



Picks and Tips from Mike the Locksmith

From the World of Mike-the-Locksmith

Hello loyal readers!

Autumn is finally upon us and the days are getting shorter and colder. I have always been a big believer that small things can make a huge difference in our businesses, our communities, and the world around us. That's why, I'm participating in **B1G1 - Business for Good**. [Visit the website here](#).

With every purchase from Mike's Locksmith, you are making a difference in the lives of those less advantaged than we.

In this issue I'll discuss tips to keep your home safe and I'll alert you to some vulnerabilities that can be easily rectified.

I thank you for your continued support, referrals and business. Be sure to read below about the charity that I've designated for the month of October.

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Some Words of Advice on Home Security

Every 13 seconds, a burglar breaks into a home in the United States and steals an average \$2,119 worth of property. (Source) If your home is burgled, the financial losses you'll sustain are bad enough. The trauma and unease in its aftermath, however, is a

bell that can't be rung, and many burglary victims never again feel safe in their own homes.

It happened more than 2 million times in 2009, and most if not all of those victims thought their home was pretty secure [source: FBI]. They had locks, lights, neighbors and the occasional dog, and alarm system. So how'd it happen? The alarming fact is, it's actually not that hard to get into most homes. Most homes have weak points, and seasoned thieves are pretty good at finding them.

Some weak points are obvious: an open door, a tree house within stepping distance from an upstairs window, a ground-floor window left open on a hot summer night. Most people are more careful than that, yet burglary is still relatively commonplace.

The **weak points** that lead to most burglaries are somewhat more hidden, though easy to fix. It means making a few changes and additions to create a less appealing target. In this article, we'll check out a few fixes.

Let's start with one of the most common security additions, the **alarm system**. Alarm companies portray their product as an impenetrable force field that takes the uncertainty out of home security. In fact, it doesn't really stop anyone from breaking in. The thing about alarms, though, is that the blaring happens after the fact. Somebody has already broken in, has probably already taken whatever small valuables were closest to the door and has gotten away by the time the alarm company alerts police and the cops arrive.

If you want an alarm to really protect, the thugs need to know it's there before they target you. That means displaying that unsightly notice with the alarm company's name on it, and displaying it prominently, outside the house.

Up next: Some things are better left **unsaid**, like our holiday plans.

It seems harmless enough: updates to our Facebook status to let our friends know we've arrived in Paris, Tweets of our intention to meet up for coffee, real-time posts of photos of our road-trip. We like to share. The problem is, we can't be entirely sure with whom we're sharing. So keep your whereabouts off the social networks.

Up next: For real, for real, everybody knows about the **doormat**. Once upon a time, the doormat might have been a fine place to hide a key (NOT!). And, it's even possible that fake rocks were secure when the first 1,000 people tucked their keys inside and tossed them in the dirt. And, for some, the door frame is still an ideal place to stash a key, if your burglar is the height of a grade-school student. It's best to change this practice. When you hide your house key in an obvious place, you may be reducing your inconvenience in case you lock yourself out or need a friend to drop over when you're away, but you're increasing the chance you'll find yourself in the much more inconvenient position of being robbed or put in harm's way. It's best not to have an extra key anywhere on your property. Far safer than leaving a key where it can be found, is having a locksmith install a key-less deadbolt.

Up next: It's all about the lighting.

The very **first lesson** on the very first day of burglary school is: Don't get caught. The first step to avoiding capture is avoiding detection (if they can't see you, they can't call the cops).

While lots of burglaries take place during the day, darkness is still a great cover. When looking to make your house less of a target, one of the best fixes is lighting, both outdoor and indoor. It's partly about minimizing the appearance of vacancy inside the house (which burglars look for), and partly about shedding light on would-be intruders outside the house. Inside: set your lights on timers so would-be thieves have a harder time telling if you're on vacation or just working late. Outside: it's all about visibility. The area immediately outside your home is the first line of defense. Lights should be placed at strategic points such as entries and pathways. Any hiding spots, like clusters of trees or freestanding structures, should also be well-lit.

Up next: The **last line of defense**... If a thief makes it past your lighting without being deterred, you pretty much have one last shot to stop the break-in -- at the point of entry. That's typically a door or window. For windows, locks are crucial, and burglar-proof glass is a possible upgrade.

For doors,

- The door should be either solid wood or metal, so it holds.
- The strike plate should be the heavy-duty kind, secured with four, long (3-inch) screws.
- The lock should be a deadbolt or a knob-in-lock set with a dead latch.

because a burglar can gain entry either by kicking in the door or disabling the lock, so you want to address both of those possibilities. Doors and locks aren't a place to go cheap. Even if the thief learns on Facebook that you're in Paris, ignores the alarm sign in your yard and makes it to your door without being seen, a sturdy lock and a burly door can still keep him on the outside and keep you and your loved one safe from intrusion.

[Watch an informative video here](#)

A Few More Words of Advice Concerning Home Security

According to [SafeGuardTheWorld](#), a leader in preventative home security:

- The average burglar is a male, under 25 years of age, looking for items that are small and expensive and easily converted to cash.



- Burglaries usually occur in the daytime when occupants are at school or work and most often in July and August.
- Unoccupied home with easy access, the greatest amount of cover and the best escape routes are easy targets
- Burglars will usually bypass a house if it requires too much effort or more skills or tools than they possess.

SafeGuardTheWorld gives the following advice:

- Use a solid core or metal door at entrance points.
- Use a heavy-duty deadbolt with a one inch throw bolt.
- Use a quality knob-in-lock set with dead latch mechanism.
- Use a heavy duty strike plate with 3 inch screws into the frame.
- Use a wide angle peephole.
- When you move into a new house or apartment, change the door locks.



October charity: Light Up a Life with Solar

Light up the world of a family living in rural Cambodia by providing a solar lamp for a small room for an hour. Solar lighting allows rural families to extend their workday into the evening hours and allow businesses to operate during the evening. In addition, the other benefits of having a solar lamp extends towards improving literacy rates, as children can now read more easily after dark, and reducing local air pollution caused by kerosene lamps.

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