

DRILL, BABY, DRILL A little skill and a cordless drill opened most of the deadbolts we tested.

Door locks

Some locks could leave you vulnerable

MANY OF THE dead-bolt locks we tested don't provide the level of protection you might expect. A few well-placed kicks or a standard cordless drill was all it took to defeat every lock except the Medeco Maxum 11WC60L, \$190.

Those test results are especially unsettling because forcible entries, such as kick-ins, are the most common type of home break-ins. And 67 percent of respondents to our national survey count on dead-bolt locks to help keep their homes secure. But any dead-bolt lock is better than the common key-in-knob variety.

The only flaw we found in the Medeco lock was its brass finish, which tarnished. We tested the brushed-nickel finish of the same lock; it scored Excellent.

We spent weeks prying, hammering, picking, pummeling, and drilling locks,

and few scored well. A handful proved far more susceptible than most.

Parts are often inadequate. All locks come with a strike plate that attaches to the door frame. But as we've reported in

the past, far too many of those are flimsy. Except for the Assa M80, \$95, the kick-in resistance of most locks improved dramatically when we replaced the strike plates with a Mag High Security Box Strike, \$10. You can buy it, or its equivalent, at home centers and online. But we think a lock should be secure without your having to buy another part.

Drills easily open most locks. With all except the two locks classified as high-security, even an ordinary cordless drill could drill out the cylinders in 2 minutes or less. Our tests on the Assa and Medeco, which have hardened cylinders across the product line, ruined the locks but denied access—so you'd have to replace the lock but not your home's contents.

New technologies and old problems. The iTouchless Bio-Matic BM002U, \$250, is the most expensive lock we tested. It opens by fingerprint, passcode, or key. But while it claims "maximum protection for yourself and your loved ones," it was among the easiest to defeat. We liked the convenience of the Baldwin Prestige 93800-001, \$34; Kwikset 99800-087, \$28; and keypad-operated Kwikset 99090-001, \$100. All can be rekeyed for temporary access to guests and contractors and then rekeyed again, when access is no longer needed, without having to change the lock or call a locksmith. Yet all of those locks succumbed too easily to our prying/wrenching test.

How to choose

You'll get no protection if you leave your door unlocked while you're out, as almost 20 percent of those surveyed said they do at least occasionally. Also consider:

Learn lock lingo. The deadbolts we tested are single-cylinder and are operated using a thumbturn. The high-security locks have hardened cylinders, unique pin



Alarm-company gotchas

Alarms, especially noisy ones, can provide an extra layer of security. Almost 80 percent of homeowners with alarms rated those systems effective at protecting their homes in a recent, nationally representative survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. But before you get an alarm or switch monitoring companies, check whether your area requires a permit, and be aware of the following contract clauses:

Early-termination charges. These can leave you liable for up to 80 percent of the

costs of the contract's term, even if you move.

Exclusions. A contract we saw warns that promises made by sales staff or in ads are not binding if they're not in the contract.

Limited liability. If you suffer a break-in, even due to the alarm company's negligence or failure of the equipment or service, the company isn't responsible and won't reimburse beyond a specific amount, \$300 to \$1,000 on the contracts we reviewed. You might also forfeit the right to sue the company for additional money.

configurations, and other defenses. Industry rankings, Grades 1 to 3, seemed to track with our Ratings, with Grade 1 locks being the hardest to disable. But packages don't always display that information, so check company websites.

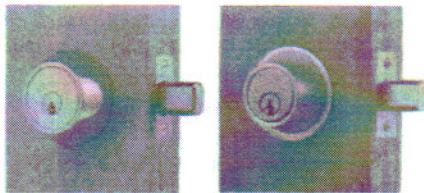
Decide how much you can spend. A high-security lock of the Medeco caliber might seem expensive, especially if you have it professionally installed. But if you

have a break-in, the deductible on your homeowners insurance is likely to be higher than the cost of the lock. And insurance policies commonly give discounts for homes with dead-bolt locks.

Beef up the door frame and lock. Hollow-core or weak doors may give way before the lock does. Whatever type of lock you buy, be sure your strike is made of heavy-duty metal and installed with the

3-inch screws that we think should come with all locks. Hinges should also be secured with 3-inch screws. Some municipalities consider double-sided locks, which require a key on both sides, a fire hazard.

Call the cops. Your local police might have home-security brochures, classes, or even on-site safety inspections. If not, check the National Crime Prevention Council's advice at www.nccpc.org.



A1 Medeco

B1 Falcon

Overview

The right lock for you depends largely on your concerns about a break-in, what other measures you're taking, and how much you want to pay. The locks we recommend vary in the protection they offer but withstood most of our tests.

Recommended

These offer top performance and often specific strengths.

For the most protection:

- A1 Medeco \$190
- B1 Falcon \$55

Only A1 aced all of our tough security tests. Its only flaw, finish durability, is cosmetic. But a brushed-nickel version scored Excellent for finish durability. B1 has a much lower price and offers almost as much security, but it can easily be defeated with a drill.

The rekeyable B4, \$46, and electronic C1, \$130, did almost as well against kick-ins. The B7 also did almost as well if you add a \$10 Mag High Security Box Strike. Without the better strike, B7 was easy prey to kick-ins. All can be defeated with a drill.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is based mainly on resistance to a heavy metal pendulum meant to simulate a burglar's kicks. **Resistance to kick-in as sold** is how well the lock survived increasingly forceful impacts using the hardware it comes with. **Kick-in reinforced** (not used in scoring) is the same test using an aftermarket

Ratings Door locks

In performance order, within types. (Types designated A, B, etc.)

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Resistance to						
					Kick-in as sold	Kick-in reinforced	Prying/wrenching	Drilling	Picking	Hammering	Sawing
A HIGH-SECURITY											
✓	1	Medeco Maxum IIW60L	\$190	90	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
	2	Assa M80	95	87	10	10	10	10	10	10	
B STANDARD											
✓	1	Falcon D241	55	82	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	2	Baldwin Prestige 93800-001	34	67	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	3	Kwikset 99800-087	28	67	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	4	Schlage FB50NSK V GEO 505 605	46	59	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	5	Weiser GDC9471	26	57	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	6	Emtek 8455 Profile	40	52	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	7	Arrow E61	43	46	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	8	Yale YH 82	42	28	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	9	Dexter JD60	21	27	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	10	Kwikset 96600-419	13	24	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	11	Weslock 00671-1-15L23	30	23	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	12	Gate House 279854	12	23	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	13	Segal SE 15361	50	21	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	14	Master Lock 5261D	13	17	10	10	10	10	10	10	
C ELECTRONIC											
	1	Schlage BE365 V CAM 619	130	59	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	2	Kwikset 99090-001	100	45	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	3	iTouchless Bio-Matic BMO02U	250	17	10	10	10	10	10	10	

① Needed no reinforcement. ② Rekeyable. ③ Surface-mount.

Mag Security Box Strike in place of the included strike or, for surface-mount locks, 3-inch screws; models scoring Excellent as sold were not retested. **Prying/wrenching** uses a pipe wrench, channel-lock pliers, and a screwdriver with lever. **Hammering** swings a weighted sledgehammer down onto the lock to break

it off; the more blows needed (up to 10), the higher the score. High scores in **sawing** are for locks whose deadbolt couldn't be totally cut and whose performance in kick-in tests didn't drop after they were partially cut. We tested **finish durability** by exposing the locks to salt spray. **Price** is approximate retail.