

1 WINDOWS

Make sure all windows are not only shut at night or when you're not at home but also locked. Don't leave valuable items on display – they may catch the attention of someone passing by.

Fit mortice locks or bolts to all outside doors and gates and locks to all downstairs or easily accessible windows.

Lock them even when you're at home – opportunist thieves will often just try doors in the hope they have been left open.

2 ALARMS

Have an approved alarm system installed – ask your insurance company for advice. Always remember to activate it when you go out.

3 SECURITY LIGHTS EXTERNAL/INTERNAL

Fit an approved, motion-sensor security light – this not only serves as a safety device for you but also as a deterrent to any potential burglars approaching the house. When you're not at home use automatic timer switches to turn on your lights when it goes dark to make it look like someone is in.

4 FRONT DOOR & LETTERBOX

Be aware when someone you don't know calls at your door and always use the chain. A distraction burglar's



aim is to get into homes by distracting valuables. Set up a personal password with your energy providers so you know they are who they say they are. Don't leave your keys where they can be viewed through your letterbox, even when at home – many thieves will use a cane with a hook on the end through your letterbox to steal car keys. When you're away on holiday, cancel any newspaper or milk deliveries and use Royal Mail's "Keep safe" service, to keep all your post until the date you return.

5 DRIVEWAY

Gravel driveways which are noisy when you walk on them are a good deterrent to any thieves thinking of breaking into your house.

6 VEHICLES

Make sure all windows, sunroofs and doors are locked when a vehicle is left unattended, even if just for a few minutes – if there is a security device for the vehicle it should be used at all times. All valuables should be removed from the vehicle or hidden out of sight when the vehicle is unoccupied.

7 WHEELIE BINS

Don't leave your recycling bins out where they can be used as a step to climb over a wall or fence. Also be certain to shred any documents with personal details on before throwing them away. At Christmas, make sure you don't leave boxes and

packaging outside your home advertising all the new toys and gadgets inside!

8 GARDENS, GATES AND FENCES

Prevent intruders getting to the back and sides of your home by installing strong fencing or gates. Check for weak spots where a thief could get into your garden, for example, a low or sagging fence, or a back gate with a weak lock.

A thorny hedge along the boundary of your property can put thieves off. But make sure that passers-by can still see the front of your home so that a burglar can't work without being seen.

9 SHEDS

Put all your tools away so they cannot be used to break into your house, and lock your garage and shed with security locks or padlocks. Consider anchoring heavy and expensive items such as bikes and lawn mowers to the floor to make it difficult for them to be stolen.

**Using our simple checklist,
ensure your home and garden
are secure against burglars**

**Pointers highlight areas where
you can improve security to
prevent your home, garden
or car from being targeted by
thieves.**