



# Homeowner's Guide to **Windows**

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# Where do you start?

Where do you start when you're thinking about new windows for your home? First, think about what you need. Second, think about the type or style you're looking for in your windows. Third, which type of material. Finally, what style of glass.

Read on to learn how to select the best residential windows for your home. Feel free to print this PDF and use the notes sections to write down anything you'd like to learn more about.

# What do you need?

For replacement purposes you need to look at the current windows and determine whether you need to replace the whole window and the window frame.



## HOW TO TELL IF YOU NEED A WHOLE WINDOW REPLACEMENT?

- Look for signs of rotting wood on the inside and, especially, the outside of your window.
- Check for drafts by closing the window and holding a candle to it. If the light flickers, there's probably a draft.
- If your windows are caulked, look for caulk that's not sealing correctly.
- Next time there's a hot or cold day, check for cool or warm zones by holding your hand over every inch of the window frame and feeling for a change in temperature.



*If you see or feel any of these, you may want to consider a complete window replacement.*

## REPLACING THE ENTIRE WINDOW

Many people choose to replace the whole window, even if the existing window is in good structural condition. They do this because it's assured that the new window will be insulated and sealed correctly with the new materials available today.

In the case of a whole window replacement, you have a wide range of options.

For whole window replacement it is necessary to remove trim work on the interior and exterior of the window. This generally is not a big problem, and is more easily done in newer homes, but there is more labor involved and usually more material costs.

## POCKET WINDOW REPLACEMENT METHOD

The pocket method is most commonly done on double hung windows (those where the window slides up and down) or sliding windows. It is usually done in cases where the existing window frame is in good condition. The old window sash and glass are now obsolete. The window sash is the part on the frame that holds the glass. The glass and sash lose their energy efficiency or they simply no longer work very well and, in some cases, have become dangerous.

This method is very popular in much older homes, character homes with older style trim work, where the homeowner does not want to disturb the interior or exterior

trim work. The double hung window sash, the two frames that hold the glass and move up and down, are removed and a new window with a new frame is "inserted" into the old window frame.

This new window is insulated and sealed within the old frame. It is usually less costly than a whole window replacement and usually requires less labor and material costs. It is a tremendous fix in those old homes where the windows rattle and a breeze comes through.

## SASH REPLACEMENTS

There are also sash replacement kits. These provide new sash and new jamb liners for older double hung windows and are typically less costly than other methods.

*Notes:*

*If it's possible, are you interested in a pocket replacement instead of an entire window replacement?*

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# Three Basic Types of Windows



## CASEMENT *or* AWNING WINDOWS

crank out and in by turning the handle. Casements pivot from one side or the other just like a door. Awning windows pivot from the top and the bottom cranks out.



## DOUBLE HUNG WINDOWS

(often referred to as tilt windows) slide up and down. A single hung window is a window where the top is fixed and does not move and the bottom slides up and down.



## SLIDING WINDOWS

slide back and forth. **Double Slide**—both sides sliding or **Single Slide**—just one side operates.

# Which **type** of window??

Which type is selected depends mostly on personal preference and in what capacity they are being used.

Casement windows are probably the most popular in new home construction where double hung windows are used more in replacement because that is what is being replaced. Casements are typically the most costly and the most energy efficient (other than a fixed or non-operating window).

Double hung windows, are the next in line as far as cost and energy efficiency.

If cost is a major consideration, then think about sliding windows. You often see sliding windows in hotels and apartment complexes. They also have the least hardware which allows for less things to break down and the operation is simple.

## SWITCHING THE TYPE OF WINDOW YOU CURRENTLY HAVE

You can switch the type of window you currently have. For example, if you currently have a casement window and you want double hung windows it is possible to do so. They may need to be custom sized but any window can be made to fit your existing opening.

There are a few factors in deciding whether or not you can switch the type of window you currently have.

The best way to know for sure what your options are for switching types of windows is to have an expert come and look at your windows.

*Notes:*

*What kind of windows do you have now?*

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*Which type of window are you interested in?*

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*Are energy efficient windows a priority?*

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# Which **material** is best for your window frame?

