

10 Hiding Spots Burglars Always Look First

Under the mattress

Burglars will make a beeline to the room with the most valuables. The good stop is always going to be in the master bedroom, that's where you have your clothes, your jewelry, your extra cash, your weapons, your prescriptions—anything of value. Hiding things under the mattress is one of the oldest tricks in the book, so a thief will likely check there for hidden treasures there.

Bedroom closet

A thief might rummage through your entire closet—pockets and all—looking for cash or other valuables. If you do decide to store valuables in your closet, leave them in a box purposely mislabeled with a boring name (think: “college textbooks 1981” or “baby clothes”) to keep sticky fingers out.

Dresser drawers

While burglars are in your bedroom, a jewelry box on top of the dresser is a hot commodity. Even you don't store your jewelry in plain sight, a thief will probably hunt around in dresser drawers for a shoebox or other unique box that could be filled with watches, jewels, and other valuables. Instead of putting your high-value belongings in an obvious box, ball them up in a sock, he suggests. Pick a pair with a bright pattern that will stand out to you but won't look fishy to a crook.

Portable safe

You probably want to keep your precious items locked away, but it won't do much good if the safe isn't attached to the floor or a wall. If it's closed and locked, it implies there are things of value in there. If it's small and portable, they'll take the whole thing. On the other hand, burglars are generally trying to get in and out as quickly as possible. They won't bother using a stethoscope to crack the combination, so a heavy safe they can't lift is your best bet.

Medicine cabinet

Crooks want to make quick cash off your belongings, so they'll be sure to browse your medicine cabinet for prescription pills they can sell. The pills might not be a concern because you can get a refill easily, but be careful what you store nearby. You want to avoid putting anything of significant value around medication of any kind. For instance, using an old pill container as a hiding spot for jewels could actually make them a target.

Freezer

If you've thought of the freezer as a sneaky hiding spot, chances are a robber has, too. A burglar won't rummage through your entire stack of frozen peas and fish sticks, but if you leave your treasures in something out-of-place, such as a sock, the thief will be onto you. If you're going to put something in the freezer, you want to put it in with something that looks legit, like wrapping it in a bag that used to have blueberries in it. Use the same rule of thumb if hiding anything in a pantry. Just give a loved one a heads up so that if anything happens, your valuables won't be trashed with the rest of your food.

Office drawers

Think twice before stashing important papers like birth certificates or passports in your office drawers. People want to be convenient. They have a file labeled. Unfortunately, that also means you're leading burglars straight to everything they need to steal your identity. Use a locked drawer to keep sensitive data safe. Or better yet, put these and other valuable documents in a small fireproof safe in that big safe in the closet that we mentioned earlier.

Vase

An empty vase could act as a hiding place for valuables, but swindlers are onto your tricks. They'll likely tip the vase over or even break it, hoping to find goods inside. Have something additional in it, like flowers, that would obscure somebody looking in it. They'll also be less likely to empty your vase if it means dropping flowers all over the floor.

Liquor cabinet

A liquor cabinet might not seem like an obvious spot for thieves to hunt for valuables, but that doesn't mean they're safe. It's a target for kids looking for alcohol. You might not be devastated if your whiskey goes missing, but you don't want to lose an heirloom along with it.

Suitcase

Your luggage might seem like a waste of valuable storage space when you're not traveling, but don't keep anything irreplaceable inside. Suitcases are common things people use as a safe even though it's not a safe. Criminals will typically open a suitcase up if they find one in your closet.