

Improving attic ventilation benefits the roof

Homeowners are often interested in projects to improve the aesthetic appeal of their homes, particularly those that may increase the curb appeal of their properties. But some projects, including improving attic ventilation, can benefit a home even when they aren't especially eye-catching.

Attic venting preserves the life of a roof while improving the energy efficiency of a home. Although it may seem counterproductive to let air into the attic when you are sealing drafts elsewhere in the home, there is rhyme and reason to venting an attic throughout the year.

What is attic ventilation?

Attic ventilation is a system of air intake and exhaust that creates a flow of air through the attic. In the summertime, air flowing through the attic will cool temperatures within the attic, preventing damage to the underside of roofing shingles and preventing ambient heat from traveling inside of a home. In the winter, air flow helps to keep the attic cool and dry. This prevents moisture that can lead to mold and rot issues from building up inside of the attic. Attic ventilation also prevents warm indoor temperatures and rising heat from warming up roofs during the winter, creating the freeze-thaw pattern that results in ice dams.



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Passive and active venting systems for attics help keep homes comfortable and energy-efficient all year long.

Improving attic airflow

Many attics already contain passive ventilation in the form of vents or ventilation strips built into the edge of the roof. Other vents may appear in gables or eaves. Some homeowners prefer the addition of an attic fan to work in concert with existing venting. The spring season is an ideal time to have an attic fan installed because the weather is temperate, making it easier to work up in the attic.

According to Natural Light Energy Systems, attic temperatures can exceed 160 F on hot summer days. Proper attic ventilation can reduce those temperatures by up to 40 F, prolonging the life of the roof. Attic

ventilation also reduces the load on heating and cooling systems. No matter how much insulation is in an attic, some transfer of attic air will occur between the home and the attic, and that transfer makes heating and air conditioning systems run longer and harder to compensate.

Homeowners who notice their HVAC systems running endlessly to keep the home comfortable can benefit from improved attic ventilation, as can those homeowners whose attics feature moisture damage in the way of rusty nails or moldy wood framing. An attic fan is often an effective remedy to these issues.

Attic fan 101

The installation of an attic fan is best left to a professional, as it requires running wiring to the fan and it may necessitate cutting into the roof for venting. Many fans work with a thermostat and will turn on when the air temperature in the attic reaches a certain temperature. The fan will circulate the air, helping to keep the attic cooler and dryer. Also, the fan can help expel fumes from cooking or appliances from the home.

Improving attic ventilation may not add much to a home's curb appeal, but such a project can save homeowners money and provide year-round benefits.

the materials as authentic when selling the home, no matter how much materials look and feel like the real thing.

* Schedule projects during the offseason. Like many professionals, contractors have busy seasons and seasons that tend to be slow. These seasons can change depending on geography, but homeowners can save money by postponing projects until the slow season, when contractors are more likely to offer discounts in an attempt to stay busy and continue to generate in-

come. Savings will vary depending on a variety of factors, but it's not unlikely that patient homeowners willing to wait until the offseason to renovate their homes can save as much as five percent on the overall cost of the project.

* Try not to customize. Though the driving force behind many home improvement projects is to create a dream home that caters to homeowners' individual needs, going overboard with customizing is expensive. Larger-than-normal dimensions may seem

How to repair, replace window screens

Window screens can let fresh air into a home while preventing insects and outdoor critters from making their way inside. But screens are far less effective at keeping critters out of a home when they're damaged. Addressing such damage is typically an easy do-it-yourself project, one that begins with gathering the right materials, including:

- new screening, either synthetic or aluminum
- a rubber spline
- a screen rolling tool
- a razor knife or sharp scissor
- measuring tape
- masking tape
- a screwdriver or an awl

Once those materials have been gathered, the process of replacing or repairing damaged screens is rather simple.

1. Measure the area of the window to determine how much replacement screening you will need. Remember to leave extra room in your measurements so you have slack to make the new screen fit taut. The measurement will also help you determine how much spline you will need.

2. Remove the screen from the window frame. Some windows do not have removable screen frames, and you will have to work on the screen in its upright position.

3. Use the screwdriver or awl to pry the edge of the existing spline that holds the screening material in the frame. Pull out the old spline and remove the damaged screening.

4. Measure the new screening from a replace-



Submitted photo

Once materials are purchased, replacing or repairing damaged screens is rather simple.

ment roll. Lay the screening down on the frame, ensuring there is overhang on all sides. If necessary, use masking tape to temporarily secure the screening to the frame while freeing up your hands. This also works if you must replace screening vertically and cannot remove the window frame and make repairs on a flat surface.

5. Take a new piece of rubber spline and push it into the edge of the screen frame, securing a corner of the new screening to the frame. Continue to press the spline around the perimeter of the screen frame firmly into the groove with the screen rolling tool, which looks like a small pizza cutter. This effectively secures the screen into the frame.

6. Continue around the edge of the frame, pulling the new screening taut as you go. This helps to keep it free of wrinkles.

7. Once you have inserted the spline all the way around, cut it off

from the spline spool and push in the edge. 8. Use a razor knife or sharp scissor to cut off the excess screening, being careful not to dislodge it from behind the spline when cutting.

9. Replace the screen in the window. In the case of small tears in a screen, a complete replacement may not be necessary. Home improvement stores sell screen patch kits. Some work by cutting out a piece of patch that is attached to an adhesive backing and sticking it over the hole. Other patches are small, woven wires that can be threaded through the hole in the screen. A really small hole can be mended with a drop of clear-drying glue. The same method of screen replacement can be used to replace screens on screened-in porches, aluminum doors or sliding patio doors. Just be sure to purchase replacement screening that will fit the dimensions.

Costs

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* Remember how flattering imitation can be. As the old adage goes, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." Homeowners working on tight budgets can opt for imitation materials that appear and feel just like more costly authentic materials. When opting for imitation materials, homeowners should know that they or their representatives cannot falsely represent

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like a great idea, but unless they're absolutely necessary, they're best avoided by budget-conscious homeowners. Building supplies are sold at certain dimensions because those dimensions are the most common. Altering these dimensions unnecessarily is only driving up the cost of the project, so it's best to stick with stock sizes when money is tight.

Home improvement projects are often expensive undertakings. But such endeavors need not break the bank.