

Bump Key Q & A

How does the bump key work?

Basically a modified key is bumped with a hammer, piece of wood or any type of object to open the lock. The bump key works in a similar way to a pool cue ball hitting another ball – causing both balls to separate. When the pins inside the lock all separate, the cylinder can be opened.

Why is this just now being publicized?

Security specialists (locksmiths) have known about and used this technique for many years in the process of doing their job. In the interest of public safety, most locksmiths or industry insiders don't teach the public how to surreptitiously bypass or force open locks

Recently, this technique has been taught and discussed widely on the internet by those outside the industry causing increased concern for public safety.

Why don't lock companies tell people about this?

There is a wide range of security available by most manufacturers – from locks that are primarily there for convenience to extremely secure. Most manufacturers do not consider it ethical to educate people how to break into locks, but instead educate consumers regarding the inherent risks associated with the various levels of security.

How big of a risk is this really?

Because the bypass technique has been so heavily publicized recently by the hacker community, the "How to" instructions for using this method are readily available on the internet and easily learned by non-technical people. A motivated individual with some time and very little skill can learn to "bump" open most conventional locks with relative ease.

The general public needs to be aware that conventional, non-high security locks may easily be compromised by this form of attack and others, such as picking, drilling and unauthorized key duplication... Medeco believes that when making any purchasing decision about locks or security, only when fully informed and educated can an individual make the proper decision, Where increased protection is desirable or required, the use of a highsecurity lock should be considered.

It's also a risk that many insurance companies won't pay claims on a burglary when there are no signs of forced entry. The insurance company can assume that the door was left unlocked.

Statistics from the FBI and the Dept. of Justice indicate that the majority of burglaries happen through a door (as opposed to a window or other method) and

with no signs of forced entry so other forms of attack such as picking or unauthorized duplication of keys should also be considered.

What types of locks are easiest to bump?

Standard pin tumbler locks from most manufacturers are vulnerable to this type of attack. Most high security locks have secondary locking or additional protection to make them more secure against bumping.

Is there special training or equipment required?

No. Commonly available tools, materials, and instructions are all you need. The technique can be learned in a few minutes.

What should the average person do?

Talk to a security professional such as a locksmith about the appropriate options for what you are trying to secure. High security cylinder manufacturers (such as Medeco) provide cylinders that can retrofit into most lock brands without having to replace the entire lock.

How much more expensive is it to have locks that are resistant to being bumped?

Security has a broad range of costs from a simple slide bolt from a hardware store to high security locks with a complete electronic access control system. High security mechanical locks do cost more than standard pin tumbler locks, but are significantly less expensive than even a basic alarm system that simply provides notification when a break-in has already occurred. Some people see the value of high security only after an incident...sometimes a tragic home invasion or other serious loss.

Are there ways to make locks more bump resistant other than high security locks?

Certain brands of high security locks are really the best method of protecting against this type of attack.

With the recent publicity, several false or misleading suggestions have been made that truly don't protect consumers.

- *If you have an alarm you don't need to worry.* **False.** The average response time for alarms is growing. An alarm will not protect against the bump attack, but will notify someone that a breach has been made in the security.
- *Use slide bolts or other types of blocking devices for a door.* **False.** While this type of addition is a potential life safety risk, while home, it can only be used to protect you while you are inside the house and have bolted the doors from the inside behind you. In addition, an electronic garage door can usually be easily compromised by a thief.

- *Spray something in the lock to make it easier/harder to use. **False.*** Most types of lubricant sprayed in a lock actually make it easier to bump, not more difficult.

Is Medeco the only lock resistant to this type of attack?

Medeco is virtually bump proof because of two secondary locking mechanisms within the cylinder. Most high security locks offer some increased level of protection against picking, drilling, unauthorized duplication of keys and bumping.

How are lock manufacturers able to get away with making locks that aren't secure?

There are a broad range of locks for different applications. If a lock is used to simply keep kids out of a cabinet, for example, less real security is needed.

Most manufacturers do make locks that are resistant to varying types of attacks. The industry publishes performance standards (BHMA Certifications such as Grade 1 or Grade 2) that deal primarily with quality and basic performance, not security.

There is also an ANSI/BHMA Certification for security locks, A156.30-2003 that standard pin tumbler locks do not meet. Few consumers are aware of these standards, or are educated regarding the differences. *ANSI/BHMA certification* means that a product has been formally tested by an independent laboratory and has been found to meet or exceed the criteria in the standard. It's important for consumers to look for BHMA certified, as opposed to the more generic 'meets (or made to) BHMA standards', which means that the product has not been independently certified.

Are there other types of attack people should be concerned with?

Some of the most dangerous types of attack are those that occur quickly and easily **without** signs of forced entry. This includes bumping, picking, and entry with an unauthorized key. While Medeco can provide keys that are protected by federal patent law and offer a heightened level of key control, duplicate keys are easily obtained for most standard locks (even those stamped "Do Not Duplicate") and there is no evidence of how the person bypassed the lock, and no training required! As FEMA discovered regarding the trailers used by victims of hurricanes and other natural disasters, most common house locks can be opened by a small number of unique keys.

Medeco is striving to educate locksmiths, security professionals and crime prevention officers. Medeco also works closely with the National Crime Prevention Council to educate the public. Anyone interested can learn more by visiting www.medeco.com or contacting Medeco in Salem, VA at 540-380-5000.