*The most common are as follows (in order of cost with the first usually being the most expensive):*

## WOOD INTERIOR *with* ALUMINUM EXTERIOR

The wood can be of several different species but the most common, and least expensive is pine. It can also be pre-finished prior to installation. The exterior is aluminum wrapped wood cladding (the aluminum being about as thick as an a beer or soda can) or it is extruded aluminum which is thicker and stronger and resists dents and bending (it holds its own structure). The extruded product is more costly.

## ALL FIBERGLASS *or* FIBERGLASS *with* WOOD INTERIOR

Similar to the aluminum extruded above with a wood interior. All fiberglass windows have all parts made of extruded fiberglass. Fiberglass is stronger than both wood and vinyl, does not rot and is resistant to warping or bending. Fiberglass is still relatively new for use in window fabrication but will probably become more and more popular as pricing comes down and improvements are made over time

## WOOD INTERIOR *with* VINYL EXTERIOR

Basically the same as the aluminum above just a different material. The use of vinyl instead of aluminum generally reduces cost.

## ALL VINYL

Vinyl windows have become more popular in this climate over the last ten years or so. There have also been great improvements in vinyl windows. With laminate interiors they can be made to appear very much like wood and there are now more exterior color choices. Vinyl windows operate quite easily and almost all double hung tilt windows will easily tilt in for cleaning. They will not rot like wood which is a huge plus in climates with cold winters.

*Notes:*

*Which of these materials do you **have now**?*

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*Which of these materials are you **interested in**?*

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# Which Brings Us To Glass Choices

A lot of people think their windows are bad because they have moisture or condensation on the glass. People have purchased new windows and then in the winter, when it gets very cold, there is moisture on them and people conclude that the windows are bad or are subpar.

In reality, the windows basically have nothing to do with the moisture appearing on them. For a window, the only thing between the 68 degrees of the inside of a house and the 0 degrees of the outside of a house is 2 or 3 pieces of glass, the spacer between them, some coatings and some gas in the spaces.

The moisture appearing on the glass is a result of the temperature on the outside and the amount of moisture in the air, or humidity, on the inside. It is simple science.

The glass choices today can help to reduce and come close to eliminating any moisture on the inside of windows even in homes with higher humidity. It does come at a cost and can increase the cost of windows considerably.

The standard for glass today is double pane with low-e coating and argon gas in the airspace. This is probably the bare minimum that is needed in our climate to

help with energy efficiency year round. From there, more coatings of low-e can be added and a third pane of glass with more coatings and also the use of krypton gas.

The more additions, and the reduction in u-value, the more the cost is going to go up.

*Notes:*

*What **more information** do you need about glass choices?*

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# How much should you budget for new windows?

The old saying “you get what you pay for” applies to windows as much as it does to anything.

Today, all 3 types of windows mentioned above are very energy efficient and generally constructed better than they ever have been. However, buying the least expensive can come back to haunt you.

The window business in today’s world is more competitive than it has ever been and there are so many brands and options out there that are all competitively priced because they have to be.

There is usually a reason one window costs less than another whether it be the glass is not as energy efficient, the hardware is not as strong, the frame is not as bulky, or the materials used to construct it are not on par with more expensive windows.

There is a reason one window is \$200.00 and another, that appears to be the same, is \$350.00. The margin on windows now is not very large and it is a competitive business so the consumer needs to do research, ask questions and be sure that what they are comparing is “apples to apples” as they say.

Ask if there is new trim being used, if they will seal the windows per the manufacturer’s procedure, if they will be using window flashing tape, insulation, will there be new trim on the exterior.

As you can tell from all the choices above the cost of windows can vary dramatically.

The more windows being done at the same time will reduce the cost per window.

*Be aware of add-ons to advertised pricing that are not included in the initial quotes.*

## TYPICAL WINDOW COSTS

Type of Window	Cost of Each Window	Cost of Installation	Total
Double Hung Sash Replacement	\$100-250	\$50-150	\$150-400
Pocket Replacement	\$150-400	\$50-150	\$20-550
Whole Window Replacement	\$150-900	\$125-800	\$275-1700



### FROM THE EXPERTS AT OMNI

Omni Glass includes all items needed for installation in our installed prices and warrants all our work.

We always urge customers to look around, do research and check and make sure what is included in each quote.

Omni Glass carries several different types and brands of windows so we can cover all ranges of pricing and options.

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