



DRAFTPROOF YOUR HOME TO KEEP THE ENERGY IN AND THE COLD OUT

JACK FROST NIPPING AT YOUR NOSE INSIDE YOUR HOUSE? A FEW SIMPLE CHANGES CAN BANISH DRAFTS FOREVER.

Eliminate those little gaps, cracks and holes that let cold air into your home, and you'll not only save money on your heating bills, you'll also make your home warmer, cut down on dust, reduce inside moisture, and help block outside noise.

The materials you will need to draftproof your home are inexpensive, available at your local hardware store, and you can usually install them yourself.

HOW AND WHERE TO FIND LEAKS

An easy way to check for leaks around your home is to wait for a cold, windy day, then light two or three incense sticks and hold them together in one hand. Walk around your home with the incense sticks, bringing them close to all:

- outside windows and doors
- electrical outlets on outside walls
- floor drains
- corners where two outside walls meet and where the walls meet the ceiling and the baseboards on the floor
- doors and hatches into unheated spaces, including basements and attics, storerooms and crawlspaces
- around plumbing pipes and ductwork entering your home from unheated spaces, and
- behind bathtubs and under sinks mounted on exteriors walls or over unheated spaces.

Large air leaks will cause the tip of the incense sticks to glow and the smoke to dissipate. Smaller air leaks will cause the smoke either to blow away from or move toward the leak.

WHAT A WASTE

If you have a number of small gaps, cracks and holes in your home, you could be losing the same amount of energy as you would leaving a door open year round—which means the heat you pay good money for is simply going to waste.

Simply by draftproofing your home, you could reduce your heat loss by five to 10 per cent.

IMPORTANT

While it's great to stop hot or cold outside air from getting into your home, it is possible to seal your home too tightly. All homes require good ventilation to maintain healthy air quality.

SEAL IN YOUR SAVINGS

Staff at your local hardware store can help you choose the right product for your problem areas, and may be able to recommend someone to do the installation if you need help. Be prepared to tell the staff about your particular problem—a warped door, for example, or a breezy electrical outlet—and the size of the gap you need to fill as well as the type of surface you will be applying the product to (wood or vinyl, for example).

The products they suggest may include:

WEATHERSTRIPPING

Weatherstripping blocks air leaks around doors and windows that open. It comes in rubber-like strips designed to work under compression and quickly spring back to their original shape.

Look for weatherstripping that will do the job without interfering with the normal operation of your door or window.

CAULKING OR SEALANT

Caulking and sealant both offer a good barrier against air and water and can be used to stop leaks in or around the frames of doors, windows and baseboards, or to seal the spaces between interior joints and around water pipes and vents.

Please remember, however: caulking and sealants are not permanent and you will need to maintain or replace them as they age. Also make sure you choose the right product for the job and use it according to the instructions: both caulking and sealant comes in two types—exterior and interior—and can fail or be dangerous if used incorrectly.

GASKETS AND CHILD SAFETY PLUGS

Your local hardware store may recommend special gaskets that fit behind the cover plates of electrical outlets to stop air leaks. You'll also need caulk to seal the edges of the gaskets.

Child safety plugs can also help to reduce air leaks, and are easier to install, but they are best in electrical outlets you do not use very often.

DEALING WITH DOORS

Front and back doors are exposed to lots of wind, rain and snow and can easily become warped by hard use and bad weather.

If you have a drafty outside door, use a caulk or sealant between the doorframe and the wall and add weatherstripping along the top, bottom and side edges of the door.

For even more protection:

- put another piece of weatherstripping along the vertical doorstep, so that it will press against the outside face of the door when it's closed, and
- add a door sweep on the bottom edge of your door.

LOOKING FOR MORE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR HOME ENERGY-EFFICIENT?

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