

HOW TO CHOOSE REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

So you've made the choice: it's time for new windows! Decision-making over, right? Wrong. Now you get to choose what type of window frame material you want! Plus you get to pick the style and color of your new windows.

You might already know what you want the windows to look like, but how do you narrow down which type of frame to go with? Let us help - here, we compare the top 3 window material options in our area as well as the pros and cons of each.

VINYL

You can select from several colors or styles of vinyl windows, though the selection is slightly limited; however, vinyl is virtually maintenance free. The vinyl material minimizes heat transfer, so they are generally the most energy efficient window on the market. They do not corrode, pit or rust; any dings or dents are not very noticeable because the chosen color is throughout, not just on the surface. They are less expensive and easier to install than aluminum or even wood, but they are also not as strong or as impact resistant as aluminum – this is a key distinction in our hurricane-prone area.

ALUMINUM

If you're after a sleek, minimal, modern look, aluminum is absolutely your best choice as the frames themselves are much thinner than vinyl or wood. Also, aluminum frames are the strongest available, so if you have very large windows or are concerned with hurricane safety and impact resistance, aluminum is your best bet with those factors in mind. However, aluminum frames are much more prone to corrosion (especially in coastal areas), pitting, fading and dents than vinyl frames. They also need to be cleaned with a special aluminum cleaner, rinsed and dried semi-regularly; it's also not a bad idea to lubricate all moving parts. Aluminum is more expensive than vinyl but less expensive than wood.

WOOD

The customization options with wood are all but endless; you can get wooden frames and sashes in pretty much any color or size you're looking for. Wood is a good insulator, so wooden window frames are fairly energy efficient. However, wood is, of course, prone to rot and warp; the paint will chip and fade and need to be redone within a few years. You also need to watch out for termites moving into and munching on your frames. Wooden frames are also somewhat expensive (especially in today's market). Wooden windows are beautiful, but if the upfront expense or the prospect of high maintenance don't suit you, you'd be better off with either vinyl or aluminum.

STYLES

Single-hung, double-hung, single- or multi-pane, sliders, arch, picture, casement, architectural...who knew there were SO many styles of windows? If you are installing or replacing a specific style, that may help make your decision a little easier as to which frame material to choose. If you're not yet sure what style you want, let your contractor know and they'll be happy to go over all the style and color options available within each window material family.

With so many factors to consider when choosing what type of new windows to have installed, your best option will be to go over your specific project with your contractor. They will answer any questions and will lend their invaluable expertise to help you pick the right material that takes into consideration both your style preferences and your home's specific needs.



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