fake system stickers on your doors and windows.
- Reinforce all entryways with better doors, locks and alarms

When it comes to choosing which houses to burglarize, thieves count on being able to get in and out quickly; making no noise and going unseen. Anything you can do to impede this will make your home less attractive to thieves.

Types of Burglars

Getting inside the head of a burglar isn't quite enough sometimes you save your home from infiltration. But, knowing what kinds of burglars are out there might help you make your home just a little bit safer.

The Opportunist

This is the spur of the moment thief who looks for an open window or unlocked door to gain access to a house. This is a quick theft who simply grabs whatever they can (laptops, jewelry, wallets, etc).

The Smasher and Dasher

This is a premeditated burglar who scouts out a house, smashes a window and gets in and out quickly. This thief does not rifle through things looking for things of value, they simply grab what looks good and leaves.

The Prowler

This is a more sophisticated burglar who takes his time once inside the house. The prowler is sneaky and very discreet in entries. It is not uncommon for homeowners to come home with a prowler still in the house and not even know it until they see the mess left behind (upturned drawers, closets, etc). A lack of fear makes them more dangerous than other burglar types.

The Professional Burglar

These are not your everyday intruders. This slick thief can come in, take what he wants and get out without you even realizing it until you go for a special piece of jewelry or other valuable and find it missing. These are high class burglars with expensive taste, often going for collectible pieces of art or jewelry.

Some professional burglars are skilled at emptying out an entire house while you are away at work. They are state of the art professionals who know how to get by security systems, nosy neighbors and other deterrents.

Chapter Four: Fit Locks to Help Make Your Home More Secure

Standard doors locks do little to deter a professional burglar. That is why you may want to consider installing your own locks on all your doors and windows.

Locks and Keys

If you want to keep invaders out, you have to have locks that work. High security deadbolts are resistant to attacks from tools like pipes, chisels, sawing, crowbars and drills. They also offer protection against unauthorized key duplication which makes them a solid choice when shopping for new locks

Single Cylinder Deadbolt

Basic locks simply are not safe. Just about nay burglar can break through these simple locks. It is always a good idea to add a deadbolt 6-8 inches above or below your doorknob. One reason is because a single cylinder deadbolt offers the security of a deadbolt but the ease of having to use a key from the outside and a turn knob on the inside. This keeps someone from prying the door open with a tool, especially if the latch is at least one inch long.

When choosing a cylinder, be sure to buy one that it has a tapered guard (it will look wider at the point against the door, and narrow where the key fits in). This makes it harder to chisel or drill through the cylinder. A free spinning cylinder will also keep someone from unscrewing the guard and removing the local altogether to bypass the deadbolt and gain access to your home.

The Advantages of Deadbolt Locks

Deadbolts are more secure for several reasons:

- The locking mechanisms is inside the door (standard locks have their mechanism outside where a similar can get to it).
- Deadbolts can not be pushed back in once extended; making shimming the bolt with a knife impossible.
- The deadbolt is longer than the latch on the knob lock, making it difficult to pry the door open.

What About Key Bumping?

The internet is full of videos showing prospective burglars how to key bump a deadbolt to gain access to a house. It is done by inserting a bump key into the lock and smacking it with a hammer. This causes the tumbler pins to fly up in random fashion and correctly

unlock the door after a few tries. This practice is harder when high security deadbolts are used.

Single Cylinder High Security Patriot Maximum Deadbolt

These are high security locks now available to the home market. Sporting a Grade I by the American National Standards Institute, these locks feature a free turning collar making it resistant to attacks from tools like pipe wrenches or chisels.

This lock has a hardened steel one inch bolt and steel inserts and pins that rotate. Other types also have safeguards against key duplicating. Unlike a standard key, the keys to these high security locks have angled cuts, along with fore and aft positioning.

Double Cylinder Deadbolts

Double cylinder locks require a key to both lock and unlock them from the inside and the outside. This can make quick exits difficult. Plus, the key must be available at all times. Some people leave the key in the lock all of the time, but be warned: as long as the key is in the lock a smart criminal can use it to unlock the door (even from the other side).

Secure Your Doors

No matter what kind of door you have, you can always secure it a bit more. Even steel doors can use some adjustments to make them all the safer.

One of the biggest dangers is using an interior (or hollow) door as an outside door. They are not made to withstand any type of real force and will give easily, even breaking through by a heavy kick. Instead opt for metal insulated doors or solid wood doors. These are harder for burglars to compromise,

If you can't replace hollow doors right now, try attaching a 1/4 inch piece of plywood to it with round headed bolts. Put the round head bolts on the outside and secure them from the inside with washers, lock washers and nuts. This will help reinforce your doors and keep you safer.

If you have a window in your door, run the plywood right over the window. This will keep someone from breaking the window and reaching right in to unlock the door from the inside.

