

# Secure lock can cut chances of break-in

By Kim Kemske  
special writer

Once a burglar decides to break into your home, he often will find that this can be accomplished with little or no force. Even the more elaborate and expensive locking devices are useless if doors are left unlocked.

Although there is no such thing as a completely burglar-proof building, you can reduce the chance of a break-in by improving your door security.

Many homes are secured with only a spring-latch door lock which can be pried open within seconds. Almost

all doorknobs are spring latches. To check your lock, hold the door open, lock the device, then push on the bolt that locks into the door frame when it's closed. If the bolt easily slides back into the door, you have a spring-latch lock and need to further secure your door.

A single-cylinder deadbolt lock, with a one-inch bolt, should be installed on each exterior door and used along with your doorknob lock. When shopping for deadbolt locks, it is best to look for a brand name in a moderate price range. Be sure it is constructed of case hardened steel which resists cutting and that it has a tapered cylinder guard to prevent

it from being wrenched off.

**ALWAYS AVOID** double-cylinder deadbolts, those which require a key for exit as well as entry, as these create a fire hazard if there is ever a need to exit your home in a hurry.

A metal reinforcing strike plate should be installed with your deadbolt lock. These should be installed with screws at least three inches long that extend well into the door frame, not just into the molding.

Whether you're installing it yourself or having a locksmith do the work, make sure that the receiving hole is deep enough to hold the entire length of the bolt. You should hear a

click when the bolt is fully extended. If not, it will not lock properly and the bolt can be pushed back to allow entry.

The door itself should be constructed of solid wood or metal and should contain no glass. If the door is mostly glass, hollow wood or an old-style door with wood panels, your best bet is replacement of the door, and possibly the door frame.

A small pane of glass in or next to a door may be secured with metal grating, polycarbonate material or a security film installed over the existing glass, which will render it shatterproof.

All exterior doors should be

checked to see that they fit properly to the door frame, leaving no gaps that would allow prying of the lock device. If the door has a large gap and can't be realigned, consider replacing the door and frame with a new metal door and frame.

Double entry doors pose another problem. Instead of the deadbolt locking into a solid frame, it locks into another hinged door, making it easier to kick in or otherwise force from the outside. The flushbolts, located at the top and bottom of the inactive door, should be checked regularly to be certain they are each fully extended.



Kim Kemske is a crime prevention technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department.

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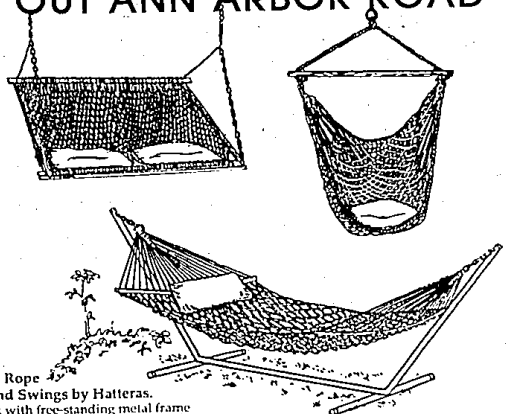
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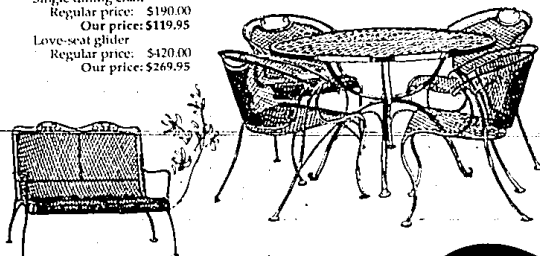
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