

## 3 Easy Home Defense Steps

2013-08-13 15:26:16 By Bryan Wilde



In a post-apocalyptic world, protecting your home and yourself should be your highest priority. You will no longer be able to rely on law enforcement to protect you and there are going to be crowds of angry, scared, unprepared people struggling to survive. Just because you took the time to prepare for the events that broke down society doesn't mean that your job is done. On a daily basis, you will be tasked with protecting the supplies you so carefully stockpiled during better times.

### Don't Show Off

Just about anything you have acquired for post-catastrophic survival makes you a target for attack. Machinery, vehicles, tools, even your garden make you more susceptible to possible assault. Try to keep your possessions hidden from plain view whenever possible. Fences work but make it pretty obvious that you are attempting to hide something. Instead, consider using natural ways to obscure your possessions. Trees, shrubs, and other foliage block the view of people passing through without making it seem too obvious that something is being hidden.

Make sure that windows in your home do not divulge what may be inside either. If your family is sitting at the table eating a home cooked meal and someone can see this event from the window there is a good chance they will try to join you; invited or not. Take a look at your home from the street to get a better understanding of this vantage point. You are better able to make changes after seeing for yourself what angry mobs of people will see as they pass your property.

As a general rule, home invasions tend to be a crime of opportunity. An open window or unlocked door serves as an invitation for criminals. A home that looks secure is less likely to be attacked by people looking for an easy score. More often than not, these people will move on in search of an

easier target elsewhere.

## Secure the Yard

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a technique that relies on landscaping to make your property, and ultimately your home, less likely to be targeted for attack. Trees and shrubs can serve another purpose in addition to obscuring the view of your property. By carefully landscaping your property, they also make it difficult for intruders to gain casual access. In fact, shrubs can be used to create natural funnels that force potential threats to move into defined areas. These areas should be easily viewable from your home so you have time to make preparations for an attack.

CPTED has another aspect known as Natural Access Control. This refers to the use of holly bushes or other thorny foliage near potential access points. It becomes very difficult (and painful) for an attacker to climb through these obstacles and into your window. It may thwart the attack completely. At the very least, it weakens the attacker making your counter-assault more effective.

## Secure the Windows and Doors

Sometimes all the landscaping and other perimeter defenses in the world are not enough to stop a determined attacker. Fortifying all the entry points into your home can keep attackers at bay long enough for you to plan your next move.

Doors are the first point of entry that any thief looks for. The front door should be a reinforced security door. Although intricate glass paneling makes your home look inviting now, those glass panels can become weak points in your structure during an attack. There are thousands of security doors available that compliment the design of nearly any home without sacrificing protection. Installing a security screen door adds an additional layer of protection. The security door can be broken into but it makes access more difficult.

Pay special attention to the back door of your home. As many as half of all home invasion attempts originate from the back door because it typically provides additional cover for the intruder and the doors tend to be much weaker than front doors. A plain wood or hollow-core fiberglass door is very common in the back of a home and both of these can be destroyed relatively quickly. Consider replacing your current back door with a more robust model similar in construction to your front door.

Be sure to use deadbolts on every exterior door in addition to the handle locking mechanism. Each deadbolt should be a Class 2 (rated the best for residential use) and the throw bolt should be at least one inch in length. Inferior deadbolts are far too easy to bypass with simple tools.

Even if the door is robust, there is another weak spot that should be considered. The door frame itself can often be unseated or broken with a swift kick or a battering ram. Most door frames are simply tacked into place using small finishing nails during home construction. Installing three-inch screws into the door frame every few inches is an easy way to increase the security of these entrance points. Flimsy striker plates are another weakness inherent to most doorways. Replace striker plates with high-quality metal and use three-inch screws to secure these into the door frame.

Sliding glass doors are easy to break. Consider boarding them up with plywood to make access more difficult. The locking mechanisms on these doors are also notoriously easy to break. Place a wooden dowel into the track behind the sliding door to prevent opening if the lock is compromised.

Windows are the second access point that requires your attention. Even locked windows can easily be popped open if there is a gap big enough to force a crowbar or screwdriver into. Adding stoppers to window frames makes access more difficult. The stopper is simply a metal pin or nail installed in the window frame. This prevents the window from opening more than a few inches even if the lock is compromised. Since these pins are not easily viewable from outside, the attacker will waste valuable time trying to force the window open. This time can be used by you to prepare a defensive stand or retreat is necessary.

Board up any windows that are not absolutely necessary to survival. Windows that allow in sunlight can help with passive solar heating techniques but other windows are not needed and create unnecessary access points during an attack. Securely boarding up these windows forces intruders to look for alternative entrances and increases the chances that they will give up and look for an easier target down the road.

If you live in a populated area you are much more likely to be attacked. Especially in the days immediately following the apocalypse, high-population areas are expected to fall victim to extreme violence and riots. Although these techniques can help ward off an attack, determined individuals will find a way in. Consider retreating to a bug out location in a remote area. Attacks are much less likely in these areas and your chances of launching a successful counterattack are much better.

Taking steps to secure your home now is helpful after a catastrophe but can also thwart home invasions now. In the United States, a home is broken into approximately every 11 seconds. Fortifying your home and property now ensures that you are less likely to become a statistic now or in a survival situation in the future.

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