Here's another reinforcement trick: attach 20 gauge sheets of metal to the exterior of the door. Use carriage bolts, spaced no more than 16 inches apart. It isn't going to look great, but it is much cheaper than replacing your door and can offer more security until you can get a sturdy exterior door.

Strike Plate

Another critical part of securing your doors is to examine the strike plate. This is the piece of metal mounted around your door jam. It is the piece that the deadbolt goes into when the door is locked. If the strike plate screws are too short, a criminal can generally kick the door, loosen the strike plate, splinter the door jam and remove the lock altogether. It takes less than a minute for someone who knows what they are doing and may not even make enough noise to rouse anyone.

Replace any screws that are three inches or less. Longer nails and screws will not only go into the door jam, but right into the stud, giving them a stronger hold.

Heavy Duty Security Strike Hinges

If your exterior doors have hinges on the outside of the house, replace them with interior hinges. Or reinstall the door so that all hinges and pins are on the inside. Otherwise, all a burglar needs to do is unhinge the door and forgo the lock altogether.

Another method is to remove two opposite facing screws from the hinge facing and insert a long nail snugly onto the wall side. Cut the nail to create a dead bolt through the hinge faces when closed. This will make it hard to remove the door even if the hinge pins are missing.

Patio Doors

Patio doors offer easy access for burglars. For one, they are often left unlocked. Even if you do latch the locks those locks are easily broken. Many security experts suggest placing a security bar (or broom) across the floor, tight against the jam. Unfortunately this doesn't work all that well since a burglar who knows what he is doing can simply lift the entire door off the track and enter that way. Putting screws into the track may slow him down, but it won't stop him. Instead, invest in a \$20 auxiliary lock that locks both doors together making them impossible to open or take out of the track.

Cardinal Gates Spring Loaded Patio Door Lock

A great security lock, this lock may have been made to keep burglars out but it also works well to prevent children from sneaking out without being seen. The lock allows you lock the door with a 3 inch gap for ventilation. It works on right and left opening doors.

Additional Equipment

Instead of installing door chains (which rarely give enough security), peepholes will allow you to see who's on the other side without risking your safety. A good peephole will let you see in 180 degree angle so you won't be surprised when you open your door.

Hardware Lens Door Viewers will let you see out but with one disadvantage; the person on the other side can tell that you are looking out.

Wide angle peephole door viewer door scope is designed in a way that allows you to see out without putting your entire face up to the door. It works at about 3 feet away and offers a 130- degree viewing space.

For those who want to go high-tech, the Brinnon PHV 132512 Electronic Peephole Viewer will take a standard peephole image and projecting it onto a digital camera. This lets you see whose at your door without them ever knowing you are home. There is also a zoom feature if you want a closer look.

The Door Club is another safety measure that can be used while you are home or on doors that are not used regularly. It just can not be used on the door you plan to use as your reentry point since it must be locked and unlocked from inside the house.

Able to withstand over two tons of force, the door club can be used to keep the door shut and secure or if used through the floor, allows you to open your door a few inches without risk of someone forcing their way in.

Door jammers are also good for security purposes and are often used by travelers to better secure their hotel rooms.

Smart Home Door Stop Alarms weight only a few ounces and look like a standard door stop, but have a 120-decibel alarm built in. When an intruder tries to get in the alarm sounds, giving you ore time to react. Easy to sue, it requires only batteries; now tries, drilling or attachments.

Chapter Five: How to Make Your Windows More Secure

Windows are one of a burglars favorite ways to gain access to the inside of your home. Since they offer numerous security challenges, windows are a great way for thieves to get in.

Window security focuses on three main areas:

1. keeping windows from being opened for access
2. making it difficult to remove the glass from the window
3. provide warning if either occurs

When trying the best secure your windows, you must understand how they are made (and how they can be compromised). Windows are made of a frame, sash and glaze. The glass mounts into the sash (they may be fixed or removable) and is generally made of either wood, aluminum or vinyl. The sashes mount into the window frame.

Secure Your Windows

There are plenty of ways to secure your window with alarms. If you have an alarm system, you will want to add window sensors and alarms, but if you don't have a professional system, don't worry. There are other types of alarms that you can put on your windows.

Individual sensors: you can buy individual sensors at Home Depot or other home improvement stores. These are small sensors (usually battery operated) that can be affixed to the window and if anyone tries to open it, the alarm goes off. Similar sensors can also be found at baby stores, since they are also good for making sure that small hands don't open windows from the inside.

Window Screen Sensors: some newer window screens have sensors built right into them. These screens lock so tightly to the window frame, that an intruder is forced to cut the screen to gain access. Once the sensor in the screen is cut, an alarm goes off.

Window Locks: windows with multiple panes may offer a bigger security risk since all an intruder needs to do is break one small pane to gain access to the house. Installing sash locks, push locks and pins locks not only slow an intruder down, but if an alarm is used in conjunction with the locks, the odds are good the burglar will flee.

Glass Break Alarms: large single pane windows may allow an intruder to climb right through the hole after breaking the glass. Glass break alarms put on these large windows will sound an alarm should anyone try to come in through the large opening.

