



Hints For Homeowners

Going Away? Tips To Keep Your Home Safe While You're On Vacation

(NAPS)—Peace of mind is important to just about all homeowners, including when they're away on a hard-earned vacation. When warm weather arrives, however, crime rates increase, according to a study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

Fortunately, you may be able to reduce any vacation time stress by taking five steps to improve security—protect your windows, monitor your doors, secure your AC, make your house a difficult target and stay in the loop about what's happening at home.

How to make it look like someone is home, even when you're away

- **Stop your mail.** Nothing says "there's nobody home" like an overstuffed mailbox and a pile of newspapers on the front porch. You can fill out a simple form with the United States Postal Service asking it to hold your mail. Or, perhaps better yet, have a trusted neighbor stop by to pick it up.
- **Leave dog toys in the front yard.** Even if you don't own a dog, you can give a burglar pause by making him or her think that you do.
- **Maintain a well-kept yard.** Remove tree branches that give easy access to top floor windows and cut back tall shrubs that make it easy for burglars to hide behind.
- **Add outdoor motion sensor lights** to scare away those trying to walk into your yard and peek inside. With smart lighting technology, you can program your lights to come on even when you aren't home. This feature has an advantage over automated timers because you can turn the lights in your home on or off as you please from anywhere with your Internet-connected device,



Having a security and monitoring system with ADT provides the Carrescia family of Greenwich, Conn. with peace of mind when they are at or away from home.

or set routines through your home automation service, such as ADT.

- **Integrate your wireless doorbell with your lights** for further security benefits. Have the doorbell trigger an inside light to give the illusion that someone is home, since burglars prefer dark areas for stealth.

While you're away, home security can act as your house-sitting service and provide real protection. Choose a security company that has 24/7 monitored protection, such as ADT, which has over 19,000 employees who are always ready to help in case of an emergency. If you do choose to hire a house sitter when you're away, provide him or her with a unique pin code to disarm your security system. Not only will you be alerted when the system is disarmed, you can deactivate this code once you return.

With these steps, you'll have peace of mind on vacation.