



**Finding the Right
Replacement Windows
for Your Home**

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Replacement vs. new windows?

Whether you are looking to enhance the aesthetic value of your home, or seeking benefits in savings, performance and efficiency, replacement windows present a great opportunity to meet these objectives.

By definition, replacement windows are windows that are custom built to fit within an existing opening. What this means, is that they are designed to fit precisely, and can be installed without disturbing the interior and exterior areas around the window. During installation, the molding remains intact and a vinyl-coated capping on the siding is used to close the gap between that and the window.

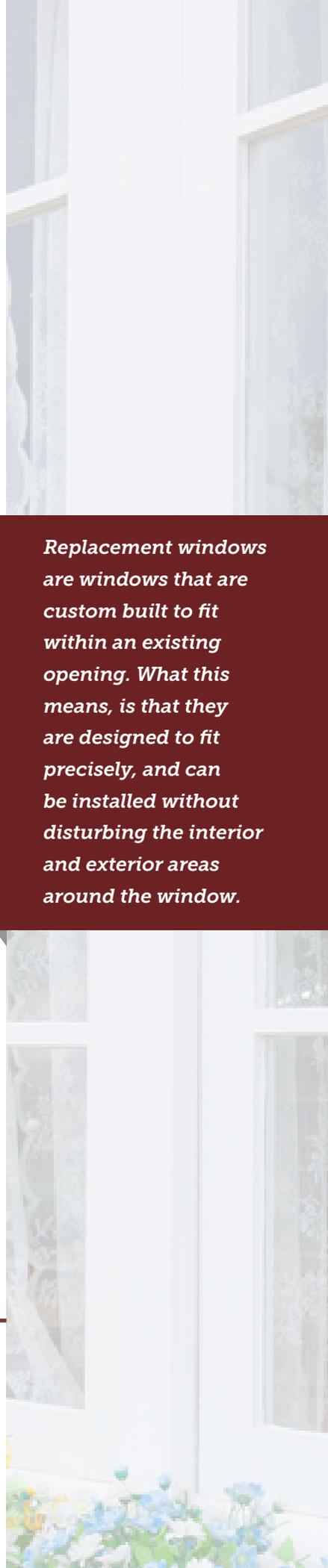
Replacement windows are commonly used during remodeling or renovation projects because they are a less expensive option compared to new construction windows. The main difference between replacement and new construction windows, also known as full frame replacements or prime windows, is that the latter is typically used when building a new home or other structure; and unlike replacement windows, which are custom-fitted, they usually come in standard sizes. In addition, when installing a new construction window, the old window frame and jamb are completely removed, and the molding is replaced entirely.

Although there are certain situations in which new construction windows are the most viable option for your home improvement needs – for example, if the original window frame is rotted or significantly out of square – more often than not, opting for replacement windows is the most practical option for homeowners who are in search of an economical way to yield a return on investment, while boosting the comfort and value of their homes.

So when is the right time to consider replacing your windows? The following signs often indicate that a replacement is due:

- Windows are difficult to open or close
- Draft or air leakage through or around the window
- Excessive condensation or icing on the inside of the window panes
- Windows rattle in the wind
- Paint chipping or peeling
- House is always too cold in winter – or too hot in summer

With a number of recorded benefits, replacement windows are an effective solution for the issues highlighted above.



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WEIGHING THE BENEFITS

Increased Resale Value: For most homeowners, the potential return on investment from selling their homes is a top priority, and many are discovering that the installation of high-quality replacement windows is a simple way to boost resale value. According to a report in Remodeling Magazine, the payback from such an investment is at least two-thirds the project cost. Prospective buyers are attracted to the practical and aesthetic benefits offered by replacement windows, including enhanced insulation properties, reduced maintenance requirements and a guaranteed favorable first impression due to enhanced curb appeal.

Aesthetic Appeal: As mentioned above, an increase in aesthetic value leads to boosts in resale value. New windows not only enhance the curb appeal of your home, but they can also beautify a home's interior, as modern windows with specialized coatings are able to reduce ultraviolet (UV) rays by up to 75 percent. As a result, the sun's harmful rays are not able to easily fade artwork, paper, fabric, carpet, wood, and other décor items.

Additionally, replacement windows can have an impact on interior design decisions, as they are able to augment the way people view their homes and the design options available to them.

Energy-Efficiency (and cost-savings!):

Much of the appeal of replacement windows can be found in the cost savings they offer the homeowner. In addition to enhancing the appearance of a home, window replacements can also help to improve their functionality by making them more energy efficient. An increase in energy-efficiency translates to savings in energy cost. Modern windows can save up to 20 percent on energy loss from the home; specifically, possible savings in climates with a significant heating season range from 11 to 24 percent, while savings in climates that mainly require cooling range from 7 to 31 percent.

The importance of energy efficient windows lies in the fact that heat has a tendency to enter and exit the home through the windows during the hot summer months and cold winter, both through unprotected window panes and old window frames.

Savings in climates with a significant heating season range from 11 to 24 percent



This is especially burdensome for a home's HVAC unit, driving up heating and cooling costs exponentially. By protecting the home against leaks, drafts, and condensation, energy-efficient windows can help reduce peak heating and cooling loads. Features such as chemical glazes, low-emissivity coatings, double-pane structures, weather stripping and foam-filled framing are used to improve energy retention.

Easier Maintenance: Modern features of replacement windows, such as double-hung, fusion-welded or tilted windows, allow for improved functionality, as well as easier and safer maintenance tasks. Furthermore, modern windows are less susceptible to deterioration and tend to be more durable than their older counterparts, making them easier to maintain and contributing to their long-lasting appeal.