Keyed Sash Locks: it's always a good idea to replace existing window fasteners with sash locks that open with a single key. Of course, you will need to keep keys handy in case of a fire; otherwise your family may be stuck inside.

Pinning Windows

Pin or bolt window cloaks work a lot like deadbolts on the door. A lock mechanism helps to pin or bolt the window to the frame or sash, making it difficult to open when engaged.

Keyed pin locks come in several models to fit almost any window style. Plus they can be used to either keep the window completely closed to open slightly for ventilation without breaching security.

If you have older windows that won't fit these modern lock styles (or you can't afford them for all of your windows), you can make your own by drilling a hole or two in a downward angle through the sash and into the window frame. Then insert strong nails (8 gauge or thicker) into the holes to pin the windows in place. Trim the nail so that the head lies flush against the frame when engaged. Note: these nails are difficult to remove so don't close off windows you may need to open regularly with this handmade pinning alternative.

Screw Down and Friction Locks

If you rent your home or can't install pins for some other reasons, don't worry, there are other products on the market that can help you secure your windows. Common screw down window locks, which use friction from a hard tightened screw against the window track, prevent windows from sliding open without force. Thumbscrew locks can also help prevent windows from being easily jammed.

Use friction screws that have a unique design or need a specialty tool to remove. This will make a thief's job more difficult.

Mechanical Casement Cranks

Casement windows are most secure when a mechanical crank is used to open and close them. If you have casement windows that open freely, consider installing a crank or lever opening mechanisms.

Jalousie Windows

These types of louvered windows are very hard to secure with locks and pins alone. The best way to secure them is by installing a security screen or gate.

Glass for Security

The type of glass you pick for your windows can also deter a criminal:

Tempered Glass: treated to resist breakage, these thermal-tempered glass windows is made by placing a piece of regular glass in an oven, bringing it almost to the melting point and then chilling it rapidly. This causes a skin to form around the glass. If the skin is pierced, the glass breaks into small crystals resembling rock salt, without sharp edges. This makes the glass 3-5 times stronger than regular glass. It is a good choice for windows in doors, entryways and other areas that may need extra strength in the windows.

Laminated Glass: great for street level windows and doorway,, this type of glass is made of two-sheets of regular glass boned in interweaving layers of glass and plastic materials. When broken, the glass adheres to the plastic material, making it hard to remove. Edges are also jagged, making entry difficult. This glass is often used in store windows to prohibit the smash and grab robbery.

Bullet-Resisting Glass: Very expensive, this type of glass is usually reserved for places that need the most security (convenience stores, banks, etc). Bullet proof glass can be three inches thick which helps keep the glass from shattering when shot.

Wired Glass: Only used for fire protection, glass with wire in it offers little (if any) security.

Plastics: plastic glazing comes in tow varieties:

1. Acrylic, is clearer and offers good strength when hit, making it 17 times more resistant to breakage. It does scratch easily though and needs to be installed b a professional.
2. Polycarbonate is not unbreakable, but almost. It is superior to acrylic when it comes to security. Although expensive (about four times the cost of regular glass), it is well worth the cost if you live in an area that frequents break-ins. It is also a great choice for small windows and windows in doors.

Polycarbonate has 300 times the impact resistance as glass. For burglary resisting applications, a 1/8 inch thick polycarbonate sheet meets the Underwriters Laboratories Standard 972, for Burglary Resisting Glazing Materials.

Screens, Bars and Grates

Although many people consider security bars, grates and screens unsightly, the fact is they work. Thankfully, today's; modern designs don't necessarily scream "safety", but rather design and architecture. These designer burglar bars are being used more and more in higher end neighborhoods to help keep thieves at bay while offering some

semblance of style;. They are especially good for basement windows and windows that may be easily accessible to burglars.

These types of security bars, grates and screens can be placed on either the inside or the outside of the windows and come in collapsible styles to make it easy to exit in case of a fire.

Chapter Six: Garage, Fence and Shed Security

Attached garages often give homeowners a false sense of security. They believe the garage works as a second barrier to get into the house, when in reality this may not be the case. Let's say a burglar is able to climb through a window in your garage. They now have access to the inside of your home, plus plenty of tools to help them break other security measures if necessary. Worse yet, they can simply hide in the garage until you come home, opening the entryway for them (without you ever realizing it). What makes this scenario so dangerous is not you and your family are in the home with the intruder!

Be sure to take special note of any ways that someone can get into your garage and secure those areas carefully.

Take special note of your garage door opener. Be sure to use one with a programmable code, that way if your remote goes missing, you can reprogram the door. It is not uncommon for a thief to steal a remote from a car only to use it later to easily gain access to the house.

Warning: some garage doors are susceptible to phantom signals from other close by remotes, police signals or aircraft. If your door opens on its own be sure to check for loose connections and then change the frequency code. If that doesn't help, call a repairman immediately.

