

How to Maintain Windows to Increase Their Lifespan

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You've made a big investment in your beautiful, energy-efficient windows. So, now it's time to think about periodic home window maintenance to protect your investment in your home. That means simply routine window cleaning and maintenance to increase the lifespan of your new windows. It will save you from the loss of home comfort, the cost of inefficiently functioning windows, and the inconvenience of having premature professional window repairs and replacements. Proper care will allow you to enjoy your new windows for many years.

Window Maintenance Tips

How long do windows last in a home? That depends on the window type and the quality of routine maintenance to preserve the unit. The three most popular types of window materials are vinyl, wood, and aluminum. Each requires its own unique cleaning and maintenance routine to prolong its lifespan.

Maintaining Vinyl Windows

How long should vinyl windows last? Vinyl windows are highly durable and can be expected to look and function beautifully for decades, well past their warranty periods, if they're properly maintained. It's a key reason why vinyl windows are, by far, today's most popular window type for new construction. Vinyl windows have simple and easy maintenance needs. Just wash them often, using this basic method, tools, and materials:

- **Glass cleaning:** Clean the glass frequently. Use a non-abrasive glass cleaner and a soft cloth. Avoid using stiff cleaning brushes that can scratch or scuff the glass. Avoid strong solutions such as vinegar, citrus, or ammonia-based glass cleaners.

- **Frame cleaning:** Apply a gentle soap and water solution. Use clean water to rinse thoroughly to remove all soapy water and avoid leaving a stubborn lasting residue.
- **Track cleaning:** Dirt naturally accumulates in the window tracks. If not removed routinely, it can prevent the window from functioning, reduce its energy efficiency, and prematurely wear on the rollers, locks, and weatherstripping.
- **Lubricate hardware:** Apply a little silicone-based lubricant to the window locks as part of your routine cleaning, especially when there is any resistance by the lock when you try to use it. Avoid petroleum-based lubricants.

Maintaining Wood Windows

Wood windows require routine inspection to catch signs of deterioration early and take the necessary steps to prevent accelerating decay. Wood is a natural building material, so wood windows are very vulnerable to cracking, mildew, peeling, insect damage, etc.

- **Cleaning:** Clean window glass and frames on a schedule:
 - First, wipe dust and dirt off the frame using a dry cloth.
 - Glass cleaning: Use a standard spray window cleaner and dry the glass with a soft cloth.
 - Frame cleaning: Wash wood window frames with mild wood cleaning soap and warm water. Use a non-abrasive cloth or soft sponge. Never use a stiff brush on wood frames.
 - Track cleaning: Wipe out residual soap and water from the window frame cleaning, and dry the track thoroughly to help avoid the potential for mold growth.
- **Maintain Paint or Stain:** Some paints deteriorate faster than others:
 - Choose an outdoor oil-based enamel paint.
 - If you use stain instead of paint, select a translucent material to help balance protection against sunlight and wet conditions.
- **Crack Repairs:** When the original paint begins to peel, the raw wood becomes exposed and is susceptible to more rapid decay. Make repairs as soon as you discover paint flaking:
 - Sand the affected area of the window frame with fine sandpaper.
 - Fill any cracks with wood filler.
 - Use a putty knife to smooth the wood filler until it blends with the frame contours.
 - Let the wood filler dry for 24 hours.
 - Repaint the area and feather to blend the edges with the existing paint.

Maintaining Aluminum Windows

Aluminum windows are exceptionally easy to maintain. Just clean the glass, frame, and track at least once per month to keep your aluminum windows looking and functioning beautifully for many years to come.

- **Clean window glass:** Clean the glass with regular spray window cleaner and dry it with a soft cloth. Don't use a stiff brush for tough spots. Apply a little extra soap and work it in gradually to remove sticky insect residue, etc.
- **Clean window frame:** For both, use gentle soap and water and a soft cloth. Rinse thoroughly to eliminate all soap residue. Leaving soap residue can cause a long-term baked-on soap film.
- **Clean window tracks:** Each time you clean the windows, wipe out the tracks with a clean damp cloth to remove dust, dirt, and grime thoroughly. This will keep the tracks operating smoothly for opening and closing your window.
- **Lubricate hardware:** Use a silicone-based lubricant for your window hardware cleaning. Lubricate the hardware each time you wash the window or if you experience any resistance from the lock when you try to use it. Avoid using petroleum-based lubricants, which can become coagulated and attract dirt.

Industry Expert Guidance for Maintenance of Windows

Energy Shield is one of the leading energy-efficient home improvement products and window installation companies in the southwest United States. Our residential windows and doors are engineered for high performance and long-term durability in the extreme conditions of the southwest U.S. desert. Installation is performed by our factory-trained teams, and customer service is provided directly by the manufacturer.

For questions about energy-efficient wood, vinyl, or aluminum windows, contact Energy Shield Window & Door Company at (623) 562-9164 or contact us right here online.
