COMPLETE STYLE GUIDE

Entry & Patio Doors

Transform Your Home's Curb Appeal, Security, and Energy Efficiency Today

Falcon Home Exteriors

2026 Edition

Your Doors Say More Than Welcome



Every day, you walk through your entry door without giving it much thought—but your neighbors, visitors, and potential buyers certainly notice it. Your doors are far more than functional barriers between inside and outside; they're the defining features that frame your home's personality, protect your family's safety, and significantly impact your energy bills and property value.

The average homeowner replaces their entry and patio doors only once or twice in their lifetime, making these among the most important home improvement decisions you'll ever make. Yet most people spend more time researching a new television than selecting doors that will serve their family for 20–30 years.

The door industry has evolved dramatically in recent years. Today's options go far beyond basic functionality, offering sophisticated security features, energy-efficient technologies, and design possibilities that can completely transform your home's appearance—whether you're building new, renovating, or simply ready to upgrade.

In this comprehensive guide, you'll discover how to select doors that perfectly balance aesthetics, security, and performance. We'll explore the latest materials, styles, and technologies available, help you understand what truly matters in door construction, and guide you through the decision-making process with confidence.

By the time you finish reading, you'll have the knowledge to choose doors that enhance your home's beauty, protect your family, reduce energy costs, and increase your property's resale value—making this one home improvement decision you'll feel great about for years to come.

Understanding Door Anatomy and Materials

Door Construction Fundamentals

Making informed decisions about entry and patio doors begins with understanding what you're actually buying. Modern doors consist of several critical components working together: the door panel itself (solid, hollow, or composite), the frame providing structural support and weatherproofing, the threshold creating a seal at the bottom, and weatherstripping around the perimeter preventing air and water infiltration. Hardware components—locks, hinges, handles, and track systems—must withstand decades of daily use.

Material Options at a Glance

Steel doors offer exceptional security and durability at moderate price points. They resist warping, provide excellent insulation when foam-filled, and require minimal maintenance—though they can dent and may rust in coastal environments without proper finishing. Fiberglass doors resist denting, won't rust or rot, and convincingly replicate wood grain, making them ideal for harsh climates. Wood doors deliver unmatched natural beauty and extensive customization but require regular upkeep and are susceptible to warping, rotting, and insect damage in certain climates. Vinyl doors, common for patio applications, offer excellent energy efficiency with virtually no maintenance.

Why the Frame Matters

Many homeowners focus entirely on the door panel and overlook the frame—a costly mistake. The frame provides the structural foundation that holds everything in place, seals out weather, and anchors your hardware. Even a premium door installed in a substandard frame will underperform, develop air leaks, and fail prematurely. Matching your frame material and construction quality to your door investment is not optional; it's essential to protecting every dollar you spend.

KEY INSIGHT

The frame is just as important as the door itself. A premium door installed in a substandard frame will underperform and fail prematurely. Always ensure your frame material and construction quality matches your door investment to get the performance you're paying for.

Style Selection That Enhances Your Home

Your door's style should complement your home's architecture while reflecting your personal taste. Understanding design principles and available options helps you make selections that enhance rather than detract from your home's character. Getting this right creates lasting curb appeal that impresses visitors and supports resale value for years to come.

Matching Architectural Styles

Different home styles call for distinctly different door designs:

- Traditional & Colonial homes: six- or eight-panel doors with classic hardware and proportions
- Craftsman homes: doors with geometric glass panels and handcrafted details
- Contemporary homes: flush or horizontal-groove designs with larger glass sections
- Modern homes: clean lines, minimal ornamentation, asymmetrical glass
- Transitional homes: flexible options that blend traditional and modern elements

Glass Configurations

Glass panels dramatically impact both aesthetics and functionality:

- Full-lite doors: maximize natural light, create an open and welcoming feel
- Half-lite or three-quarter-lite: balance light admission with privacy
- Sidelights and transoms: expand glass area without compromising structure
- Frosted, textured, stained, and beveled glass: decorative privacy solutions
- Patio doors: consider how much wall space you want to convert to glass

Color and Finish Considerations

Your door color creates an immediate visual impact and sets the tone for your entire home exterior. While neutral colors offer versatility and broad resale appeal, bold colors can make powerful design statements that set your home apart. Consider your home's siding, trim, and roof colors carefully. Neighborhood aesthetics also matter if resale value is a priority—a door that fits its surroundings will always outperform one that clashes with the streetscape over time.

