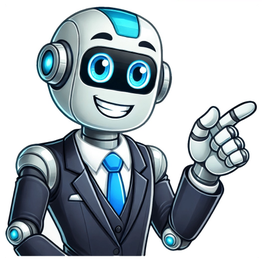
I'm not a bot



Tips, tricks & ideas for a better home and yard, delivered to your inbox daily. Key rings can get crowded (and heavy!) fast, when you consider all that you load up on them: keys for your car, front door, side door, back door, mailbox, maybe even your mother-in-law's, and a handful of miniature rewards cards sized and punched to conveniently hang. Carrying that whole lot will cause your pockets to jingle with each step and you to waste precious minutes every day fumbling for the correct copy to the door or locker you are interested in opening. Fortunately, rekeying a few of your locks offers an easy, affordable, and even DIY solution can lighten your load. Understand when, why, and how to rekey a lock with this handy guide. A pin and tumbler lock, the kind of lock found on locking doorknobs and deadbolts, contains a steel cutaway that holds a cylindrical plug and a number of springs and pins that allow a specific key shape to turn in the lock. In order for a key to turn the locking mechanism, the configuration of the pins must match the depth of the unique grooves on that key. When you want the lock to open with a different existing key—say, so you no longer want to use separate keys to enter the front, back, and side doors—the lock must be disassembled and the pins, which are of various heights, removed and replaced by new pins that match the cuts and grooves in the new key. Find trusted local pros for any home project + As mentioned, rekeying makes most sense for homeowners who prefer to have a single key that opens all of their door locks to the home or apartment. This process can lighten a full key ring to a few essentials, taking up less space in your pocket or bag as well as less time spent searching for the right one. However, rekeying a lock can also improve a building's security measures. After a new home construction—during which a number of people might have copies of door keys, including contractors, subcontractors, and inspectors—new homeowners may want to make sure they have the only keys to their home before they take possession. Likewise, it's also a common practice for landlords and property managers to have door locks rekeyed every time a new resident moves in. Whether you're moving into a previously owned home or have simply misplaced a set of spare keys, rekeying is an alternative to replacing the lock altogether that provides the peace of mind that comes with knowing no one else has a key to your home. Photo: Valentyn Semenov / Getty Images valentyn semenov / 500px Both replacing and rekeying a lock effectively change out a lock to limit access, but there are some cases in which you have to go through the motions of both processes. If you've lost the key that opens your existing lock(s), you won't be able to disassemble the lock for rekeying. First replace the lock. Rekeying won't fix a worn or damaged lock. You'll probably have to replace the lock with a cracked or warped locking mechanism soon, anyway, so consider doing so first. Then, if your goal was to change the locks so that you have the only key, you're set; you only need to rekey if you want multiple locks to share one key. When rekeying multiple locks to fit a single key, all locks must first have been made by the same manufacturer. For example, if your front door lock is a Schlage, the other locks you want rekeyed to match must also be made by Schlage. You cannot rekey a Kwikset or Sargeant lock to open with the same key as a Schlage lock, because different brands of locks have different size keyholes that only accept their own keys. If you're dealing with multiple lock brands, you'll need to decide on one and replace the others to match this brand before rekeying. Photo: flickr.com via taubinphoto This is the most expensive option. A locksmith will usually charge a set rate for a service call (often between $40 and $100) and then charge you an additional fee (potentially $10 to $30) for every lock you want rekeyed. You'll have to remove the lock from the door for this option and bring the key that currently opens the lock, but eliminating the house call makes this an inexpensive option. Expect to pay around $5 per lock. "Label your keys before starting the job. One mistake I made the first time I rekeyed my locks was not labeling my keys properly. If you're rekeying multiple locks, make sure to label each key and corresponding lock before disassembling anything. It saved me a ton of time the second time around!" —Paul Rankin, Contributing Writer and Editor If you cannot find a local store that will rekey a lock inexpensively, you can purchase the necessary tools to rekey the lock. Purchase a rekey kit—for a single lock or up to five locks of the same brand—that matches the brand of lock you want to rekey. A rekey kit for a single lock typically costs between $12 and $25, depending on the brand and type of lock. Hardware stores carry rekeying kits for some of the most common lock brands, but they can also be ordered from lock manufacturers and online retailers. The kit contains everything you need to rekey the lock: tiny picks and tweezers, a key gauge (which is used to determine the depth of the cutouts on your new key), an assortment of pins and springs, to replace the existing ones in the lock, and any other tools you'll need to dissemble and reassemble the lock. Some people—including apartment managers, owners of large office buildings, even regular Airbnb hosts—find it necessary to rekey locks frequently. To address this need, many lock manufacturers have introduced locks with smart-type rekeying technology that enables a manager to rekey the lock in less than a minute and without any disassembly. Instead, the lock's design uses a special master key to facilitate the quick and easy rekeying, with the smart rekeying process varying from manufacturer to manufacturer. If you're someone who would benefit from frequent rekeying, exploring today's options could simplify your life and still tighten security at home. Whether you're selling or staying, everyone can get something out of a kitchen update. Learn why we consider this renovation