

How to Choose Patio Doors for Your Renovation

6 Essential Tips for Choosing New Patio Doors



Patio doors were once found only in the homes of the wealthy and aristocratic. Modern manufacturing techniques have made them more widely available and today, there are more choices than ever. From traditional French doors to modern bi-fold doors, you can mix and match the styles to create your dream home.

The best placement of a patio door is in a room facing the backyard or the balcony, although it is not unusual to find patio doors opening up to the side of the home to better access that space. When considering a new patio door, think about your vision for the doors in your home. Which room will it be in? Where would it open to? Will it be necessary for transitioning between adjacent spaces?

Tip 1

Decide which opening method works best for your entrance space

When choosing a space for your patio door, measure how much space you have both on the interior and exterior side. This will give you an idea of which operating style would work best. Patio doors come in in-swing, out-swing and sliding operation styles.

- **In-swing doors** are the most commonplace¹ in residential buildings and require adequate indoor space. The hinges are located inside the home and not visible to the outside. Keep in mind, though, that rainwater and other small debris can be driven by the wind into the home upon opening. An additional screen door can be helpful to protect against the elements.
- An **out-swing** patio door needs a clear path on the outside. Hurricane doors and doors in high wind areas are often out-swing because of the greater strength it provides when the wind is pushing against the doors.
- If space is tight, **sliding doors** might fit best. They are a good solution in spaces that simply cannot accommodate a full swinging door such as a balcony or sunroom.



¹“Inswing or Outswing Doors?” Fine Homebuilding. 5 Jan. 2011

Tip 2

Decide how much wall space you want to use

“If you want to experience indoor-outdoor living, large patio doors are a great way to bring in more views of nature.”

When you replace old patio doors, you have the opportunity to change the size of the entrance. The new patio doors do not have to be the same size as the old ones.

Some homeowners opt for patio doors to extend the length of the wall, creating a **large entrance** that gives the perception of an expanded living space.

If you want to experience indoor-outdoor living, large patio doors are a great way to bring in more views of nature. Americans now spend up to 90% of their time indoors. Because of the glass panels in patio doors, homeowners can enjoy views of the outside and feel more connected to nature.

The indoor-outdoor living trend has grown consistently in the past five years and design experts predict the trend will continue for at least another five years.



Did You Know?

Patio doors became a standard element in residential and hotel construction in the post WWII building boom.

Tip 3

Decide which room would benefit most from patio doors

It can get hot cooking in the kitchen, especially in summertime, and patio doors are a way to increase ventilation. In addition, the kitchen one of the most popular areas of the home and an extra entryway can help with traffic flow.

Patio doors can add major light to an otherwise dark space. If you want to convert part of the garage to a bonus room, a patio door creates an opening and closing structure (besides the garage door) and brings in light and ventilation.



Tip 4

Research glass options

“With the development of innovative glass technologies, patio doors are becoming more equipped to insulate and protect the home.”

Many homeowners focus on patio door treatments to control sun heat, add privacy and protect against drafts that seep in during cooler weather. However, curtains and blinds often obstruct the view. More homeowners are choosing to forego heavy drapes, and even when opting for sheers, the trend is for greater transparency and light².

With the development of innovative glass technologies, patio doors are becoming more equipped to insulate and protect the home.

If you live in a warm environment with a lot of direct sunlight, tinted glass provides additional shading against the heat. Obscure glass protects privacy and allows abundant light to enter the room.

High-performance options such as heat resistant glass coating and argon gas further improve thermal performance. Learn about how **Low-E glass** can save energy.



² “Top Ten Interior Design Trends for 2014.” The Wall Street Journal. Dow Jones & Company, 27 Dec. 2013. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304020704579276272528981430>

Did You Know?

Doors date back to the ancient Egyptian era where doors were slabs of wood on hinges.

Tip 5

Research care and maintenance requirements

Depending on the frame material, some patio doors require more care and maintenance.

Wood patio doors, for example, typically need to be sanded and repainted on a regular basis. Vinyl and fiberglass doors minimize some of this exterior maintenance.

Remember to research how the material will fare in your geographic location. Aluminum is durable, but is not a good insulator and not suited for coastal climates. Wood, while versatile, is vulnerable to moisture; clad-wood is paired with a different material on the exterior for improved strength against damp weather conditions.

Ultimately, choose the material that performs well for where you live and how much maintenance you are willing to handle.



Tip 6

Find out for how long the warranty extends and exactly what it covers

Patio doors are an investment and should last a long time. Generally, replacing doors and windows yields a better financial return than larger remodeling projects such as room additions³. Replacing older doors may even result in lower heating and cooling costs. Even quality patio doors though, may require repair due to wear and tear.

Most manufacturers offer a warranty covering the material and workmanship of the patio door. These warranties have varied benefits ranging from limited coverage to **a comprehensive full lifetime warranty**. A full warranty grants the purchaser coverage of the damaged products at no charge and will include workmanship.

When comparing warranties, remember to inquire whether it covers the patio door screen, glass and hardware. Some warranties do not include labor so you may need to do the repair yourself with manufacturer provided parts.



³ "Which Home Remodeling Projects Are Worth Your Money" US News. 7 Mar. 2014