

Caring For Your Wooden Windows

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Natural wood windows are a major selling point for any home, as with proper care and maintenance, their beauty can last a lifetime. Since they're a large investment in the overall look and feel of your home, you need to be acquainted with proper long term protection, as variables such as placement and local climate call for different maintenance strategies.

Harsh winters and oceanic winds both require different treatments and upkeep than wooden windows on a house in a city, so knowing how to care for wood windows means something different for every location. What follows are some basic care tips, specific to common variations in climate and temperatures. Use these tips and take the time to schedule regular maintenance and your wooden windows can be enjoyed for decades to come.

Priming Your Windows

Primer makes your windows resistant to stains and damage from everyday touches and bumps. Use a latex primer and opt for the highest possible grade — this is an occasion where getting the input from an expert can really go the extra mile. Since replacement wood windows are a substantial investment, you don't want to skimp on care. Latex is exceptionally important because it will keep the windows from getting tacky in humidity.

- Be sure to prepare the surfaces around the wood beforehand, and be meticulous. The materials you used to seal the wood will also discolor the windows themselves, and break down weatherstripping, making your windows drafty.

- A top coat of polyurethane will help protect the primer, and if your intent is to keep the original color of the wood, it will prevent variations in color with aging (or at least reduce the rate at which discoloration happens).

Priming repels dirt and protects them, so it's absolutely necessary as a first step.

Regular Maintenance

Natural wood is extremely durable and will last for years, but the oils in our skin from repeated touching or just the dust in your house can break down the exterior. ***Cleaning should be part of your regular maintenance routine, but you have to be extremely careful about what materials you use.***

Traditional cleaners — even if they say they're formulated for wood — can eventually cause a breakdown. It's important to use simply a damp cloth to wipe down your wooden windows and keep grime from building up. If the build-up is significant, warm soapy water can be used but you must be sure to go back over and clean up any remaining soap residue afterward with a damp cloth.

While you're cleaning, make note of cracks or missing pieces from the wood. This is especially important in moist climates, like coastal regions, as these cracks invite water, which makes wood expand and eventually split. Once identified, use wood putty to fill the cracks, and the immediately surrounding area and reapply a thin layer of the same primer you used initially, along with a topcoat.

Climate & Care

A few extra tips for your immediate climate and temperatures and how they affect your windows.

- **Sun** — windows facing east or west directly with a lot of sun exposure would benefit from a yearly, thin application of a UV-resistant topcoat. The sun's rays can and will fade wood, so you have to be regimented in your protection routine.
- **Saltwater** — if you live near a beach and your wooden windows are exposed to salt air, clean them weekly with a mild detergent. Salt can build up and wreak havoc on the wood, and a good top coat will help tremendously as well.

Contact Energy Shield Windows and Doors, Arizona

Proper care and attention to detail will make your investment shine for years to come. If you're considering wooden windows, you'll want to talk to an expert before you make your decision and start in on the project.