Congratulations

You have bought our Multi Gauge Curtain Pick

.... Why buy 5 different gauges of mortice pick when the MG will do them all !!

Basic Lever Lock picking

1.i] Picking Mortice Lever Locks That Have Curtains/Bolt-Throwers

2.i] Lever Recognition Photos of Various Levers Lever Breakdown

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Logical Picking

1. Picking Mortice Lever Locks That Have Curtains/Bolt-Throwers

How do you pick locks? Is it purely by trial and error or is it just guesswork?

I’d like you to try to forget some of the hit and miss techniques, and ask you to try and use a more logical approach. For instance, when dealing with levers that have square false gates, if every lever has one true gate and one false gate, then there can only be 16 different permutations to try [4 to the power of 2], using this type of logic will give you a higher success rate in picking, there are one or two locks such as the New Securefast range that have 25 different permutations. A lot of these permutations are not usable. If you were to try each of the different permutations using the following procedures as opposed to using guesswork, [which could mean as many as 4 to the power of 8 different permutations], it could take you quite a while to open your lock, so we take some short cuts. It is not absolutely necessary to know which manufacture of lock that you are working on, the only requirement that you need to know is what type of lever that you are dealing with, does it have false notches, v or square, or none at all? I often come across locks that are so badly corroded that it is difficult to distinguish which model of lock they are. Therefore do not panic – just follow your logical procedures to get the lock open. If you build up this practical approach to picking, although it may take you a little time to get used to, you’ll feel far more confident that whatever lock that you come across, you will be able to open it.
Do not worry about the time that it takes; after all, what is worse, taking 15 minutes or more to open an unidentifiable lock NDE or drilling 6 holes trying to find the unknown position of gates? Practice will improve your times.

The following procedures can be adapted to suit whichever lock that you are working on for instance, some levers which have V notches will behave like levers with square notches therefore that would be a good time to switch that procedure to the square notch lever procedure etc.

Here are examples of 3 procedures for picking lever locks.

A Procedure of Picking Lever Locks With-out False Gates

A Procedure of Picking a Lever Lock with V Notched False Gates

A Procedure of Picking a Lever Lock with Square False Gates

2.i] Lever Recognition

I generally place locks into 3 groups:-

A] those with levers without false gates,

B] and those whose levers which have V notched false gates [anti pick notch],

C] those whose levers have square false gates [false gate].

[Remember that false gates are classed in the same set as anti pick notches.]

Generally, locks that have false gates follow these rules:-

A high lift lever will have its false notch above the true gate and so the false notch will be the 1st to indicate, with the low lift lever the false notch is generally below the true gate but there are one or two locks on the market which use false gates above and below the true gate on both high and low lift levers. However, the following procedures are not affected by this as it is a process of decoding to discover what the 1st gate is, i.e. true gate or false gate.
Different Types of Levers

Before progressing with these procedures, I’d like to take a quick look at:

True gate

A true gate is that gate which allows the bolt stump/fence to pass through and allow a lock to open.

False gate

Is an anti-pick device to try and fool the picker into believing that he has found the true gate.
V-Notched False Gate

These are to deceive the picker and prevent any further movement of the lever, in reality because of their shape, any further pressure on the lever with the pick will cause the bolt stump/fence to disengage the anti-pick notch, and this can also be felt as reverse pressure on the tension wrench, which is useful for the picker.

High Lift

A high lift lever, as he name implies is a lever that is lifted high by the key to align its true gate with the bolt stump/fence.

Low Lift

A low lift lever only travels a short distance to align its true gate with the bolt stump/fence. The above drawings are somewhat over-size to emphasize the differences.

3 Logical Procedures


A General Guide that WILL increase your success rate with practice.

What I call the 'Golden Rule', is to only move a lever if it shows resistance to moving. Do not move any other lever.

This - if you stick rigidly to it - will ensure that the levers are moved in the correct order and will prevent the dropping of levers as you progress.

Step One:

Use the tension part of your pick to apply pressure onto the levers via the talon and curtain/bolt-thrower and stump. The maximum pressure here is that which will just cause one or more levers to show resistance to movement.

Experience shows this to be on most lever locks approx 100grams [approx 3oz] pressure on the end of a 7cm tension wrench.

[You’ll have to adjust your pressure if your tension wrench is longer.]

Or the resting weight of 2 fingers. [try borrowing the digital kitchen scales to practice the pressure] Any more pressure can make the picking process more difficult especially when it comes to locks with false gates.

