



# TIPS FOR CHOOSING A WINDOW INSTALLER OR A CONTRACTOR

If your windows are ten years old, it's time to upgrade, because there is better, more efficient technology. New windows are one of the best investments you can make in terms of being more energy efficient for your house.

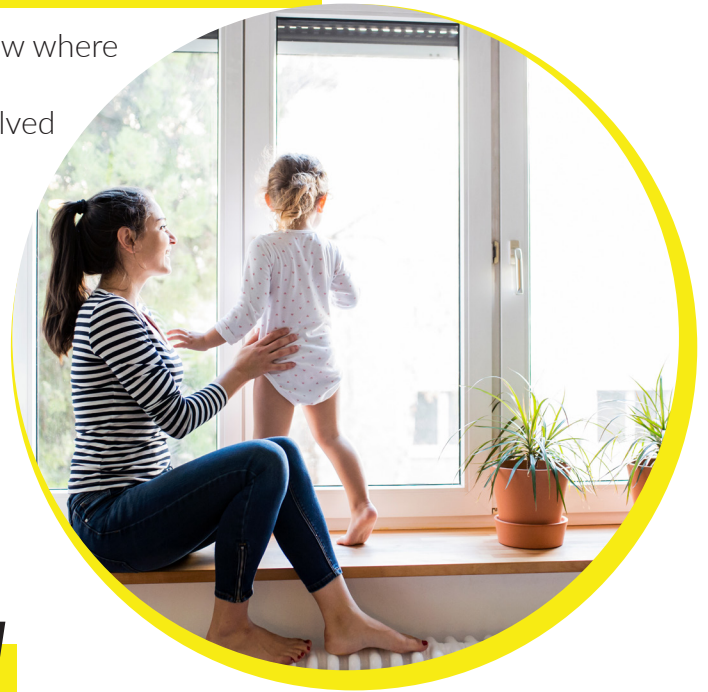
BUT

What if you want to enlarge the opening to make room for a bigger window?

# ADDING A WINDOW TO YOUR HOME

A lot of customers ask if they can add an existing window where there are no windows, but they always seem incredibly shocked by how much it's going to cost and what's involved with creating a hole where one doesn't already exist.

Most people imagine you're just cutting a square in the wall, but the truth is you have to take all the drywall down, measure and adjust siding, and unless your window is less than twelve inches, you're going to cut into studs—which is a huge deal. So it's very important that your contractor has the know how to do the project right to keep from getting water damage in your house.



## DO YOU NEED A WINDOW INSTALLER OR A CONTRACTOR?

When it's a basic case of replacing old windows with new windows in the same size opening, an experienced window installation company is a good choice. Do your research to ensure the company has a good workmanship warranty and will be there to handle any future problems should they arise. Keep in mind that a good carpenter can install a window, while a window installer may not always be experienced in handling special cases.

***Knowing how to choose a window installer will ensure the job is done properly, and your windows will perform as they should.***

Not all companies that advertise window installation among their “specialties” can be trusted to do the job right the first time. These tips will help you choose a window installer with the right combination of skill, experience, knowledge and the other ingredients for successful window installation.



# TIPS FOR CHOOSING A WINDOW INSTALLER OR A CONTRACTOR

## 1. You should look for someone who doesn't work for one specific window manufacturer.



It's best to find an independent contractor who will help you find the best windows at a good price point instead of someone who operates as a salesperson for a specific brand.

A window dealer is trying to make money by selling you a window. A contractor, on the other hand, doesn't make money selling windows, but by installing them. For instance, We are contractors and we'd help you find the best windows that fit your budget, whereas a window dealer or a siding company—someone who's not necessarily a window contractor—will usually have deals with distributors for certain windows. So they're trying to make money not just installing the window but selling you a more expensive window that doesn't necessarily correlate to a better product. Plus, when you choose an independent contractor you can feel good about supporting a local business.

## 2. Skip the Upstarts or smaller companies.

There are plenty of window installers around, so only consider those who have been in business at least five years. A track record of that length, at minimum, shows the company hasn't worked itself out of business through poor-quality installation that gave it a horrible reputation and/or drove it into bankruptcy. This economy is strong and interest rates for home equity loans are low. Those realities have produced a booming home renovation market, including window replacement. There is money to be made for installers, and many without skill and experience are getting into the business. The inevitable result is that some homeowners get ripped off with shoddy window installation.