the Most Valuable Project of 2025 and how to stay on budget. Last Updated on May 14, 2025 Determine if the Lock can be Rekeyed to Existing Key | Key compatible lock brands | Rekeying Options | How to Rekey a Lock Say you've bought a home, but there are one or two locks in the home that work off of a different key than the rest of the locks (or you simply don't have a key for one or two of the locks). This can happen when the previous homeowner bought a replacement and installed it, usually to replace a broken lock. Or you might find yourself doing the same thing. You buy replacement door locks, and now you want the new locks to work with the current house key. When you want EVERY lock in the house to work from the same key, Rekeying the lock is the answer. You can rekey locks to match existing keys when the locks have the same keyway. To test if they are the same keyway, take the key you want to use, and see if it slides into the keyhole of the new lock. If it slides in, the new home door lock can be rekeyed to use the same key. If the key will not slide in, the cylinders (keyways) are different, and that lock cannot be made to work with that key. The two most popular door lock manufacturers in America are the Kwikset and Schlage. Locks contain a cylinder plug that has grooved sides so that only its brand of key can slide into the keyhole. I've highlighted, in black, the milled spots on the left side of a Kwikset and Schlage key. You can see that the milled sections of the Kwikset do NOT match the milled sections on the Schlage. It is impossible to slide a Kwikset key into a Schlage lock and vice versa. These two locks cannot be rekeyed to match an existing key of the other. Even though locks may be made from a different company, several lock brands use the same keyways, or similar enough so that a key from one lock will work with the other brand. To guarantee you can rekey a new lock to an old key, buy locks from the same manufacturer. But that's not always possible or desired. The table below shows brands that will typically work together. This is useful when you are replacing a lock with another and want to make sure that what you buy can be rekeyed to match your existing key. Brands that Work With Kwikset Keys Brands that Can Work With Schlage Keys Kwikset Schlage Weiser *Yale (typically) Defiant Dexter Baldwin (entry-level product) Baldwin (high-end) Emtek *Yale can either way. So be careful. Kwikset makes door locks that can very easily be rekeyed by the homeowner. The Kwikset SmartKey rekey process is outlined in our YouTube video. These locks can be rekeyed in just a few seconds. We sell a Kwikset SmartKey rekey kit that gives you everything needed to rekey a Kwikset lock to an existing key if the locks are Kwikset Smartkey locks. If you want to rekey the lock yourself, rekey kits are available. But you should know rekeying does take some practice and patience. DIY Schlage Rekey Kit It may not be worth doing yourself if you only have one or two locks. If you make a mistake, pins and springs will fly everywhere, and a local locksmith will charge more to get it back together. But if you're rekeying multiple locks, there can be some savings. Home rekey kits come with new pins. The new pins are provided specifically to match a key that comes with the kit. This makes it easier, as it ensures you use the right pins for smooth operation, but it also increases the workload because you may have to rekey all of your locks (instead of just the new ones) to this key. Pro Tip: If you want to rekey a lock to match an existing key, keep the old lock, remove their pins using the method below, and install those pins into the new lock. Amazon has rekey kits available at good prices. They have both 1) kits designed to rekey a few locks to a specific key provided in the kit and 2) larger kits that will allow you to freely rekey your locks to any old key. Rekey Kits on Amazon If you've ordered the locks online, a locksmith will rekey them for you in their store. To save money, always take them into a lock shop, don't install them (so the locksmith doesn't have to go to your location). Though you will get charged to rekey any locks you bring in, rekeying in a lock shop is a very affordable solution. When you buy from a locksmith or a hardware store, they will often rekey locks to match a different existing key at no cost. Some big box stores do it too, but they may charge for the service. Any of our four Arizona locations will rekey them for you at purchase for no additional cost. You've bought your rekey kit, and you're ready to try to rekey the locks. Here's how you do it. These instructions assume the lock is in your hands, and not installed. View our article on How to Replace Locks if you need to remove the locks. Parts of a Lock On deadbolts, the lock cylinder is usually held in place with a screw and it will be very obvious how to remove it. For knobs or levers, it's not so obvious. You will need to find the hole that allows you to remove the front of the knob/lever and expose the clip. Your rekey kit normally includes a little wire tool, that you can poke into that hole, and once poked the knob/handle can be slid off and the cylinder removed. The key cylinder (sometimes referred to as the plug) is held to the housing with either a c-clip or a nut. Your rekey kit will have a c-clip removal tool to help remove and replace it. The nut simply twists off. This is the most critical step. If not followed, your pins will fly everywhere. Game over. Head to your nearest locksmith. Your lock is full of top pins and springs. Before you remove the plug from the housing, you need to be sure that the top pins and springs are held in place. Lock Cylinder Gunk'd up with Graphite The follower tool does this. Place the follower at the back of your cylinder plug. Insert the existing key and rotate it 45 degrees. While keeping the follower tool firmly against the rear of the plug, pull the plug out of the housing. The follower fills the void left as the plug is removed and holds all of the top components in place. Dump out the pins in the cylinder plug on the table, and insert the new key you want the