Some locks do require a lot more pressure.
Step Two:

Feel your way through the lever pack with the picking wire, gently nudging each lever in the direction required to engage gate with the post/stump, to determine which lever is binding or is resisting moving. Only nudge each lever a maximum of 1 mm [40/1000ths inch] at a time to prevent over-lifting.

When you have found the lever that is binding more than any other lever, continue nudging this lever in the direction required to engage gate with the post/stump, 1mm at a time until it becomes free to move. Do not move this lever any further at this time, it maybe in a true gate or it may be just the shape of the lever allowing it to become free to move.

Step Three:

Repeat this procedure for each lever in turn, you may have to return to the first levers to continue this process, and the lock will open.

This procedure is specifically for levers without false gates. NB. If you cannot find a lever that is binding you may have to apply a little bit more pressure, but do not apply excessive pressure.

If this does not work, move backwards and forwards through the lever pack, gently nudging each lever 1mm at a time until such times you do find the lever that is resisting movement.


[This is similar to picking a lock with no false gates, but you must use light tension for this principle to be successful.]

Step One:

Use the tension part of your pick to apply pressure onto the levers via the talon and bolt-thrower/stump. The maximum pressure here is that which will just cause one or more levers to show resistance to movement.

Experience shows this to be on most lever locks approx 100grams [approx 3oz] pressure. Or the resting weight of 2 fingers. [try this method of weighing by borrowing the digital kitchen scales to practise the pressure]

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Feel your way through the lever pack with the picking wire, gently nudging each lever in the direction required to engage gate with the post/stump, to determine which lever is binding or is resisting moving. Only nudge each lever a maximum of 1 mm [40/1000ths inch] at a time.

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Step Three:
Repeat this procedure for each lever in turn, you may have to return to the first levers to continue this process. Eventually the lock will open or will move back a fraction and stop, here we obey the ‘Golden Rule’ again, because one or more levers is engaged in a false gate, we now lift this lever by applying a little more pressure onto it with the pick wire, [remember – if the wire starts to flex – you are applying too much tension], and, if you are not applying too much tension, the lever will move out of its false gate and into its true gate. Too much tension will cause the lever to over-lift when it decides to move.

Repeat this procedure for any other lever which is binding then the lock will open.

NB.

If you cannot find a lever that is binding you may have to apply a little bit more pressure, but do not apply excessive pressure. If this does not work, move backwards and forwards through the lever pack, gently nudging each lever 1mm at a time until such times you do find the lever that is resisting movement.


There are various ways of determining what sort of lever that you are dealing with, i.e. High lift or low lift.

1] Impression the levers

2] For the more experienced: by feeling the bellies of each lever with your picking wire

3] Deliberately putting each lever into the 1st gate that you come across

The following procedure details the 3rd option.

Step One:

Nudge each lever in turn similar to the previous procedure obeying the ‘Golden Rule’. [In this case instead of the lock opening, the bolt will move back a fraction and stop. ] Until each lever’s 1st gate is engaged with the bolt stump / fence. It may be a false gate or it may be a true gate. Remember, only move the levers that most resist movement. This ensures the correct order of picking.

Make a note of the order.

Step Two:

When all levers are in a gate, apply a little more tension. This binds all the false gates. Now test each lever in turn, by gently nudging or tapping them. If they feel solid, that will be a false gate. If they move, that is a true gate. Now you use the handle of your picking wire as a pointer. Whilst touching the bellies of the levers, make a note of the angle indicated by your picking wire thumb- turn. This is helpful when determining how far you will have to move a lever to get past its false gate.

Step Three:

Now you drop all the levers. And restart the picking; in this instance we try to leave a low lift lever until the last, this prevents the bolt stump moving back into a false gate. When you move a lever which has a
true gate first, move that lever to its true gate. When you move a lever which has a false gate first, you skip past that false gate. Remember that only light pressure is being used for this to be possible. If you are using too much pressure, you will have to ease off the pressure so that you can skip past the false gate. Carry on this procedure for all the levers and if the last lever to move was one that indicated a true gate first, then the lock will open. If the last lever to move was one with a false gate, release the tension completely, but still maintain contact between the stump and the levers.

i.e.: When you move this lever you do not want the bolt to be moving towards the unlocked position. [This is where the order of picking comes into play. And if the order of picking is correct you will not drop any other lever.] This will allow you to skip past the false gate. Then re-apply pressure. - The lock should open. Locks that have false gates above and below the true gate are treated in the same way, but you have to be a little more careful when skipping past the false gate – too much tension will cause over-lifting.

