



Home Security: A Visual Guide

The saying goes that 'an Englishman's home is his castle'. While the concept of anyone, male or female as 'ruler' of their home sounds very old-fashioned in the 21st century, the idea of home as a stronghold and a place of safety remains popular today. So how do you make your home your 'castle', ensuring it is safe and secure against the outside world? As a simple tool for boosting home security, the **Master Locksmiths' Association (MLA)** have produced this step-by-step visual guide. Here, **Dr Steffan George, development director of the MLA** takes us through the guide:

Unsecure House – figure 1

"It's often useful to understand the pitfalls of poor security before beginning to consider what improvements to make to the security of your own home. Figure 1 illustrates the most common areas where security can be compromised in and around your home":

- 1. Obstructive bushes:** check that shrubs and bushes aren't obscuring your home from view – overgrown greenery can provide cover for burglars.
- 2. Open windows:** it's important to consider your own influence on the security of your home. Try to establish good habits and check that all windows are not only closed but locked before leaving the house.
- 3. Old door:** At the MLA we are firm believers that a lock can only be as good as the door or window it is installed into. A lock can only be fully effective if the application of the lock and the door it's being fitted into is appropriate and the door and frames are in good condition.
- 4. Drainpipe next to flat roof:** The combination of a flat roof and a 'convenient' drainpipe can make it all too easy for potential intruders to gain access through the upper windows of your home.
- 5. Window next to flat roof:** If you do have a flat roof, make sure that any windows within reach have the relevant window lock and where necessary are fortified, either with reinforced glass, bars/grilles or even block up the glass if you feel appropriate.
- 6. Exposed window:** Side windows can also increase the vulnerability of your home if you do not reinforce the glass using one of the methods mentioned above. If the window is next to your front door, ensure that you don't leave keys in sight.

7. **Broken & unlocked gate:** gates to your home, whether leading to the front door or the garden present an excellent opportunity for you to increase the security of your home. Don't lose out by leaving them unlocked and in poor repair – this also makes your home look more vulnerable and may attract opportunistic thieves.
8. **Broken fence:** Not only do gaps and broken patches in your fence look unsightly, they also create weak spots where intruders could gain access.
9. **Unsecure tools:** tools left lying around or unsecured in a shed can be used by burglars to gain entry, so make sure you clear them away and securely store them after use.
10. **Open & unlocked shed:** there is little point in having a shed to protect and secure valuable tools and machinery if you leave it unlocked and open for anyone to enter.

Secure House: figure 2

“Figure 2 shows how just a few changes can ensure your home is safe and secure”:

1. **Trimmed hedges:** as well as keeping your garden looking tidy, keeping hedges and undergrowth well trimmed ensures a clear view of the surroundings of the house, making it much harder for potential intruders to hide.
2. **Closed & locked window:** As well as making sure all windows are closed and securely locked whenever you leave the house, it is also worth enlisting an MLA locksmith to come and check the locks on your windows to confirm they meet your insurance requirements.
3. **Door and Lock to appropriate standards:** Once you have got a door which is fit for purpose and in good condition, you need to select an appropriate locking system. Sadly 'one lock fits all' doesn't apply, for instance a standard mortice lock would not work a multi point locking system on a UPVC door. Locks should also be appropriate to the door type fitted but it is not always easy to know what to look for – especially as there are several different standards in existence. It's a good idea to seek advice from a professional who will be able to install the correct lock to the right specification and appropriate security level.
4. **Alarm:** You may already have an alarm system fitted but it's essential that you remember to set it every time you leave the house. It's also important to regularly change your alarm code to ensure that nobody could have memorised it and passed it on.
5. **CCTV:** It's worth considering installing a CCTV system to help you be vigilant over who approaches your property. While not a necessity, it does enable you to monitor the outside of your home and keep an eye out for anything untoward. Having a CCTV system is also proven to be an effective deterrent against attack, so lessening the likelihood that your home will be singled out by intruders.

6. **Safe:** Invest in professionally specified and installed safe to ensure valuable items are properly secured and off limits to any intruders. An expert will advise you on the best type of safe to suit your needs, based on the size of your items and whether you want to store electronic data, documents or valuables
7. **Lighting:** Dusk to dawn lighting will not only deter potential thieves; it will also light your way to the door in the dark – and help you search for your keys!
8. **Bike lock:** if you own bikes and other sports equipment stored in sheds or garages, make sure you lock them securely in place to deter theft in the event of a break-in. Fit a ground anchor to lock them too. Look for 3rd party accredited products such as those that have passed Sold Secure testing. (See www.soldsecure.com for further info)
9. **Locked window next to flat roof:** make sure you always keep windows next to flat roofs securely locked, even when you are in the house as they can make an easy entry point for burglars.
10. **Bars on window:** bars or grilles are the most secure way of ensuring that a window does not compromise the security of a building – and with a vast range to choose from you can find a style which does not compromise the aesthetics of your home.
11. **Locked gate:** having appropriate locks installed on garden gates vastly increases the security of your home, as well as sending a deterrent signal to would-be burglars.
12. **Secured fence:** by keeping your fences in good condition you reduce opportunities for intruders to gain access to your property.
13. **Secured tools:** garden tools which are hung up and secured in a locked shed or outbuilding cannot be easily accessed by burglars looking for objects to use to smash windows and gain access to your home.
14. **Locked outhouse:** a secure lock is extremely important. Investing in a strong and solid shed to house your valuable garden and sports equipment is all well and good but this needs to be reinforced by a lock of an appropriate standard to ensure your insurance requirements are met, as well as to protect your belongings.

“It can be a minefield trying to ensure you have covered everything in terms of security, so why not ask a trusted professional such as an MLA licensed locksmith to survey the physical security of your house? That way you can rest assured that your home really is your castle, safe and secure from any intruders.”

For further information or to find an approved MLA company please visit

www.locksmiths.co.uk



Follow @[MLA_locksmiths](https://twitter.com/MLA_locksmiths) on Twitter

ENDS

Notes to editors

Issued on behalf of the Master Locksmiths Association by Karol Marketing Group.

For further information, pictures or to set up interviews please contact Jenny Rowley or Hayley Ford on 0191 265 7765 or email Jenny@karolmarketing.com/
Hayley@karolmarketing.com

About the MLA

The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) was established over 50 years ago to set and promote standards of conduct, practice and materials within locksmithing. The MLA is recognised as the authoritative body for locksmithing by the police, home office and other leading organisations such as the British Standards Institute.

As a not for profit association, the MLA ensure its member companies undergo strict vetting procedures so the public, government and industry receive the appropriate service and advice. MLA members share the ethos that 'skill and integrity' remain paramount in locksmithing and are able to provide sound advice based on knowledge and experience.

A list of approved MLA companies can be found on the MLA website, for further information please visit: www.locksmiths.co.uk