

BUYERS GUIDE FOR DOORS

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TRADING



**PREMIER
WINDOWS**

So you're thinking about a new or replacement door for your home? Well, this can have a significant impact on the way your home looks, how much heat it can retain and it can even make your home more secure. Of course, it's important to find which door is right for you before going through with purchasing one. Within this handy guide, you can find 30 years of door installation expertise, so once you're done reading it, you should have no doubt in your mind about the right door for your home.

T: 0800 854 353

www.premwindowsanddoors.co.uk



DOOR MATERIALS

The material the door is built from has a significant impact on the look and performance of the door, which means you will need to think carefully about which best suits your needs. Here at Premier Windows, we use four different door materials – uPVC, aluminium, composite and timber.



uPVC

uPVC has been the material of choice for many homeowners ever since uPVC windows became extremely popular during the 1980s. This is because uPVC has a number of excellent qualities such as:

- uPVC is resistant to rot, discolouration and warping, which means uPVC doors are highly durable.
- As a natural insulator, uPVC is great at keeping heat inside the home. Modern uPVC frames also feature a number of heat-trapping chambers, making uPVC doors some of the most energy-efficient you can find.
- You can keep a uPVC door looking its best with only the minimum of hassle. A wipe down with a soft cloth and soapy water is all it will ever need to do this.
- Whilst older uPVC doors posed a risk to security, improvements in technology mean the ones of today are much sturdier.
- Along with a wide range of colours, uPVC doors come in either smooth or woodgrain finishes, making them adaptable to a variety of different property styles. Woodgrain finishes resemble the natural appearance of wood.



Aluminium

Over the past 10 years, aluminium technology has improved considerably and now aluminium doors are a highly popular choice with homeowners. Here's what you can expect if opting for one for your home:

- In order to combat aluminium's naturally conductive qualities, modern aluminium doors are fitted with polyamide thermal breaks. These sit between the frames, lowering heat transfer considerably. As a result, aluminium doors are able to perform very well in terms of energy efficiency.
- As aluminium is a wonderfully strong material, aluminium frames can be built to more slender proportions. This allows larger areas of glazing to be accommodated. For this reason, aluminium patio and bifold doors, which are mostly glazed, are highly popular with homeowners.
- Aluminium has an anti-corrosive layer, preventing it from rusting or corroding. This means that its finish and any doors built from it can last for decades.
- You can keep aluminium doors clean with the minimum of fuss too, just like you can uPVC doors.
- Aluminium doors can be powder coated in any RAL colour, which means there is a lot of flexibility when it comes to creating a look for them that you're happy with.

DOOR MATERIALS



Timber

Timber is one of the oldest construction materials around, yet it has been improved substantially in order to meet modern living standards. If opting for a timber door, you can expect the following qualities:

- Timber has a natural woodgrain appearance that looks rich, textured and beautiful. Many consider it the best looking of all the materials.
- Wood can be painted or spray finish can be applied to it, both of which are available in a huge selection of colours. This gives you huge flexibility in terms of the look you can achieve.
- Timber is an excellent choice for anyone who hopes to do their bit for the environment. It's a completely natural material, plus the timber doors we install are built from FSC® certified wood, meaning the material in use comes from sustainable forests.
- Provided they've been properly cared for, timber doors are able to last for the longest length of time. However, they will require retreating periodically in order to last as long as they can.
- Timber is a naturally insulating material and a great retainer of heat. Generally, this means timber doors are very thermally efficient.



Composite

Although they've only been around for about 20 years or so, composite doors are now the most popular type of entrance door fitted in the UK and with good reason. Made up of various materials to maximise their performance, here's what you can expect from them:

- Our composite doors are fitted with an ultra-dense foam or a solid timber core, which gives the doors fantastic insulation qualities. This allows them to achieve energy ratings of 'A', which are some of the highest you can find.
- This core is also CFC-free. As CFC is harmful to the ozone layer, this means they're better for the environment.
- The external skin of composite doors is built from glass reinforced plastic (GRP) skin, which is very easy to keep clean.
- This skin is also incredibly durable and designed to emulate the appearance of timber. This means you can enjoy a timber-like aesthetic without needing to retreat the door periodically.
- Styles of composite door range from highly traditional to ultra-modern, so they can easily be adapted to meet almost any visual requirements. Colour options for them are vast too.

