

The Quick Start Series:

Padlock Picking Secrets



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Why You Need This Guide:

In this guide I will show you how to become a master at opening padlocks. Before I show you everything you need to know to open padlocks quickly and efficiently here are the main reasons why you need this information:

- By reading this guide you will quickly learn and understand the many methods available to you to open padlocks in a non-destructive way. Thus allowing you to choose the best method of entry.
- Learn in a simple to understand way what tools exist to open padlocks, what they do and how best to use them.
- You will quickly learn the best method of attack for each padlock and be in a position to choose the quickest method available. Don't mess about with one technique if there is a quicker and more effective one available to you. You want to be able to choose the best tool for the job to get the job done as quickly as possible. That job is opening padlocks!
- The more you utilise and practice the methods and techniques I share in this guide the better you will be at opening each padlock you face.

What is Non-Destructive Entry?

You will find that this guide only focuses on non-destructive-entry techniques. No mention has been made to the use of any tool to forcibly damage a lock in order to gain entry.

Methods of opening locks that do not damage the lock in any way are called **Non-Destructive Entry** techniques.

Who this guide is aimed at:

This guide is aimed at anybody with a genuine interest in lockpicking whether as a hobby, sport (as in the increasingly popular lock sport events) or indeed as a grounding for a future career as a locksmith.

In no way is this information intended for anyone who has criminal intentions. It has often been said that a would-be thief prefers a brick than a pick.

A Short Guide:

This guide is relatively short. It is aimed at providing an introduction to the world of locks and lock picking on this particular topic. Although it is an introduction there is valuable information to be learned from this guide.

The aim of this guide is to give you a no-nonsense guide to the topic and to arm you with only the information you need. Written in plain English and free of jargon it pulls together the best tips and info to get you up to speed on the subject as quickly as possible.

Also, check out the full series of reports from www.withoutakey.co.uk to further your knowledge and expertise in lockpicking.

Choosing Your Method of Attack

The 7 methods we will look at are:

1. Picking The Lock
 - a. Raking
 - b. Single Pin Picking
2. Skeleton Keys
3. Shimming
4. Bypass Pick Entry
5. Jigglers
6. Bumping
7. Comb Picking

Note: - The tools discussed in each section can be obtained from

www.withoutakey.co.uk

Check out the last page for details of a great deal available exclusively to you as a thank you for reading this report.

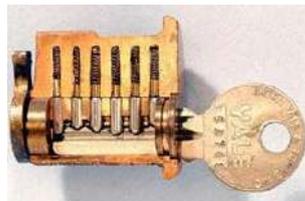


Method 1: Picking The Lock

The methods in this part refer to actually picking the lock. What is meant by this is using tools to manipulate the parts of the lock that the key would otherwise do.

The information in this 'Picking The Lock' section is aimed at padlocks with pin tumbler locking mechanisms such as the lock shown below. (The will also apply to wafer locks too).

(For more detailed information on locks not covered by this guide, for example lever and combination padlocks, please check out the other guides in the series).



How The Pin Tumbler Lock Works – In Brief

A pin tumbler lock has sets of pins. One pin on top of another pin makes a set. The lock shown in the picture above has 6 sets of these top and bottom pins.

When the correct key is inserted into the lock the key turns a plug that the key is inserted into. The bottom pins will also turn with the key leaving the top driver pins where they were (in the casing of the lock).

In order to turn the plug and open the lock the top and bottom pins must all line up at the top of the plug so that all the top pins are out of it and all the bottom pins are within it. If any top pin is not raised enough and left within the plug it will not turn. Similarly, if any bottom pin is pushed too far and protrudes past the plug it will also prevent the plug turning.

The point at which all top and bottom pins must be raised to (so that they line up allowing the plug to turn) is called the **'shear line' or 'shearing point'**.

Raking

This is by far the quickest method and the most popular lock picking technique especially amongst people beginning lock picking.

