

## Replace a wood window (phase 1)



**A**esthetically, old windows have charm to spare. Functionally, they aren't so charming. Replacing a window is a basic project, but it is involved enough to be covered in two phases. The first phase (shown here) includes measuring for the new window, removing the old one, and prepping the opening. For this job, I chose a wood window to match the windows in the house and ordered it without stock trim or brick mold so that I could match the trim.

I sized the new window to fit without having to cut back or patch the existing siding. (I replaced one piece of siding above the window, but that is fodder for phase 2 in the next issue.) The rough opening, however, needed blocking to close the sash-weight space that old windows have and new windows don't. For this, I use 2x lumber that matches the existing framing.

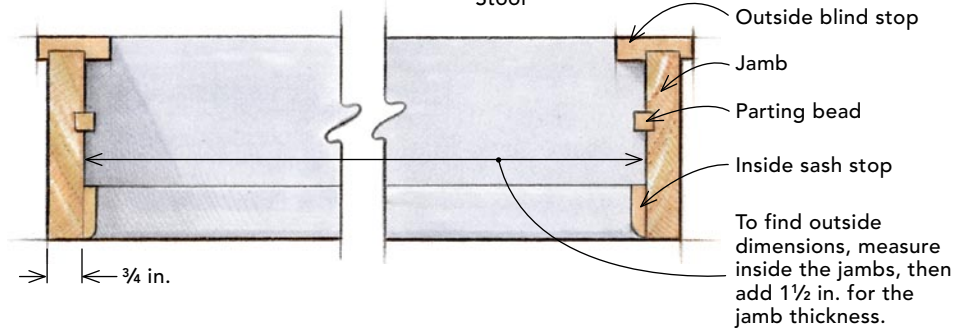
There's nothing charming about having a piece of plywood covering a hole in the house while I wait for the new window to arrive, so I always make sure the new window is what I ordered before I remove the old unit.

Scott Grice is a frequent contributor to Fine Homebuilding.

### STEP BY STEP

#### MEASURE FOR THE NEW WINDOW

**1 Measure the existing sash.** To size the new window, measure the distance between the inside of the window tracks for both width and height. Add 1½ in. (¾ in. for each jamb) to the width and ¾ in. plus the thickness of the stool to the height. This will give you the outside dimension to use for ordering a new window.



#### REMOVE THE OLD WINDOW

**2 Sash first.** It's safer and easier to remove the window frame with the operational sash taken out. With a pry bar, remove the inside sash stops. Cut the sash-weight cords, and let the weights fall into the cavity. With the stops and cord removed, the lower sash should easily lift out.



**3 Trim second.** To ensure that the house paint remains intact, score the seam between the trim and siding before prying the trim loose. Windows made before the mid-1950s have a cavity behind the trim to house the sash weights.



**4 Weights, then window.** After pulling out the loose sash weights, remove any fasteners holding the window in place, and lift the entire window frame from the opening in one piece.

STEP BY STEP

PREP THE ROUGH OPENING



**5 Add blocking.** Once the old window frame is removed, clear debris and errant nails. Use 2x lumber and spacers to block in the sash-weight cavity and to create the appropriately sized rough opening for the new window.



**6 Fur out the blocking.** The front face of the new rough opening should be flush with the sheathing. In this case, the author was able to use the old window trim, ripped to width, as furring.



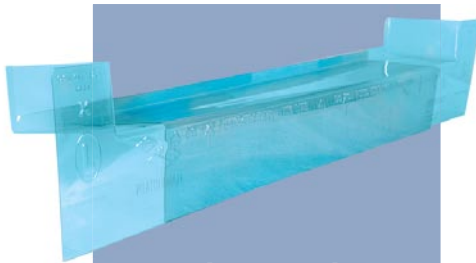
INSTALL FLEXIBLE FLASHING



**7 Flash the sill first.** Use self-adhesive flexible flashing to create a waterproof sill pan. First, spread the flashing across the rough opening (photo above). Then cut down along the inside edge of the opening, and lay the flashing across the sill. To seal the corners, run another 8-in. to 10-in. piece of flashing down the side of the opening, lapping it over the top of the sill pan and down the front.



**8 Flash the sides and top.** Apply 4-in.- to 6-in.-wide flashing to the sides first, then the top. (The author used a wider brand for the sill pan, thus the different colors.) The flashing should be behind the siding, but don't worry about getting the flashing behind the siding because that could create more leaks than it would prevent. (For more on window flashing, see "Window Installation Done Right," FHB #197 and online at FineHomebuilding.com.)



Ready-made pan flashing

Flashing tape isn't the most fun material to work with. Depending on the kind you get (see "What's the Difference?" in FHB #196 or online at FineHomebuilding.com), it will either stick to everything tenaciously or nothing at all. Whatever the case, it can be frustrating. For those who don't want to fashion a sill pan from scratch, there are manufactured pan-flashing systems available, such as Dow's Weathermate Sill Pan, shown here (www.dow.com; \$5). This can be an economical option if you don't have a lot of windows to install. They come in various sizes to fit an opening's width.

John Ross, associate Web producer



Want to watch it happen? See the video at

FineHomebuilding.com