DOOR STYLES

Doors come in a number of styles that, ultimately, serve different functions. Therefore, knowing what you want to achieve for your home will be useful when it comes to determining what style of door you're after.



Entrance doors

Entrance doors are fitted to the front or back of your property. When people walk by or enter your home, one of the first things they'll notice is your front door. So, if you want to improve kerbside appeal, it's imperative that it looks good. On the contrary, if your front door is chipped, scratched and missing paintwork, it could leave potential buyers of your home unimpressed, leading to a devaluation of your home.

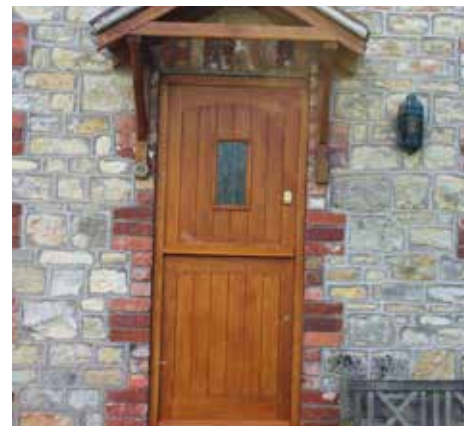
Of course, there's no reason why your back door can't look great too. Entrance doors are usually hung from the side and open into the property.

Here at Premier Windows, we offer uPVC and composite entrance doors, and both come in a variety of contemporary and traditional door styles, many of which make use of different glass designs. It's also possible to customise their furniture and hardware for a truly unique look.

Stable Doors

Stable doors are a type of entrance door which have a barn-style design and two independently operated halves. When the top half is open and the bottom is closed, you can ventilate your home without the worry that any young children or pets are able to leave the property.

Our stable doors are built from composite and timber, so natural, beautiful looks are a certainty. We often fit them on cottages and farmhouses, although they're great when used as a back door on any property because you can keep an eye on the kids if they're playing in the garden from the inside of your home.



French Doors

French doors are instantly recognisable by two largely glazed doors that sit next to one another. When they are open, they leave a large opening for air to flood into your home. As their design contains a lot of glass, they also let lots of light inside, significantly brightening up any rooms.

Having been in use since the 17th century, their design is considered timeless. Ours are built from uPVC, aluminium or timber, so they come in a wide range of finish options. They can also open inwards or outwards, come in a choice of framework and with various handles, so it's easy to find French doors that suit you.

WHAT TYPES OF DOOR ARE AVAILABLE?



Patio Doors

Patio doors consist of slim frames and large areas of glass, a look typically considered to be very modern. They also allow huge quantities of natural light to enter your home. This means you can enjoy panoramic views of your exterior space. When open, fresh air will flood your home too.

As they slide to one side to open instead of inwards or outwards, you don't need to worry so much about keeping their opening pathway clear. This means they can be great in locations where space is at a premium.

Our patio doors are manufactured from high-quality uPVC and aluminium. They also come in a variety of colour finishes and with either 2, 3 or 4 panels. So, it's possible to fill small and large openings with them.

Bifold Doors

Like patio and French doors, bifold doors allow you to bathe your home in natural light and take in uninhibited views of your outside space. However, because they slide and fold in a concertina style in order to open, they leave a completely open aperture, really bringing the outside into your home.

If the right support is in place and enough space is available, they can even replace a whole wall. We install bi-folding doors made from aluminium, and these come in smooth, woodgrain and anodised finishes. The sightlines on aluminium bifolds are super slim too, so you can enjoy less inhibited views when the doors are closed. Plus, you can't beat aluminium when looking to achieve the ultra-modern look.

Bifold doors come in as little as 3 panels or as many as 6, which means they can be used in place of a whole wall if desired.



FINDING THE RIGHT DOOR FOR YOUR HOME

Now you know how the different types of doors function and the materials they're built from, you should have an idea of what you want to achieve for your home. However, you might also be thinking about the age and style of your property and whether a certain type of door is best suited to it.



Period properties

The classic design of French doors makes them a great option for any period properties. However, French doors have been used on all types of home over the years; their timeless design allows them to blend into any surroundings pretty well.

Entrance doors come in a range of traditional designs, so it's easy to enhance any period features too. For example, the woodgrain exteriors that are found on composite doors make them a great option. For the back of the home, you might also consider a classic stable door.



