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# choosing replacement windows

## the KEY is being an informed consumer

**W**ith thousands of different window companies and manufacturers, how does the average homeowner choose what's best for their home and budget? What are the differences and what should they know before speaking to a salesperson?

**Sifting through the jargon.** What is just a sales pitch and what is actual information? This can be a tough question to answer. Just as there are many window companies, there are just as many pieces of advice and information. The Energy Star ratings program by the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) allows you to compare various window products

**Arm yourself with these simple facts. You will certainly make an informed decision that will benefit you and your home for years to come.**

to determine which window offers the best performance and value. Researching via the internet can be confusing. As with everything else, consider the source. Some information out there is published by a

specific window company. What you think may be neutral party information is nothing short of someone else's sales pitch. Ask the company, (or companies) you are getting

quotes from to provide independent information on the window products they offer. If you would like to research yourself, here are some independent sources:

- U.S. Department of Energy  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)
- American Architectural Manufacturers Assoc.  
[www.aamanet.org](http://www.aamanet.org)
- National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC)  
[www.nfrc.org](http://www.nfrc.org)

There are many different windows, manufacturers, installers and companies, and more than one of them offers excellent products and service. The focus should be on what your preference is. In the end, it



is your money so be sure you get something you are comfortable with and proud of.

**Is it worth the investment?** This is where you need to prepare yourself. The average house will cost between \$7,000.00 and \$20,000.00 for replacement windows. Custom sizes and upgrades can cost an extra 15%. You will notice a reduction in your energy bills, 20-45% is the average, (just how much depends on your energy provider and windows you choose). New, energy efficient windows will also make your home more quiet, comfortable and attractive. Your house is, after all, a long term investment.

**Efficiency Ratings—what do the numbers and letters mean?** Manufacturers mark their replacement windows with many numbers, letters and fractions. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "The lower the U-factor, the more energy efficient the window is." U-factor means its ability to conduct heat.



**Aspen Home Improvement, Inc.**  
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"The very best"—a few short words with a huge meaning. That's our goal at Aspen Home Improvement. We never tried to be anything else. Aspen Home Improvement has just recently been awarded the exclusive dealership of the world's most advanced energy-efficient window, the *Starmark*.

Established 20 years ago, Aspen has built a solid foundation and an extensive customer base. We specialize in external products for your home—windows, siding, doors, roofing, decks, sunrooms, soffit, fascia, and gutters.

Our installers are not "Jack of all trades" but *Certified Master Installers*. Aspen prides itself on protecting the environment so much so that we have put in years of research, now being able to provide you with the "greenest window on the planet." Aspen Home Improvement is home of the #1 nationally-rated energy-efficient window. A bold statement, but it's true.

We are a family-owned company you can trust—our non pro-rata warranty applies not only while you own the home but for subsequent owners as well. Should you experience accidental damage to your Aspen windows? No problem, Aspen products and labor are covered for life.







The lower this number is, the more resistant that window is to heat flow, and is a better insulator.

In Pennsylvania, The Department of Energy looks for recommended U-factors to be in the range of .20-.27 by the year 2015. Each point equals a 3% increase in energy efficiency. For example, the average minimum Energy Star required vinyl window carries a .35. However, a double pane composite window, (Starmark), carries a .24. This means the difference in energy saving is 57%. That is a big difference in money and fuel economy!

**What materials are windows made of?**

Replacement windows are made of wood, vinyl and cellular composite frames. Wood windows can be as beautiful as they are misleading. They are after all, made of wood which is not impervious to moisture, rotting and insects.



Vinyl windows can be the less expensive option. They offer better energy efficiency as well as protection from elements and pests. Cellular composite windows offer the strengths of both wood and vinyl. They are even suitable if maintaining the look of wood is desired, while offering better moisture and decay resistance.

**Capping, Coil and Exterior Trim.** Capping is exterior trim made from aluminum coil. It is to cover all of the wood currently surrounding your windows. This important step makes your windows maintenance free. There are two kinds of capping generally offered: standard and brick mould effect. The brick mould effect costs extra at most companies, however it adds dimension to the windows, eliminating the “so much window” finished product. Also be sure the caulk around the windows is used to create a tight seal, not to fill in holes of incorrectly measured



windows. A reputable company with certified installers can answer any installation questions.

**Finding an Installer.** If you have chosen the window with the utmost care, do not neglect professional installation. First, be sure that your home improvement company is registered with The Attorney General. Next, be sure that both your company AND your installer are lead certified. Even if you have a “newer” home, you will certainly benefit from your lead certified installer. Many window manufacturers certify installers for their specific products. Deviating from the manufacturer’s recommendations could void your warranty. Using the same contractor for purchase and installation can minimize the chances of problems arising later.

**The long and short of it—be an informed consumer.** Do your homework and stick to the basics. Find out as much about the products as possible before you get your estimates. Arm yourself with these simple facts. You will certainly make an informed decision that will benefit you and your home for years to come.

If you need help understanding the information you gather, don’t hesitate to call us at 569.3700. There is no charge for an informational visit to our showroom or your home, which will include your free estimate.

R&A

  
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