Noise Reduction and Added Security: In addition to benefits in energy-efficiency, modern replacement windows are able to serve as an effective barrier to outside noise, while increasing the comfort of the homeowner. On a more serious note related

to keeping the outside world out, replacement windows are equipped with a number of safety features, such as pick-resistant locks, night latches, safety screens and reinforced frames to improve home security.

A VARIETY OF OPTIONS

There are many types of replacement windows on the market that are able to meet a range of style, design and budgetary needs, and with the help of experienced design professionals, homeowners can determine what type of windows are best for their remodeling or renovation projects.

Among the many design aspects to consider, perhaps the most important are the types of window styles, materials and glass options that are best suited for the home. To help narrow down the options, factors such as, the age and architecture of the home, the location of the windows, and other specific needs come into play.

Style options: Choosing the optimal style plays an important role in the window replacement process, but it also pays to understand all of the operating and maintenance directions for each type.

Narrow down the options, factors such as, the age and architecture of the home, the location of the windows, and other specific needs



Some of the most popular style options for replacement windows include:

Double hung windows are known for their beauty and practicality. They have a classic appeal, are easy to clean – because the sash can be tilted, are convenient to open and offer optimal ventilation, while letting in 30 percent more daylight.

Bay and bow windows are another popular style option that are known for adding dimension to a room, thus making a small space appear larger. These windows can give the interior and exterior of the home a distinct, attractive look and are also popular because they offer good ventilation and allow natural light into the home.

Casement windows exude a modern sense of style, and like double hung windows, allow for easy cleaning and maintenance. Casement windows provide maximum visibility, providing an unobstructed view of the outdoors. Features such as multi-point locking systems, tuck away folding handles

and multiple assembly options impact security, maintenance and accessibility, as well as ventilation considerations.

Awning windows are also perfect for hard-to-reach places and are a good option for rainy days and coastal areas, because windows can be left open without worrying too much about water entering the home during a gentle rain shower. These windows are hinged at the top and opened by tilting the window out from the bottom, and as their name suggests, awning window create the appearance of an awning when open.

Sliding windows slide open from side to side and are an excellent choice when there is limited space outside to swing the window open. These windows also allow for easy cleaning and are virtually low-maintenance.

Glass options: Like window style options, there are a number of glass options to choose from. For most homeowners, energy-efficiency is key; however, other glass options exist to serve diverse purposes:

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Tempered glass is ideal for windows that are close to the floor or located in high-traffic areas, as this type of glass is about three or four times stronger than typical glass and is a great option to prevent breakage.

Obscure glass is a great option for areas where privacy is desired – for example, in the bathroom, or where light is needed, but where the view may be unattractive.

Sound dampening glass is ideal in areas when exterior noise is a concern. The increased pane thickness of this option helps reduce the transmission of noise by reflecting the energy of the sound waves.

Energy-efficient glass is by far the most popular choice because of their cost-saving benefits. With this option, energy-efficiency is achieved via the use of tints, gas-filled panes, insulated glass and coatings. In the case of the latter, options include, Low-E2, which reflects heat back to its source so summer heat is reflected outdoor and indoor heating in the winter is retained, Low-E3, which

is formulated to reject solar heat while letting light in, and Low-E3/ERS, which combines the energy efficient properties and UV protection of Low-E3 with Low-E3/ERS.

Material options: Choosing the right frame materials are also an important consideration. Material choices include fiberglass, vinyl, aluminum and wood.

Fiberglass frames provide good insulation and are generally maintenance free. They are eight times stronger than vinyl and four times stronger than fibrex. Fiberglass windows come in a variety of options, including Everwood, designed to replicate the details and beauty of traditional wood windows, without the maintenance. Even though they might be a little bit more expensive than some other window choices, the benefits greatly outweigh the extra investment.

Vinyl frames are a popular choice for window replacement because they are maintenance free, insulate well and make a smooth operating window.

Energy-efficient glass is by far the most popular choice because of their cost-saving benefits.



However, even though they are relatively inexpensive, they do not have the same energy savings and performance.

Aluminum or metal frames are durable, strong and virtually maintenance free. However, these frames tend to be a poor choice for energy-efficiency due to heat and cold conductivity.

Wood provides a great aesthetic and good insulating properties; however, because the natural look of wood involves considerable maintenance, periodic painting, staining and treatment is necessary to protect the material from moisture, movement and rot.

With a number of options to consider when selecting replacement windows, it is no wonder that homeowners are often confused about what choices are best for their homes. Fortunately, with the help of design professionals, and with the appropriate guidance, the decision-making process is made easier.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

As a first step when shopping for replacement windows, homeowners should define and prioritize their goals regarding energy-efficiency, maintenance reduction, appearance, etc. It is recommended that they gain at least a basic understanding of the properties, costs and tradeoffs associated with available choices.

It is best to stick to using objective energy measurements, like those from Energy Star. Pay attention to the U-value. Energy Star windows must be a U=.3 or lower. The lower the U-value of the window, the better the rating

Following this step, retaining the services of a window contractor who understands the nuances in window technology and who can aid in the selection process is advised. Experienced contractors have a better knowledge of what is popular, what works in awkward spaces and what is cost-effective. Checking the credentials

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of contractors is crucial and can be done by examining references, reviews and ratings. Contractors should be fully insured, licensed, certified and must follow safety procedures, codes and regulations.

Evaluating warranties and reading the fine print is extremely important. Even when a window that meets all outlined requirements is found, it is vital to dig deeper to ensure the best warranty, construction and installation. Finding a company that is certified by the manufacturer for the installation will prevent any voids in the warranty and guarantee proper installation.

By keeping these guidelines in mind, homeowners are sure to find the perfect replacement windows for their individual needs.



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