



Home security, in buying order.

Twelve steps, free habits first, then the cheap hardware police crime-prevention units recommend.

1 Lock it every time



- Doors and windows, even when you are home
- Even for a five-minute run to the store
- Close the garage before you get out of the car

2 Re-key when you move in



- You do not know who has copies of old keys
- Re-key or change every exterior lock
- Renters: ask the landlord to re-key

3 Deadbolt, one-inch throw



- A deadbolt on every exterior door
- The bolt should extend at least one inch
- Chain locks break easily; do not count on them

4 Longer strike plate screws



- Short factory screws make doors easy to kick in
- Use three-inch screws that reach the wall stud
- Four to six screws per strike plate

5 Light the entrances



- Porch, side, back and garage doors
- Motion lights are a good choice
- Mount bulbs out of reach from the ground

6 Trim the hiding spots



- Cut shrubs that block doors and windows
- Cut back limbs that reach upper windows
- Doors visible from the street

7 Sliding door bar



- A wood dowel or metal bar in the bottom track
- Screws in the top track so it cannot lift out
- Cut a dowel to fit the closed door snugly

8 Window pins and locks



- Thumb latches are easy to pry
- A pin or nail through both sashes stops lifting
- Keyed locks: everyone knows where the key is

9 Peephole, not a chain



- A wide-angle viewer shows who is there
- See visitors without opening the door
- Solid wood or metal exterior doors

10 Know your neighbors



- Swap phone numbers with the people next door
- Ask about joining a Neighborhood Watch
- Trade favors: mail, packages, driveway parking

11 Look lived-in when away



- Light timers set to a random pattern
- Stop the mail or have a friend collect it
- No travel plans on social media until home

12 Doorbell camera last



- Helpful, but not a substitute for locks
- Aim it at the door and the walkway
- Ask if your police department has a camera registry

Lock it, light it, longer screws. Most of home security costs less than dinner out.

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