

Window Maintenance Tips

Summertime is the perfect time to wash the winter grime off your windows and let in the fresh air. But did you know that windows actually require a little more maintenance than just a simple soap and wipe? Boost the longevity of your windows with these annual maintenance checks:

Vinyl and Metal Windows

1. Examine the edges. Take a close look at your window and frames. Rubber seals hold glass in place, and as they deteriorate over time, you'll experience more water and air leaks. If you see leaks, take the window sash (the framed part that holds the glass) to a glass-repair shop and have the rubber seals replaced. If you don't know how to remove the sash, call in a window repairman.

2. Check for cracked glass. If yours has any cracks or breaks, have glass shop professionals or a window contractor come out to replace it. If outside air can permeate your window through the frame, your room won't be as comfortable and your utility bills will rise.

3. Look for moisture. Moisture is your window's enemy. If you have double- or triple-pane windows with moisture between the panes, it will indicate that the seal between the panes has failed. Broken seals are also a red flag that the gas between each pane has dissipated, lowering the insulation value of the glass. Call a professional to make this repair.

3. Inspect the weather stripping. Hold up your hand to the edges of the window. If you feel a draft, you probably need to replace the weather stripping, which you can find seated in the groove in the window frame. You can pick up replacements at your local home improvement store. Also, keep the weather stripping clean to extend its life. Just give it a quick brush or a wipe with a soapy sponge to rinse away dirt and grime.

4. Check the casing. Look closely all around the window casing and fill in any noticeable gaps with a paintable latex caulk.

Wood Windows

1. Visually inspect the windowpanes. You're looking for cracked panes and missing glaze (the putty that holds the glass in place). If either of these is present, your window is letting in drafts. Replace the broken panes and repair the glazing.

2. Check the painted exterior frame. Poor paint jobs allow moisture to penetrate wood, which will cause wood rot and swelling over time. If the paint is worn, cracked, or damaged, take the time to sand, prime and repaint the window

frame.

3. Check the casing. Look all around the edge where the casing meets the exterior wall and add a paintable latex caulk to fill in any cracks or holes.

4. Feel for drafts.

Make sure that the windows seal tightly when closed. If they are loose, and if you feel a draft when you hold up a hand to the edge of the window, you may need to add weather stripping around the interior of the window.

Window Washing

Okay, now that you've maintained your window systems, here's the secret to getting a glistening shine.

1. First, spray a multipurpose glass cleaner onto the window frame, hardware and sill and wipe it clean with a microfiber cloth.
2. Second, spray glass cleaner on each window pane from top to bottom. You can make your own glass cleaner with one part white vinegar and one part water.
3. Working from top to bottom, wipe each pane of glass clean with a microfiber cloth or sheets of newspaper for a streak-free shine.
4. Have very tall or hard-to-reach windows? Call in the professionals. Your windows will shine like new, and you won't have to break out a sweat.