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Danielle Pugh, Account administrator

DIY tips and tricks

HOW TO PICK A LOCK

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Have you ever experienced being locked out of your own home because you happen to have misplaced or lost your keys? Do not panic and think about picking the lock yourself before calling somebody for help. Majority of locks used in homes are plain pin-and-tumbler type locks that can be easily unlocked using a pick and tension tool, in which these tools can be crafted from ordinary household materials. Picking a lock is easy and can be easier when you practice a bit more but it involves a considerable amount of tolerance.

STEPS

- 1. Know the mechanics of your lock. Most pin-and-tumbler locks include a cylinder and several pair of pins. The cylinder revolves inside its casing and locked by the pins. When locked, the uppermost pin of each pair sticks out on the cylinder and the casing, stopping the cylinder from revolving as a result. By placing in the proper key, the pair of pins will be driven up thus withdrawing the uppermost pins from the cylinder which will then enable the cylinder to be turned and the lock released.
- 2. Prepare your pick and torque wrench. There are several types of picks specially made for different locks. A torque wrench on the other hand is a tool used to apply force to turn the lock cylinder. These pick and torque wrench tools are commercially available and can be acquired in sets although some people prefer to make their own set of lock picking tools.
- 3. Position the torque wrench into the lower part of the keyhole.
- **4.** Establish the cylinderÂls turning direction for the lock to be released. If you frequently use the key to unlock your door then you most likely know which direction to turn the key in order to release the lock. Otherwise, use the torque wrench to apply pressure to the cylinder. Turn it clockwise and followed by turning it the other direction. In either way you turn, the cylinder will definitely turn also but only for a few millimeter before coming to a halt. If the stop feels solid and firm you are turning the cylinder the wrong way, while if the stop feels ÂlyieldingÂl you are turning it the correct direction.
- **5.** Administer light pressure to the torque wrench going to the correct direction. Hold down the torque wrench. The necessary torque will be different for every lock and also for every pin on the lock, thus trial and testing is necessary at this point.
- **6.** Place in the pick into the upper portion of the keyhole and sense the pins. Feel each pin inside the lock with your pickÂIs tip by pressing them up. Try to push all these pins upwards and make out the pin that is hardest to press up. If you encounter a pin that wonÂIt budge at all, release the torque slowly until you can press that pin up. Otherwise, raise the torque by turning the torque wrench when you can push all the pins up easily.
- 7. Press on the immovable pin up until it ÂlsetsÂl. Remember that the aim here is to push the upper pin totally out of the cylinder, so continue applying adequate pressure to beat the downward force of the spring. At some point where you cannot push this pin anymore, this pin should drop into the cylinder except that the torque applied on the cylinder will cause the misalignment of the cylinderÂls hole with the hole in its casing Âll the pin obstructing the cylinder should have retracted by this time and rest on the cylinder. A soft click should then be heard when the upper pin touches the cylinder. You can determine if the upper pin was set successfully when you can push the lower pin up without resistance from the spring.
- **8.** Keep on putting torque and go over the steps for the rest of the pins. Sustaining the torque on the cylinder is very crucial to stop the set pins from falling back down. Adjust the torque applied to the pins as each require different amount of torque.
- **9.** And lastly, unfasten the lock. By this time, you should have set all the pins and by using the torque wrench you should be able to turn the cylinder and open the lock.

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