

DIY - Windows

Drafty windows are a significant cause of heat loss and discomfort in an older home. Old double hung windows are a particular problem. Even in a new home, sitting close to a window on a cold winter night can be chilling. Here are some simple things you can do to improve this situation.

First

- Make sure your windows are latched to decrease outside air infiltration.
- Remove window air conditioners. Significant cause of air leaks.
- Remove screens when possible, particularly on the south side. This will improve natural light and increase solar heat gain.

? New Windows?

Should you replace your old windows? This is often the first thing we think about when weatherizing an older home. However, it is very expensive - often costing \$1000 or more/window. This money could be spent more effectively on other weatherization measures.

What else can we do to our windows to lower cost and increase comfort?

For windows that you don't open in the winter

You can do far more with windows if you do not need to open them in the winter. Let's look at the options for windows not opened.

- Insulation film kits. Air seals window sash. Slight improvement in R value
- Window inserts (Windowdressors). Air seals. Increases R value (adds 1-1 ½ to R value). Equivalent to adding storm windows
- Caulking Cord
- Consider "cellular shades" or "thermal curtains". These will increase the R value of your windows. Expense may be an issue.

For windows that you do open in the winter, your options are limited to weatherstripping the top and bottom of the window sash. There is weatherstripping for the sides of windows but its effectiveness is limited. Cellular shades/thermal curtains could also be used.

For all windows:

- Consider insulating/air sealing the space between the window frame and the house framing behind the window trim. This is often an open space an inch wide.

This space may be approached in 2 ways. Remove trim and fill space with **low expansion** spray foam. Or, if removing the trim is not an option, caulk both edges where trim meets wall and meets window sash. Consider selectively removing trim on those windows that seem to have the greatest air leakage. An infrared camera could help with that evaluation.

