



Bringing the Outdoors In

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With summer in full swing and people celebrating the wonderful weather here in Southern California many homeowners are interested in bringing the outdoors in with a bi-folding door system. To help expand your indoor/outdoor experience with a door system, we've put together a list of things to consider, as well as the design process you can expect.

There are multiple things to consider when thinking about designing a door system into your home such as the type of door, interior and exterior space allowances, investment, door finish materials and glass options. Let's start with door options:

LOW PROFILE PATIO DOORS – A standard patio door with narrow stiles allow for more space than typical French or sliding glass doors. Patio doors will be the most cost-effective option, yet the door function will still be a basic slider for French door layout.

FOLDING OUTSWING DOORS – Also known as bi-folding doors, these multi-panel doors open from one side of an opening and are pushed back to the opposite side to be perpendicular to the wall on which they are on. Folding door systems can either be top-mounted or bottom mounted. The advantages to top-mounted systems are the high quality, robust panel and frame designs, effortless opening operation and the ability to span any size opening. A bottom mounted systems is a great budget-friendly option; but beware, the hardware may not be as durable and the bottom tracks can build up debris, making the sliding mechanisms difficult to open smoothly.

MULTI SLIDE SYSTEMS – The upgraded version of your standard patio slider, multi slide systems have multiple panels that slide to one side of the wall. This is a creative solution to get you the openness you desire when exterior space for the doors may be limited.

POCKET SLIDE SYSTEMS – A multi slide system where the glass door panels disappear into a side wall, eliminating the doors altogether for a seamless indoor/outdoor experience. A gorgeous option, but you must have the appropriate wall space to house the doors to the left or right of the opening.

The first thing to think about when deciding which doors to go with is the space you have to work with and the investment you are willing to make. The most cost-effective solution will be to keep the existing door opening and replace your current door with either a low profile patio door or a bottom mounted bi-folding door. A bottom mounted bi-folding door may help eliminate the need for the sometimes costly structural engineering required for top-mounted systems; however, the advantages to the top-mounted system may outweigh your efforts to save a bit of dough.

When looking at the space you have to work with you need to think through a few scenarios. For example, if you go with a folding, outswing door system do you have four to five feet of space of clearance outside the door without obstructing a walkway? Do you have a window next to your current French or sliding glass doors? If so, you may want to consider eliminating the window and adding the additional space to the new door system opening, or eliminate the window to allow for a pocket sliding system to be housed in its location.

Investment is obviously an important topic of conversation. Based on numerous factors, door systems can range from

\$3,500 for a basic, 6 foot opening and could cost upwards of \$40,000 if you are considering a 15-20 foot wide opening with large structural changes. The cost for a door system is made of two parts: the door and the installation. Your choice of door materials such as vinyl, fiberglass, aluminum and wood clad as well as the type of glass will affect the price of the door. Will direct sunlight be an issue? If so, you may want to consider solar protective glass that will avoid any floor or furniture discoloration. The cost of installation will be determined by the complexity of what needs to be done structurally and each home is different.

If you're exploring the idea of incorporating a door system, have a professional come see what you have to work with. This in-home visit will help your contractor to determine the possibilities and whether structural work will be required. To avoid a surprise, be prepared for structural work to be involved. Structural work does not need to be scary, or overwhelming as a good contractor will take care of it all for you.

Since almost all door systems are made to order, you can expect a 6-12 week lead time. This is a great time to get Homeowner Association approval, if necessary, and obtain your building permits through your city. Your contractor should submit the engineering if necessary and pull your permits for you.

Door systems creates a dramatic design effect and is changing the way we live in our homes. Take advantage of living in Orange County and bring the outdoors in!