Modernist homes

If you live in a modernist home, the sleek design and operation of aluminium bifold doors is absolutely perfect for it. Although, sliding patio doors do a great job complementing any contemporary architecture too. If an entrance door is what you're after, you can also specify for a more modern design. This might include a slimline door knocker, a bar handle, minimalist glazing and other contemporary design features.

You can also discuss any style ideas you have with an installer prior to making your decision. Experienced installers like us will have worked with enough properties to know what will and won't work.



The style of door and the material are two of the biggest considerations, although there are plenty more to consider when buying a new door for your home.



FRAMING OPTIONS

Door frames can have a significant impact on whether the door is better suited to more traditional or contemporary architecture, and there are two types of framing from which to choose: chamfered and ovolo.



Chamfered Framing

Chamfered frames feature a flat, streamlined appearance which many consider to be quite minimalistic. For this reason, they suit modern properties very well. However, chamfered window frames can often be seen on many new builds and 1920s style properties too. They tend to be slightly thinner than ovolo frames, so if you're looking to maximise the glass area on a patio door, for example, they are the best option.

Ovolo Framing

The Ovolo style of frame has a curved shape, which many consider to be more decorative than their chamfered counterparts. If you live in a rural cottage or a period home, ovolo frames will complement your property nicely.



DOOR FURNITURE

There are various types of door furniture to consider and each will have an impact on how your door will look, whilst some will affect the way it functions too.



Door Handles

Handles are found on almost any door, as they're usually the means by which a door is opened and closed. They are usually fitted with locking cylinders so they can be locked and unlocked.

Contemporary and classic handle designs are available. Lever handles are a popular option but there's also curved, pad, bar and several alternative handle designs to choose from. Handles also come in either a Gold, Polished Chrome, Satin Chrome, White or Black finish.



Letterboxes

Letterplates are an essential feature of any front door, although they're often used for doors located on side and back porches too. Traditional options that fold inwards are available, as are those which are lifted upwards. Many consider the latter a more contemporary option. Gold and Polished Chrome are two common finish options, but Satin Chrome, White and Black are also available.



Door Knockers

Door knockers come in a variety of traditional designs. For this reason, they really enhance the aesthetics of traditionally styled entrance doors. Urns, lionheads and rings are some of the more popular traditional designs that are available. However, slimline knockers are a great choice for those who are after a more modern looking door.

Door knockers also come with the option of a spyhole, so you can see who is knocking on your door before answering it.



Door Knobs

A door knob might be used for decoration or on a door that has keyless locking. Their designs can be smooth or shaped, whilst they might have decorative carvings etched onto them to suit your personal preferences. They also come in various colours such as Polished Brass, Polished Chrome and Satin Chrome.

DOOR FURNITURE



Door Hinges

Flag hinges and butt hinges are the only two types of door hinge, although flag hinges are the more visible of the two. Featuring a flag shape – hence the name – they regularly feature on uPVC doors because they make them more secure and better supported. However, butt hinges are used across the board. They only show a metal cylinder that sits on the inside of the door, near the point where the door meets the frame. This makes them very difficult to see when the door is closed.



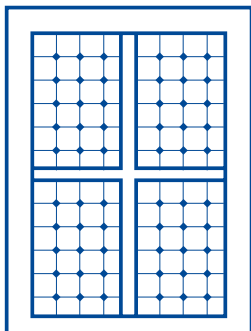
Numerals

Numerals can be fitted onto the exterior of a door in order to display your house number. This can be useful if it's not very obvious what number your house is. Although they serve a more practical purpose than an aesthetic one, they're available in a variety of polished finishes to match knockers, letter plates and other furniture.



GLASS OPTIONS

There are a huge range of glass options for doors available today and their features differ enormously. We've covered them all in this section so you can decide which is right for your home.



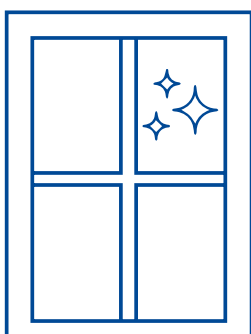
Decorative Glass

Decorative glass is a fantastic way to add a stylish feature to a door. It's often incorporated into the door design or used for sidelights and toplights. You can choose from both traditional and contemporary designs, various shapes, sizes and patterns.

Many decorative glass options use coloured glass, but etched designs are also available to choose from. Common examples of etched designs include the house name or number. Double glazed doors can accommodate stained glass designs, but they will be better protected if situated within a triple glazed unit.