Here are some other tips to help make your garage door more secure:

- When going on vacation or leaving for long periods of time, consider unplugging your garage door opener for added security.
- Install an autoclose. Autoclosers are good too for people who tend to forget to close their garage door when leaving.

Fence Security

Remember, fences only delay intrusions; they don't prevent them. No matter what style fencing you have, a persistent person can infiltrate it. Of course that doesn't mean that you shouldn't use fencing as a way to deter or slow down a burglar. When looking for the right fence consider these important facts:

- A solid wood fence may look pretty and offer you plenty of privacy, but it can easily hide criminal activity from passerby and neighbors. If someone scales your solid wood fence and gets inside of your yard, they will be protected from sight. This can give them the privacy they need to take their time in getting into your home.
- Chain link is the best fence when it comes to security. It keeps people off of your property (and pets in) without obscuring the view. In some cases, you may want to consider topping the chain link with barbed wire or razor wire, but be sure that you can according to local building codes first.
- Keep anything that can be used to scale your fence away (boxes, ladders, lawn furniture, etc).
- Trim overhanging tree lines to keep people from scaling the fence.
- Lock all gates

Padlocks and Storage Sheds

What does your storage shed contain? If it is full of junk you don't care that much about, I wouldn't go crazy trying to protect its contents. On the other hand, if you have expensive boats, equipment or other tools in your shed, then you might want to consider securing it well.

Most thugs have no trouble breaking through a typical padlock. A snip of a bolt cutter or the prying of a pry bar is all that is required to get in. So if you are going to use a padlock, ask the locks for a high security one that is casehardened to make it more difficult to penetrate with a bolt cutter.

A good padlock uses steel ball bearings to lock it, plus it will have both at the heel and the toe of the shackle. A rounded notch at the shackle is a tell tale sign that the lock has steel bearings.

The lock featuring steel ball bearings is superior for several reasons:

1. it features a round notch which is harder to break
2. it can't be opened with a jimmying attack. A shim is a small piece of metal that is used to free the spring in a standard lock, but a steel raring lock doesn't use a spring and therefore can not be shimmed open.

To make a ball bearing lock even stronger, a shroud may be used to make it resistant to bolt cutters. The shape too can have a security impact. Master Lock is shaped like a hockey puck, which leaves no room for bolt cutters.

The lock isn't your only consideration, however. Lock hardware is also important. A master lock double hinge will hold your door shut and secure by the lock.

Next, consider the hasp. Be sure to mount it with no screw heads exposed. Carriage bolts are even better, since they are secured with washers and nuts and are hard to remove without breaking the door apart to do so.

Chapter Seven: Lights are A Good Deterrent

Lights are one of the best security measures a homeowner can take. With the right lighting you can take away shadows that allow burglars to hide and showcase any trouble before a burglary occurs. Easy to install, and relatively cheap, lights can be used to highlight shadowy areas; flood the entire perimeter with light or simply turn on when there is a disturbance near an entry point.

Lighting Security

Burglars hate light. The more light you have on your property, the less likely you will fall victim to a burglary. Take a good look at your property when you drive up at night. Are there a lot of dark shadowy areas? Does your house look lit from the inside and outside? Does your home look darker than your neighbors? If so, then you may be putting yourself at risk.

Of course, you want to make sure that the lights you install aren't going to bother the neighbors, but well placed lights will add security to your property –and theirs. After all, a lighted secure neighborhood is good for everyone.

Spotlights

Double versions are always best because they shine light in two directions.

Floodlights

Available in single or double models. The double light model offers the most security since they help to highlight more of the property.

Whichever types of lights you decide to install around your home, be sure that they are hung high enough so that a burglar can not easily dismount or block them in some way.

Here are some other installation tips:

- install at the corners or ends of the building
- place lights so they illuminate dark areas of the property or places where a burglar could hide
- angle all light towards walls, screens and trees
- install as many lights as you can without causing a nuisance to the neighbors
- set lights on timers to ensure that your house is never in the dark (just be sure that your timers are scattered, so different lights come on at different times to make it look as if someone is home)
- check bulbs regularly (your lights won't do any good if they don't work)

Installing quality lighting to the outside your home is one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to deter criminals and keep your home valuables and your family safe.

Motion Detector Lights

Using an infrared sensors to detect movement, these light some on when motion is detected in a certain area. They are especially good for sue around doors and easily accessible windows. They are good for two reasons: they let you see when someone approaches your home and hey give you light if you come home after dark.

Consider carefully the placement of motion detectors. Most people install them to go off when someone walks or drives up the driveway, but not along the driveway. This can leave a burglar a clear advantage. Instead, position the detector to go across the driveway, juts be sure it isn't shining into any of your neighbors windows.

Play with the sensitivity to the lights to ensure they offer safety without going off every time a squirrel runs by. Adjust, test, and repeat until the fixture works just as you need it to.

