

# Here's how to fix double-hung windows

BY JAMES AND MORRIS CAREY  
FOR AP WEEKLY FEATURES

We brothers grew up in our grandmother's house, a turn-of-the-century home with double-hung wood windows.

Guess who was assigned the task of repairing and maintaining those contraptions? Even though Dad was the handiest guy in the neighborhood, we were the chosen ones.

Every time a sash rope broke it was our responsibility to make the repair.

If you have an older home with double-hung wood windows, you know that every so often the ropes that hold the counterweights rot and break, sending the counterweight into window oblivion.

You also know that there is nothing harder to open than a double-hung window without the help of both counterweights.

In time, we got rather good at making this repair.

Here is how it's done: First, prepare the work area. Put a drop cloth on the floor to protect the carpet. If the floor is hardwood, cover it with a sheet of 1-inch wall-board.

This will prevent damage to the floor in a rot or window part drops.

Next, remove the trim pieces from either side of the window opening that keep the lower window in place.

Nothing else prevents that

window from falling out, so be careful.

Use a sharp chisel to pry the trim away from the frame of the window.

First, break the paint connection by running a razor knife blade the full length of the trim. Doing so will reduce paint chipping and, in many instances, will eliminate damage to the trim.

(Note: Use a wedge between the side of the window and the frame to hold the window in place while you remove the trim. Once the trim is removed, the window is pulled out and the window and its frame will fall out of the opening.)

The next step is to remove the lower window.

The weight ropes usually are held in place with a small nail or screw. Remove the fastener from each side, being careful not to drop the window, and then pull the rope away.

Move the window to a safe location. This would be an ideal time to repair the frame, reduce the window and sand and paint the frame.

## REMOVING TRIM

With the bottom window safely out of the way, the center trim usually can be removed so that the top window also can be removed. Even if there is nothing wrong with the weight ropes attached to the top window, it is wise to replace them as well.

Removing the trim is a big part of this job. Once the trim is out, it's a mistake not to remove all the ropes at once. When one rope goes, it indicates what soon will follow with the other ropes in that opening.

Make sure to slide the top window to the lower position and wedge it in place before beginning to remove the center trim.

(Note: The outer trim that holds the lower trim in place is mounted onto the inside face of the frame. However, the center trim piece is usually recessed into a dado. So, be careful to keep that in mind as you use your chisel to pry it loose. In other words, the back of the trim is below frame surface.)

After using a sharp razor knife to break the paint seal on both sides of the trim, slightly limbed the tip of a sharp chisel into the side of the trim.

Tap lightly with your hammer so you don't split the trim.

Next, place a wedge or a small block between the chisel and the frame to act as a fulcrum.

Prying the trim out will be easier using this technique.

Next, remove the upper window in the same way as the lower window was taken out.

Place the upper window away from the work area. Remove the four weight

chamber covers; these are usually held in place with screws. If painted, they might require some tweaking.

To loosen the paint connection between a screw and the surrounding area, insert a screwdriver into the slot and tap lightly with a hammer. This will accomplish three things:

1. It will clean the screw slot.

2. It will break the paint seal.

3. It will slightly loosen the bond between the screw and the wood that it is imbedded in, making the removal of the screw easier.

With the covers removed, replace the ropes, making sure the new ropes match the old ones in length. Put everything back together in reverse order.

One last note: This is a good time to make sure that the weather-stripping is up to snuff.

For more home improvement tips and information, visit our Web site at [www.onthehouse.com](http://www.onthehouse.com).

Readers can mail questions to: On the House, AP News Features, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020, or e-mail [Careybro@onthehouse.com](mailto:Careybro@onthehouse.com). To receive a copy of On the House booklet on plumbing, painting, heat, insulation or deck/patio, send a check or money order payable to The Associated Press for \$6.95 per booklet and mail to: On the House, P.O. Box 1562, New York, NY 10016-1562, or visit [www.onthehouse.com](http://www.onthehouse.com) or [apbookstore.com](http://apbookstore.com).

## HOME CALENDAR

### EXPO Home show

EXPO Design Centers nationwide will host the 2003 Spring EXPO Home Show Saturday-Monday, Feb. 15-17. The show will feature a wide variety of activities and events for homeowners, designers and builders. Admission is free.

EXPO Design Centers are at 686 E. Big Beaver Road in Troy (phone (248) 689-3346), 7200 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield (phone (248) 865-1590) and 5400 Park Blvd. in Utica (phone (563) 736-1500).