What You Will Need:

Rake Picks

Turning Tool (Also known as Tension Wrench)

Steps To Take

Insert a suitable turning tool in to the edge of the lock and apply just enough tension to the tool to stop it from falling out of the lock.

- 1) Insert a rake pick to the back of the lock.
- 2) Apply very light tension to the turning tool
- 3) Rapidly pull the rake out of the lock
- 4) Continue to insert the rake and quickly pull it out of the lock until the lock opens.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

As you pull the rake out of the lock the peak of the rake strikes the bottom pin. The pin is forced upwards and it causes the top pin to move up and away from the shear line. The technique is successful when all top pins have been raised above the shear line and the bottom pins have stayed below the shear line. This is why only very light tension should be applied otherwise the pins will bind (stick) and not be able to move freely to where we need them to be.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- Remember, light pressure on the turning tool is the key to success. Too much and the pins will bind – that means get stuck and be unable to move.
- Vary the raking action. Try pulling the pick out a bit then back in then out a bit more and so on. Vary the speed of the raking action. Also, vary

the tension on the turning tool. A further method is to pivot the pick up and down slightly whilst bringing it in and out of the lock in more of a jiggle motion. Experiment with each lock and you will find your own method that works best for you. **Practice, practice, practice!**

Speed of Entry

- When this technique works it can be extremely quick.
- However, the method is somewhat haphazard and depending on the lock it might take some time before it works. The lock's pins might not move freely due to dirt or age of the lock etc which can affect the effectiveness of the method.
- Other techniques discussed in this book could prove to be quicker (depending on the lock).

Single Pin Picking

- Sometimes called 'Pure Picking'.
- This method again deals with the direct manipulation of the pins (or indeed wafers). However, instead of using a haphazard raking motion waiting for the pins to fall at the correct position – remember that's called the shear line – with this method we will individually lift each pin to the correct height.

What You Will Need:

Hook Picks

Turning Tool (Also known as Tension Wrench)

Steps To Take

1. Insert a suitable turning tool applying a small amount of tension.
2. Insert a hook pick to the back of the lock.
3. Gently lift the back pin (in fact the bottom and top pin set).
4. Continue to work the pick out of the lock and gently lifting each pin stack.
5. Try to locate the pin that is hardest to push up. When found lift this pin stack up just enough until you feel a slight give in the plug. The turning tool will be able to turn slightly.
6. Repeat the process – finding the pin stack that is hardest to push up. Raise it until you feel a little more give in the plug and find the next pin stack that now sticks.
7. Continue until the lock opens.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

The lock will have slight imperfections. The holes in which the pins sit will not be perfectly aligned. In applying tension one pin stack will stick more than the others. Once that is raised to the shear line the plug will turn and a different pin stack will then bind. Raise all pins to the shear line and the plug will turn.

Improve Your Chances of Success

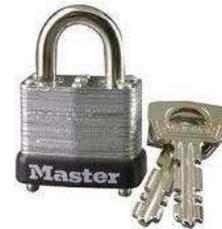
- Don't apply too much tension. To do so would cause the pins to bind.
- Also, some locks have security pins which will bind with too much tension applied.
- Every now and again try removing all tension and starting again. Any pins that might be raised too much can then fall back and you can start again.
- Again - Practice, practice, practice!

Speed of Entry

- With practice this can be very quick indeed.
- The key though is to practice this method as much as possible so that you will learn to understand the correct feel needed to pick any lock you encounter.

Skeleton Keys

- An excellent method for opening warded padlocks locks.
- Skeleton keys are keys that have had metal removed from them so that they only have enough metal to be able to open the lock.
- Wards are protrusions and obstructions that prevent an incorrect key from entering and/or turning within a lock.
- Often identified by the lock being laminated i.e. made up of layers. Also identified by the key which will be quite flat. The notches in the keys are rectangular rather than 'v' shaped (as found on pin tumbler and wafer keys).



What You Will Need:

A set of skeleton keys (usually 5 keys in a set).



