

How to Repair and Replace Screening on Screen Doors and Window Screens

Flies and other flying insects are annoying. Inside the house, they can spread disease and bacteria when they land on surfaces or on food. Some can even bite you. Controlling the fly population by keeping the flies out of your house helps to create a healthier indoor environment for your family.



However, keeping flies and other flying insects out of your home can be a challenge. You can start by keeping doors closed as much as possible. Since we often need to ventilate our home by opening windows and doors, it is important that we have screens on them to keep the flying insects out. It doesn't take much of a hole in a screen for flies to crawl inside, so we need to make sure the screens are in good condition.

Door and window screens may be punctured or torn from their frames, or split due to rust and corrosion, abuse, or a wind storm. Depending on how damaged your screen is, you will need to decide whether to repair or replace the screen.

How to Repair a Screen

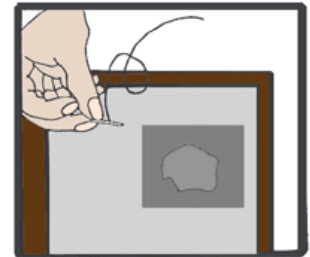
If you decide to repair the screen, you will need screening material that matches your other screens, scissors, a block of wood, and a tape measure or ruler. A patch will not be completely invisible, but it costs less and

will keep the flies out. There are two methods for repairing a screen.

Repair Method 1

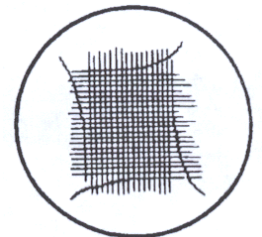
1. Cut a patch of screen that will cover the hole at least 2 inches around on all sides. Use the same type of wire fabric for the patch as you have for the original screen.

2. Unravel a long piece of screen wire, or several pieces. Lace the wire through the patch and screen to secure the patch to the original screen.

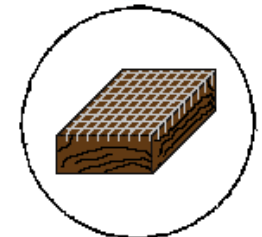


Repair Method 2

1. Cut a patch of screen 2 inches larger in each dimension than the trimmed hole.

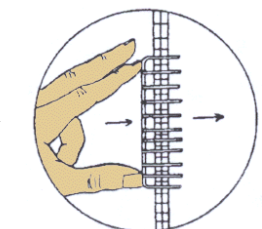


2. Ravel out the wires on the patch for about 1/2 inch on each of the four sides.

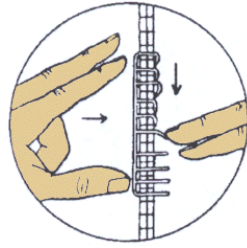


3. Bend the ends of the wires over a block or the edge of a ruler to form prongs for securing the patch to the screen.

4. Place the patch over the hole from the outside. Push the prongs through the screen.



- From the inside, bend down the ends of the wires toward the center of the hole to secure the patch to the original screen. You may need someone outside to press against the patch while you are working from the inside.

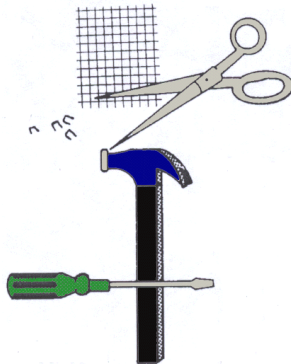


Patching minor holes and tears in window and door screening using either of the methods we have discussed makes this a simple task – even for beginners.

How to Replace a Screen

If the hole is too large to repair or you don't like the way it looks, the next option is to replace the complete screen. This process is a bit more expensive, but the finished product looks better. For this task, you'll need some patience, along with the following materials and tools:

- a roll or large piece of screen wire fabric (either metal or nylon),
- screen staples or tacks,
- bedding strips (for metal frame units) – also called splines,
- scissors,
- screwdriver,
- hammer, and
- screening tool.



Most tools and procedures for replacing window and door screens on wood frames apply to metal frames also. One difference in wood and metal screens is the way the wire fabric is attached to the frame.

Use screen staples or tacks to secure wire fabric to a wood frame. A round flexible strip of plastic or rubber is used on most metal units to secure the wire fabric to the frame. This strip – called a “bedding strip” or “spline” – holds the wire fabric in a channel around the sides of the frame.