Homeowners planning decorating projects for the spring will enjoy design seminars, product demonstrations, credit promotions and a hands-on children's design workshop.

EXPO's professional designers will be on hand to offer expert design advice during the weekend. Homeowners can enter to win (no purchase necessary) such items as a Charbroil® ProSeries stainless steel grill, a Krill® island butcher block, and a \$2,500 shopping spree from Delta® facets.

### Home decor

Heberman Fabrics, 905 S. Main in Royal Oak, offers a variety of home decor classes. Advance registration is necessary. Some classes have prerequisites. For more information, call (248) 540-0010 or visit [www.hebermanfabrics.com](http://www.hebermanfabrics.com).

The schedule includes Simple Curtain (\$60), Tuesdays, Feb. 18 to March 4; and Roman Shade (\$80), Thursdays, Feb. 20 to March 12, or Fridays, Feb. 21 to March 14.

Basement remodeling Bloomfield Hills Community Education, in cooperation with Oakland Builders Institute, will offer an eight-hour basement remodeling seminar 6-10 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, Feb. 18 and 20, at Andover High School, 4200 Andover Road in Bloomfield Hills.

Cost is \$50, plus a textbook fee of \$8. Pre-registration with payment is required no later than Thursday, Feb. 13, to Bloomfield Hills Community Education. To register, call (248) 433-0885 during regular office hours. The seminar is designed to help people make better use of valuable space in their homes by planning and completing a successful basement remodeling.

The instructor, a licensed builder, will explain the many facets of the project, including planning, meeting building codes, insurance, permits, estimating materials, the basics of home construction, working with subcontractors, finishing techniques, and tying into existing plumbing, electrical and

### heating systems.

Oakland Builders Institute teaches building courses in 38 schools in Michigan. For a free brochure and a current schedule of class locations, call (800) 940-2014.

### Home Improvement

The Palace Home Improvement Show will run Friday-Sunday, Feb. 14-16, at The Palace of Auburn Hills.

The show will have more than 300 exhibitors, who will display products and services for kitchens, baths, windows, doors, spas, remodeling, interior design, home offices, furniture, arts and crafts, decorative accessories, electronics, heating, cooling and appliances.

Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens. Admission is free for under age 12. For more information, call (248) 662-1019 or go to [www.builders.org](http://www.builders.org).

### Auction

Dumouchelle's, 409 E. Jefferson in Detroit, will conduct an auction Friday-Sunday, Feb. 14-16.

Times are 6:30 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. Saturday, and noon Sunday. Exhibition hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday. Call (313) 963-6255 or visit [www.dumouchelle.com](http://www.dumouchelle.com).

Among the featured items will be sterling silver, furniture, large fountains, American art pottery, large fountains, furniture and art works.

### Octagon House

The Octagon House, 57500 Van Dyke Avenue in Washington Township, is open for public tours noon to 4 p.m. the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Adult admission is \$3.

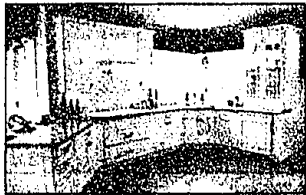
For more information, call the Octagon House at (586) 781-0084 and leave a message. The on-line Octagon House event calendar can be viewed at [www.calendar.yahoo.com/octagonhouse](http://www.calendar.yahoo.com/octagonhouse) or 1160.

### Meadow Brook Hall

Winter four times at Meadow Brook Hall, on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills, are 1:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Admission is \$12.50 for adults, \$8 for over age 62, \$6 for under age 17 and free for ages 2 and younger.

Enjoy soothing music as you sample assorted tea sandwiches, scones, quiche and tea 3-4:30 p.m. Tuesdays in the Christopher Wren Dining Room. Cost for tea is \$30 per person. Space is limited, so call in advance for reservations. For more information or reservations, call (248) 370-3140 or visit [www.meadowbrookhall.org](http://www.meadowbrookhall.org).

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## TIPS

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room's entrance pathway against a solid wall but in an area where the door is visible from the bed. Such a location is more empowering. If possible, try to place the bed in a position where there is a pleasant view in the morning.

■ Opt for a solid headboard,

which tends to make occupants feel more grounded and safe.

■ Rid the bedroom of electronics, especially television sets, exercise equipment, clutter and other items with the potential to distract from romance.

■ Use serene colors in the bedroom to create an environment that's conducive both to sleep and romance.

—Nicole Stafford

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