Steps To Take

1. Select one of the keys in the set and insert to the back of the lock.
2. Turn the key and see if the lock opens. If not...
3. Retract the key from the lock very slightly, turn the key again.
4. Continue retracting the key and turning.
5. If an unsuccessful skeleton key is inserted then when turned it will stop as it hits a ward (obstruction) within the lock.
6. Move onto the next key in your set and repeat the process until the lock opens.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

You will see from the picture above of the skeleton keys that they only have the end parts of the key. The rest of the key has been filed away so that the wards in the lock do not prevent the key from turning. The end of the skeleton key is the only part required and that part deals with retracting the locking bolt of the padlock.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- Make sure you are able to easily recognise a warded lock.

Padlock Picking Secrets

- By following the instructions above and gradually retracting the key after each unsuccessful attempt it will increase your chances of success.

Speed of Entry

- A very rapid form of entry with warded padlocks.

Shimming

A great method of bypass. A bypass method is one that does not deal with replicating what the key does but instead utilises a weakness in the design of the lock. Used to open many pin tumbler padlocks.

What You Will Need:

A set of padlock shims.



Steps To Take

Note: Some locks require only one shim to open and some require two.

1. The aim here is to insert a shim so that it follows the shackle into the lock.
2. Place the shim onto the shackle so that the wings of the shim are away from you and the longer part in the middle of the shim is entering to the front of the shackle.
3. Gradually work the shim further down into the lock and also around the shackle so that it is on the inside and the wings are off to the side. As in the picture shown here.
4. In order to assist the shim entering the lock, press the shackle down to help reduce the tension the shackle places on the locking bolt.
5. If necessary repeat with a shim on the other side of the shackle.
6. Continue to press into the lock until the shackle opens.
7. It might be necessary to gently assist the shackle lifting up by giving it a pull once the shims are in place.



What happens in the lock – How It Works

The locking bolt sits inside the notch on the side of the shackle keeping it locked. This locking bolt is spring loaded. This means that it can move backwards and forwards even when the key isn't in the lock. It is also the

reason why you can push a shackle down into the lock to lock it without the key present.

The shim pushes back that locking bolt thus allowing the shackle to lift and the lock to unlock.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- Push the shackle into the lock every now and again to reduce any tension on the locking bolt whilst pushing the shim into the lock.
- By studying locks in your own collection you will know which ones will require two shims and which only one. Two notches on the shackle require two.

When To Avoid This Method!

Some locks will have ball bearings which enter the shackle rather than a flat locking bolt. These are anti-shim mechanisms to prevent this technique working.

Speed of Entry

- Many locks still open with this method of entry. When it works it is extremely quick!
- An excellent method to use.

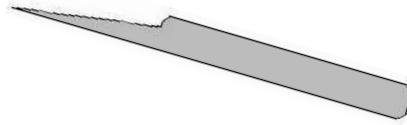
Bypass Pick Entry

The method of attack here is by going directly to the locking bolt rather than trying to manipulate the pins of the lock.

This method will not work on all locks but depending on the size and age of the lock you can find you have very successful and quick results with this method. Usually, very small padlocks are ideal with this method for example the ones found on luggage cases.

What You Will Need:

Bypass pick



Steps To Take

1. Insert the pick diagonally into the back of the lock. You are aiming for just behind the last pin of the lock.
2. Pivot the pick or in other words straighten it up and the lock should pop open.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

When inserting the pick into the back of the lock your aim is to try to locate the locking bolt. This is the lock that is spring loaded and enters the notches in the shackle. The bypass pick locates this bolt and pulls it away from the shackle thus opening the lock.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- Taking locks apart allowing you to see the inner workings will let you better understand how this technique works. It will also allow you to understand when this method can and cannot be used.
- Some locks are now fitted with anti-bypass parts that prevent this method from working – however as stated in the opening remarks of this method there are still many locks, and many more small locks, that this method is still an effective method of opening for.