Privacy Glass

Privacy glass is obscured, making it more difficult for onlookers to view the inside of your home. For this reason, it's commonly used on back doors and bathroom windows. However, it's also commonly used on front doors. Despite concealing the inside of your home, it has no negative impact on the amount of light that's able to get in. It's available in a range of floral, geometric and cloudy glass designs.

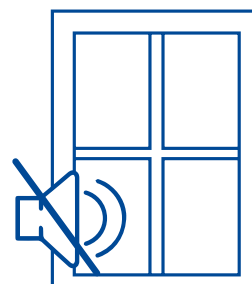


Self-Cleaning Glass

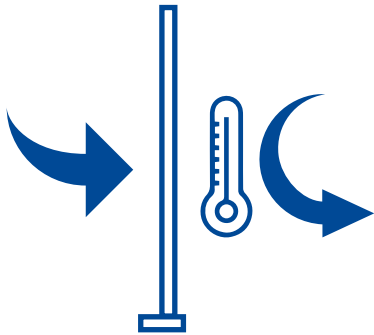
Self-cleaning glass is covered in a special coating that is activated by UV light. Once it's been activated, the coating begins to break down any organic dirt that it comes into contact with. This helps to prevent inorganic dirt from sticking to the glass. The leftover dirt is then washed away when rain meets the glass. Bi-folding, patio and French doors are mostly made up of glazing, so fitting self-cleaning glass in any of these door types can be a good way to reduce maintenance times.

Sound Reduction Glass

Although a standard double glazed door will keep plenty of outside noise from entering your home, you can keep more out by opting for sound reduction glass. If you live near a busy road, under a flightpath, or your neighbours are just plain noisy, having it fitted onto your new door can ensure your home environment remains a peaceful space. Triple glazing is another way you can reduce external noise, however, sound reduction glass is the cheaper of the two options.



WHAT TYPES OF GLASS ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOORS?



Low-e Glass

Utilising an invisible coating, low-e, or low emissivity, glass works by reflecting heat back inside your home. It also allows more solar radiation through than standard glass, leading to an increase in heat through passive solar heat gain. For these reasons, it's great for patio doors and bi-fold doors because it keeps internal spaces warmer.

If positioned incorrectly, however, solar glass can cause overheating.

Toughened Glass

Toughened glass is thermally treated in order to make it up to 5 times stronger than the standard equivalent. When broken, it also shatters into hundreds of tiny, blunt pieces, making it much safer than ordinary glass. In order to comply with building regulations, it's a requirement for strengthened glass to be used in any doors that are fully glazed. This means bifold and patio doors will be fitted with it.



DOOR SECURITY

External doors offer a potential route into your home, which means that it's essential for them to be highly secure. In this section, we've covered the types of locking hardware doors are fitted with, along with types of security accreditations that are available for doors so you know what to look out for.

Door Hardware



Cylinder Locks

Cylinder locks are fitted into door handles, so they're always used on French doors. If you've specified for an entrance door to come with a handle, you'll also find them in use here.

When activated, the handle is unable to turn, thus preventing the door from opening. The best cylinder locks will utilise what is known as anti-bump technology. This prevents any intruders from breaking them using a technique known as lock bumping and then entering your home.



Night Latch

If you've ever left your front door on the latch, this is the piece of security hardware that enables you to do so. Fitted onto the internal side of the door, they are opened from the inside using a lever or from the outside using a key. However, key operation can be prevented by using a small button to lock the latch into position.

A common feature on entrance doors, they're usually used in conjunction with a mortice deadlock.



Mortice Deadlock

Mortice deadlocks are fitted inside the door and operated by a key. As the key is turned, a bolt is inserted into the door frame, thus securing the door. They can be used on a number of entrance doors, although, they're most commonly found on timber variants. Many home insurance companies will require an entrance door to be fitted with one otherwise they won't insure you.



Door Chain

Although they're not a requirement, door chains can be a very useful security feature. By keeping your door 'on the chain', you open it slightly in order to speak to any visitors without providing a clear entry route into your property.

HOW CAN I TELL IF A DOOR IS SECURE?



Multi-Point Locking Systems

The majority of doors built today come fitted with multi-point locks. They work by securing the door at multiple locations in the framework, leaving fewer weak spots for potential intruders to exploit. They are engaged when the door handle is lifted upwards.



Anti-Lift Technology

A security measure that is specifically used on bifold and patio doors, anti-lift technology uses security strips to prevent these types of doors from being lifted out of their tracks by intruders so they can gain entry to your home. It can also be referred to as anti-jacking technology.