The range you set is also important. Give the sensor too much range and every stray cat in the neighborhood is going to set it off. Most lights offer a 70-foot rage, you an shorten it by titling the sensors down or even using duct tape to mask part of the sensor.

Also be sure to trim back low hanging tree limbs. A swinging branch in the wind can set off many sensors.

Outdoor two-Light Downward Floodlight: this style offers a lot of advantages:

- * they are relatively cheap
- * Offers an adjustable time
- * Offers adjustable sensitivity settings
- * The activation beam is adjustable
- * can be changed to a motion sensor y using a specialized adapter

Motion Sensing Light Socket: this nifty converter can change nay indoor light socket into a motion sensor light. It is easily installed. Simply screw it into the existing light socket. These are especially useful in closet area, laundry rooms, the garage, or the hallway. It can also double as a nightlight for children and guests.

A sensor plug is used in a similar manner, but only on a single light, which turns on when you walk past it. It can also be used on an appliance like a fan or radio. No need for installation, the plug is simply plugged into the outlet. It can also be set to only activate during certain times of the ay or when the room is dark.

Chapter Eight: Everything You Need To Know About Alarm Systems

It has been reported that homes without alarm systems are 600% more likely to be broken into than homes with such systems. Of course every system is not equal. The best systems don't just sound an alarm when someone gets in; but prevents them from getting into your home in the first place. This is done by installing an alarm system that covers the perimeter of the home, including doors and windows.

Perimeter Protection

More than 870% of all break-ins occur through windows, doors, skylights and vents, so be sure that whatever system you choose includes sensors in these areas.

Door Contacts

Magnet operated switches that are attached to doors and windows. When the magnet is dislodged by the door or window being opened, an alarm sounds

Glass Break detectors

There are two types of glass break detectors:

1. one that detects high frequency sound patterns made by breaking glass
2. one that detects sound waves that run through the frame when the window pane is shattered

Metallic Foil: is a traditional way of protecting glass, feature thin strips of metallic foil placed on the window. When the glass breaks, the electric current in the foil is interrupted, sending out a signal to the alarm. The problem with metallic foil is that it can be easily defeated by scratching it off the window.

Wooden Screens: large openings like skylights and vents can be covered with wooden rods alarmed with wires that sound if the rod is broken.

Lace Paneling: Lacing is a tight woven pattern of metallic foil or fine wire that is placed on the surface of an area. When an intruder tries to get in they break the foil and an alarm sounds.

Area Protection

The problem with perimeter only security is that if an intruder manages to find another way in, you are left unprotected. Area protection can help to combat this problem, giving you a more secure home. While businesses and commercial buildings have a variety of area security devices to choose from, only a few work in a residential setting:

Pressure mats: these are flat switches that are placed under rugs that react to pressure made by footsteps. Placed in doorways, window area and hallways they can work well to alarm you of a potential intruder. Be careful though, because your own family could

accidentally set off the alarm. Even larger pets can set them off. The good news is that they can be turned on and off at will.

Photoelectric Beams: these individual; light rays scour the room, and if someone walks across it, breaking the beam, an alarm sounds. They can be set in a way as to allow small children and pets to roam free around the house without worry of setting off the alarm.

Passive Infrared System: This type of device measures infrared heat generated by someone walking within the protected area. It can be a hassle for families however, restricting their movements in certain areas of the home.

Motion Detectors: These devices detect motion within a specific area and sound an alarm. They work by filling the room with ultra sound microwaves, that detect motions when disturbed. The sensors are quite sensitive.

Object Protection: If you want to protect a single item like a painting, valuable object or even a family safe, you may want to consider installing an object alarm. One type of object alarm actually makes the object being protected the alarm. If anyone touches it, an alarm sounds. These devices are attached directly to the object.

Panic Buttons

Panic buttons installed at various locations throughout your home will allow you or nay member of your family to activate the alarm and notify authorities of a break in should someone get into your home while you are there. Be careful where you put these buttons though to ensure that children or guests don't accidentally set them off.

When choosing an alarm for your security system be sure to follow these simple tips:

- make sure the alarm sounds both inside and outside of the house
- choose an alarm, that when sounded, calls the police for help
- install lighting features with the alarm, turning on all interior and exterior lights when activated
- choose an alarm that sound unique (and is unmistakable)

False Alarms

Statistics show that nearly 99% of all security alarms are false, leaving security monitoring agencies with the task of finding ways to ensure customers safety without overburdening local police stations with multiple false alarm calls. That is why many monitoring services will call your home when an alarm sounds, before dispatching the police. Since most alarms are unintentionally set by people in the house, calling seems like a good way to determine the alarms validity.

Y simply giving the right password, the service knows whether or not the police should be sent. If the person answering the phone can to give the correct password, or no one is there to answer, the police are sent immediately.

