



Not moving? improving

Many homeowners have taken the opportunity in recent years to carry out major and minor improvements to their properties, preferring to increase the value of their existing homes rather than entering into the volatile property market. In 2011 it looks like the trend will continue.

Home refurbishment is also an opportunity to upgrade appliances, materials and fittings to the latest environmentally friendly and cost effective innovations and models. Each month, long-established St Helier company, Romerils, will be offering advice and ideas on how best to improve a home and increase the value of properties.

Home Security

Contrary to the Hollywood stereotype, most burglaries are not planned weeks in advance by criminal masterminds. In fact, 80 percent of burglars are green opportunists who choose their targets on the spur of the moment, using gut instinct and tell-tale signs as a guide.

Recognising and avoiding the signs that scream 'target' to neighbourhood criminals is an effective way of making a property less vulnerable to burglary. With a few simple modifications to your home and some changes in your habits, you can easily develop home security practices that will protect your home.

Despite increasing technological sophistication, the humble old key still is crucial with regard to home security. Its safekeeping and dutiful uses, therefore, are as important as the property and people being protected. Our recommendations are:

1. Don't hide keys – If you usually hide a house key outside your front door, stop doing it immediately. The first things burglars will do if they know someone isn't home is search door frames, beneath flower pots, rocks, and welcome mats. If you've built a good rapport with your neighbours, give them a spare key for home security if you're afraid you'll lock yourself out.

2. Locks – To keep a burglar from having easy access to your home, you should have good, high quality locks on all doors with outside access. If you are unsure of your present locks ask for a Free Survey and have them checked. If you just

purchased a new home, have you thought about the keys you were given? Are they the only ones to your new dwelling? If you cannot answer that question then you need to change the locks immediately.

3. Windows – Keep your windows shut and locked all the time when you're not at home, even during the summer. Criminals looking to break into a house are usually looking for unlocked doors and windows, or open doors and windows, which make breaking in incredibly simple and poor home security.

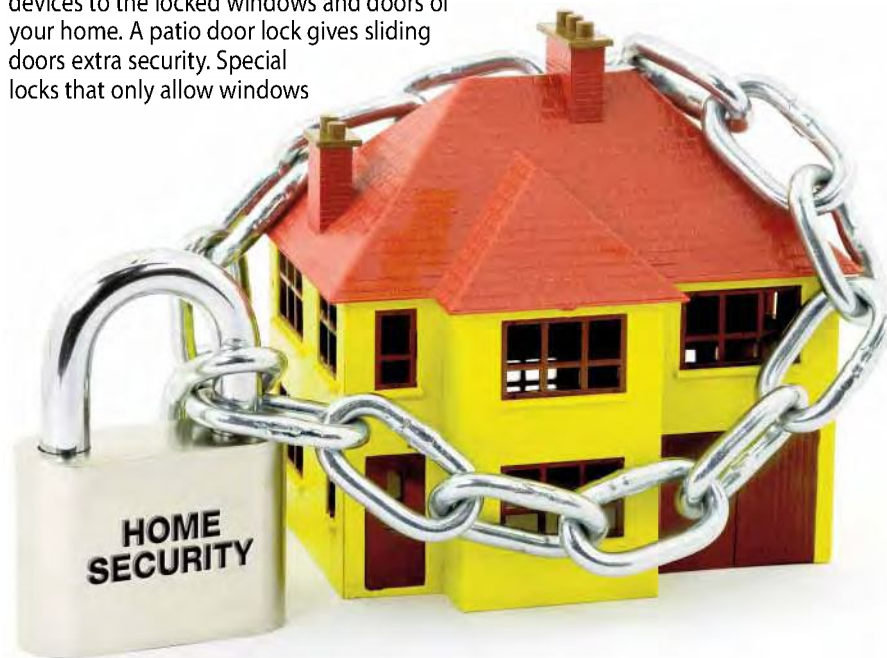
4. Secondary devices – A good way to keep your home secure is to add secondary devices to the locked windows and doors of your home. A patio door lock gives sliding doors extra security. Special locks that only allow windows

to open part of the way are another device for home security.

5. Keep valuables out of sight – Keeping your valuables out of sight is an excellent home security habit. They would rather spend their time on houses where they know they can get something worth stealing, so put jewellery away in boxes within closets, or preferably in a safe.

6. Signs – Even if you don't have a dog, putting up a "beware of dog" sign in a window or on a gate is an extremely effective way of keeping intruders away. While an intruder may be prepared to avoid or harm a dog he or she can see, they will hesitate to come face to face with what could be a Chihuahua or a German shepherd.

With the right mind-set, you can guarantee your peace of mind and home security while at work or on vacation. Following some of these tips will not only help you protect yourself and your possessions, but will make others more aware of what they can do for their own homes as well. An entire neighbourhood of secure premises is the ultimate home security. Talk to expert locksmiths who should provide advice free of charge.



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