lock to work with. Insert new pins as indicated by the kit's instructions. You will know this step is correct when the pins form a smooth line along the top of the cylinder so it can freely rotate when the key is used. This is just the opposite as before. As you slide the cylinder back into the housing, you will be pushing the follower out. The cylinder will take the place of the follower so that the top pins are held in place. Replace the c-clip or nut to hold everything in place. Put the cylinder back into the knob or deadbolt. Make sure that everything seems to be working with the key before you install the lock. Better to know now, than have to take it apart again later. Disclosure: As an eBay / Amazon Associate I may earn from qualifying purchases. We may be compensated if you purchase through links on our website. Our team is committed to delivering honest, objective, and independent reviews on home products and services.MoreRekeying a lock is an essential skill for homeowners looking to keep their property secure without paying for complete lock replacement. This process involves changing a lock's internal mechanism so that it operates with a new key, rendering old keys useless. Whether you've recently moved into a new home, lost your keys, or simply want to update your home's safety, we'll explore the ins and outs of lock rekeying, from how to do it yourself to when to call in the professionals.Lock rekeying is the process of altering a lock's internal components to work with a new key while keeping the existing lock hardware. This involves changing the pins or wafers inside the lock cylinder, which are the parts that interact with the key to allow it to, or prevent it from, turning. Rekeying is often more cost-effective and less invasive than replacing the entire lock, especially when the lock is still in good condition.Deciding whether to rekey or replace a door lock depends on several factors. Below, we'll explore situations where rekeying or replacement is better.Rekeying is often the best choice in the following scenarios:After a break-in attemptEnsuring all locks work with one keyLost or stolen keysMoving into a new homeWhen locks are still in good conditionIt's best to change the entire lock in the following situations:Changing the door hardware's style or finishLocks that are outdated or damagedUpgrading to a more secure lock typeWhen the lock cannot be rekeyedWe recommend replacement if your lock shows signs of wear or damage, or if you want to upgrade your security. In the how-to video below, This Old House general contractor Tom Solva explains how to change locks on a new home.To rekey a lock, you'll need the following tools and materials:A rekeying kit typically includes new pins, springs, and a tool for removing the cylinder plug. Ensure you buy a kit that matches your lock's brand and model.Rekeying a lock involves several precise steps. Here's a general overview:Remove the lock from the door.Locate the retainer ring or clip.Remove the retainer to access the cylinder.Insert the current key and turn it to align the pins.Use the plug follower tool to push out the cylinder plug.Carefully remove the old pins and springs.Insert the new key into the plug.Use the key gauge to determine the correct pin sizes.Place new bottom pins into the plug chambers.Add new springs on top of each pin.Carefully reinsert the plug into the cylinder.Replace the retainer ring or clip.Test the lock with the new key.Remember, this is a simplified overview. The exact process may vary depending on your lock type and brand.Not all locks are created equal, and different types of locks require different rekeying methods. Understanding these variations can help you approach the rekeying process with more confidence.Disc tumbler locks are commonly used in padlocks and specialized door locks. They use a series of slotted rotating discs instead of pins. Rekeying these locks can be more complex and may require specialized tools.Pin tumbler locks are the most common type found in residential settings. They use a series of pins of different lengths to prevent the lock from opening without the correct key. Rekeying these locks involves changing the pins to match a new key's cut.Wafer tumbler locks are often found in older homes and some automotive features. Instead of pins, they use flat wafers. The rekeying process is similar to pin tumbler locks, but replaces wafers instead of pins.While rekeying a lock can be a straightforward process, there are some common challenges you might encounter:Damaging springs or other small componentsDifficulty removing the cylinder plugIncorrect measurement of new pinsMisaligning pins during reassemblyIf you encounter these issues, it's often best to hire a professional locksmith to avoid damaging the lock.Professional services are readily available for those who prefer not to tackle the rekeying process themselves. Let's explore the benefits and costs associated with hiring a professional.Professional locksmiths offer several advantages:Ability to recognize and address unforeseen issuesExpertise in a wide variety of lock typesGuaranteed results (which may include a warranty)Quick and efficient serviceHiring a professional will save you substantial time if you're planning to rekey multiple locks.The cost of professional rekeying services can vary depending on the amount and type of locks plus your location. Generally, you can expect to pay $50–$100 for professional rekeying services. While it's more expensive than DIY rekeying, it's often much faster and yields a high-quality result.