KEY INSIGHT

Your entry door should coordinate with—not necessarily match—your home's other elements. Creating intentional contrast between door and siding colors actually increases curb appeal more than perfectly matched colors, which can cause doors to visually disappear into the facade.

Security Features That Protect Your Family

Lock Systems and Hardware: Your First Line of Defense

Beyond keeping weather outside, your doors serve as your home's primary security barrier. Grade 1 deadbolt locks offer maximum security with one-inch throw bolts and reinforced construction that resists forced entry, lock picking, and drilling—essential for any entry door not clearly visible from the street. Multi-point locking systems engage at three or more points along the door's edge, making doors extremely difficult to pry open while preventing warping over time. Smart locks add remote access, temporary guest codes, and activity logs, and many integrate with whole-home security systems for comprehensive protection.

Impact-Resistant Glass

For homes in hurricane-prone regions or high-crime areas, impact-resistant glass provides crucial protection. This laminated glass holds together when shattered, preventing entry and protecting against flying debris during storms. Even outside hurricane zones, impact-resistant glass significantly increases security against break-in attempts by eliminating the easy path of smashing glass near a lock to gain access.

Frame and Hinge Reinforcement

The strongest door fails if installed in a weak frame. Look for reinforced frames—especially around the lock area. Security strike plates and reinforced strike boxes distribute force across a larger area, preventing the common break-in technique of simply kicking in the door near the lock. Hinges deserve equal attention: non-removable hinge pins prevent removal of outward-facing hinges. Three or more heavy-duty hinges secured to wall studs—not just door jambs—provide the structural integrity your family's safety depends on.

Visible Security as a Deterrent

Effective home security is as much about perception as it is about physical strength. A well-secured door that visibly features quality hardware, reinforced construction, and security cameras communicates clearly to would-be intruders that your home is not an easy target—sending them to look for easier opportunities elsewhere in the neighborhood.

KEY INSIGHT

According to security experts, visible security features deter most break-in attempts before they begin. A door that clearly features quality locks, reinforced construction, and possibly security cameras signals that easier targets exist elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Energy Efficiency and Performance Standards

Your doors significantly impact home comfort and energy costs. Understanding performance ratings and efficiency features helps you select doors that pay dividends through reduced heating and cooling expenses—delivering real savings on your energy bills month after month, year after year.

Understanding Energy Performance Ratings

The National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) provides standardized measurements for door performance. Key ratings to know include:

- U-factor: measures heat transfer—lower numbers mean better insulation
- Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC): measures solar radiation passing through the door
- Air leakage rating: 0.3 cfm or lower indicates excellent weatherstripping quality
- Energy Star certification: a reliable baseline for overall efficiency performance

Insulation Technologies

Modern doors employ multiple insulation strategies to maximize thermal performance. Polyurethane foam cores provide superior R-values compared to polystyrene, offering better thermal resistance in smaller thicknesses. Some premium doors feature multiple insulation chambers or thermal breaks that interrupt heat transfer paths through the door's core and frame. Weatherstripping quality varies dramatically between manufacturers—compression weatherstripping creates tight seals without requiring excessive force to close, while magnetic weatherstripping, similar to refrigerator door seals, provides excellent long-term performance with minimal maintenance and no degradation over time.

Climate-Specific Considerations for Best Results

Cold climates demand maximum insulation values, weatherstripping that stays flexible in freezing temperatures, threshold designs that prevent ice damming, and materials that resist excessive contraction in extreme cold. Hot climates benefit from reflective glass coatings, light-colored exteriors, and UV-resistant materials that handle thermal expansion. Coastal regions require corrosion-resistant hardware and materials, impact-resistant glass for hurricane protection, and enhanced weatherstripping capable of standing up to wind-driven rain and salt air without deteriorating over time.

