

Reprint **SMART WORDS** for **SMART HOMEOWNERS** Reprint

An article from the archives of our quarterly information eLetter

From the experience of experts and their advice on relevant homeowner topics.

Screen Doors Can Last a Lifetime

If you like to keep doors open for fresh air and you have screen doors to keep out the bugs, some simple maintenance will keep those doors working properly and doing their job this summer and next. They will also add to the curb appeal of your home.

Smooth Operator

The first thing to check is that the door 1) operates smoothly and 2) seals completely. Start by opening it a few times and watching the automatic closing. If the door is stiff to open or makes any kind of noise, the hinges are usually at fault. This can typically be remedied by a spraying silicone on the hinges or if rust is evident spraying WD-40. Work the door open and closed a few times to work in the lubricant. If the door has removable hinge pins, remove and clean the pins prior to oiling.

Most screen and storm doors use a cylinder to pull it closed. Most cylinders have an adjustment screw that regulate their closing operation. It adjusts how quickly the door pulls itself closed from its fully open position to closed position. The door should be adjusted so that it closes quickly enough to not allow a lot of time for the bugs to come in, but not so quickly that it swings back against someone before they are comfortably clear of the opening.



Latching

The door should also close with enough force at the end to firmly engage the latch mechanism.

If the cylinder is not operating correctly no matter what adjustments you make to it, it's probably time for a replacement. Most home centers and hardware stores offer replacement cylinder kits, with complete hardware and instructions for replacement.



Alignment

The other operational problem you may encounter is a door that is out of alignment and will not close correctly. Some screen doors are prehung in a frame, similar to a standard door, and adjusting them requires that all of the screws that hold the screen door frame to the regular door frame be removed and the screen door frame be reset in the opening and then reattached.

Other types of screen doors slip into an aluminum channel, and the channel is attached to the regular door frame with screws through the hinges. To adjust this type of door, remove the screws that hold the screen door in the channel, and slide the door in or out of the channel as needed to adjust. When it's right, reinstall the screws into new holes.



Cleaning And Re-Screening

Once you've gotten everything operating properly, the next step is to clean the door and the screen, and make any necessary repairs. Aluminum door frames can be cleaned with a mild, nonabrasive soap and

warm water. Mild solvents can also be used to clean grease and oil stains off the aluminum. Painted wooden door frames can also be cleaned with soap and water, but if the paint is peeling it needs to be sanded, primed and repainted as soon as possible to prevent damage to the wood. Molded plastic and fiberglass doors can be cleaned with mild, nonabrasive soap and warm water. Never use solvents on plastic or fiberglass.

A Cleaner Screen

The screen itself can be cleaned with a light spray from a garden hose, avoiding high pressure that can damage the screen material. A soft bristle brush with a little soapy water will also do wonders for dirty metal screens, but here again go lightly to avoid damage.

A very good, all around cleaner and degreaser is Citrus Clean by ZEP. It will help with cleaning all the above if you follow the directions.

Screen Repairs

If the screen material is torn or has come loose, it's time for a re-screening. For most aluminum and steel screen doors, re-screening is a fairly straightforward procedure. Most home centers and hardware stores sell re-screening kits, which consist of new screen, a new vinyl spline and a splining tool (these are all available separately as well). If you'd rather not tackle it

yourself, most glass shops offer reasonably priced re-screening services. Or call Handyman Central Services.



Take the door out of the frame and lay it on a table or sawhorses. Remove the old spline from the groove in the frame, and remove the screen. Lay the new screen material on the door so that it overlaps the door frame on all sides. Start in one corner, and using the spline tool push the new spline over the screen and into the groove. Work your way around the door,

lightly stretching the screen as you push the spline into place. Finish by trimming off the excess screen material.

Awards For Superior Results

I'm delighted to tell you that we've been honored with the **Super Service Award** for the FIFTH consecutive year.

Less than 5 percent ever qualify for this award in any given year, so it's an unparalleled and rare distinction to be a successive winner five times. Visit our web site for more details.

Need Help?

Call me for minor and major tasks in and around your home and office at 973-627-7398.

- ✓ We are a family owned and run business.
- ✓ We are insured.
- ✓ We are not a franchise or impersonal home service conglomerate.
- ✓ We do Not send hired "sub-contractors" to do your work.
- ✓ We will shrink your Overgrown To-Do List.
- ✓ We have great references because we do great work all the time.

Ron

The Counties We Cover

If you're in Northwestern New Jersey please eMail me or call us for more details about our services. Our support services are available in the N.J. counties of:

- ✓ Morris
- ✓ Sussex
- ✓ Parts of Warren
- ✓ Parts of Somerset and Hunterdon

You'll be delighted with the results!

Details: www.handyman-central.net

Emails: ron@handyman-central.net

Calls & Faxes: 973-627-7398