

HOME HELP

How to.. choose a front door

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Bold colours can help your house to stand out if you're trying to sell
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Not much can ramp up your kerb appeal quite as quickly as a new front door. Equally, a shabby old one — or a badly chosen new one —

can lower the tone of even the smartest pad. Choosing a style that suits your home and is an expression of your personal taste involves a delicate balance. Here's how to get it just right.

Making an entrance

Whether you are picking out a front door as part of a general face-lift or choosing one for a new-build, set your budget (prices range from £200 to more than £20,000), then explore what pairs best with the general style of your house. Although there is a dizzying range of doors on offer, from classic cottage to oversized industrial, rotating and even bullet-proof, there are a few guidelines to follow.

“The first question to ask yourself about any entrance is how it will fit into the existing building design and the impact it will have within the general facade,” says Elizabeth Assaf, author of *Door Couture: A Unique Perspective of Contemporary Door Design*. Before deciding on the type, material and colour of the door, she advises looking at the exterior of your home as a whole: existing materials such as window frames, cladding, rendering, stone and any metal touches should inform your choice.

Size matters, too. Consider the proportions of the house to decide how imposing your door

should be.

Wood, uPVC or fibreglass?

A Victorian semi may call for a traditionally styled solid wood front door, and a contemporary superhome for some kind of streamlined steel number, but you can mix and match, making sure longevity and insulation are factored in. Low-priced uPVC, high-density, low-corrosion aluminium, durable composite and high-performing fibreglass are among the options.

According to Spitfire Doors

(spitfiredoors.co.uk), Cheshire-based specialists in ultra-contemporary door systems, aluminium works best in a modern setting, while composite and uPVC are better for traditional and modern facades. If you simply must have wood, opt for a canopy or overhang to protect it from the weather. Todd Doors' smart Essentials range features basic yet smart front doors with a hardwood veneer and a solid engineered-timber core (from £275; todd-doors.co.uk).

The English Door Company, part of Evolution Windows, makes expensive-looking uPVC "timber-alternative" doors, which have the look and feel of real wood, but are virtually maintenance-free. There are 200 colours to choose from and the price includes

installation (from £1,850; 0800 773 4045, [evolution windows.com](http://evolutionwindows.com)).

Or up the ante with a bespoke monumental bronze barrier to the world – more work of art than mere front door. Urban Front, which is based in Buckinghamshire, can make one for you if you have £20,000 to spare (01494 778787, urbanfront.com).

Fitting and security

Always check whether installation is included in the price, and ask if the door is sold as a set, with hinges and locks included, or if these are extras. If you need a fitter, Urban Front advises only considering specialist carpenters who have proven experience of fitting doors – and the same goes for getting a builder to do it. Make sure you tell the fitter if your new door is exceptionally heavy or has specialist details such as pivots or a fingerprint entry pad.

Keyless, deadbolt or mortise lock? You'll want to make sure your front door, and any rear and patio doors, are as burglar-proof as possible. For advice on security and getting your existing front door assessed, visit the Master Locksmiths Association's website, [locksmiths.co.uk](https://www.locksmiths.co.uk), or [met.police.uk](https://www.met.police.uk). Finally, check whether your home insurance policy has any specific requirements.

The power of colour

Even a simple paint job can do wonders for a front door, and if you live in a row of terraced houses, it's a great way to make your home stand out, especially if you are trying to sell it. Bold colours such as violet, primrose yellow, flamingo pink and cobalt blue have been on trend lately, but it's hard to go wrong with soft greens and blues. Farrow & Ball Lichen and Dix Blue both work well with rosy brick. Against lighter stone or whitewash, pale pinks and greys make for a soothing arrival home.

Knobs and knockers

These are a great way to express your personal or family identity. "While it used to be that lion-head door knockers were seen as a sign of patronage, strength and wealth, nowadays the styles and animals aren't quite so prescriptive in the stories they tell," says Thea Carroll, senior buying consultant at The Buying Solution.

“While you can get everything from dragonflies to doughnuts, it’s best to choose something that is in keeping with the home. It’s worth giving a nod to the history or local features of your area, such as a fish door knocker if you’re near the river, or a squirrel if you’re near a park.”

Loved by the royals and, apparently, Tom Ford, who has been spotted wandering its Chelsea showroom, Beardmore has hand-crafted knobs and knockers from £100 (beardmore.co.uk). For solid brass bees, dragonflies, pineapples and foxes, visit thedoorknockercompany.co.uk, where prices start at about £15.

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