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Don't Make It Easy for a Thief to Steal Your Bike!

Last year, thousands of people became victims of bicycle theft. Most of the stolen bikes were taken in an instant, and they were easy to steal. You don't have to risk bike theft unnecessarily. You can lower the chances of your bike being stolen by learning what others did wrong; then you can do it right. You may need to protect your new bike, or maybe you're unsure of your present lock or locking techniques. This pamphlet will tell you how bicycles are stolen; how to lock your bike and what lock to use; and what other steps you can take to help avoid theft, or to recover a bike that has been stolen.

HOW BICYCLES ARE STOLEN

The easiest bike to steal is the bike left unlocked outside a store or house 'just for a minute', even if it is being watched from inside. You might take your eyes away for a moment, and when you look back, it's gone. A thief might have five or ten seconds before you get outside, but once he's on the bike and moving, it's almost impossible to catch him on foot. Bike thieves don't always go out looking for bikes to steal, but if they come across an unlocked bike, they may not be able to pass it up. So don't invite theft by leaving your bike outside, unlocked and untended, ever.

Bike thieves with a car or van may look for bikes that are locked, but not locked to anything solid. They'll just throw the bike into the car, and spend time later to cut off the lock, in private. Another instant theft.

Then there are the bike thieves who use tools. The tool of choice is the bolt cutter; it's fast and easy to use; its easy to buy or

steal; and even a small pair will go through many of the chains, cables and padlocks in use these days. A large pair will cut through most heavy-duty, case-hardened chains and padlocks, and many cables-- and it takes no more than a few seconds! One technique: The thief walks up to a bike, cuts through the lock, and then, to avoid arousing suspicion, he walks away. A minute later he returns, removes the chain or cable--he makes it look like he's using a key--and then rides off. Another instant theft.

Other tools--hammers, hacksaws, wire cutters--take longer to use and are far more obvious. Therefore they are used mostly on bikes left for longer periods in isolated locations, particularly at night.

Bike thieves don't always need a whole bike. Your frame may be locked securely, but if your front wheel isn't, it will be easy to steal. Or, if your bike is chained to a bike rack by its front wheel, a thief could detach your frame and rear wheel, and match it up with a front wheel he got from a bike at the other end of the rack. It's easy, it's fast, and all it takes is a small wrench (or no tools at all with 'quick-release' wheels).

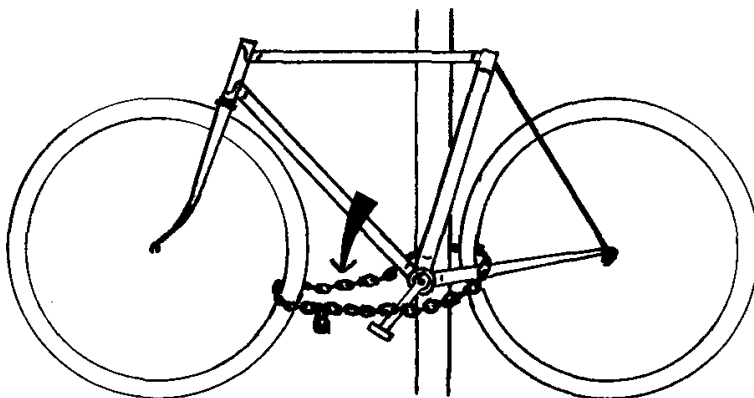
Another use for that pocket-size wrench: Some people lock their bikes by passing the chain or cable around the seat post, or handlebar stem, or front fork. With this tool, the seat or stem or front wheel can be quickly removed and replaced, and presto! the bike will no longer be locked. Yet another instant theft.

HOW TO LOCK YOUR BIKE PROPERLY

The best locks used improperly still leave your bike and/or wheels liable to theft. On the other hand, any lock will reduce the chances of theft when used to its best advantage. The object is to slow the thief down, to make theft as difficult as possible.

1. Lock your bike in a well trafficked area, where it will be visible.
-Use a bicycle parking lot if one is available, especially if it is guarded or patrolled. If such facilities are possible where you work or shop, but do not exist, see what you can do to get them started.

