

Handle Sets

Arrowhead Stairs & Trim Hardware, opening new doors every day.

Consider the front door the welcoming face of your home and the handle set its hearty handshake. This lock-and-trim hardware is a small detail that makes a big first impression.

A handle set is also your home's guardian, allowing you to key a dead bolt into place with a satisfying snap. This familiar sound, which precedes our every trip across the threshold, reassures us that everything—and everyone—inside is safe and sound. For added security and convenience, some newer locks don't even need keys; they're opened with a touch pad or a smartphone.

While the lock is all business, the trim that surrounds it is about pleasing our senses; how it feels matters as much as how it looks. No wonder that handle set manufacturers offer so many knob, lever, thumb latch, and escutcheon options, as well as a slew of different metals and finishes.

Anatomy of a Handle Set



Dead Bolt

For maximum security, should extend 1 inch from door's edge.

Escutcheon

Protects door from key scratches and hides holes drilled for lock and thumb latch.

Latch Bolt

Holds door securely against stop.

Lock Cylinder

Accepts key, which operates dead bolt.

Thumb Latch

Retracts latch bolt.

Handle

Caring for Your Entry Set

Sticky Lock

Squeeze powdered graphite, available at hardware stores, into the key slot, then turn the dead bolt with a key to distribute the powder. (Do this every couple of years to prevent sticking.) Steer clear of spray lubricants, such as WD-40, which collect dust.

Stubborn Latch Bolt

Latches also need occasional lubrication. A squirt of silicone or WD-40 on the extended latch is just what the locksmith ordered.

Tarnished Metal

To keep it shiny, rub on jeweler's rouge, such as Flitz (about \$6; doitbest.com). Keep it away from the keyhole so that it doesn't clog the lock. For a soft patina that fits nicely with an old house, buff on a clear, protective layer of car wax, like Turtle Wax, every three months or so. Waxing will also preserve lacquer that's still in good shape. Buffing on a coat of wax every three months will keep a lacquered finish, like the one on this chrome Baldwin handle set, looking like new.

BROWSE HARDWARE