Steps in Replacing Screens

1. Prepare the work area by removing the screen frame from the door or window. Place the frame on a smooth, flat surface. Assemble your supplies.
2. Remove the old screen from the frame.
 - **Wood:** Use a screwdriver to carefully pry up moldings. Remove old staples, tacks, and brads from the frame. Discard the worn wire fabric.
 - **Metal:** Carefully lift up the cut end of the bedding strip. Slowly pull the strip straight up. The strip may be used again if it's undamaged, or a new bedding strip may be purchased.



3. Measure the opening, and cut the replacement screen fabric. When measuring and before cutting the wire

fabric, make sure you are cutting on the grain of the fabric.

- **Wood:** Cut the wire fabric on grain 6 inches longer and 3 inches wider than the opening.
- **Metal:** Cut the wire fabric on grain 3 inches larger in each dimension than the opening.

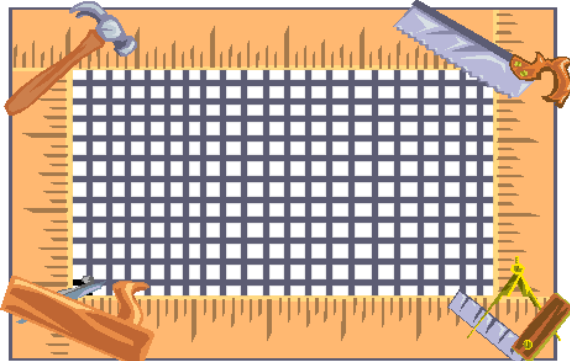


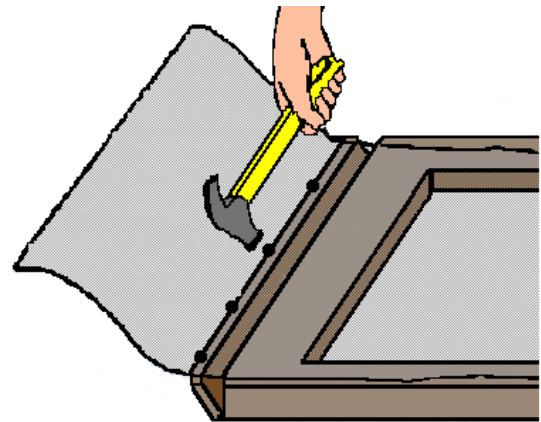
Illustration shows how screening fabric is woven to create the "grain."

4. Position screen fabric on the frame.

- **Wood:** Without bending or folding the screen, carefully lay it across the frame. Make sure the grain of the screen fabric lines up with the edge and end. The screen fabric should extend about 1 inch beyond the top opening and 1-½ inches beyond each side. The grain of the wire fabric should be parallel to the sides of the frame.
- **Metal:** Without bending or folding the screen, carefully lay it across the frame. Make sure the grain of the screen fabric lines up with the edge and end. The screen fabric should extend about 2 inches beyond the top opening and 2 inches beyond each side. The grain of the wire fabric should be parallel to the sides of the frame.

5. Attach screen fabric to frame.

- **Wood:** Insert screen staples or tacks across the top of the frame every 2 inches. Stretch the screen fabric from top to bottom of the frame, and attach the fabric in same manner as for the top. To pull the fabric tight lengthwise on the frame, place a board at a 45-degree angle against the bottom of the frame. Tack or staple the wire fabric to the edge of the board so when the board is pressed flat against the work surface, the wire fabric is stretched taut from top to bottom. After securing the top and bottom of the wire fabric to the frame, tack or staple the sides every 2 inches. Attach the fabric to the center rail last.



- **Metal:** With a screwdriver or the convex wheel on the screening tool, seat the bedding strip and edge of the wire fabric down into the metal channel. Use the concave wheel on the screening tool to push the spline or bedding strip into the channel on top of the screen. Pull the screen fabric taut across the frame, and secure the other side in the same manner. Be careful not to pull the wire fabric so tight that it splits when forced into the channel. When both long sides are in position, secure the top and bottom by forcing the wire fabric and bedding strip into the channel.

6. Trim excess wire fabric.

- **Wood and Metal:** With a sharp knife or scissors, remove the excess wire fabric. Trim close to the staples or bedding strip.
 - **Wood Only:** With new brads or small finishing nails, attach the original moldings. Touch up damaged areas with paint, if necessary.
7. Attach molding or quarter rounds.
 8. Return the window or door screen to its original location.