*Cost data via Angi.Deciding between do-it-yourself (DIY) rekeying and hiring a professional depends on your skills, time, and budget. While you'll increase your home improvement skills, a pro can do a larger volume of locks in less time. Here are some other pros and cons of DIY rekeying:DIY Pros:Builds DIY experienceIs cost-effectiveCan be done in your own timeDIY Cons:Has the potential to damage the lockPoses a security risk if done incorrectlyIs time-consumingMaintaining Your Newly Rekeyed LockAfter rekeying your lock, proper maintenance is crucial to ensure its longevity and continued security. Here are some tips:Apply a silicone-based lubricant annually.Avoid using oil-based products, which can attract dirt.Check for loose screws or other signs of wear periodically.Regularly clean the lock with a dry cloth.If you want to rekey a lock to match an existing key, the process is similar to standard rekeying but requires careful pin selection. You'll need to use a key decoder or take the existing key to a locksmith to determine the correct pin sizes. This process allows you to have one key that opens multiple locks, which can be convenient for homeowners.After rekeying your locks, it's important to check your home's overall security with the following steps:Be mindful of who you give spare keys to.Consider adding additional security measures, such as deadbolts.Consider a master key system for controlled access.Ensure all entry points are secured.Many hardware stores offer lock rekeying services. Let's explore the different options for getting your locks rekeyed and the benefits of each.Hardware stores rekey locks at most locations. This can be convenient if you're already purchasing home improvement supplies. Typically, you must bring the lock or the key cylinder to the store.Hardware stores also often have rekeying kits available if you want to attempt the process yourself. The staff can offer advice and support for DIY rekeying projects. However, the range of lock types they can work with might be limited compared to professional locksmith services.A professional locksmith might be a better choice for more complex locks, or if you prefer personalized service. Locksmiths can often provide on-site services and handle a wider range of lock types. They have the expertise to address any unexpected issues that may arise during the rekeying process.Additionally, locksmiths can give you tailored security advice for your specific situation. While professional locksmiths might be more expensive than hardware stores, their services come with the assurance of professional handling and reliability.Rekeying a lock is a valuable skill, offering a cost-effective way to update your home's security. While you can rekey a lock yourself, it requires careful attention to detail and the right tools. Professional services are a reliable alternative for those uncomfortable with the process, or for those dealing with multiple complex locks. Either way, regular maintenance and periodic rekeying or replacement can go a long way in keeping your house safe. We made a short video showing how to re-key door locks 3 different ways. We'll show you how to perform a standard re-key, how to re-key for a master key, and how to re-key for construction keys. We go into a bit of detail explaining how each method works. Here are links to jump to the start of each section: How to Re-Key a Lock How Master Keys Work How Construction Keying Works You may want to re-key your locks for a number of reasons: a lost key or stolen key, a roommate or tenant moves out, a need to unlock several doors with just one key, or multi-unit access in the case of a master key. Watch our video and learn how to do it yourself. It's simpler than you might think. If you have questions, contact us and talk with one of our experts. We carry a full range of re-keying tools, pins, and supplies for KW and SC keyways, on top of our broad selection of bath and door hardware and locks. Last Updated on May 14, 2025 Determine if the Lock can be Rekeyed to Existing Key | Key compatible lock brands | Rekeying Options | How to Rekey a Lock Say you've bought a home, but there are one or two locks in the home that work off of a different key than the rest of the locks (or you simply don't have a key for one or two of the locks). This can happen when the previous homeowner bought a replacement and installed it, usually to replace a broken lock. Or you might find yourself doing the same thing. You buy replacement door locks, and now you want the new locks to work with the current house key. When you want EVERY lock in the house to work from the same key, Rekeying the lock is the answer. You can rekey locks to match existing keys when the locks have the same keyway. To test if they are the same keyway, take the key you want to use, and see if it slides into the keyhole of the new lock. If it slides in, the new home door lock can be rekeyed to use the same key. If the key will not slide in, the cylinders (keyways) are different, and that lock cannot be made to work with that key. The two most popular door lock manufacturers in America are the Kwikset and Schlage. Locks contain a cylinder plug that has grooved sides so that only its brand of key can slide into the keyhole. I've highlighted, in black, the milled spots on the left side of a Kwikset and Schlage key. You can see that the milled sections of the Kwikset do NOT match the milled sections on the Schlage. It is impossible to slide a Kwikset key into a Schlage lock and vice versa. These two locks cannot be rekeyed to match an existing key of the other. Even though locks may be made from a different company, several lock brands use the same keyways, or similar enough so that a key from one lock will work with the other brand. To guarantee you can rekey a new lock to an old key, buy locks from the same manufacturer. But that's not always possible or desired. The table below shows brands that will typically work together. This is useful when you are replacing a lock with another and want to make sure that what you buy can be rekeyed to match your existing key. Brands that Work With Kwikset Keys Brands that Can Work With Schlage Keys Kwikset Schlage Weiser *Yale (typically) Defiant Dexter Baldwin (entry-level product) Baldwin (high-end) Emtek *Yale can either way. So be careful. Kwikset makes door locks that can very easily be rekeyed by the homeowner. The Kwikset SmartKey rekey process is outlined in our YouTube video. These locks can be rekeyed in just a few seconds. We sell a Kwikset SmartKey rekey kit that gives you everything needed to rekey a Kwikset lock to an existing key if the locks are Kwikset Smartkey locks. If you want to rekey the lock yourself, rekey kits are available. But