PAS 24 accreditation

At a minimum, any door you purchase should have PAS 24 accreditation. PAS 24 is a test standard that is used to assess the security performance of windows and doors. Doors that are tested to this standard undergo a series of tests that simulate common burglary scenarios. Any doors that receive PAS 24 accreditation must meet a minimum standard of performance in these tests.



Official Police Security Initiative

Secured by Design

However, if you're particularly security conscious, you might want to look out for Secured by Design accreditation. This is a UK Police operated scheme that recognises high levels of security on doors, windows, and other home products. Our uPVC entrance doors are fitted with Secured by Design approved locks, whilst our composite doors are also accredited by this scheme.

DOOR THERMAL PERFORMANCE

The better your door's thermal performance, the more heat it will keep in your home. Not only does this lead to warmer properties but it also means lower energy bills too. Plus, your home will be more energy-efficient so your environmental impact will be reduced.

The overall design, materials in use and the quality of the glazing have an effect on thermal performance. However, specific hardware like low-e glass, weather seals and the door threshold will have one too.

There are two main methods used to calculate their overall thermal performance: Door Energy Ratings and U-values.



Door Energy Rating (DER)

One of the more popular door energy rating schemes is ran by The British Fenestration Rating Council (BFRC). Generally, door energy ratings use a scale of A-G to determine a door's thermal performance, with A being the highest rating and G being the lowest. E is the minimum rating required in order to satisfy Building Regulations, although installers will typically offer doors which can achieve ratings of C and above. Our composite doors, for example, can achieve ratings of A.



U Values

U-values are calculated by the equation W/m^2k , which measures heat loss in watts (W) per square metre of material, when the temperature (k) outside is at least one degree lower. The lower the U value, the better the insulation the material provides. For materials with a U value of 0, no heat can escape.

Doors that have more than 50% of their total area glazed must have a U-value of at least 1.8 W/m^2k . However, there are many door options out there which easily outperform this. Our French doors, which have an overall U-value of 0.8 W/m^2k , are one of them.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOOR INSTALLER FOR YOU

Perhaps you've found your perfect door or set of doors but you've also found two different companies that install them. How do you decide which installer is going to do a better job? Whilst price does have an influence from time to time, doors which are cheap without good reason, like a promotion of some kind, should have their quality brought into question. There are also other ways that can help you determine which installer is right for you.



Product Guarantees

When buying new doors, it's important to look at whether or not the company offers a guarantee on all the window components and the installation. If they're not prepared to offer one that covers both aspects for at least 10 years, it pays to steer clear of them. If a company can't guarantee your new door or set of doors for at least 10 years, chances are they won't even last for 5.

Accreditations

Who the company is accredited by gives a good indication of the quality of the installer. For instance, accreditation by schemes like Which? Trusted Trader are only granted to companies that have proven their outstanding credentials in a number of aspects, including credit checks, customer experiences and installation quality.



Learning about a window company's reputation

It's possible to learn about a company's reputation via word of mouth or online. Two useful online review formats you might consider are Checkatrade.com and Google reviews. If a friend or family member has had work performed by a specific company, their own experiences of them, good or bad, can be invaluable too.

PAYING FOR YOUR NEW DOOR

Another important consideration is how you will pay for your new doors. However, several companies, like us here at Premier, offer a finance option of 12 months interest-free credit after paying a 20% deposit.

Opting for finance instead of paying outright is better suited to those who'd rather spread payments out over a longer duration of time. However, if your credit history isn't very good, finance may not be available to you.





FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Upgrading an old door or fitting a new one will always add practical and aesthetic value to your home. However, be sure to speak to an installer about which ones will maintain the unique character of your property years after they've been fitted. This is important if you come to sell your home in the future, as potential buyers may not be too happy paying full price for a home which has an inconsistent design scheme.

You also cannot underestimate the value of seeing a door or set of doors yourself before making a purchase. Therefore, we would recommend heading down to a showroom first prior to making a purchase. Whilst at a showroom, you can also have any home improvement enquiries answered by well-informed home improvement specialists.

We hope this guide has provided you with all the information needed to find your perfect door. However, if you'd like more information, feel free to get in touch with the team here at Premier Windows or pay us a visit at our Aylesbury showroom, which is located just off the A41. We're happy to answer any enquires and are available to call on 0800 854 353 or can be contacted online.

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