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## Changing screens is easy

A few simple precautions, and the right tools, make it easy to change a torn window screen on either wooden or aluminum frames, says Alton Davis, a carpentry specialist at Builders Square.

The key to working with the older wooden windows is preservation. The torn screen is usually held to the wooden frame by thin strips running along the edge of the screen, and nailed to the back of the frame.

"Use a sharp knife to remove the strips," Davis said. "They break easily."

Once you have lifted the restraining strips, and then the screen, carefully examine the wood frame; repair it if necessary. Then, measure the distance where the screen fit the frame. Cut new screen to the same dimensions.

You shouldn't measure the old, worn screen — discard it — and take your measurements from the actual frame, Davis said.

Replacing the screen is simple. Lay the cut screen on the frame and tack down one side, top or bottom. It must be straight. You can go ahead and attach the wooden strip over it for strength.

Now comes the tricky part. Stretch the screen to the opposite side and attach it.

Hint: "You don't have to stretch the screen magnificently tight. It just has to be firm. It doesn't take much tension."

Once you have the opposite side attached, then it is easy to complete the other two ends.

Miter the wooden strips that cover the screen edges if you are putting on new strips, Davis suggested. The mitered ends join together for strength.

"And it looks nicer."

Aluminum screens have their own peculiar set of problems, not the least of which is the condition of the frame, the Builders Square specialist said.

"If it is bent, then you might as well throw it away. Bent aluminum loses its strength and you'll never get it straight again."

Also, bent aluminum will never fit flush in the window as it once did.

For this job you will need a crimping tool called a wheeled spline roller that looks like a handle with two round ends that spin. One end is round and the other is concave. It costs about \$3. Spline costs about 10 cents a foot. It's best to bring a piece to the store when buying new.

The screen should be cut one inch too large, then placed on the wire frame that is laying on a flat surface. Use the rounded end of the crimping tool to gently press the screen into a channel that runs the length of the frame. Once the groove has been mashed into the wire, then place the spline — this looks like rubber string — over the groove and use the concave side of the crimping tool to push the spline into the groove. Be careful not to mash or break the spline.

Once secure, trim off the excess screen with a sharp utility knife.

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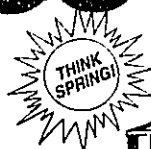
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