Choosing the Right Lock for Your Home: Deadbolts, Multipoint Locks, and Smart Locks

When it comes to securing your home, the lock on your front door is the first line of defense. But not all locks are created equal, and the choices can feel overwhelming. You might have heard terms like deadbolt, multipoint lock, and smart lock thrown around, but what do they actually mean for your daily life and your home's security? This article breaks down these three common types of residential locks, explaining how each works and what you should consider before making a choice. Understanding these options helps you make an informed decision that fits your home and your habits.

What Is a Deadbolt?

The deadbolt is a classic, and for good reason. Unlike a spring latch found in a standard doorknob lock, a deadbolt has a solid metal bolt that extends from the door into the door frame. The bolt is "dead" - it does not retract unless you turn the key or thumb turn. This simple design makes it much harder to force open than a latch lock. A spring latch can be pushed back with a credit card, but a deadbolt resists that kind of prying.

Deadbolts come in two main types: single-cylinder and double-cylinder. A single-cylinder deadbolt has a keyhole on the outside and a thumb turn on the inside. A double-cylinder deadbolt requires a key on both sides, which can be more secure but also creates a hazard if you need to exit quickly in an emergency. For most homes, a single-cylinder deadbolt with a keyed exterior and thumb turn interior is a good balance of security and convenience.

Another important feature to look for in a deadbolt is the lock grade. Locks are graded by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) from Grade 1 (highest) to Grade 3 (lowest). Grade 1 deadbolts are built to withstand repeated use and forced entry attempts, making them ideal for front doors. Grade 2 is suitable for interior doors or lower-traffic exterior doors, while Grade 3 is for light-duty use. The grade is usually stamped on the box or the lock itself. A deadbolt's security also depends on the strike plate and door frame. A reinforced strike plate with long screws that reach into the wall studs can make a deadbolt much stronger than one held in place by short screws in the door trim.

View the location on Google Maps

What Is a Multipoint Lock?

Multipoint locks are common on modern doors, especially those made of steel or fiberglass. Instead of a single bolt at the center of the door, a multipoint lock has three or more locking

points that engage simultaneously. Typically, there are hooks or bolts at the top, center, and bottom of the door edge. When you lift the handle or turn the key, all of them shoot into the door frame at once.



This design offers several advantages. First, it distributes the force of an attempted break-in across multiple points, making the door much harder to force open. Second, multipoint locks often use a cylinder lock mechanism that resists picking and bumping. Third, because the door is secured at multiple points, it tends to seal tightly against the weatherstripping, improving energy efficiency and reducing drafts.

However, multipoint locks are not perfect. They can be more complex to install and adjust than a simple deadbolt. If the door frame is not perfectly aligned, the lock may stick or fail to engage properly. Also, because the locking points are integrated into the handle mechanism, a failure of the handle can leave you unable to lock or unlock the door. For these reasons, multipoint locks are most common on new doors or as part of a door system, rather than as a retrofit item. If your home has a steel entry door, it likely already has a multipoint lock. If you are replacing an old door, a multipoint system can be a strong upgrade, but you should have it installed by a professional who can ensure the frame is properly prepared.

What Is a Smart Lock?

Smart locks are a more recent innovation that adds convenience and flexibility to home security. At their core, smart locks are electronic locks that you can control with a smartphone, a keypad, or even your voice. Many smart locks are designed to retrofit onto an existing deadbolt, replacing the thumb turn with a motorized unit. Others replace the entire lock assembly.

The main appeal of a smart lock is keyless entry. You can let yourself in with a code, a fingerprint, or by tapping your phone. You can also grant temporary access to guests, service providers, or dog walkers without handing out a physical key. Some models integrate with home automation systems, so your door can unlock when your car arrives or lock itself when you leave. Many models also provide an activity log so you can see who came and went and when.

But smart locks also introduce new considerations. They require batteries, and if the batteries die, you might be locked out unless there is a backup key or a 9-volt contact on the outside. They are also vulnerable to cyber threats, though reputable brands use encryption to protect against hacking. If your home's Wi-Fi is unreliable, a cloud-dependent smart lock might not work when you need it. Finally, smart locks are generally not as strong as a heavy-duty deadbolt in terms of physical resistance. A determined burglar with a crowbar might not care much about your digital lock's firmware. For this reason, many security experts recommend using a smart lock as a supplement to a good deadbolt, not a replacement.



How to Choose the Right Lock for Your Home

Your choice depends on your priorities. If you want the highest physical security and you do not mind using a key, a Grade 1 deadbolt with a reinforced strike plate is a proven solution. It is simple, reliable, and does not depend on batteries or internet. If you have a modern door with a multipoint lock, it is already offering strong protection, but you should check that the door frame is sturdy and the lock is well-maintained. If you value convenience and want to eliminate keys, a smart lock can be a great addition, but pair it with a deadbolt for backup and physical strength.

Also consider your daily routine. Do you often have guests or service people coming by? A smart lock with a temporary code feature can save you the hassle of hiding a spare key. Do you live in an area with frequent power outages? A purely electronic lock might not be ideal. Do you rent your home? You may need to get your landlord's approval before changing the lock, and a smart lock that does not require drilling might be easier to install and remove.

Installation and Maintenance

Most deadbolts and smart locks can be installed by a handy homeowner with basic tools, but a proper installation is critical for security. The lock must be aligned with the strike plate so the bolt slides fully into the hole. If the bolt only goes in partway, the door can be pried open easily. For multipoint locks, professional installation is almost always recommended because of the alignment requirements and the need to cut multiple holes in the door edge.

Regular maintenance also matters. Lubricate the lock mechanism with a dry graphite powder or a silicone-based lubricant once a year. Avoid oil-based products, which can gum up over time. Check the screws in the strike plate and hinges to make sure they are tight. If you have a smart lock, replace the batteries before they get low, and keep a spare set handy. Many smart locks will alert you when the battery is low, but it is best to change them proactively every six months.

When to Call a Professional

If you are unsure about which lock to choose, or if you need help with installation, a residential locksmith services professional can provide guidance and hands-on help. They can assess your door and frame, recommend the right lock grade and type, and ensure the installation is done correctly. This is especially important for older homes where doors may be out of square or frames may need reinforcement.



For residents of Oklahoma City and the surrounding area, Okey Locksmith provides 24/7 mobile automotive, residential, commercial, access control, and emergency locksmith services. Whether you need a new deadbolt installed, a smart lock set up, or an emergency

lockout resolved, they can help. Their team understands the local security needs and can work with your existing door to find the best solution.

Ultimately, the best lock is one that fits your lifestyle, your door, and your budget. A deadbolt gives you reliable, straightforward security. A multipoint lock offers robust protection for modern doors. A smart lock adds convenience and control. By understanding what each type does, you can make a choice that keeps your home safe without complicating your daily life.

Okey Locksmith is also on YouTube.

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