



DEALING WITH A HOME SECURITY SYSTEM BREAK-IN

Even if you're not home when it happens, break-ins are a terrifying ordeal. This invasion of your personal space can shatter your sense of safety for a long time.

Aside from the "standard" important tasks such as reporting stolen items to the police and your insurance company, here are some steps you can take towards feeling secure again:

Improve your home security by using the following: Work especially on the visual and physical deterrents. Make it clear (with big security signs, for example) that you are NOT going to be broken into again. And if the break-in illustrated a particular security hole, plug it. Beef up the security and make it clear that you've done so.

If you or a family member cannot stop worrying about another break-in, or starts showing other anxiety symptoms, visit a counselor. As anyone who's gone through one knows, break-ins can be very traumatic (particularly home invasions), and this can lead to a disorder called PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is a serious condition that is diagnosed by a counselor, and can be treated effectively with counseling. Don't be afraid or ashamed to seek help.

As for recovering stolen property, it's best to leave this process to the police. If you've marked your belongings with your driver's license number and given police your serial numbers, you've greatly increased your chances of getting your stuff back. Police have various ways of looking for stolen goods.

Most people don't know their neighbors very well these days. This is a shame for several good reasons, one of them being home security. Your neighbors can be potent allies in your efforts to keep your home safe and secure.

Get to know your neighbors if you haven't already. Tell them about your interest in keeping your home secure, and ask them if they could keep an eye out for you. Offer to do the same for them.

You should also call your local police and see if there's an active neighborhood watch program in your area. If not, start one. This can be an effective way to help the whole neighborhood watch out for each other, and it can also build a sense of community (which has benefits that go far beyond home security).

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