- Lock your bike in an auto parking lot, and ask the attendant to keep an eye on it for you.
 - Bring your bike into your office or building if you can, and lock it there.
 - Don't leave your bike out all night if you can possibly avoid it. Even if you keep it inside, in an apartment hallway or basement, lock it securely.
2. Lock your bike to a solid object--a sign post, sturdy bike rack, sturdy fence, etc. If your chain or cable lock is long enough, a lamp post, telephone pole or thick tree is fine. If you have a solid U-shaped bicycle lock (Citadel, Kryptonite, Stopper, etc.) a parking meter is fine, or use a suitable bike rack--the kind with individual posts sunk into concrete. The end supports of many standard bike racks are good also.
- In any case, make sure your bike and lock can't be lifted over the top of the post or meter.
 - Be considerate of others. Don't block sidewalks or doorways. Don't take up several spaces of a bike rack.
 - If you don't see anything to lock your bike to, try across or down the street, or around the corner. In the rare occasion that nothing is available, then lock the wheels so that at least your bike can't be ridden away.
 - Use your ingenuity. If you are locking your bike for a concert or movie, lock it down the street, near some stores or houses. Other-

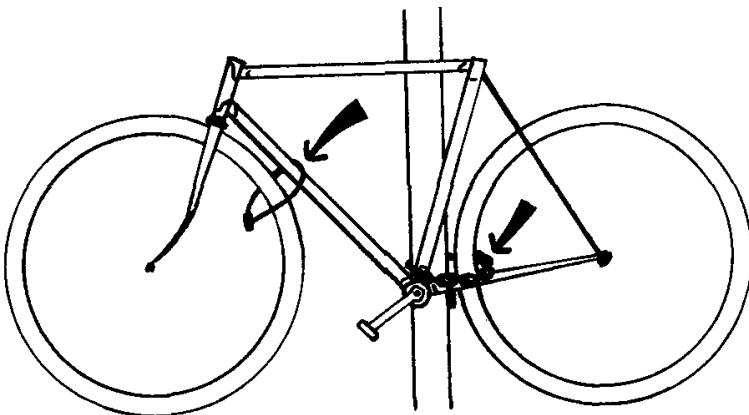


wise a thief will know he has until the show gets out to steal your bike.

3. If you have a 4' or longer chain or cable, lock both wheels and the frame to the post or bike rack. If you lock just a wheel and your frame is stolen, you'll have to replace the whole bike. If you lock the frame and a wheel is stolen, it'll cost you \$20-50 to replace it. If you've got a 4' or longer chain or cable, it's long enough to lock the frame and both wheels to a post, so you might as well use it.

-If you have a 3' chain or cable, you've got a decision to make. You can lock either the front wheel and frame, or the rear wheel and frame, to a post. The rear wheel is more expensive because of the gears, but it's less apt to get stolen because it's harder to get off. Your best bet would be to lock the rear wheel and frame to the post with your regular lock, and then lock the front wheel to the frame with an inexpensive chain or cable lock. A short one will do. Thieves won't often bother cutting a lock for a front wheel.

-If you have a Kryptonite type lock, place it around the rear wheel just behind the seat tube. Then place it around the post and secure the lock. Because the lock holds the rear wheel within the frame's 'rear triangle', both the frame and the rear wheel are secured, even though it doesn't look that way at first glance. The Citadel lock may fit around your seat tube and rear wheel, but it's not really necessary to have the lock around both. In either case, if



you have a quick-release front wheel, you can remove it, and lock it along with the rear wheel. Or you can take it with you. If you don't have a quick-release front wheel, or if you just don't want to take the front wheel off, you can lock it to the frame with a light-weight chain or cable lock.

--If you have two bikes to lock, pass both locks through both bikes so a thief will have to cut both locks to steal either bike.

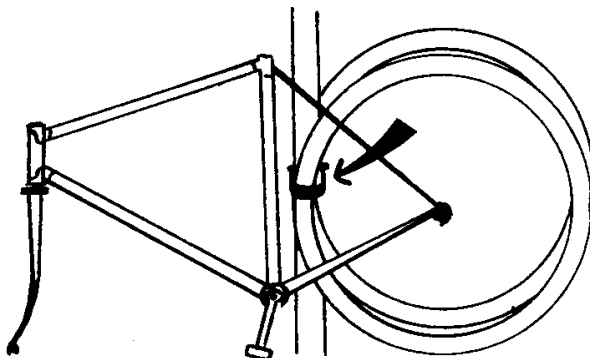
--You may want to remove and take with you your handlebar or seat bag, and maybe your pump and tool kit. It all depends on where you're locking your bike, and for how long.

--One of the best ways to avoid the whole problem of locking your bike, at least on short errand runs, is to have a friend ride with you. It's more fun, and your friend can watch your bike while you're inside (and vice versa). You may want to lock it anyway, though, with a light-weight lock, so your friend won't get hassled.

--If your bike is extra-special to you, don't lock it up, ever. (One exception: if it's locked and you're watching it closely.) It's not worth the risk. It is often useful for you to have a second bike (or your house may have a common bike)--a relatively inexpensive, easier to replace bike to use for errands and commuting; a bike you can lock up and not worry about.