Selecting an Alarm System Company

Truck callers are companies that are simply out to make a quick buck on nervous homeowners; they are not reputable service agencies. The trunk slammer gets his name by virtually working out of his trunk he shows up at your door and tries to sell you a system without having a storefront or business. He probably makes his money on system installations and has no intention of servicing the equipment or offering ongoing monitoring services. Be sure that any company you picked has a good track record and is know for their service.

Check out nay prospective companies with your insurance agent; Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce.

The Right Price

Don't try and nickel and dime a dealer in order to get the best price. A deal isn't a deal if you are left with a service you can't use. Choose a well established company that can handle installation; repair; and monthly monitoring for a price you can afford. Be wary of any company who gives you a flat price without reviewing your home and seeing what equipment and service is needed.

Quality Alarm System Features

When looking for a quality alarm system be sure to look for these important features:

- Emergency backup power. An alarm is only good if it works and if it hooked up to your house's main power supply and that is cut or shit off you will be left without any security. Look for a system with a battery backup. This will ensure that it is powered during an emergency.
- Malfunction alert. Let's assume everything breaks; including your alarm system. Some sort of alarm or light to tell you the system isn't working is essential. It also can tell you if any component has been tampered with.
- A good warranty. Most alarm systems require service from time to time. After all, there may be multiple parts and equipment pieces, so be sure you have a goof warranty that covers all the parts and labor.
- Good user instructions. Be sure that you know extaly what your system can do (and can't do) and know how to work it. Some companies will offer to show you in person how its works, while other simply had you a user manual. In either case, be sure that the instructions you are given are clear and through.

Alarm Systems: Practical Choices

Getting a good quality alarm system doesn't have to cost you a small fortune and doesn't even require an installer. Many DIY systems are available that will allow you to quickly

and cheaply install a security system within hours. Here are a few quality Wireless Home Security Systems now on the market:

www.simplisafe.com/SecuritySystem.

This do-it-yourself system is fairly cheap (with prices starting under \$200 for apartment security systems), and monthly maintenance of under \$15. IT offers a quick setup without drilling or wire placement, although you do need a land line telephone for servicing. Here are some other benefits of this simple system:

- no long term contract or hidden fees
- pre-built system available or you can build your own
- the system is wireless and can be easily moved to a new home or apartment
- the base unit plugs in, but other components are battery operated
- offers a 400-500 foot range
- motion detectors work up to 30 feet, offering full room coverage.
- Sensors provide a 90-degree protection
- Door and window sensors included
- A panic button allows instant access to the dispatch center
- Offers a 25% discount on home insurance

www.lasershield.net

This sets sells for about \$700 and includes a master alarm unit; three wireless door and window sensors; one pet immune motion detector; to 4-button keyfobs; and one wireless smoke detector. Landline and cell phone monitoring is available. The system also covers your home for fire, carbon monoxide, flood, glass breakage and remote viewing services. Monthly fees begin at \$24.99 with a \$10 additional charge for cellular service.

www.lifeshield.com/best-home-security

This \$300 package includes eight sensors; a smoke alarm detector; base unit and key remotes. The service center can be contacted via broadband or cellular service. A land line is not required. Other services offered include: carbon monoxide monitoring; medical alerts and smoke and fire protection.

For those on a tight budget, this company offers a cheaper security system (about \$150) that includes two door/window sensors, motion detector, control panel and emergency dialer. Without the monthly call-in service. The dialer however will call up to 9 numbers in case the system is activated.

Alarm Permit/False Alarm Fees

Keep in mind that many municipalities now requires homeowners who install a security alarm to pay a one-time permit fee. This fee goes directly to emergency services agencies. Other counties also charge an annual fee which can range from \$30 to several hundred to help offset dispatch fees when alarms are sounded. In addition, most municipalities now charge homeowners a false alarm fee if their alarm is sounded during a non emergency more than once or twice in a calendar year. Be sure to call your local municipality office or police station to find out what permits and fees may be associated with your alarm system.

Alarm Stickers

Most alarm companies offer free stickers to be placed near windows, doors and other places on your property. Some people think that tipping a burglar off to an alarm system will not make a difference. I disagree. A rational burglar is looking for the easiest house to hit and one with an alarm system is not an easy target. Therefore, it can't hurt to use these stickers to your advantage.

Some homeowners even buy fake stickers to place on their doors and windows even if they don't have an alarm system, This can be a good ploy, but don't count on it being your only security measure.

Free Video Security Software

Want to turn your webcam or wireless video camera into a security camera? A company called Vitamin D (www.vitamindine.com) offers free software that can turn a single camera into a security camera. Paid versions can turn your home's computer into a security system, sending email messages when the software detects unusual activity in and around your home. The paid version of the software also offers these benefits:

- a simple rule builder helps to refine searches and find events quickly on your camera
- custom actions that lets you trigger specific events
- FTP storage and automatic backup
- Multiple camera management
- The ability to arm or disarm cameras with a single lick
- The ability to set a delay so cameras don't turn on until you have left the premises.

