



Changing a roof means years of improved performance and an instant uplift to the look of a home.

Topping it off

Roofing materials transform look, functionality of a home

When renovating a home, homeowners may not give ample thought to the roof unless there is a leak or another sign of damage. It's easy to forget about the roof when materials are working properly. Some people put off replacing or repairing a roof simply because of the costs of such undertakings. However, the right roof can improve the appearance of a home and provide protection against the elements, potentially preventing damage to a home's interior as well. Roofing materials have evolved over the

Roofing materials will need to meet a particular area's fire codes and must be able to withstand any extreme weather conditions common to the geographic region where the home is located. Certain roofing materials may be heavier than others and may require special framing. Work with an experienced roofing contractor to learn more about your available options and to shed light on any special installation or maintenance issues to consider before construction begins.

years, but the most common type of roofing material is the asphalt shingle. These shingles are a relatively modern invention, with the first "asphalt prepared roofing" serving as a forerunner to asphalt

shingles, appearing in the late 1800s. Roofing materials will need to meet a particular area's fire codes and must be able to withstand any extreme weather conditions common to the geo-

graphic region where the home is located. Certain roofing materials may be heavier than others and may require special framing. Work with an experienced roofing contractor to learn more about your available options and to shed light on any special installation or maintenance issues to consider before construction begins.

The following are just some of the roofing materials homeowners may want to consider.

- **ASPHALT SHINGLES:** The most popular roofing material, asphalt shingles are guaranteed for 20 to 30 years, which helps solidify this choice as a smart-value product. For some homeowners, a downside to shingles is that, because they are so popular, they're seen everywhere. So those homeowners looking to make a unique statement with their roofing materials may want to choose a different option.

- **WOOD SHINGLES AND SHAKES:** A wood roof is another possibility, but some homeowners find wood roofs require more money to install and more effort to maintain than roofs made with other materials. Wood shingles are sawn from logs and are thin, while shakes are thick, rough and formed by being split from logs.

- **CLAY OR CONCRETE TILES:** These tiles add texture and elegance to a roof, says HGTV. Clay or concrete tiles are very durable and quite heavy, so they must be installed by

Potential indicators of roof trouble

With regard to home repairs, homeowners may be able to delay some projects until the weather permits or they find room in their budgets. But other areas, including the roof, may demand immediate action.

Few homeowners give the roofs of their homes much thought until a problem arises. But learning to recognize potential indicators of roof trouble can help homeowners prevent potentially drastic situations down the road.

- **LIGHT:** Homeowners with attics in their homes can inspect the ceilings inside the attic for signs of holes or leaks. Light peering through the top of the house indicates a hole or leak, as does stains or streaks on the ceiling.

- **WORN SHINGLES:** Shingles should lie flat against the roof, so any that appear to be buckling or turning up are damaged and in need of repair. A single damaged shingle does not require a full roof replacement, but inspect all the shingles nonetheless. Another indicator of shingle problems can be found when cleaning downspouts or gutters. If the gutters and downspouts contain lots of shingle granules, the roof may soon need to be replaced.

- **MOSS:** Moss on a rooftop may give a home character, but that added character is costly. Shady areas of a roof can be susceptible to the growth of moss and fungi because moisture can be trapped in such areas. If possible, remove moss or fungi from a roof with a stiff brush or hire a professional to do the job instead. Moss may come back even after brushing it off, so homeowners should keep an eye on areas of their roofs that get little sunlight. In addition, trapped moisture can be very harmful to a roof, so it may be wise to exercise caution and have roofs with mold or fungi growths inspected.

- **AGE:** Another indicator of roof trouble may be the age of the roof. Even if there are no visible signs of damage, homeowners whose roofs have some years under their belt may want to consider replacing them. Asphalt shingle roofs typically have life expectancies of 20 to 25 years, while roofs installed over existing layers of shingles may need to be replaced after 20 years.

Recognizing minor roof damage before it escalates into a larger problem can save homeowners substantial amounts of money.

a professional. These tiles can make Mediterranean-, Spanish- or mission-style houses stand out even more. Their long-lasting nature can help offset the price tag.

- **METAL:** Metal roofs are usually made from fully recyclable steel, aluminum or alloy, making them an eco-friendly choice. Metal roofs also reflect the sun's rays and can be an energy-efficient option in hot climates.

- **SLATE:** One of the

longest-lasting materials available in roofing products, slate is fireproof and comes in various natural colors and shapes. Once installed, slate requires very little maintenance. However, slate can be cost-prohibitive because of its delicacy and weight requires extra roofing support and professional installation.

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