



# Best Replacement Windows of 2024

Wind- and rain-resistance tests reveal winners from American Craftsman, Andersen, Jeld-Wen, Marvin, Pella, Preservation, and Reliabilt

By Tobie Stanger

Updated February 12, 2024

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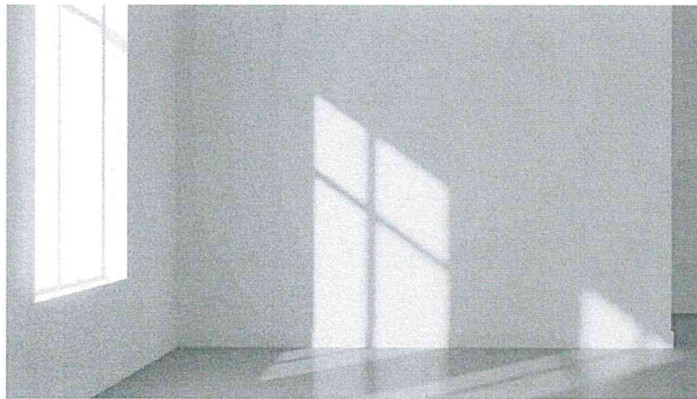


Photo: iStock

The best replacement windows keep out noise and the elements while letting in maximum light. They're easy to open and clean. And they're energy-efficient, saving you money on utility bills.

But replacement windows get costly quickly. Even the least costly models will set you back several hundred dollars apiece, plus installation.

So if you're going to spend that kind of money, make sure you're buying high-quality windows. Consumer Reports tests wood, vinyl, and composite replacement windows from brands that include American Craftsman,

Anderson, Atrium, Jeld-Wen, Marvin, Pella, Simonton, and others. We evaluate each window on its resistance to both wind and rain, which is critical to keeping your home draft-free and dry. Below is some general information about replacement windows, followed by the top-scoring windows we tested in each category.

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## Types of Replacement Windows

There are two main types of replacement windows, and the type to get depends on the condition of your existing window frames and your taste.

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An “insert” or “pocket” replacement window fits into your window frame; there’s no need to remove molding on the inside or trim on the outside. Because it’s essentially a frame within a frame, an insert lets in a bit less light than the original window. Inserts can be bought in stock sizes, but custom inserts offer more style and feature choices as well as a more accurate fit for better energy efficiency.


Full-frame windows, also called new-construction windows, are mass-produced in standard sizes. In an existing house, the contractor removes the frame—as well as outside trim and sometimes siding—and makes any needed changes to the opening before installation. If your window frames aren’t in good condition—or if you want to change the size or shape of the opening—you’ll need this kind.

Most replacement windows, regardless of type, are ordered from a window company or through a

contractor. And it's wise to comparison shop. Ideally, you'll get a handful of bids, each representing a custom plan tailored to your home. Check our [replacement window buying guide](#) to get more details on features and styles, and tips for dealing with an installer.

## Best Vinyl Replacement Windows

Vinyl windows make up the largest segment of the replacement window market. They don't need to be painted or stained, but you'll probably find fewer options when choosing colors and hardware.

<b>1</b>		✓ RECOMMENDED	OVERALL SCORE
		<b>Preservation 9000 Series</b>	<b>93</b>
		Price: \$550	
		⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES	
		⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES	
		⊗ RAIN RESISTANCE	
		<a href="#">See all Double-hung window Ratings</a>	
		<p><b>CR's take:</b> For its relatively high price, the <a href="#">Preservation 9000 Series</a> double-hung window offers top-notch protection from the elements, including high-speed summer and winter winds, and wind-driven rain. The model we tested was an insert, or "pocket" window, though it's sold as a full-frame version as well. This window comes in a wide variety of exterior and interior colors, as well as wood-grain looks. One available glass upgrade qualifies the window for an <a href="#">Energy Star Most Efficient designation</a>, which makes the purchaser eligible for a tax credit worth up to \$600. Find this brand at designated dealers through the <a href="#">Preservation Collection website</a>.</p>	

<b>2</b>		✓ RECOMMENDED	OVERALL SCORE
		<b>Reliablilt (Lowe's) 3500 Series</b>	<b>87</b>
		Price: \$325	
		⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES	

WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES

RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)

[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** The first-rate and competitively priced [Reliablilt \(Lowe's\) 3500 Series](#) replacement window keeps drafts at bay. We found that it does a superlative job resisting high winds at both summer and winter temperatures. It's very good at keeping out wind-blown rain, too. We tested the insert or "pocket" model of this window. Lowe's house brand, Reliablilt 3500 Series vinyl windows, are available in white, almond, and a combination of bronze on the exterior and white on the interior. Available options include a lifetime warranty on glass breakage and features that improve energy efficiency. Find a Lowe's store that sells Reliablilt [through the brand's website](#).

3



RECOMMENDED

OVERALL SCORE

### JELD-WEN V-4500 Series

84

Price: \$450

WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES

WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES

RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)

[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** The [Jeld-Wen V-4500 Series Premium Vinyl](#) double-hung window is a winner. It aced our tests of wind resistance at both 0° F and 70° F. We also found it very capable of keeping out strong, wind-driven rain. This window is available in five exterior and three interior colors, and with several designs for grilles—the vertical and horizontal bars that create the look of small panes. You can also select several glass types. We tested the pocket window in the lab, but the [website](#) shows this can also come as a new construction window. Find a [Jeld-Wen dealer](#).

