LANAI LIVING · HOME REPAIR WORKSHOP

Screen Repairs Made Easy

Fixing screen doors and window screens — from quick patches to full replacements.

A hands-on guide for our island homes

WHY IT HAPPENS

Why screens give out — the island edition

Our screens work hard. Between the salt, the sun, and the critters, **nothing stays new for long.**

Salt air

Sea breeze rusts metal mesh and frames, then corners give out.

Strong sun

UV makes fiberglass brittle until it cracks at a touch.

Critters

Geckos, cats, and curious dogs push right through soft mesh.

Kids & pets

Leaning, pushing, and paws stretch and tear the screen.

Wind & debris

Trade winds fling leaves and twigs that poke holes.

Age & sag

Old spline dries out, screens go slack, doors start to droop.

THE BIG DECISION

Three ways to fix it

Before you buy anything, figure out **which job you actually have.**

PATCH

Small hole or short tear

- Mesh is mostly good
- Hole smaller than a fist
- Frame is solid
- 5-minute fix, a few $

RE-SCREEN

Mesh is shot, frame is fine

- Big rips or sagging mesh
- Sun-rotted, brittle screen
- Frame still straight
- ~10 min, ~$15 in mesh

REPLACE

The frame itself is gone

- Bent or cracked frame
- Broken corners
- Door sags or won't close
- New frame or full unit

PICK THE RIGHT MATERIAL

Know your mesh

F	**Fiberglass**	The everyday pick — cheap, forgiving, easy to roll. Won't dent. Charcoal color sees best.
A	**Aluminum**	Stiffer and more dent-resistant, but it creases for good and can corrode in salt air.
P	**Pet-resistant**	Vinyl-coated polyester, about 7x stronger than fiberglass. Stands up to claws and noses.
S	**Solar screen**	Blocks 80–90% of heat and glare. Great on sunny west and south windows.
N	**No-see-um**	Extra-tight weave that stops gnats and sand flies while still letting air through.

Salt-air pick

For homes near the water, go with:

- **Charcoal fiberglass**
  won't corrode, hides dirt
- **Stainless mesh**
  for screens that must last

Skip bare aluminum by the sea.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Your screen-repair toolkit

Most of this fits in a shoebox — or comes in one **all-in-one repair kit.**

1 Spline roller

The little wheel tool — convex side for mesh, concave for spline.

2 New spline

The rubber cord that locks mesh in. Match the size to your groove.

3 Replacement mesh

Fiberglass for most jobs. Buy a few inches bigger than the frame.

4 Utility knife

Sharp blade to trim mesh and spline cleanly.

5 Flathead screwdriver

Pops the old spline up out of the groove.

6 Scissors & patches

For cutting mesh and for quick stick-on patch repairs.

THE QUICK FIX

Small holes & tears: quick patches

If the mesh is mostly fine, don't re-screen the whole thing — **just patch it.**

Stick-on patch

Pre-cut self-adhesive squares. Best for fiberglass holes up to a few inches.

Mesh repair tape

Comes on a roll — ideal for long tears and runs along an edge.

Clear silicone

For tiny holes in aluminum mesh: dab silicone over the gap and let it set.

Iron-on mesh

Heat-activated patch (e.g. Screenmend) melts into fiberglass for a near-invisible fix.

STEP BY STEP

Patch it in four steps

1

Tidy the hole

Snip away loose, frayed threads so the patch sits flat. Square up a ragged tear.

2

Cut your patch

Make it about an inch bigger than the hole on every side so it grabs good mesh.

3

Press it on

Peel-and-stick or push the patch's little wire hooks through and fold them flat.

4

Smooth & set

Press firmly from the center out. With iron-on patches, add heat per the directions.

Tip: *match the patch color to your mesh (charcoal vs. silver) so the repair disappears.*

Full re-screen: the big picture

Same job, door or window

When the screen is brittle, bagged out, or torn in several places, **replacing all the mesh is easier than patching.**

Good news: the steps are identical whether it's a window screen or a sliding screen door — only the size changes.

~10

minutes once you've done one

~$15

in mesh and spline per screen

The flow, start to finish

1. Pry out the old spline
2. Pull off the old screen
3. Lay the new mesh on top
4. Roll mesh + spline into the groove
5. Trim the excess clean

DO IT YOURSELF

Re-screen it, step by step

1 Pry out the spline

Find the seam, work a flathead under the old spline and pull it out all the way around.

