

## Draught-proofing your home



### Why draught-proof?

Draught-proofing your home will keep the warm air in and the cold air out. Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to save energy and money in any type of building. Draught-proofing windows and doors could save you **around £20 per year**<sup>1</sup> and draught-proofing an unused chimney can save you around £15 per year<sup>2</sup>. Keeping out draughts will make your home more comfortable at lower temperatures, meaning you might be able to turn down your thermostat and avoid wasting money on your energy bills.

### Where to check for draughts?

Some common areas to check for draughts include:

- Internal and external doors
- Windows
- Loft hatches
- Floorboards and skirting boards
- Unused chimneys.

Simply place your hand around these areas to feel for any cool breeze.



<sup>1</sup> Energy Saving Trust

<sup>2</sup> Based on a typical three-bedroom semi-detached gas heated house, with an 84% efficient gas boiler and average gas tariff of 3.63p/kWh and electricity tariff of 14.33p/kWh; correct as of April 2018 and valid for one year.

## Ventilation

Houses are built for a level of ventilation, so be careful when draught-proofing kitchens, bathrooms and rooms with solid fuel fires. Ventilation is important as it will help prevent any condensation and mould in your home.

## How do I draught-proof my home?

Use this simple guide to block draughts in your home using materials you can find in your local hardware or DIY store.

**Quick tip:** fix a swivel cover across large key holes for a quick and easy way to stop cold air spreading into your home

## Internal and external doors

- **Letterbox:** install a letterbox flap or brush over your letterbox to block out the draughts. This can be simply screwed into place but remember to measure your letterbox first.
- **Gap at the bottom:** fix a door brush along the bottom of the door to cover the gap. The brush will need to be measured and cut to the correct size of your door. Ensure the brush is only just touching the floor then screw into place.
- **Gaps around the edges:** fit foam strips inside the gaps of your door, ensuring the seal is tight. Alternatively, you can install metal or plastic strips with brushes or wipers attached.

**Quick tip:** create your own draught excluder. Stuff the leg of an old pair of tights or jeans with rags, stuffing or even rice and place in front of doors and windows.

**Note:** You don't need to draught-proof doors between two heated rooms.

## Windows

- You can use self-adhesive foam strips to fit into the gap around the window. These are the cheapest option and easiest to install.
- You can also use metal or plastic strips with brushes attached. These are slightly more expensive than self-adhesive strips but are longer lasting.
- For sliding windows, it's best to fit brush strips into the gaps or consult a professional. Foam strips do not work well.
- For metal-framed windows or windows that don't open, a silicone or sealant can be used.
- Another way to draught-proof your windows is to fit a thermal lining to your curtain which can be bought from a fabric shop or online.

**Quick tip:** make sure the draught proofing strip of material is the right size to fill the entire gap in the window. If it is too small there will still be a gap and if it is too big it may be difficult to close the window.

## Loft hatches

Hot air rises, so draught-proofing your loft hatch is essential in keeping warm air circulating through your home. To draught-proof your loft hatch you can simply put a foam strip around the edges of the hatch to form a seal.

## Floorboards and skirting boards

Many homes with original wooden floors are likely to have draughts between the floorboards and skirting boards.

### Silicone sealant

- Choose a flexible silicon-based sealant as the floorboards and skirting boards will contract and expand with everyday use
- Silicone sealant is simply squeezed into the gaps between the floorboards and skirting boards
- Silicone sealants are permanent so make sure to wipe off any excess with a damp cloth before it dries. The sealant will break down over time but can easily be reapplied.

**Quick tip:** put a thick rug down to reduce draughts coming through your floorboards

### Plastic strips

- If you have wooden floors and want something more discreet, you can use specially designed plastic strips. These v-shaped strips of plastic can be pushed into the gap between floorboards to block the draught, while being almost invisible from the surface.

## Unused chimneys

Unused chimneys are another common source of draughts. Draught-proofing your chimney if you're not using it will reduce draughts and keep warm air inside your home.

Chimney draught excluders can be brushes, pads or balloons which are fitted inside the chimney. They are invisible and great for preventing hot air escaping and blocking the draughts from coming into your home. Remember to remove them in summer to let the air circulate. Alternatively, you can use a chimney cap to permanently block an unused chimney which is generally fitted by a professional.

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