Which Locks Need Changing First in a New Home

Moving into a new home brings a mix of excitement and a long to-do list. Among the boxes, paint swatches, and utility setups, one task deserves immediate attention: the locks on your doors. You have no way of knowing how many copies of the existing keys are floating around. Previous owners, their friends, contractors, and service people may all have copies. Changing the locks early gives you control over who can enter your home.

The question is not whether to change them but which ones to tackle first. Not every lock on the property carries the same risk. A deadbolt on the front door is a higher priority than a cabinet lock, for example. Working through the list in a logical order saves time and prevents you from leaving a vulnerable entry point open while you focus on less critical hardware.

Start with the Front and Back Doors

The front door is the most used entry point in any home. It is also the one most people think of first. The back door, especially if it leads to a patio or garage, is just as important. Both should have a quality deadbolt installed. A deadbolt provides a solid mechanical barrier that a simple credit card cannot bypass. If the existing deadbolt looks worn or feels loose when you turn the key, replace it entirely rather than just rekeying it. A worn cylinder can fail when you need it most, leaving you locked out or making the lock easy to pick.

For the back door, consider a lock that works with a key from the inside as well as the outside. Some homeowners prefer a thumb-turn on the interior for quick exit, but a keyed interior lock adds an extra layer of security if the door has glass panels. A potential intruder cannot simply break the glass and reach through to turn the lock.



Check the Garage Entry Door

Many homes have a door that connects the garage to the house. This door often gets overlooked because the garage door itself has a lock or an automatic opener. But if someone gains access to the garage through a broken side window or a compromised garage door opener, the door between the garage and the house becomes the last line of defense. That door should have a deadbolt as strong as the one on the front door. Rekey it so it matches the same key as the front and back doors, or install a new lock if the existing one is old or flimsy. A cheap interior-grade lockset will not stop someone who is already inside the garage.

Evaluate the Basement and Side Doors

Side doors and basement walk-out doors are often hidden from street view, which makes them attractive to someone who wants to work without being seen. These doors tend to get less traffic, so their locks may be older and less secure. A basement door that leads to a dark stairwell is a common entry point for burglars because it offers cover. If the lock on that door is a basic key-in-knob model, upgrade it to a deadbolt. The same goes for any door that opens onto a porch, deck, or balcony that is easily accessible from the ground. A sliding glass door

lock is also worth checking. A simple wooden dowel or a bar in the track is better than nothing, but a dedicated sliding door lock adds real security.

When you evaluate these less-used doors, look at the strike plate as well. A strike plate that is held in place by short screws can be kicked in with surprising ease. Replacing the short screws with longer ones that reach into the door frame studs makes a noticeable difference. This is a simple upgrade that costs very little and can be done while you are changing the locks. It is one of those small details that can help securing residential doors without requiring a major investment in new hardware.

Consider Rekeying Instead of Full Replacement

Not every lock needs to be ripped out and replaced. If the existing locks are in good condition and the brand is one you are happy with, rekeying is a faster and cheaper option. Rekeying changes the internal pins and springs of the cylinder so that the old keys no longer work and a new key does. A locksmith can rekey multiple locks to the same key, so you end up with one key for the whole house. This is a practical solution if you want to keep the original hardware for aesthetic reasons or if the locks are relatively new. Rekeying does not address a worn or damaged lock, but for a sound lock it works perfectly.

If you decide to rekey, do it for all the exterior doors at once. Rekeying just the front door and leaving the back door on a different key defeats the purpose of simplifying your key ring. A single key that works every exterior door is convenient and reduces the chance of getting locked out.



Think About Smart Locks and Keypads

This is a good time to decide whether you want to upgrade to a smart lock or a keypad lock. A keypad lock lets you enter an access code instead of using a physical key. Some models also connect to a smartphone app, so you can grant temporary codes to guests or service providers. That eliminates the need to hand out keys that could be copied. Smart locks vary in complexity and price, but the basic principle is the same: you control access without relying on metal keys. If you choose a smart lock, make sure it has a backup method for entry, such as a physical key or a backup battery. A lock that fails electronically can leave you stranded.

If you are not ready for a full smart lock, a simple keypad deadbolt is a reliable middle ground. It offers the convenience of a code without the connectivity and potential complications of a

networked device. Many models allow you to store multiple codes, so you can give a unique code to a house sitter or a cleaner and delete it later. This level of control is one reason homeowners find that keypad locks can help securing residential doors in a flexible way that traditional keys cannot match.

Don't Forget the Mailbox and Gate Locks

Mailbox locks are small and easy to overlook, but they protect your mail and any packages that might be left inside. If the mailbox is built into the wall or mounted on a post near the front door, change the lock or have it rekeyed to match your house key. The same goes for any gate on the property that has a lock. A gate that leads to a backyard or a side yard can be a weak point if it is secured with a flimsy padlock. A weather-resistant padlock that requires a key or a combination is a simple upgrade. If the gate itself is not very sturdy, consider replacing the latch with one that can accept a padlock. Every point of access matters, even the ones that seem minor.

Work with a Qualified Locksmith

If you are changing multiple locks or rekeying the whole house, a residential locksmith Edmonton can handle the job efficiently. They can come to the property, assess the condition of each lock, and either rekey or replace them on site. This saves you the hassle of buying new locks and trying to install them yourself, especially if the doors are not standard sizes or the existing hardware is unusual. A locksmith can also advise on the best type of lock for each door, taking into account the door material, the frame condition, and your security needs. They carry the tools and parts to do the work correctly the first time, and they can cut new keys on the spot.

When you hire a professional, you also get the benefit of their experience with common issues, such as misaligned strike plates or doors that have settled over time. A lock that is installed slightly off can bind and wear out prematurely, and a locksmith will notice and correct that during the installation. The cost of the service is usually modest compared to the peace of mind it provides. You know that every exterior lock on your new home is secure and that you are the only one with the keys.

Make a Plan and Do It Quickly

The first week in a new home is chaotic, but lock changes should move near the top of the list. Start with the doors that are easiest for someone to approach unseen: front, back, garage, and

basement. Then work through the side doors and gates. Decide whether to rekey or replace based on the condition of the hardware. If you are unsure, have a locksmith inspect the locks and give you a recommendation. Once the locks are done, you can focus on the rest of the move with one less thing to worry about. Knowing that your home is locked properly from day one lets you sleep better and enjoy the new space.