you should know rekeying does take some practice and patience. DIY Schlage Rekey Kit It may not be worth doing yourself if you only have one or two locks. If you make a mistake, pins and springs will fly everywhere, and a local locksmith will charge more to get it back together. But if you're rekeying multiple locks, there can be some savings. Home rekey kits come with new pins. The new pins are provided specifically to match a key that comes with the kit. This makes it easier, as it ensures you use the right pins for smooth operation, but it also increases the workload because you may have to rekey all of your locks (instead of just the new ones) to this key. Pro Tip: If you want to rekey a lock to match an existing key, keep the old lock, remove their pins using the method below, and install those pins into the new lock. Amazon has rekey kits available at good prices. They have both 1) kits designed to rekey a few locks to a specific key provided in the kit and 2) larger kits that will allow you to freely rekey your locks to any old key. Rekey Kits on Amazon If you've ordered the locks online, a locksmith will rekey them for you in their store. To save money, always take them into a lock shop, don't install them (so the locksmith doesn't have to go to your location). Though you will get charged to rekey any locks you bring in, rekeying in a lock shop is a very affordable solution. When you buy from a locksmith or a hardware store, they will often rekey locks to match a different existing key at no cost. Some big box stores do it too, but they may charge for the service. Any of our four Arizona locations will rekey them for you at purchase for no additional cost. You've bought your rekey kit, and you're ready to try to rekey the locks. Here's how you do it. These instructions assume the lock is in your hands, and not installed. View our article on How to Replace Locks if you need to remove the locks. Parts of a Lock On deadbolts, the lock cylinder is usually held in place with a screw and it will be very obvious how to remove it. For knobs or levers, it's not so obvious. You will need to find the hole that allows you to remove the front of the knob/lever and expose the clip. Your rekey kit normally includes a little wire tool, that you can poke into that hole, and once poked the knob/handle can be slid off and the cylinder removed. The key cylinder (sometimes referred to as the plug) is held to the housing with either a c-clip or a nut. Your rekey kit will have a c-clip removal tool to help remove and replace it. The nut simply twists off. This is the most critical step. If not followed, your pins will fly everywhere. Game over. Head to your nearest locksmith. Your lock is full of top pins and springs. Before you remove the plug from the housing, you need to be sure that the top pins and springs are held in place. Lock Cylinder Gunk'd up with Graphite The follower tool does this. Place the follower at the back of your cylinder plug. Insert the existing key and rotate it 45 degrees. While keeping the follower tool firmly against the rear of the plug, pull the plug out of the housing. The follower fills the void left as the plug is removed and holds all of the top components in place. Dump out the pins in the cylinder plug on the table, and insert the new key you want the lock to work with. Insert new pins as indicated by the kit's instructions. You will know this step is correct when the pins form a smooth line along the top of the cylinder so it can freely rotate when the key is used. This is just the opposite as before. As you slide the cylinder back into the housing, you will be pushing the follower out. The cylinder will take the place of the follower so that the top pins are held in place. Replace the c-clip or nut to hold everything in place. Put the cylinder back into the knob or deadbolt. Make sure that everything seems to be working with the key before you install the lock. Better to know now, than have to take it apart again later. Disclosure: As an eBay / Amazon Associate I may earn from qualifying purchases. Trending Popular Contact us Author: Makenna Dibbert | Last update: Friday, June 10, 2022 Since most homes have multiple doors with multiple locks, re-keying can get expensive. You can re-key a lock like a pro at a fraction of the cost. Re-keying kits are available for most lock brands but they're not interchangeable. You must buy a kit for each brand of lock in your home. Can all locks be rekeyed? You can rekey all of your locks to match an existing key when the locks all have the same keyway. You can test if the locks use the same keyway by taking the existing key you want to use and seeing if it slides into the keyholes of the locks you want to match that key.Is it cheaper to rekey or replace locks? Rekeying your lock is almost always cheaper than replacing a lock. This is because of the cheaper price of the key pins inside the locks, whereas when you replace a lock, you are paying for all brand-new parts. Can you rekey locks from different brands? To rekey locks to use the same key, all of them must be from the same manufacturer. You can't rekey a Kwikset lock to use a Schlage key because each maker's locks have different size holes that will only accept their own keys. How much does it cost to lock rekey? Rekeying Home Locks Rekeying locks on your home typically costs $80 to $160. If you call the locksmith to your home, you might pay a trip fee of $50 to $100. The cost to rekey is $30 to $60 per lock, bringing you to that total. Rekeying is different and more affordable than replacing the locks. Is it cheaper to rekey or replace locks? | Mr. Locksmith™ Video Is rekeying safe? Rekeying a lock does not hurt the security of the lock, nor does it make it more secure. One of the factors that makes a lock secure is how many pins are inside of it. As long as the locksmith swaps the old 5 pins with 5 new ones, the lock will remain just as secure as it was before. Will Home Depot rekey a lock? Home Depot will rekey locks such as Schlage, Kwikset, doorknobs, deadbolts, single and double cylinders for $5 to $15 per lock. If your local store does not offer the