LOCKING DEVICES FOR EVERY PURPOSE

The lock you choose (and how you use it) should depend less on

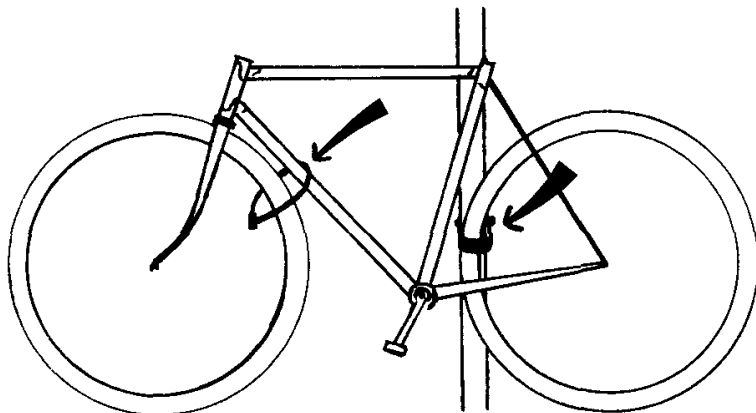


the value of your bicycle than on how badly you want to keep it. Buy the best lock you can afford, but base your choice also on where and when you will be locking your bike, and for how long.

1. Light-weight chains, and light- and medium-weight cables: These are easily cut with tools, and therefore are risky to use for extended periods. They may be ok in supervised bicycle parking areas, or indoors, or for quick stops in busy areas. They are fine for short periods, even for expensive bikes, if you keep an eye on the bike through a store or restaurant window. If anyone starts to mess around with your bike, you have time to get out there and stop them. These locks are light and easy to carry, so they are the best locks for day-tripping and some kinds of touring. The 4' colored-plastic-coated cables with a built-in lock are ideal. Also good--longer and maybe stronger too--is the 'Curley-Cable' type, but be sure you use an adequate padlock with it.

2. Medium-weight chains: These are a bit stronger than most of the above, but they can still be cut easily with bolt cutters, even if the links are case-hardened. General use would be the same as the above, but since they are heavier, they are not as good for pleasure-riding use.

3. Heavy-duty chains and cables: These resist many bolt cutters, but not big ones. Chain links are often case-hardened to resist hacksaws. Cables have extra protection at weak points; some are available with a built-in heavy-duty lock. Most are quite expensive.



Heavy-duty chains and cables are difficult to carry, so you might think about leaving your lock around a sign post or bike rack at night if you park in the same area regularly. But maybe you should shift spots within the same area from time to time so that thieves won't know you park there regularly.

--Padlocks: Always use a padlock that is at least as strong as your chain or cable; a lighter one would be your 'weakest link'. The best padlocks feature a thick, case-hardened shackle which is held in on both sides when locked; a solid body; and a tumbler mechanism with at least 5 'pins'. The circular key type is particularly good. Note: There are few combination type padlocks which are as strong as a good key type padlock.

4.Special bike locks (Citadel, Kryptonite, Stopper, etc.): These locks, because of their design and materials, are effective in resisting bolt cutters, other tools, acids, etc.; therefore they provide better security for longer periods. In addition, they are reasonably light and easy to carry. They are fairly expensive, but worth the price if they're what you need.

BICYCLE REGISTRATION

Bicycle registration today remains such an unconcerted effort that its usefulness is not yet evident. You should register your bike, though, because 1.The more people who register their bikes the better the system will work; 2.If your bike is stolen, there is a better chance of it being recovered and returned to you; and 3.If your bike is stolen, it's possible that you'll see it again someday, and your registered number is the easiest and sometimes the only way to prove that the bike belongs to you.

For information on registration, consult your local police or fire department. They, or a local bike shop, will have the tools to engrave or stamp a number permanently into your frame. For the sake of anonymity, the number need not be your social security number. Some programs suggest the first initial of your last name, followed by the

last four digits of your social security number; but any number will do. You may want to use the serial number already stamped into the frame, if there is one. In any case, under the bottom bracket of the frame is a good place to put your number. You may want to engrave it onto each rim, and onto the fork too. Then give the police the information they need to file away.

If you do lose your bike, let the police know, even if it wasn't registered. Let your local bike shops know; oftentimes stolen bikes are resold locally, and yours may come in for repairs. If you do find your bike, and if you can prove to the police that it is yours, it's still yours, any protests of the 'new owner' notwithstanding.

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what kind of lock do you need? How should you use it? For extended locking in high-risk areas, a strong lock and proper locking techniques are a must for reasonable security. In other situations, a lighter lock may be adequate, but proper use of your lock is always a good idea. Take a little extra time to do it right. With a little practice, locking your bike the safest way will become second nature. Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry. Good luck, and have fun!