



Complete Guide to **Sunroom Styles**



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Many homeowners dream of feeling the warm breeze on a summer evening or the sounds and smells of a spring rain shower, all without the bugs, pollen and dust. Imagine having a space in your house where you can feel like you are sitting outside without having to be outdoors.

Sounds lovely, right? Well, before you start furnishing it in your mind, it's important to have a firm grasp on how far your money will really take you. This eBook will help you discover your indoor/outdoor living options, give you a realistic idea of the kinds of sunrooms there are to choose from and what kind of investment you'll need to make.

What's in a Name?

This indoor-outdoor living area goes by a lot of different names: sunrooms, four season rooms, three season rooms, all season rooms, patio rooms, conservatories or solar rooms, just to name a few. What's the difference? For the

most part, the number of seasons you can comfortably use the space is the determining factor.

Sunrooms come in four basic levels: screen rooms, glass rooms, 3 season rooms and 4 season rooms. In this eBook, we'll provide a basic description of each type with details on the complexity of the constructions. As you will see, the wide variety of options to choose from will determine to cost range you'll have to choose from.

With so many styles and options available, planning your new sunroom can seem overwhelming. It's important to know all your options and how you want to use your room when you start planning this major home improvement project. After you establish that, you'll want to take into account your space requirements, existing structures, and regional considerations.



Space requirements

What you want to use the room for will help you decide how big the room will be. If you are looking for a separate family room or entertaining area, you may need more space than your existing deck can accommodate. But if you're just looking for a quiet place to read or relax, or a way station between the pool or hot tub, enclosing your existing deck may be just the ticket.

If this will be a multi-purpose area with an entertainment center, dining space or a cornucopia of plants and even small trees, you'll obviously need more space and likely need to make it climate controlled for all seasons.

Can You Convert Your Existing Deck or Patio?

If you are considering using an existing deck or patio for a new sunroom, be sure you have a professional contractor check out the structure to ensure that it is strong enough and that it meets all snow and wind load requirements for your area. Snow and wind load have to do with the amount of stress snow and wind can have on the integrity of the structure under extreme conditions. The minimum requirements are generally set by the local building code.

If your existing sunroom or deck isn't big enough, or if it's in poor condition, you may need to tear it out. If this is necessary, you'll want to factor in the costs for demolition, site excavation, and pouring new cement footings or a foundation. You may also need to adjust some landscaping or more utilities.

Regional Considerations

Engineering requirements vary from area to area and your builder should take responsibility for making sure your sunroom meets all local building codes. The drawings submitted to local building departments should include how the sunroom will be constructed to meet snow loads and wind loads. The plans should also demonstrate how the foundation will be built to support the weight of your new sunroom or patio room, taking into account the type of soil you have and the size and weight of the sunroom.



Major Sunroom Styles

Screened Room or Enhanced Screen Room

This is usually a regular porch or deck with large screened panels added to allow fresh air to circulate while keeping out bugs and offering shade and some rain protection. These structures can be used spring, summer and fall as long as the temperatures aren't too extreme. Many people include a side deck for this area to use for grilling.

Cost Range – Converting a Deck or Porch to a screen room is the least expensive of your sunroom options. The costs range from \$8,000 - \$25,000, depending on how large the room and how you finish the interior.

1. Wall units constructed of screens, not glass
2. Style of roof that will integrate into your roof line
3. Flooring is not insulated
4. Must be able to close room off from the rest of the house
5. Limited lighting and electrical



Enclose An Existing Screen Room

Very similar to a screened room or porch, a glass room usually just consists of adding vinyl or glass window units to an existing screen room. This structure may be added new but in most cases, it's a conversion from an existing screen room to a fully glassed in room. Why the change? After a few years of living with a screen room, many homeowners find they want the protection from dust, pollen and rain that windows can offer. Since the windows open and close, you still get the benefit of bringing the outdoors in when you want it while keeping it cleaner and drier the rest of the time.

1. Window units generally glass
2. May include a solid or glass knee wall along the bottom instead of top to bottom windows
3. Only sliding windows
4. Flooring is not insulated
5. Must be able to close room off from the rest of the house

You should estimate between \$10,000 to \$25,000 to enclose an existing screen room, depending on the size and type of materials you choose.

Before



After



Three Season Porch

A 3 season room is a finished room comfortable for use most of the time in spring, summer and fall. There can be some climate control including small air conditioning units or heaters added to control the temperature. Many families use their 3 season room as a family room or for casual dining most of the year. However, to save on energy costs, this room will need to be closed off from the rest of the house in the winter.



1. Climate control separate from the rest of the home
2. Roofline is integrated with the rest of the house
3. Interior wall may be finished with wood to give room fully finished appearance
4. High quality windows and doors
5. Option to wire for electrical, cable, plumbing

Depending on the size and finishing options, a ball park range for a good quality 3 season room can run anywhere from \$20,000 to \$35,000.

Four Season Porch

A 4 season porch is designed and built to be a true extension of your existing home. Constructed to use your existing HVAC for year round usage, it's often used as an extra family room and/or dining room all year round. This fully insulated structure is the most versatile of the sunroom options and can be created in any number of configurations including conservatories, solariums and traditionally framed sunrooms.

Inside



Outside



1. Open to the rest of the house with integrated HVAC
2. Constructed with insulated, walls, floor and roof
3. Foundation must typically be a distance of three to four feet below the ground to ensure that it does not move when the ground expands and contracts during the winter months.
4. Fully integrated into the roofline and architecture of home

The cost of a quality 4 season room is difficult to estimate because there are so many options for a home owner to choose from. Most basic 4 season room projects start at around \$35,000 and can go as high as \$70,000 (or more) depending on the size, materials and options chosen.

Conclusion

Sunrooms, pergolas and patio spaces of all sizes and shapes are becoming more popular for a variety of reasons. Of course you want to add beauty and style to your home. Also, as many residential lots are getting smaller, these additions can help you maximize the space you have. In addition, lower construction costs than traditional room additions help to add value to your home.

Because there are so many factors to consider when adding outdoor living spaces, it's nearly impossible to pinpoint the cost of building a sunroom based on square footage. All the components of the project – existing condition and site, soil and landscaping, footings, materials, and finishing accessories – need to be taken into consideration.

Even if you are familiar with some other types construction projects, keep in mind that building a sunroom requires a unique method of construction. Hiring a contractor that specializes in this type of work may seem like the expensive way to go, but in the end, it will save you time and money while providing you with the beautiful outdoor space you want.

With so many decisions to make, many homeowners can start to feel overwhelmed by the planning required for a sunroom project. An experienced, reputable contractor can help you with a realistic assessment of your options as well as providing the latest information in trends and materials for your home.