Technical:

Again, we have designed a very simple looking tool yet retains the originality of a reversible pick for left and right mounted locks. Using the same approach of light-handed manipulation of the lock, you’ll surprise even yourselves. For those of you who are new to this type of tool please work your way through this information a few times and take your time understanding ‘our approach’ to really knowing what’s inside a lock. Know your levers, and what the differences are, and you’ll soon be opening the locks.

Tool Construction:

Although the pick stem is stepped with 5 positions, the stem is suitable to enable the user to operate the pick on any gauge [of standard curtain lock] between 8g and 4g. Therefore, the variations are: 8g 7.5g 7g 6.5g 6g 5.5g 5g 4.5g 4g
The tool is made of Silver Steel which has been hardened and tempered, [this is instead of the normal stainless steel] to give extra strength and toughness, however, this does mean that the tool should be kept lightly oiled to prevent corrosion. Therefore, you will find that you have a cotton cloth enclosed in the kit, please dry off the tool if you have used it in wet conditions, and rub it down with the oily cloth, before you put it away. If looked after, I see no reason why this tool should not last an exceedingly long time. The ‘Drive Fin’ has been designed to rotate the curtain, however, in its design it adds strength to the stem. Along the fin are two small square notches; these are specifically designed for the use of this tool on the ERA Fortress lock [though you’ll need Fortress Wires + Thumb-turn in addition to this kit]

Tool Construction:

Although the pick stem is stepped with 5 positions, the stem is suitable to enable the user to operate the pick on any gauge [of standard curtain lock] between 8g and 4g. Therefore, the variations are:

8g 7.5g 7g 6.5g 6g 5.5g 5g 4.5g 4g

How To Use The MG Pick

You will note that there is a facility along the drive fin that accommodates the warded curtain in the ERA Fortress. The drive fin has a knife-edge machined into it, this is so that when tension is applied the drive fin locks into the curtain and stabilizes the tool. For those rare occasions where doors that do not have a key-way both sides, you will have to drill through the keyhole to create the space for the extra length of the tool. Please be careful doing this to avoid damage to the curtain. This is of little import compared to the versatility of the tool.

Picking Method

The Golden Rule remains the same

If you are new to the CB curtain picking range, please read the following notes regarding Basic Curtain Lever Lock Picking see chapter 4 where you’ll find Tips and Hints for using the original CB Pocket Curtain Pick.

For a left-hand mounted lock the picking wire should be on the right side of the drive fin. For a right-handed mounted lock the picking wire should be on the left side of the drive fin. If you are working on a 5g key-way, you can position the pick stem at either the 4.5g step or the 5g step depending on door thickness.
Procedure for picking the 110

1. Start with medium/heavy tension. On most occasions the lever closest to the bolt will be the first lever to bind and this is normally picked from bolt to cap.
2. Keep nudging all levers, approximately 2mm at a time until one of the levers start to bind (goes tight).
3. Once you have found a binding lever continue to nudge the belly gently upwards until it no longer binds (using very small movements).
4. Repeat step 2 until all levers have plenty of movement which means they are in the true gate, or very close to the true gate. (You may find some levers hardly need a lift as they are already in the true gate.)

5. If one of the levers goes solid (i.e. into a false gate) you will need to ease off the tension and then the other levers will drop – STOP – before you do that move to Stage 2.

Stage 2.

6. Note the picking angle of those levers that are in true gate. This is essential as without it you will not be able to place the levers back into the true gate and continue picking the other levers.
7. Continue to gently feather the levers and once all four levers are in true gate you will hear a final click on some of the levers and the bolt will jump back.
8. At this point there will only be one lever left to pick. Tension can now become very light which allows you to place the last lever in to the true gate.
Example of step 6 (for a LHS lock)

Lever 1

Lever 2

Lever 3

High Lift

Medium Lift

Low Lift

Realistic opening times 5 -15 minutes

Lever packs in the detainer series – old and new

OLD LEVER PACKS
The old lever packs are ‘child’s-play’, they only have a false gate above and below the true gate which is easy to decode when picking (see picture of old an new lever below).
NEW LEVER PACKS
The new lever packs will sort the men out from the boys but stick to the procedure and you will soon be breaking them open. Their false gate is a non linear fence.