KEY INSIGHT

Energy Star certification provides a reliable baseline for efficiency, but regional recommendations vary significantly. A door perfect for Minnesota may perform poorly in Arizona. Always check Energy Star's regional recommendations for your specific climate zone before making your final selection.

Installation and Maintenance Best Practices

Professional Installation Essentials

Even the finest door underperforms when improperly installed. Proper installation begins with accurate measurements—even small errors create gaps that compromise efficiency and security. The rough opening should provide adequate space for shimming and adjustment without excessive gaps requiring extensive filling. Level and plumb installation is non-negotiable: doors installed even slightly off-level develop operating problems, don't seal properly, and wear unevenly over time. Professional installers use multiple reference points and precision tools to ensure perfect alignment. Flashing and weatherproofing around the frame prevents water infiltration that leads to rot, mold, and structural damage—quality installations include head flashing above the door, side flashing integrated with your home's weather barrier, and proper sealant at all penetrations.

Annual Maintenance That Extends Door Life

Consistent annual maintenance prevents small issues from becoming expensive problems. Clean weatherstripping with mild soap and water, and replace it promptly if damaged or compressed. Lubricate hinges, locks, and all moving parts with appropriate lubricants. Inspect and touch up painted or stained finishes before moisture finds its way in. Check threshold condition and adjust as needed to maintain a proper seal. Examine caulking around the frame and reapply wherever gaps appear. For patio doors, vacuum tracks regularly and use appropriate cleaners to remove built-up debris, then adjust rollers periodically to maintain smooth operation and consistent sealing performance throughout the year.

Common Mistakes You Must Avoid

Never paint over weatherstripping or locks—doing so causes operational problems that compound over time. Avoid pressure washing doors, which forces water behind weatherstripping and damages finishes in ways that aren't always immediately visible but lead to costly repairs. Never ignore minor issues: a small air leak or sticky lock typically indicates underlying problems that will worsen if left unaddressed. Attending to small maintenance tasks promptly is always far less expensive than waiting until a minor issue becomes a major repair that disrupts your family and strains your budget unnecessarily.

KEY INSIGHT

Installation quality matters as much as door quality. Requesting references, verifying installer certification, and ensuring warranty coverage includes installation defects protects your investment and ensures your new doors perform exactly as intended—for decades to come.

Making Your Door Investment Count

Your entry and patio doors represent significant investments in your home's security, efficiency, and beauty. Making informed decisions ensures you select doors that serve your family well for decades while enhancing your property's value and curb appeal in ways you'll appreciate every single day.

Remember these essential takeaways: door quality extends beyond the panel itself to include frame construction, weatherstripping, hardware, and installation. Style selections should complement your home's architecture while reflecting your personal taste. Security features—from quality locks to reinforced frames—provide essential family protection. Energy efficiency ratings help you select doors appropriate for your climate that reduce ongoing costs. And professional installation is what transforms a great door into a great long-term investment that performs as intended for the full span of its designed life.

Taking the Next Steps

1. Honestly evaluate your current doors: security, energy performance, and appearance
2. Identify your home's architectural style and matching door designs
3. Create a list of must-have features versus desirable upgrades
4. Review your climate zone's specific energy efficiency requirements
5. Consider your timeline in the home—resale appeal vs. personal preference
6. Choose a certified, reputable installer with verified references and warranties

When you're ready to move forward, choose your professionals carefully. Quality installation determines whether premium doors perform as intended or disappoint despite their superior construction. Take the time to research installers, request references, confirm warranty terms, and ensure the company you choose stands behind their work with the same commitment to quality that went into manufacturing the doors themselves.

Get Expert Guidance From Falcon Home Exteriors

Falcon Home Exteriors specializes in helping homeowners select and install entry and patio doors that perfectly balance style, security, and performance. Our experienced team will guide you through every decision—from initial style selection through final installation—ensuring your new doors exceed your expectations. **Contact us today for a free consultation and let us help your home make the right statement.**

Visit **falconhomeexteriors.com** or call **(571) 601-2193**