service, you may purchase a rekey kit or visit Lowe's or Ace Hardware. Home Depot does not rekey car locks as they often require specialized technology. Will Lowes rekey locks? Lowe's are able to rekey locks in certain stores. Customers can bring in their locks (if an eligible brand to be rekeyed at Lowe's) and have their locks rekeyed for around $5. Lowe's also offers rekeying kits so customers can rekey their own locks at home. Can I rekey a lock without the original key? Yes, it is possible for you to rekey a lock without the original key. A locksmith can change your locks even if you have lost or misplaced the original key. In general, it is possible to pick or shim the lock and unlock the door. Then, the locksmith will have a much easier time removing the lock cylinder. How do I change door locks after buying a house? Now that you've got the right supplies, it's time to get to work.Step one: Remove the old deadbolt lock and hardware. This part is pretty easy. ... Step two: Insert your new deadbolt. Take your new deadbolt hardware and install it where the old one was. ... Step three: Insert your new lock. ... Step four: Test. Should I change my locks after buying a house? When you move into a new home, you should change the locks on your house. You have no idea how many copies of the house keys are floating around out there from the previous homeowners, so changing the locks will keep your new house more secure. Tom recommends changing the locks whenever a new home is purchased. What happens when you rekey a lock? When you rekey your locks, you're altering the lock mechanism so that the old key will no longer open it. Instead, a new key will be necessary. In many circumstances, rekeying your locks makes more sense than changing your locks. Can a locksmith rekey existing locks? Some locksmiths may tell you that you should change your locks. But in many cases, you can just rekey them, which means changing the existing lock system so a new key operates it. A locksmith simply replaces the tumblers and pins to create a lock that can be opened by a brand-new key. Can Kwikset locks be rekeyed to any key? A Kwikset SmartKey tool (One should've came with your lock, but if not, you can buy one on Amazon). The new (or rather, old) key that you want to use instead. This must be a Kwikset key, as Kwikset and Schlage keys are totally different from one another (and won't work in each other's locks). Can a Schlage lock be rekeyed? Please note, products are not keyed alike across functions. Schlage Rekeying Kits provide everything you need to get the job done—including all the tools and parts you need for repinning the cylinders of most Schlage locksets so that they work with a single key. Can Kwikset locks be rekeyed? Re-keying SmartKey locks requires only three items and entails three easy steps. Users must have their functioning key, a SmartKey Learn Tool, and a new Kwikset key. First, insert the functioning key and turn it ¼-turn clockwise. Then, insert and remove the SmartKey learn tool. Do bump keys work? When executed correctly, lock bumping is effective in nearly 90 percent of all cylinder-type locks produced today. Perhaps one of the most disconcerting aspects of lock bumping is that it can often go undetected, which means that your home can be broken into without any signs of forced entry. How do I rekey a Kwikset lock? How to re-key your SmartKey Security™ locks?Prepare your door. Make sure you lock is installed on your door and that your door is all the way open. ... Insert current key. ... Insert the SmartKey tool fully and firmly into the SmartKey hole. ... Insert the new key you wish to use with the lock. ... Remove your new key. How do you get a new key for a lock? A lock impression allows a locksmith to make a key without decoding the lock. For a qualified locksmith this can be an efficient way to create a new key. A blank key is inserted into the lock and turned. The pins will press against the key leaving marks where cuts need to be made. Can I rekey a deadbolt? You can re-key a lock like a pro at a fraction of the cost. Re-keying kits are available for most lock brands but they're not interchangeable. You must buy a kit for each brand of lock in your home. Are Kwikset keys unique? Yes, it is a "unique" key. You don't "cut" a new key, you program the lockset to accept a different key. If you have other "Kwikset" keys laying around, you can use those. Are all Kwikset keys the same? Kwikset locks have roughly 3,000 different possibility's , the chance of someone having the same key in your area is very slim. Regarding the rekey kits, its usually the same thing as the lock, the first couple keys are probably the same as each other. Most locksmiths wouldn't recommend Kwikset smartkey. Does Home Hardware rekey locks? Our trained locksmiths can rekey many home locks and deadbolts so the same key will work in every door of your home. It's a small thing, but small things can often be a big help. Can Home Depot make a key from a code? Unfortunately, Home Depot can not make you a new key with the original key. However, if you find yourself in this situation, you typically have options: Call a locksmith to decode your lock and cut you a new key. Use this as an opportunity to replace your lock and get a new set of keys. Can you rekey an Andersen lock? *Only Andersen® brand storm door with mortise hardware can be rekeyed. Whether your entry door uses a Schlage® or Kwikset® key cylinder, a replacement storm door key cylinder may be required to match the two (2) locks. Knowing how to rekey a lock is a convenient skill to possess, especially if you've recently purchased a new house and wish to change the locks, or if you're trying to eliminate some key-chain clutter by standardizing all your locks to a single key.Without this knowledge, you are pretty much stuck buying those bulk cases of similarly keyed locks (which are typically pretty junky locks) or utilizing a locksmith to rekey your locks.But if you want to take the path less traveled and rekey your locks yourself, this guide will hold your hand every step of the way and will work with a variety of cylinder locks, including