4



RECOMMENDED

OVERALL SCORE

### American Craftsman 70 Pro Series

82

Price: \$350

WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES

⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES

⊗ RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)

[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** [American Craftsman 70 Pro Series](#) offers stellar protection against drafts from cold winter winds at a competitive price. It's a strong performer against drafts when winds are warmer, too. It also protects very well against wind-blown rain. The model we tested was an insert or "pocket" window, though it's also available in a full-frame version. The [American Craftsman website](#) shows that you have a choice of three interior and five exterior colors, as well as numerous grille, glass and hardware options. American Craftsman windows are sold at Home Depot.

## Best Wood Replacement Windows

Most wood window frames are made of solid wood covered on the outside with another material for protection from the elements. They're generally the most expensive type of window, available with many finish and hardware options.

1



✓ RECOMMENDED

OVERALL SCORE

**Pella Lifestyle Series**

**83**

Price: \$800

⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES

⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES

⊗ RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)

[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** The Pella Lifestyle Series window is pricey but performed excellently in our tests. It resisted high winds at 0° F exceptionally, and did a solid job at 70° F as well. This window resisted leaks admirably when pelted with strong, wind-borne rain. The wood interior is available in four prefinished stains and four prefinished paint colors, plus a ready-to-paint finish. The aluminum-clad exterior is offered in 12 colors. This [Pella window](#) offers numerous grille, hardware, and other feature options, including "optional integrated security sensors" (which we didn't test). The model

we tested was an insert or "pocket" window. Here's [where to buy Pella windows](#).

**2** 

**RECOMMENDED** **OVERALL SCORE**

**Andersen 400 Series Woodwright** **71**

Price: \$530

- WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES
- WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES
- RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** [Andersen's 400 Series Woodwright](#) window was a star in our high-wind tests at 70° F but was just middling against cold winds at 0° F. We found it to be very good at keeping out leaks from windborne rain. This window has a wood interior (available in maple, oak, and pine, as well as white) and an exterior covered with Fibrex, a composite of wood dust and polymer that's available in seven colors. Andersen notes that this window is a best-seller for historic renovations. Here's [where to buy Andersen windows](#).

## Best Composite Replacement Windows

Typically made of wood fiber and a thermoplastic resin, composite windows look more like wood than vinyl windows do, and they generally cost less than solid wood windows.



**1**

✓ RECOMMENDED

OVERALL SCORE

**Andersen A-Series****87**

Price: \$500

- ⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES
- ⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES
- ⊗ RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** The A-Series composite window from Andersen was a champ in our wind-resistance tests at both 0° F and 70° F, earning excellent scores for both. It also fared well on our rain-resistance test, earning a very good rating. The A-Series double-hung window is made of wood protected by fiberglass and Fibrex, a composite of wood dust and polymer. It's available in 11 exterior colors and seven interior colors, along with natural, unfinished, or stained wood. The model we tested was an insert or "pocket" window. Here's [where to buy Andersen windows](#).

**2****MARVIN** 

✓ RECOMMENDED

OVERALL SCORE

**Marvin Essential****86**

Price: \$900

- ⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 70 DEGREES
- ⊗ WIND RESISTANCE 0 DEGREES
- ⊗ RAIN RESISTANCE

[See all Double-hung](#)[window Ratings](#)

**CR's take:** The Marvin Essential composite double-hung window is an excellent, albeit pricey, choice. It was impressive at keeping out drafts from high winds, both at warm and cold temperatures. Its performance against wind-driven rain also was near the top. The Essential's interior finish, made of a type of fiberglass called Ultrex, is available in four colors. The exterior, also of Ultrex in a choice of six colors, can be painted without voiding the warranty. Marvin offers numerous hardware choices and glass options, including triple-pane glass, glass coatings for extra insulation, and specialty panes for sound abatement, high altitudes, hurricane zones, and California fire zones. The model we tested was an insert or "pocket" window. Find a [Marvin replacement window dealer](#).

# How CR Tests Replacement Windows

For our tests, we order 3x5-foot double-hung windows from a variety of manufacturers. Our previous window testing has shown that most windows stand up to simulated aging; we now focus instead on how well a window can withstand the elements.

After installing each window in a wooden frame, test engineers seal one side and rig a specially made device that simulates wind. They raise the airflow velocity to 25 mph and then 50 mph and measure air leakage with a flow meter. They run this test at 0° F and 70° F to evaluate whether the frames hold up even as materials contract and expand at varied temperatures.

To test rain resistance, we simulate windblown rain by pelting the window with 5 gallons of water per square foot per hour. Windows that earn an excellent rating in this test can withstand simulated winds up to 74 mph, or gale-force winds. The worst windows leaked at about 35 mph.

Another important takeaway: Our tests have found that even within the same brand of replacement windows, not all lines perform the same.



**Tobie Stanger**

Tobie Stanger is a senior editor at Consumer Reports, where she has been helping readers shop wisely, save money, and avoid scams for more than 30 years. Most recently, her home- and shopping-related beats have included appliance and grocery stores, generators, homeowners and flood insurance, humidifiers, lawn mowers, and luggage—she also covers home improvement products like flooring, roofing, and siding. During off-hours, she works on her own fixer-upper and gets her hands dirty in the garden. Follow her on Twitter [@TobieStanger](https://twitter.com/TobieStanger).





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Replacement Windows Rated

Access Ratings


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## Recommended Replacement Windows

 **BEST TIME TO BUY:** March, April, September

### Double-hung window (10)

93



**Preservation 9000 Series**

Price: \$550.00

87



**Reliabilt (Lowe's) 3500 Series**

Price: \$325.00



[See All Double-hung window](#)

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