



Adding Value to Your House with New Windows: Energy Efficiency Matters

by [Emma Diehl](#)

They say kitchens and baths sell homes. But when was the last time you thought about your windows and how old they're getting?

"I was dealing with buyers the other day who were willing to cancel a deal, because of the substantial cost of window replacement," says Michelle Minik, a top agent who sells 70% more than her competitors in the Goodyear, Arizona, market. In Minik's experience, sellers don't even consider the condition of their windows until the inspection, when they're faced with significant repairs and a huge expense.

Rather than ending up like the folks in this situation — starting from square one with a broken contract and shabby windows to boot — stay ahead of the curve with this guide to adding value to your house with new windows.

This project isn't small. Or cheap. Or as dramatic as a chef's kitchen makeover. That doesn't mean you can put it off forever. We'll answer your biggest questions (do new windows increase home value, and by how much?), offer tips for noticing windows on their last leg, and help you maximize your window investment with smart material selections.



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How much value will new windows add to your home?

There are lots of factors, including where you live and whether you go for a midrange or upscale variety, that impact how much windows cost and what you'll recoup from your spend. However, this is what the straight-up data says.

The average cost to replace all of the windows of a house is **\$12,000**. Based on that average, you'll likely add **\$9,672** at resale as a result of this project for an **81% ROI**. That's based on findings from HomeLight's Top Agent Insights Survey for Q1 2020, featuring agent estimations from across the country.

According to HomeAdvisor, which uses data from thousands of home professionals to report on home improvement costs, a single-window replacement cost can fall anywhere between [\\$200 and \\$1,800](#). That doesn't account for custom or nonstandard-size windows, which can inflate the bill closer to \$20,000. The average national cost of window installation is [\\$5,421](#).

Swallowing the truth about these costs gets a little easier when you realize that, on average, if you spend a little over 12 grand, you'll likely get a little over 10 grand of it back. Plus, you

won't have to worry about old windows slamming the book on your home sale when you were about to close.



Source: (Fleur / Unsplash)

How soon do you need to replace windows?

According to Quality Window & Door, named the [top window dealer of the year](#) by *Window & Door* magazine, residential windows will last 15-20 years on average. However, [well-maintained windows](#) (wood calls for repeated painting and sealing) and certain materials ([like vinyl](#)) can last longer.

Not sure when your windows were last replaced? Are they original to the home? Check for these signs of aging:

- **Draftiness and higher energy bills.**

If your [windows sit out of plumb or the curtains move when the windows are closed](#), you're letting in a draft. According to Energy.gov, air leaks in your windows can make your heating and cooling bills [10%-20%](#) more expensive.

- **Warping or visible rot.**

Notice bending, discoloration, or softness in your window sashes or frames? The

culprit is [moisture where it shouldn't be](#). At this point your windows are ready for repair or replacement.

- **Window stickiness.**

Hopefully, you haven't painted any windows shut. If not, then sticky windows are likely (again) a warping issue due to the wet weather elements.

- **Condensation or moisture between panes.**

When moisture builds up between your double-pane windows, it [means you have a broken seal](#) that's allowing that condensation to build on the inner side of the outside pane.

If you're noticing any of these issues, but your windows are younger (10-15 years old) calling in a window repair contractor to fix them up may suffice. While repairs won't change the overall look of your home, repairing a single-pane glass window costs [\\$75-\\$80 on average](#), a fraction of the replacement cost. Additionally, if your window is still under warranty, it may cover the costs of repairs.

However, the lifespan of your windows will vary based on climate. In Minik's Arizona market, she recommends sellers start thinking about replacing windows after 10 years. "We have a lot of breached window panes because of the heat here," she says. Such a problem can be repaired, but if this type of issue has progressed past a certain point, you'll need to replace the window altogether.

If your windows don't meet certain extreme weather requirements and you live in a high-risk area, it could benefit you to replace your windows sooner. If you replace your older windows with storm windows, you could see a [10%-15%](#) credit in your homeowners' insurance for "wind protection upgrades." This upgrade might also put future buyers at ease when you sell.



Source: (Petter Rudwall / Unsplash)

Wood versus vinyl: Which type of window material should you invest in?

Wood windows have a classic look and can last up to [30 years if you take good care of them](#). But that's just the thing: They're higher maintenance and are more vulnerable to water exposure. That can create problems if your area gets a lot of rain.

According to data from the National Association of Realtors 2019 Remodeling Impact Report, new vinyl windows rank second on [Realtors' list of exterior home improvement projects](#) with the biggest impact.

Second only to new roofing, new vinyl windows have the greatest appeal to buyers and are likely to add the most value at resale (more so than various front door and siding upgrades).

New wood windows on the other hand, rank 4th and 6th among the projects listed for buyer appeal and resale value, respectively. Vinyl windows also run around [18% less than wood windows](#). However, with vinyl, you'll be more limited in the type of aesthetic you can achieve (wood no doubt offers a richer color palette).



Source: (Matthew T Rader / Unsplash)

Additional window replacement perks: Energy savings, tax credits, and curb appeal

In addition to the added value to your home, as a homeowner you'll enjoy a number of other benefits that new windows can provide.

Saving energy and boosting the marketability of your home

One perk of replacing your windows is the monthly energy savings. According to the government-backed symbol for efficiency, Energy Star, you can shrink your energy bill by [12% on average annually](#) if you use energy-efficient windows and skylights. This amounts to [\\$101-\\$583 a year](#) when replacing single-pane replacements, and [\\$27-\\$197 a year](#) for double-pane replacements.

Replacing your windows with Energy Star-approved windows can also boost the price of your home. In a 2019 survey from the National Association of Home Builders, a majority of buyers said they'd be willing to pay an average of [\\$8,728 more for a home to save \\$1,000 a year](#) in utility bills. Green-motivated buyers are looking for these features, says Minik, especially in climates where the energy bills skyrocket from air conditioning. In addition,

HomeLight's Top Agent Insights Survey for Q1 2020 revealed that the number one factor sellers should consider when selecting windows is energy efficiency.

If you live in your home for a few years after replacing the windows, you'll see a benefit from lower utilities and a possible discount on your home insurance. The couple years of utility savings you'd get from more efficient windows, combined with the ROI when you sell might make the initial investment more palatable.

Tax credits for energy-efficient upgrades

In addition to utility savings, you'll benefit come tax season if you install energy-efficient windows, skylights, and doors. Not all your windows need to be replaced to qualify, and also applies for the creation of new windows and skylights. For windows and skylights, you'll get a [10% tax credit up to \\$200](#). Simply file the [Residential Energy Credit IRS form 5695](#) during tax time.

To really maximize your return, tackle this project a few years before you sell, so you can enjoy the energy savings and tax credits and all in all, get a little more out of this purchase. That way too, instead of one large payment, you can break it up into manageable installments if necessary.

Curb appeal

When it comes to selling your home, now or down the line, looks matter. And windows have a huge impact on how your house presents from the street. Swap old, decaying window frames with a modern beautiful design and you'll instantly boost your curb appeal.

New windows add value, though you won't recoup your whole spend

No one wakes up, looks at their windows, and gets excited about replacing them someday. But as far as home improvement projects go, new windows can go a long way toward attracting buyers to your home and getting top dollar for it. "If the sellers are updating the windows, it shows pride of ownership in a home," says Minik, "It's a lot easier to sell."

<https://www.homelight.com/blog/do-new-windows-increase-property-value/>