

GET YOUR MIND IN THE GUTTER

You should have your mind in the gutter when you're doing repairs on your roof. Don't wait until bad weather or gutter leaks damage your home's foundation. Gutter maintenance now can save you a major home repair later.

Replacing gutters is just a matter of choosing material, piecing, and shape. Here's a guide to choosing the best gutters for your home.

Materials

Roof gutters typically come in aluminum, steel, stainless steel, vinyl, wood, and copper.

- **Aluminum** is not only lighter, making it easier to install, but also comes in a wide variety of colors and won't rust. It's also inexpensive at \$5 to \$9 per foot. However, it can be easily damaged - especially if you find yourself propping ladders against the gutter to do repairs on the roof.
- **Steel** rusts, but if treated and painted, it's an inexpensive alternative at just under \$4 a foot.
- **Vinyl** is also inexpensive, at \$3-\$5 a foot, and it won't rust, rot, or need a finish, but after several years in a cold climate it can crack.
- **Wood** and **copper** are beautiful, highly desirable options for restorations. Copper in particular won't rust, lasts a lifetime, and ages beautifully? but it's pricey at \$20 a foot.

Piecing

Gutters can be sectional, or in pieces that snap together and are fairly inexpensive, or seamless, which must be installed by a professional. Seamless gutters are custom-made for a home, don't leak, and are worth the price.

Shape

You have two choices here - a U, or a K? Their names imply their profile shapes; K-shaped gutters are most popular. They're similar to the U, with wavy ends for added strength. Shapes also depend on the roof gutter materials.

Be sure that any professional installing your roof's gutters uses thick material (at least .032 inches thick) and aluminum should be primary, not secondary (recycled) so that your roof and gutter have the maximum protection.

Keep these tips in mind as you shop for your new gutter, and your home will benefit from the added protection for years to come.