

## Home Security Need Not Be Expensive

**Q:** *I would feel more comfortable with better home security, but I don't want higher electric bills from using floodlights. I cannot afford a complete monitored system. Are there any good options?*

**A:** Adequate home security is a priority for many families. While a well-lighted yard provides a good deterrent against break-ins, outdoor lighting can be expensive to install and operate.

At an average rate of 11 cents per kilowatt-hour, using two 150-watt floodlights for 10 hours a night costs about \$120 annually. If you choose outdoor lighting, put in light fixtures only where you feel security could be a problem. In most cases, motion-sensor lighting makes the most economical sense. Solar-powered units can help cut electric bills further.

Most security companies install equipment for a low initial cost (or even for free). Along with providing standard security, many monitored systems include smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

If you cannot afford monitoring, an X10 dialer can be attached to most home security systems. When someone tries to break in and the alarm

goes off, it automatically calls the telephone number of a friend or neighbor who can alert the police. The dialer may have to be professionally installed.

Simple improvements can be effective. Good deadbolt locks on doors and keeping window locks tightly closed are two of the best ways to keep would-be intruders out—and much less expensive than operating floodlights.

With deadbolt locks, start with a bump-resistant deadbolt. Otherwise, with a bumping key, a thief can open most pin tumbler locks in a few seconds.

Master Lock offers technology that lets a deadbolt be set so even a key can't

open it from outside. I have installed an electronic Schlage LiNK deadbolt on my front door that can be opened with a changeable four-button combination or a key, or be controlled remotely from a laptop computer.

Other security options include outdoor wireless video cameras. Prices on these are reasonable for many homeowners.

Affordable sensors can be mounted on windows and doors. Although they are not monitored, a burglar might not know this when the loud alarm goes off. If you don't have one of the most time-proven protection systems—a dog—barking dog devices sensitive to vibration can be hung on the inside of doorknobs.

When planning your home security, remember burglars want to get inside quickly. Create several layers of obstacles outside windows. Planting thorny rose or barberry bushes are one suggestion.

Consider extra locks on windows and placing large furniture in front of easy-to-access locations.

Strengthen framing around the latch area on outside doors, particularly back doors. Many door frames have only a one-inch thick pine board supporting the latch. With a couple of good kicks, the wood splinters and the door swings open. Attach a reinforcing steel strip under the door trim and install longer screws that reach deep into the wall framing.

The following companies offer security systems:

- ▶ **Digital Security Controls**  
(888) 888-7838  
www.dsc.com
- ▶ **Honeywell**  
(800) 573-0154  
www.security.honeywell.com
- ▶ **Intermatic**  
(815) 675-7000  
www.intermatic.com
- ▶ **Wireless Imaging**  
(800) 676-3402  
www.wirelessimaging.com
- ▶ **X10**  
(800) 675-3044  
www.x10.com. ■



This wall-control module for a monitored security system has colored buttons for police, fire and health emergencies.



To ask a question, write to **James Dulley**, Energy Report, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, Ohio 45244, or check his Web page, [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).

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