

Expert Advice - how do I secure my door?

Burglary is something that concerns us all – wherever you live in the UK. But the chances of a burglar smashing glass to gain entry to your property is fairly slim when you look at the statistics. As many as 70% of burglaries are committed with the burglar entering via a door, with almost a third forcing the lock to gain access* to the property.

It can take just a few seconds to force a front, back or patio door not equipped with the necessary security. And reality is the better visible security you have, the less likely a chance burglar is going to have a go at your door.

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

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

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Door security as easy as one, two, three,

1. 'Gimme a high five'

A **5 lever mortice lock** is an absolute essential for front and back doors. Many insurance companies specify that as a minimum a BS3621 five-lever mortice lock must be fitted to all external doors. Be sure to look out for the British Standard kitemark that assures the lock is proof against drilling, picking, cutting or forcing.

A 5 lever mortice lock has the classic keys and key hole and a sturdy bolt that engages in a slot recessed in the frame. This means it is strong and will resist a 'kick-in' attack.

Most mortice locks have a lever mechanism - the key operates a series of levers that open and close the bolt. Simple two- and three-lever locks are cheap but also easy to break into; for real security, a 5 lever lock should be regarded as the acceptable minimum. Spend as much as you can afford on this basic security – it could pay dividends in the event of an attempted break in.

Beyond the simple mortice lock you should consider **multi-point locking** that features heavy duty hooks/bolts that clamp the door tight against the frame; and for PVCu doors additional roller cams ensure the door seals rigidly into the frame. The locking cylinders should be tested to BS EN 1303 Grade 3 or a Kitemark approved cylinder.

ERA's new lock **Vectis Plus** combines the mortice lock with a modern multi-point lock. Utilising the trusted and respected technology from traditional 5 lever mortice locks, the Vectis Plus multi-point lock uses a sophisticated locking mechanism that would defy *most* burglars.

2. Stop burglars with 'a bolt out of the blue'

For maximum security, doors should also be fitted at the top and bottom with **bolts** - the best type is the door security bolt, or rack bolt, which is recessed in the door and door frame and operated by a key.

Rack bolts are essential for French windows or doors where a burglar can gain access by removing exposed hinge pins. **Hinge bolts or Dog bolts** that engage automatically as the door closes to protect the hinge side of the door are also a good idea.

For French doors fitted with a Multi-Point Lock consider using 'shootbolts' to really advance your home security.

3. Safe and sound at night

Nightlatches offer good basic door security. Opened from the outside with a key and from the inside with a handle, nightlatches are convenient as they lock automatically on closing and can be put 'on the latch' – if for example you need to unload your car and carry in shopping and so on.

Nightlatches are best used as an additional method of security. As it is screwed to the door frame, it is still possible for burglars to kick the door in or trip the lock tongue with a thin piece of plastic or a credit card.

A deadlocking facility adds extra security; giving the key an extra turn 'deadlocks the night latch so it can be released with the key from the outside, but can't be opened from the inside' foiling the burglar who has smashed the glass to reach in.

For optimum security use with a British Standard approved mortice lock.



Top ten tips to tighten your door security

1. Make sure that your door hinges are strong and are fitted with long screws. It is possible to fit hinge bolts, which will reinforce the hinge side of the door against attempted forced entry.
2. Fitting an anti-jemmy SecuStrip will stop thieves from crow-barring open your door.
3. Patio doors should have special locks such as push bolts fitted to them.
4. Fitting bolts to the top and bottom of outside doors, especially back doors, provides great added security.
5. Home security is a balance between convenient access to your property and an appropriate level of security. Remember – a chance burglar isn't going to tamper with your property if he can see a number of security devices built into the frame itself.
6. **THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP** - Once you've increased your security measures, make sure you USE THEM