



The British Pest Control Association (BPCA) gives top ten tips on keeping pests at bay.

1. Store **food** carefully so that pests do not have access to food sources. Wipe up spills immediately and sweep up crumbs.
2. Cover or seal **rubbish** tightly. Do not let bins overflow and keep the lid completely closed at all times.
3. If you **compost** kitchen waste, ensure you frequently inspect the base of the area for signs of rodent activity.
4. Seal **cracks** and **holes** on the outside of the home including entry points for utilities and pipes. Wire wool is the best product to block holes with - expanding foam is the worst.
5. Check that **doors** fit tightly. If there is a gap of 6mm or more, consider putting a bristle strip on the bottom of external doors to prevent pests from coming in.
6. Fit **cone guards** around the bottom of drainpipes to prevent rats from climbing up the side of your building and **metal balloon guards** to the bottom of drainpipes to prevent them climbing up the inside - you can get these from your local hardware shop.
7. Check for and remove **structural damage** such as moisture-damaged wood. Water damage can cause weak spots in the roof where pests may enter. Repair damaged windows and screens.
8. During warmer summer weather fit **fly screens** to windows and any door that may be left open for a period of time. This will assist in preventing flying insects such as house flies, wasps and mosquitoes.
9. Inspect seams in mattresses and the gaps around headboards of the bed carefully for evidence of **bed bugs**.
10. If a house member returns from **travelling abroad**, be sure to fully check luggage and sleeping bags (ideally outside) before stowing away.