Make an Old Computer Your Home Security System

Have an old computer lying around? Turn it into a home security system. Here's how:

- update the operating system as much as you can
- connect the computer to the internet
- install cheap webcams with built in microphones and motion controls to all your computers

- download Skype, the free voice over internet telephone and videoconferencing service onto your home security computer and onto your laptop. Note: you will have to set up two Skype accounts: one for your security system and one for the remote PC.
- Set up your security system PC with the free software from www.secure.logmein.com that will let you remotely access your system from anywhere. This will let you control your home security PC from anywhere.
- Use Skype to call into your remote computer and then use the software mentioned above to answer the call. This will give you full control of your security PC. You will be able to use the webcam to scan the room and see what's going on.

Bonus Section

Ideas to Keep Burglars Away

Burglars don't like occupied houses. But how can you make them think someone is in your house when it is empty? Leaving lights, TV's and radios on can help, but if they never change or remain at the same volume all day, a savvy burglar will figure out that it is a ploy. Instead, think about installing some of these nifty gadgets:

- A Fake TV: using much less electricity as the real thing a fake TV offers the real-life flicker of a TV and turns itself on as the room darkens at dusk.
- Realistic Sounds CD: the sound CD offers realistic sounds you would hear in a home throughout the day (water running; talking; sweeper running; etc).

Interior Protection

Burglars want to get in and out quickly. Some will settle for a small payoff rather than go digging through the house looking for bigger loot. That's why many safety experts advise homeowners to leave a few bucks or cheap things in plain sight that a burglar can easily grab; and leave your real valuable hidden. The odds are that a quick burglar will grab what he can and leave.

Protecting Your Valuables

Hopefully a burglar never gets into your home, but if he does, the first place he'll head is the master bedroom. This is where most of your jewelry firearms and money are kept. If you are going to keep these types of items in your bedroom, be sure to hide them away where other people aren't likely to find them. Many companies now make everyday item safes (a fake cleaning container or soda pop can) that can be left on a nightstand holding your jewelry or other valuables without being noticed.

Or maybe hide your larger valuables inside a laundry hamper that holds a fake bottom. Most burglars are not going to sift through your dirty clothes looking for valuables.

Safes

Safes are a good way to protect your valuables. But form what: fire, burglary, water damage? When purchasing a safe, consider what you will securing in it and what disasters it may have to face. If security is your only concern, then look for a burglar-proof safe, but if fire and water are also a concern then be sure to buy a safe that can withstand a certain amount of heat and water resistance.

Fire Resistant Safes

If you are storing contracts, deeds, wills and other important documents, that a burglar is not likely to target, then you will want a water and fire proof safe. Basically an insulated metal box, these safes have been tested to withstand a certain amount of heat. A good fire safe should have an Underwriter's Laboratory (U.L.) rating of at least one hour. This means that the safe can withstand a temperature of over 1700 degrees for an hour before the inside temperature gets hot enough to burn the papers hidden inside. A higher rating is needed to protect computer discs and tapes

Sentry makes several fire safes that can withstand high temperatures for longer periods of time and can also protect your CD's and movies and more. .

Be warned though: most fire resistant safes can not withstand a burglars tools. So if you are looking to protect your valuables from theft, you will need to invest in a Burglar resistant safe.

Burglar Resistant Safes

The main job of a burglar resistant safe is to keep burglars out. These safes are designed to withstand attacks by burglars tools, cutting torches and even explosives. Made with solid steel walls and doors, they come with a U.L. rating of TL-15 which means it can withstand 15 minutes of high speed drills, sledgehammers, power saws, and more. Some companies, like the AMSEC AMVault TL-15 Rated Composite Safe also offer fire protection. A U.L. rating 30 offers both security and fire safety.

Safes with a TRTL 30 are also torch resistant which means they can stand up to a burglars tools for a full half hour without breaking. A rating of TXTL/TXTR 60 is resistant to tools, and explosives which is designed to stand up to an hours worth of burglary tools. These high end safes are made to safeguard very expensive items.

Remember, no matter what safe you choose, always bolt it to the floor. Otherwise the burglar may take off with the entire safe, giving him the time he needs to break into it later.

Floor Safe

A floor safe should have at least a B rating and be installed in a hole in the floor, surrounded by 200 pounds of concrete. There are several advantages to installing a floor safe:

1. It is securely mounted to the floor, so no one can carry it away

2. It is located below ground, which protects it from fire
3. It is easy to conceal

Safe Locks

When you install a safe you will have to decide between a key lock and a combination lock. Keys are easily lost so a combination may work best. Of course, you will have to keep a copy of the combination somewhere else in the house in case it is forgotten. Here's another danger to combination locks: not twirling the lock after it has been opened. If you don't discharge the lock, the safe will remain unlocked once the door is closed.