Speed of Entry

- This can be a very quick method indeed. Much quicker than actually picking the lock.
- Bear in mind though that some locks will not allow this method to work.

Jigglers

Not only a great versatile tool to have in your toolbox for padlocks but very effective on many locks such as drawers, lockers, filing cabinets etc. Plus, Jiggler keys come in three different sized sets – Car Key, Mini & Micro.



What You Will Need:

A Micro or Mini Jiggler set (depending on the size of lock).

Steps To Take

1. Choose a key from the set and insert into the keyway.
2. The action required for the jiggler keys is quite haphazard. Rock the key up and down and pull the key in and out of the lock. Give the key either slight turning pressure or every now and again turn the key.
3. If unsuccessful move on to the next key in the set and repeat.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

The rocking, jiggling and wiggling motion of the keys coupled with the shape the keys are cut to aim to set each pin or wafer at the shear line.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- The action required, as stated earlier, is haphazard. Just jiggle, wiggle and rock the key. Don't apply too much turning force – don't bind those pins!

Speed of Entry

- With practice this can be a very quick method. These tools are an invaluable addition to your toolkit and I would certainly advise you to get all three sets

Bumping

Bumping has become an extremely popular method of opening door locks recently. However, it should not be forgotten that this method can also be used to effectively open padlocks.

What You Will Need:

- Bump Keys for padlocks. There are two main bump keys available for opening padlocks. A **'Master Key' bump key**. This is designed for the Master Lock range of padlocks. Additionally, there is a more generic **Padlock bump key** which is a different size to the Master bump key. It is certainly worth getting both to cater for different sized padlocks.
- Bump Hammer

Steps To Take

1. Insert the suitably sized bump key into the lock all the way.
2. Pull the key back slightly. You want the bump key so that the key is not lifting the very last set of pins.
3. Hold the key (and padlock) in such a way so that you will be able to turn the key with your thumb and finger **BUT** you want to keep part of the handle of the key free for the next step.
4. Using the bump hammer knock the key into the lock and at the same time apply a very quick but gentle turning motion to the key.
5. Repeat until the lock opens.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

The force of the key entering the lock under the pressure of the bump hammer causes an upward force on the bottom pin. This is transferred to the top pin which travels up into the casing of the lock and away from the shear line.

The aim of the technique is to get the bottom and top pins to separate at the shear line. The turning of the key should be timed to coincide with when the pins are separated.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- Don't apply too much tension. To do so would cause the pins to bind.
- A bump key grommet can be used to speed up the process. These are rubber washers that are inserted onto the key before it enters the lock. This washer helps to move the key back out of the lock after the key receives its blow from the hammer. This saves you time as you don't have to keep resetting the key each time. This of course means that you can simply continue to hit the key until the padlock opens.

Speed of Entry

- With practice this is again a very fast technique.
- This is certainly worth practicing and will get you in to a great many padlocks in a very short time.

Comb Picking

A relatively new method that is growing in popularity due to its effectiveness.

This can be a very quick method indeed at opening many padlocks.

What You Will Need:

A set of comb picks. The size and shapes vary in different sets so to give yourself the best chance of finding the right sized comb it is worth adding as many of these sets to your toolkit as possible.



Steps To Take

1. Choose a comb from your set that has the same number of protrusions as the lock has pins.
2. Insert the comb pick into the lock so that each protrusion of the pick is aligned with each pin.
3. Lift the pick upwards so that the pins in the lock are raised as far as possible.
4. Once you have lifted the pins turn the plug and the lock should open.
5. If the pick does not enter the lock and you have problems aligning the chosen comb with the pins then choose a different comb pick and try again.

What happens in the lock – How It Works

This is quite a sneaky method that is simple to execute and devastatingly quick.

The comb lifts the pins up and out of the plug. So, instead of just the top pins being raised above the shear line (and into the top casing of the lock) with this method both the bottom and top pins are raised out of the plug. This means that there are then no pins blocking the plug's rotation thus allowing the lock to be opened.