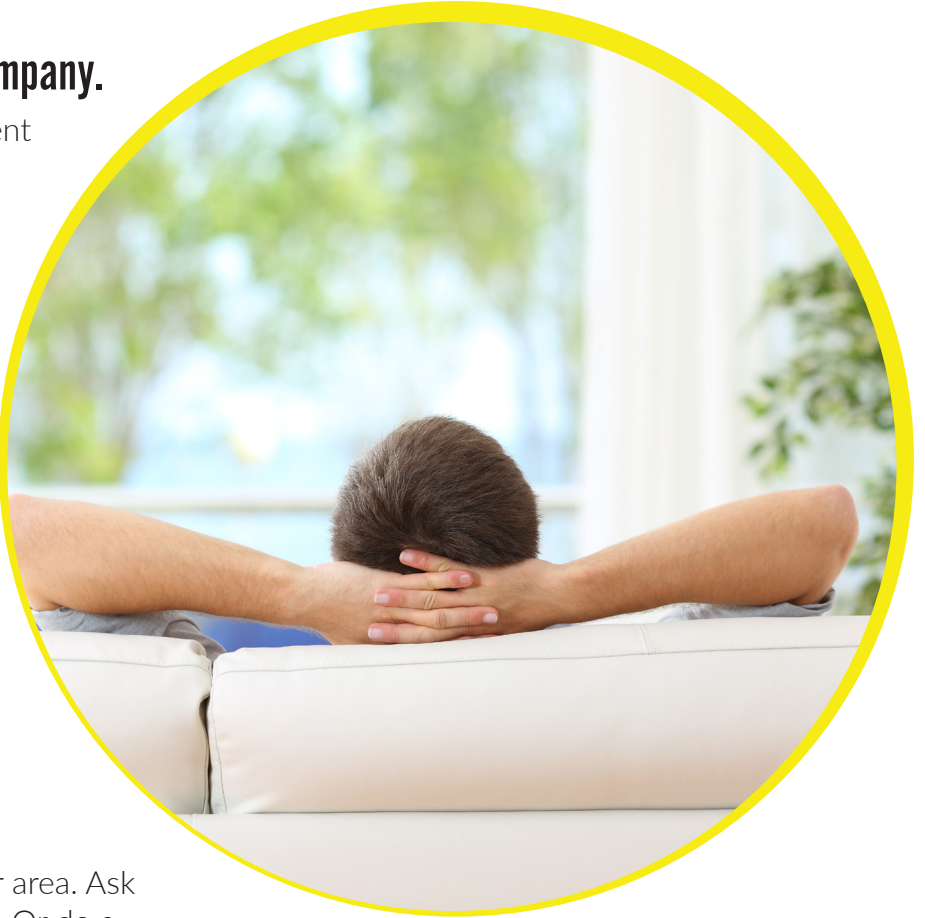
Do your research. First of all, do they have a website? Do they appear reputable? We get most of our work from people who tell their friends and neighbors. So just ask for recommendations. That's a really good thing, too, because then you're working with a company who's already worked with someone you know.

Find someone with information that clearly displays their state license number, and shows that they're bonded and insured. Those are usually indications that they do quality work because they're publically releasing all of this information that makes them easy to track down. Always make sure that you're using people who are licensed, bonded and insured.

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## 3. Hire the Crew – Not Just the Company.

The high demand for window replacement is creating upstarts, as noted. It is also causing established companies to hire more installers to meet the demand. Some of those hires do not have skill or experience. You don't want them installing your windows, whether you're paying \$250 per window for affordable Jeld-Wen vinyl or \$1,000-plus for premium Andersen wood. It doesn't matter if the company owner has 50 years experience and can perfectly install windows in his sleep. What about the new guy on the crew? What are his skills and experience?



## 4. Check Their Ratings.

It's easy to find window installers in your area. Ask family and friends for recommendations. Or do a simple search: "Window installers in my area," for example. See what companies come up.

Put together a short list, and then do your due diligence. The internet makes it really easy. Sites to check, in order of importance, are:

- Google reviews
- Better Business Bureau
- Yelp



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## 5. Make Sure They are Licensed and Insured (and Bonded is Good too!)



A license demonstrates basic competence and also compliance with local building codes.

Being insured means that if one of their crew members falls off a ladder and breaks a leg and goes on disability, you (probably) won't get sued. That's worker's compensation insurance. It means that if they drop and destroy a \$1,800 bay window assembly, their insurance will cover the replacement cost. That is liability insurance. Both are important. Being bonded means that if they go out of business half-way through the job, the cost of hiring a new contractor to finish the work will be covered. It means that if they are responsible for buying the windows, but fail to pay for them, you won't have to. It means that if they do a terrible job (a scenario you can avoid with these tips, right?) and you have to hire a company to fix the issues, the cost will be covered.

Those are just a few of many examples of the benefits of hiring a licensed, insured and bonded window installation contractor.

## 6. Make Sure They've Installed Your Windows Before

Now we're getting down to the nitty gritty. While installation is generally the same for all window brands, the best work will be done by an installer with excellent experience putting in the brand and series of windows you're buying.

## Bottom line:

Experience installing your brand can mean the difference between average and superior installation. The best installation ensures your windows will perform beautifully for the longest period of time.



# IT'S OKAY IF THEY DO OTHER WORK

We're not talking about companies that do nothing but sell and install windows and doors. Those companies should be considered.

We're talking about home remodeling companies that do windows, siding, roofing, decks, etc.



## IN THE END...

If the window isn't properly installed, the biggest enemy is always water. Water creates damage faster than anything else, so if the installer doesn't properly seal back up to the siding material, water can start getting in.

It's incredible how quickly things can be ruined just from getting rot in the structural parts of your house, like mold in your insulation.



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