

Stop Throwing Money Out Your Windows

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Did you know that windows were once called “wind holes?” Fortunately, today’s double-pane windows do a good job of preventing unwanted air flow. However, closed windows still offer very little resistance to the flow of heat. Windows are, in fact, “energy holes.” Compared to well-insulated walls and roofs of modern homes, standard double pane windows allow 10 to 15 times more heat energy to flow through them. So, despite the fact that windows make up only about 10% of a home’s insulated shell, up to 50% of the home’s heating and cooling energy pours through them. Isn’t it time to stop throwing money out your windows?

Installing energy-efficient window coverings in your home can reduce heating, cooling and lighting energy needs in three significant ways:

- Reduce heat loss and heat gain through the windows
- Control solar heat gain by allowing it in winter and reducing it in summer
- Enhance daylighting (the use of natural light) by diffusing and dispersing sunlight deep into a room

Reducing Heat Loss

Heat flow through windows is graphically shown in the infrared photo, where red areas indicate energy loss. The dramatic color difference between the walls and windows shows the contrast in resistance to heat flow. R-values measure resistance to heat flow. The walls of a contemporary home have an R-value of 19, while standard double-pane windows only have an R-value of about 2.

How do we make the windows more like the walls? We add insulation. Not the fiberglass you would find in the walls, of course, but with window coverings – products that also control light and privacy, and add a fashion statement to the room. An excellent choice is the Hunter Douglas Duette[®] Architella honeycomb shade. Its patented honeycomb-within-a-honeycomb construction forms three air pockets for superior insulation between the window and the room. Duette Architella honeycomb shades can add up to four points to a window’s R-value, tripling the energy efficiency of a standard double-pane window and cutting heat loss through it by up to two-thirds. Imagine the impact of this much increased insulation on your energy bills!

Managing Solar Heat Gain

The earth receives an enormous amount of solar energy. In summer, we don’t want that powerful energy entering our homes as heat. Standard double-pane windows allow up to 76% of solar energy to enter a home as heat. Window coverings help reduce solar heat gain in summer months. For example, Duette Architella honeycomb shades reduce solar heat gain to as little as 15%. Solar screen shades with reflective backings are also very

effective, and allow view to the outside. Exterior solar screens are the most effective of all, reducing solar heat gain to 10% or less.

In winter, to reduce heating energy consumption, take advantage of as much free heat energy from the sun as you can. Raise or open your window coverings whenever direct sunlight is shining on the window. If you are not always around to tend to your window coverings, consider an automated shading system, which can raise and lower your window coverings over the course of the day based on the amount of sunlight striking your windows, saving energy and money in the process.

Lightening up your rooms

Natural light entering a home is important for both visual comfort and general well-being. Using natural light to illuminate home interiors is called daylighting. With good window design, and the appropriate choice of window coverings, daylighting can provide most, if not all, daytime light needs.

One window shading product known for doing an excellent job of diffusing harsh sunlight, evening it out and making it softer, is the Hunter Douglas Silhouette[®]. As a bonus, Silhouette window shadings provide excellent UV protection for furnishings, and are also widely considered to be one of the most exceptionally beautiful window fashions in the world. Hunter Douglas Pirouette[®] window shadings and Luminette[®] Privacy Sheers also offer excellent daylighting benefits, as do Duette honeycomb shades in light colors and translucent fabric choices. Wood blinds and shutters can reflect and redirect light deeper into a room, although they are less effective at diffusing and softening.

Living Smart

So, stop throwing money out your windows. Install energy efficient window coverings and save energy resources and money, leave a healthier world to future generations, and enhance the beauty and value of your home. See a window coverings professional for advice on the most effective energy-saving solutions for your home.