Schlage, Kwikset, Baldwin, Yale, Corbin Russwin, and others!Rekeying locks is pretty easy; however, expect to spend about 10 to 15 minutes per lock and about $30 to $50 for a rekey kit. With that, let's get to it! How Rekeying a Lock WorksThe majority of locks found on doorknobs and deadbolts are pin tumbler locks. These types of locks utilize a series of pins called key pins (top pins) and driver pins (bottom pins).Driver pins are the topmost pins and are all the same length. Their responsibility is to hold the lock shut when the correct key is not present.However, the key pins are a variety of lengths and can be thought of as the combination of the lock. This combination is called the lock's bitting. When the correct key with the correct cuts is inserted into the lock, the key pins will rise to the same level and push the driver pins out of the lock's core, allowing it to rotate and for the lock to open. To solidify this concept, check out the animation of a key entering a lock below.Now, this is a mile-high description of how these locks work and if you would like to learn more, check out my guide on how the pin tumbler lock works. However, for the purpose of rekeying, this is all you really need to know.To rekey a lock, all we need to do is swap out the bottom pins (key pins) with those that match the cuts of a different key—essentially changing the bitting of the lock to match the cuts of your new key.Otherwise said, rekeying is nothing more than changing the combination of your lock.Additionally, these different length key pins are standardized by manufacturers with a specific coding representing length. For example, Schlage locks have bottom pins coded between 0 and 9, 0 being the shortest at 0.165" and 9 being the longest at 0.300".Different lock manufacturers have different pinning standards for their locks, which is why it's crucial to get the correct rekeying kit for your specific lock. We'll talk more about this in a moment! Determine What Locks You Want to RekeyBefore you can begin rekeying your locks, you first need to identify which locks you want to repin and if they are compatible with the same key.Sadly rekeying locks isn't as simple as matching any lock to a single key.Different makes and models of locks use different keyways and keys. For example, a Kwikset key will not fit into the keyway of a Schlage lock.Additionally, different lock manufacturers use various sized pins (length and width) and have diverse key bitting specifications.To illustrate this, look at the difference between the heights of Schlage key pins vs. Kwikset key pins.Pin SizeSchlageKwikset00.165 "-10.180"0.171"20.195"0.195"30.210"0.219"40.225"0.240"50.240"0.264"60.255"0.288"70.270"-80.285"-90.300"-So if you have Schlage on your front door and a Kwikset on your garage door, you will either have to replace one of the locks with a matching brand or continue to use two different keys.However, even when using the same brand for all your locks, you'll also want to verify that the locks use similar keyways.This can easily be tested by fully inserting your desired key into all the locks. If the key goes in, it matches the keyway, and that lock can be rekeyed to that specific key.Note that the key doesn't have to open the lock, just fit into the keyway.Now that we understand exactly what locks we want to rekey let's look at the tools and equipment required! Tools RequiredAlright, so let's jump into the tools and equipment you will need to begin rekeying your own locks!Required:Rekeying kitTweezersPlug followerScrewdriverOptional:Key gaugeC-clip removal toolPinning matLet's jump into a few of these in more detail.Rekeying KitFirst, and most importantly, you will need a rekey kit for your specific lock brand. These kits contain each size bottom pin and will allow you to rekey a good number of locks!I highly recommend the following kits for Kwikset, and Schlage locks as they are half the price of other hard case sets and come with two additional tools, a key gauge and plug follower—both of which will make your life easier!Schlage Rekey KitKwikset Rekey KitTweezersLock components are small and extremely difficult to replace using your fingers.While regular household tweezers will work just fine, pinning tweezers are explicitly made for keying locks and have a gap that allows them to fit snugly around pins and grasp them firmly.Continually dropping pins is a frustrating experience, so if you have a lot of locks to rekey, I would highly recommend picking some up. My go-to are Covert Instrument's pinning tweezers.Plug FollowerA plug follower is used to push the plug out of the lock while at the same time holding the springs and driver pins in the upper lock cylinder. They are an invaluable tool to have, and repinning locks without them is no easy task—so I highly recommend picking some up!If you buy one of the rekeying sets I've recommended above, they come with a follower. However, if you got with another rekey set, HPC has a nice set here.Alternatively, you can use a ratchet socket of the correct size. How to Determine Your Lock's BittingThe first step in repinning your lock is to determine its bitting.This can be accomplished in various ways, but we'll cover the two common and easy methods here.Method 1: Use a Key GaugeA key gauge is a quick and easy way to determine the bitting of your lock by measuring the depth of cuts on your key. They cost about $15, and you'll need to buy one that measures your particular lock's brand. So if you are rekeying a Schlage, you'll need a key gauge that measures a Schlage.To use a key gauge, insert your key into the slot, and starting with the first cut on your key, slide your key down the gauge until it stops. The number that your key stops on is that cut's pin size!For example, in the image below, I found that the first cut of my key was 3 and then used my gauge to determine my Schlage key had a bitting of 3-4-2-6-2.Now by knowing your bitting code, you can quickly replace pins in your new locks without any guesswork, and if you ever lose your key, you can easily get a new one made from this code!If you are interested in a key gauge and are keying a Schlage, Kwikset, Weiser, or