What you need to know to maximize the look and functionality of your home

Character and warmth abound in this renovated home, and these replacement windows perfectly match the style and wood finishes in this updated kitchen.

Whether you’ve encountered a string of bad storms, just moved into a historical home that needs a bit of TLC, or you’ve been in your “forever home” for many years, most homeowners will at some point encounter the need to repair or replace their windows. While a good-quality, well-maintained window can serve loyally for upwards of 20 years, it’s inevitable that climate-related wear and tear or old age will eventually render any window a good candidate for replacement.

For most homeowners, the window replacement process is uncharted territory. Which window should you choose? What about energy efficiency? Does the replacement window’s style need to reflect the original? It can be difficult to know where to start. Fortunately, advancements in the window industry mean that the window replacement process isn’t the limited or confusing endeavor that it once was. Armed with a few pro tips, any homeowner can successfully navigate the replacement process, turning it into an opportunity to upgrade the look and functionality of a home.

Know when it’s time to repair.
Keeping a window in good working condition via repairs to malfunctioning hardware and replacement of weather stripping can often extend a window’s life, but issues like wood rot or condensation between panes of glass are sure signs a window needs to be replaced.

Do your research.
Investigate your options so you’ll have a general lay-of-the-land when it comes time to speak with a building professional. Become familiar with various material options, including wood, aluminum-clad wood, vinyl, vinyl-clad wood and fiberglass. If you can, visit a dealer in person so you can touch and experience potential windows first-hand and learn about the different advantages or drawbacks these materials may offer.

Quality is key.
Unlike many furniture or home accessory purchases that can be as temporary as a fleeting design trend, windows are an investment you’ll live with for many years to come. The most important factor to consider when selecting new windows is the quality of the product. Higher quality means longevity, and both material and manufacturer selections can go a long way in ensuring you’re picking a window that’s capable of hanging in there for the long haul. Speaking of the long haul? Make sure your window is backed by a solid warranty you can count on.

Don’t overlook energy efficiency.
Energy efficiency is a critical component of a high-quality window, and you should collaborate closely with your building professional to ensure you understand the window performance needs of your home, based on the type of structure, your location, and your city’s climate. Replacing your windows is a chance to opt for a more energy-efficient solution, helping contribute to lower utility bills and reduced energy consumption.

New windows can transform.
From casement windows, to awning windows, to double-hung windows – there are many options to fit any opening in your home. Replacing your windows is an excellent opportunity to choose a new look, perhaps transitioning from a more traditional style to a modern look with unobstructed views. Maybe you’re choosing a high-contrast interior finish to truly make your new windows stand out, or perhaps you simply prefer an awning style where you once had a slider, while still maintaining the historical details of your home.

With a good foundational knowledge of the materials on the market, an eye towards making a good investment in the future of your home and a bit of design-forward thinking, the replacement process can be a rewarding process that truly adds value to your home.