2 Remove old screen

With the spline gone the old mesh lifts right off. Wipe the groove clean.

3 Lay the new mesh

Drape new screen over the frame with a few inches of overhang on every side.

4 Smooth it flat

Pre-roll mesh into the grooves. Smooth top-to-bottom, then side-to-side — no bubbles.

5 Roll in the spline

Start in a corner. Press new spline into the groove, keeping light tension as you go.

6 Trim the excess

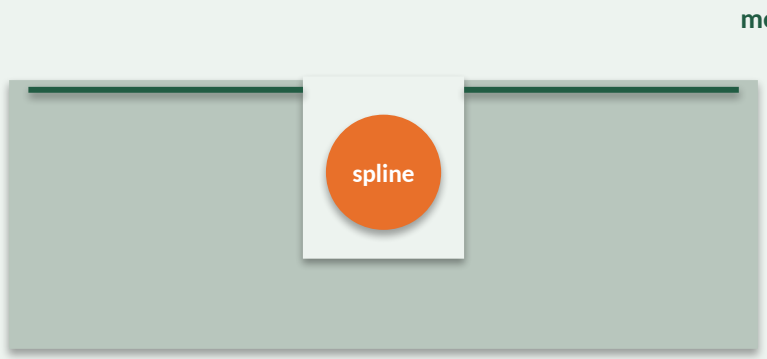
Run a sharp knife along the outside of the groove so you don't nick the new screen.

Works the same for a window screen or a sliding screen door.

THE PART PEOPLE GET WRONG

Spline secrets

How spline locks the mesh in



frame groove

Measure the groove

Match spline size to the channel — common sizes are 0.125", 0.140" and 0.160".

Reuse only if soft

Old spline that's hard or cracked won't seal — buy a fresh roll, it's cheap.

Don't over-stretch

Pulling fiberglass drum-tight bows the frame. Just snug, not stretched.

Corners: push, don't cut

Press spline into corners with the tool; one continuous piece holds best.

PAST PATCHING

When to replace the whole thing

Sometimes the mesh isn't the problem — **the frame or door is. Then it's time for new.**

Signs it's time

- Frame is bent, cracked, or rusted through
- Corner joints are broken or pulling apart
- A screen door sags or won't latch
- You've patched the same spot more than twice

Your options

Universal frame kit

Cut frame stock to size, add corner pieces, re-screen. Cheapest custom fit.

Pre-made screen

Stock sizes off the shelf — fast if your opening is standard.

Custom from a shop

Bring measurements; they build it. Best for odd sizes or heavy doors.

Full screen-door unit

Worn-out door? A new pre-hung screen door beats fighting the old frame.

DIY A NEW FRAME

Build a window screen frame from a kit

A frame kit is just four bars and four corners. **Measure carefully and the rest is easy.**

1

Measure the opening

Height and width of the screen channel. Subtract about 1/8" each way so it slides in and out.

2

Cut the frame bars

Trim aluminum frame stock to length with a hacksaw or miter — two verticals, two horizontals.

3

Snap in corners

Push the plastic corner connectors into each bar to make a rectangle. Check it's square.

4

Screen & finish

Re-screen as before — lay mesh, roll the spline, trim. Add a pull tab if you like.

Measure twice: *write the numbers down and take them to the store — frame stock and spline both come in sizes.*

FOR OUR CLIMATE

Hawaii-smart choices

1 Beat the salt

Choose charcoal fiberglass or stainless mesh. Bare aluminum corrodes fast near the ocean.

2 Tame the sun

Put solar screen on west- and south-facing windows to cut heat and glare by 80–90%.

3 Block the bugs

No-see-um mesh keeps out gnats and sand flies on those still, warm evenings.

4 Before a big storm

Pop screens out and store them inside — flying debris and high wind shred them otherwise.

LET'S RECAP

The whole thing in one breath

1. **Patch:** small holes and short tears — fast and cheap.
2. **Re-screen:** when the mesh is brittle or baggy but the frame is straight.
3. **Replace:** when the frame is bent, broken, or the door won't close.

And remember — **match your mesh to island life:** salt, sun, and bugs.

Now — who's got a screen they've been meaning to fix? Bring your questions.