Weslock lock, I highly recommend the Pro Lock KD01. If you have another lock brand, you can typically find a wide variety of gauges here.Method 2: Use the Key as a GuideIf you don't want to splurge for a key gauge, you can also use the key that you wish to repin your lock to as a guide.When you replace the pins into the lock, you can insert the key to verify their heights. If the pins are flush with the plug—like in the image below— they match the cuts of the key and are the correct size.However, if the pins extrude from the pin chamber, they are too big, and if they don't quite reach the top, they are too small.It's good practice to check your pin heights when installing new pins anyways, and we'll cover this in more detail in the steps below. How to Rekey a LockAlright, with all the prerequisite information out of the way, let's jump into the steps of rekeying a doorknob lock.To remove the lock cylinder from the lock, you will need the original key of the lock you desire to rekey.If you have lost the original key, you'll either need to get a new one made or replace the lock entirely.Step 1: Remove the KnobThe first step is to remove the knob and lock cylinder from the doorknob assembly. If you are rekeying a lock already installed on a door, you can rekey it without removing the entire assembly from the door.Start by inserting your original key into the lock and turning the key 90 degrees towards the slot on the doorknob (as illustrated above). On some locks, this slot is a hole, while on others it is a slit cut with an exposed metal clip.Using a screwdriver, paperclip, or another pointy object, press in on the clip and pull the knob off the door.If the clip does not depress, the key has not been rotated to the correct position. Try turning it in the other direction.Step 2: Remove the Lock Cylinder from the KnobNext, we need to remove the lock cylinder from the handle.Begin by rotating the key 90 degrees in the opposite direction that you did in step one, and then remove the key from the cylinder. If you're having issues removing the key, make sure that the key is vertical to the slot that we compressed in step 1.Once the key is removed, remove the lock cylinder from the handle.Some locks have a spring-loaded chamber (like in the image above) that needs to be compressed with a small flathead screwdriver in order to take it out of the handle. Step 3: Remove the Cylinder Retaining ClipOnce you have your lock cylinder removed from the handle, flip it around and remove the retaining clip from the back.Most locks will use a C-clip which can easily be removed using a clip removal tool. However, a screwdriver and a little elbow grease will work too.Step 4: Remove the Plug from the CylinderNow it's time to remove the plug, which contains our key pins!To remove the plug from the cylinder, insert the old key and rotate it 45 degrees left or right.Using a plug follower—or alternatively, a ratchet socket that fits snug in the plug—push the plug out of the cylinder, ensuring that it stays tight against the plug the entire way out. Also, be sure not to rotate your plug and dump your key pins all over the floor.Take things slow and don't force anything during this step as any mishaps could cause pins to drop out of the cylinder.Once the plug has been removed, DO NOT remove the follower from the cylinder. At the current moment, it is keeping the top pins and springs within their chambers. If you do remove it, pins and springs will fall out and make your job a little more challenging.If things do go wrong during this step and pins or springs do fall out, it's not the end of the world. Compress your springs and top pins back into their chambers and insert your plug follower to keep them in place. Step 5: Remove Old Pins from PlugOnce the plug has been entirely removed, you can dump the old pins out of their chambers and remove the original key.Step 6: Insert New Pins into the PlugIt's finally time to update those old pins with new ones.You'll need:Pinning kitTweezersThe new key you want to repin the lock to(Optional) The bitting code of your new key from a key gaugeYou don't need the bitting code, but it does make things a lot easier as you know exactly what sized pins to put into each chamber. In my previous example, I determined my key bitting was 3-4-2-6-2. The first pin is the slot closest to the head of the key, while the last pin is the furthest.In the example image above, I put the following sized pins in each pin chamber from left to right.ChamberPin Size1324324652If you don't have a key gauge and don't know what pin sizes to use, here is a simple trick!Insert the key that you want to reprogram the lock to. Begin inserting random pins into each slot and test their heights.If the pin sits flush with the top of the plug (like in the illustration above), they are the correct size for that key.However, if the pins extrude from the plug chamber, they are too long. Conversely, if the pins don't reach the top of the pin chamber, they are too short. Step 7: Reassemble the LockOnce you've replaced all the pins and have verified using the key that they are the correct heights, it is time to reassemble the lock!With the key still in the lock, begin by reinserting the plug back into the cylinder and use it to slowly push the plug follower out of the cylinder.Once the plug is in the cylinder, verify that the key turns smoothly, put the retaining ring back on, and remove the key.Insert the lock cylinder back into the knob and then reinsert the key. Turn the key towards the push slot and then slide the knob back onto the rest of the assembly.That's it! Your doorknob has been rekeyed! For any additional doorknobs, repeat the above steps. How to Rekey a DeadboltIf you need to rekey your deadbolt to match your doorknob, you can quickly rekey it in about 5 minutes!To rekey a deadbolt, begin by removing it from the door, then separate the lock cylinder from the rest of the deadbolt.Once the lock cylinder is out, you can rekey it just like you would a doorknob. Click here to jump up to those steps.Note there is one significant difference between a deadbolt and a doorknob. While doorknobs typ