

Tips for Success

Following is information that will help you become more adept at manipulating locks. Solutions to common problems and general miscellaneous information that could prove useful is included.

Determining the Direction of Rotation

Before you can pick a tumbler type lock, you must determine the correct direction of rotation. It may sound like a trivial point, but who wants to waste hours trying to pick a lock the wrong direction. Though there will of course be exceptions, there are some general guidelines. Cylindrical locks, padlocks, file cabinet locks almost always turn in a clockwise direction or either direction to open. When confronted with a door lock, turn the plug so that the top of the keyhole turns toward the edge of the door. There is a notable exception here, Corbin and Russwin locks turn AWAY from the door edge.

Tight or Dirty Locks

If a lock seems exceptionally tight or dirty, it will be hard to break the pins. It may help to lubricate the lock. NEVER use a liquid type lubrication such as WD40, 3-in-1 oil, etc... Use powdered graphite, available in most hardware stores. It comes in a little tube, allowing a light squeeze to blow a puff of graphite into the keyway. If lubrication does not help, you may need to apply a little firmer hand on the tension wrench.

Proper Attitude

It is very important to maintain a confident attitude while you are learning to pick locks. If you feel nervous or stressed, it will only make things harder. You will not be able to pick every lock you come to, but with practice and patience, you may be surprised. Visualise what is happening inside the lock, this is the key. If you don't fully understand how a lock works and exactly what you are doing to it, you will not experience a high degree of success.