Improve Your Chances of Success

- The success of this method lies in two things.

- 1) The lock allowing this method to work i.e. there has to be sufficient space within the lock's casing to accommodate both sets of pins (plus the springs). Get to know which locks it will work on and which it won't.

- 2) The comb has to be suited to the lock you are trying to open. In other words the protrusions on the comb have to be the right size, shape and distance apart that will allow them to lift each pin in the lock. Therefore, the more sets of comb picks you can add to your toolkit the better.
 - Use the front pin to see if you have correctly lined up the comb with the pins. Being able to see the first pin in the lock allows you to visually line up the comb correctly.

Speed of Entry

- When this method works it is extremely quick.
- Get hold of as many locks as you can so that you will build up a working knowledge of when you can and cannot use this method.

Problems & How To Solve Them

Now that I've discussed the methods of padlock entry that are available to you I'd like to look at a few problems you might encounter – and try to offer some help and advice in overcoming those issues.

Problem One:

You can find yourself overwhelmed having just read about all these different techniques. Trying to practice all of them might feel daunting and you don't know where to start.

Solution:

First of all don't worry about this. My aim in this guide is to improve your knowledge of the techniques available to you. Your skill and ability to apply each of those techniques will come with time – some quicker than others.

Take it one step at a time. Choose one technique and focus on that one alone. Practice that technique on as many padlocks as possible. Once mastered, or at least once you have managed to have sufficient success that you feel happy with the technique, you can then move on to learning the next technique.

Problem Two:

Despite your best efforts and the practice you keep putting in you can't get a padlock to open.

Solution:

This can be very frustrating but don't give up with the technique all together. It might be that the technique you are trying is not effective on that particular lock. For example, the lock manufacturer might have modified the lock to thwart that particular technique.

Go back over the notes in this book for that particular technique and see if the 'Improve Your Chance of Success' section can offer any fresh hope. If not

move on to a different lock and try the technique afresh there – you will no doubt have more luck and that will renew your confidence in the technique.

If there is a lock that despite your best efforts you just can't open it then I would suggest dismantling it. You will then be able to see if it is a case of the lock not being susceptible to that line of attack or perhaps it just required a different placement of the picks. **When taking a lock apart you might even discover a specific weakness that can be exploited in a new way!**

Problem Three:

Now that you have learned these great techniques you might be asking yourself how you can go about getting hold of locks to practice on.

Solution:

There are a number of sources that I would suggest you investigate further.

- EBay is often a great source of old locks and you will often see a bundle of old padlocks up for auction.
- Car Boot Sales in your local area.
- Why not put out feelers with friends and family asking for old locks. You never know what might be lurking in their drawers and cupboards.

Get Out There And Start Applying This Knowledge

After reading this guide you will have a great grasp on all the effective methods of opening padlocks. By practicing these techniques you will very quickly become an expert at opening padlocks quickly and effectively.

If you follow the advice laid out and practice on as many locks as you can and take apart old locks then you will very quickly be selecting the best line of attack allowing you to literally open many locks in seconds.

Dismantle Those Locks!

You can learn so much from taking apart locks. Here are some of the benefits.

- 1) There is no better way, or indeed quicker way, of learning whether a particular method of attack will work or not.**
- 2) By being able to see the inner workings of the lock you might even discover a new technique of bypass. Perhaps there will be a certain angle that a bypass pick can be entered that could attack the locking bar?**
- 3) By knowing what is inside a padlock you will be able to better visualise the picking process when you are actually applying a technique to a locked padlock.**

Thanks For Reading

If you do have any further questions please get in touch at the email below. Also if you do find any unusual bypass methods specific to particular locks I'd always be interested to learn them.

I also hope very much that you have enjoyed this guide and if so please do email to let me have your comments. Also, please check out the further guides available in this series (available at withoutakey.co.uk).

Contact me at Pete@withoutakey.co.uk

Best Wishes

Pete



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