Protection While on Vacation

Thieves look for empty houses. The best way to keep yours safe from an unwanted intruder while on vacation is to create an "I'm Home effect. This can be done by:

- having a neighbor get your mail and newspaper daily. Thieves look for piled papers and bulging mailboxes.
- Connect some lamps and radio/TV to various parts of your homes on timers. Stagger turn on times for different areas of the house to make it look as if people are wandering through the house throughout the evening.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed and snow shoveled while you are away
- Hide your keys, or better yet give them correctly to a neighbor
- Ask your neighbor to park their car in your driveway while you are gone
- Don't leave notes indicating your absence
- Lock up your home securely: check all doors and windows
- Turn off the main water valve before leaving
- Unplug your phone before leaving

Dogs and Guns for Security

Dogs make good burglary deterrents, but trained guard dogs do not make good pets. However, even a small dog that makes lots of noise can deter a criminal whose main aim is to get in and out of the house unnoticed. One note though: don't rely solely on your pet to keep you safe. There is no guarantee that your dog will attack an intruder, and some may not even bark much when one comes into the home.

Most people opt for a larger breed when thinking of security. Even if they are very friendly (which is what you'll want around your family), their size and the depth of their bark may help to deter an intruder. However, a small dog that barks incessantly when a stranger approaches is a good alarm and can be very effective.

Guns

Owning a gun for protection is a controversial topic. Many people believe that you absolutely need a firearm in your home to protect yourself; while others believe that having guns in the home puts your family at a higher risk should an intruder get in.

Gun ownership is an individual matter and only you can weight the risk and benefits of owning one. Here's something to keep in mind: if you keep your gun locked securely away from other members of the family, how are you going to get to it fast enough in an emergency situation? Also, if you are at all concerned about your ability to shoot in a conflict, that gun could easily be turned on you during a home invasion.

Checklists

Once you have secured your home, review these checklists to see if you have done everything possible to keep your home secure against a burglary:

Doors and Windows

- keep all exterior doors locked at all times
- protect all exterior doors (including vestibule and patio doors)
- put a dead bolt lock on all exterior doors
- equip all glass and wood panel doors with a double cylinder lock
- install sturdy door
- make sure all doors fit the frames snugly
- add extra long bolts to locks
- install peepholes to all exterior doors
- secure patio doors with metal bolt locks and shatterproof panes
- keep windows locked at all times
- install window alarms
- install iron window guards on basement and street level windows
- make open windows lockable
- anchor window unit air conditions to prevent someone from taking it out and climbing in the open window

Interior Security:

- never allow strangers or unidentified people into your home
- use peepholes
- never assume that someone in uniform or with a badge is legitimate.
- Verify all workmen, contractors, inspectors, etc, before giving them access to your home
- Never keep a lot of cash in our home
- Inventory your belongs regularly
- Destroy unneeded cards
- Use a safe deposit box for valuables
- Never leave checks lying around
- Install locks on your bedroom door
- Keep a telephone in your bedroom at night

- Install an alarm system and/or panic buttons throughout your home
- Use exterior deterrent signs and stickers

Outside Security

- use fences and hedges to delineates your property line
- never cover windows and doorways with hedges and trees
- keep valuable possessions away from window and doorways
- keep garage doors closed and locked at all times
- remove your name from the mailbox
- secure tool shed, greenhouses and other outside structures
- be aware of strangers in your neighborhood
- don't store firewood against the house

Home Security During Vacation

- arrange for a friend to pick up mail newspapers and packages
- have your flowerbeds and hanging baskets watered
- ask a friend to park their car in your driveway
- have someone cut your lawn and shovel snow while you are away
- lock fences and gates
- have trash removed
- check your alarm system before you leave
- don't tell a lot of people about your trip
- notice police of your absence
- don't pack you car the night before you leave; pack it quickly in the morning (or inside your garage with the door closed)
- make sure all doors and windows are locked before you leave

Special Tips for Apartment Dwellers

When moving into an apartment, look fro these special safety concerns:

- a doorman who screen visitors
- attended elevators
- properly secured interims fire wells
- properly secured garages
- remotely operated door opening systems with intercoms and closed circuit TV
- adequate lighting
- roof doors operable from the inside
- fore stairs with one way doors

Here are few other precautions to take:

- change the locks upon moving in

- install peep holes
- do not indicate your sex on your mailbox
- install window alarms
- get to know your neighbors
- never admit anyone into the building with your remote unless you know who it is and why they are there
- don't ride self service elevators with strangers
- use the emergency button if threatened
- never ride an elevator if the roof escape hatch is ajar

Warn police and management of unauthorized people in the building

Conclusion

Securing your home may take a little time and effort, but installing the right locks, alarm systems and other safeguards is well worth the time and money. Remember, common sense is also important. More than a third of all burglaries occur because someone forgot to lock the back door or left the garage door open while they were in the backyard. Paying attention and using common sense is one of your greatest safeguards against theft and burglary. Most burglaries are opportunistic. They look for homes that they feel offer them the best chance to get in and out of without being seen. Taking the precautions mentioned in this book can help make your home less of an opportunity and more of a hassle; leaving thieves with no choice but to move onto another target.