

The following tips come from convicted burglars, security consultant Chris McGoey and Richard T. Wright, a criminology professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, who interviewed 105 burglars.

1. **I carry a clipboard, or dress like a lawn guy. I try to never look like a crook.**
2. **The two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors.**
3. **I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he is doing.**
4. **Why do people pay for a fancy alarm and leave the house without setting it?**
5. **I love looking in windows. I look for signs that you're home and for the nice stuff you have. I drive or walk by at dusk, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets.**
6. **Don't announce your vacation on the internet. It's easy to look up your address.**
7. **Leaving that window cracked is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's also an invitation.**
8. **If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. I can hit the jackpot and walk right in.**
9. **Of course I look familiar. I have cleaned your carpets or delivered a refrigerator.**
10. **When you let me use the bathroom while working in your yard, I unlocked the window.**
11. **Love those flowerbeds. That tells me you have money, and that there are nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out let me know how old they are, and I wonder what cool stuff they have, too.**
12. **We really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway, and might leave a flyer in your front door to see when you remove it.**
13. **If it snows while you're out of town, get a neighbor to create car and foot tracks into the house. Untouched snow drifts in the driveway are a dead giveaway.**
14. **If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set or not.**
15. **A good security company alarms the window over the sink and the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom. It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there too.**
16. **I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions or offer to clean your gutters.**
17. **I always check dresser drawers, the nightstand, and the medicine cabinet. Here's a helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.**
18. **You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.**