

All properties need to have a certain level of ventilation to let fresh air in and reduce condensation and mould, but gaps in the wrong places can lead to cold draughts and heat loss. To draught-proof your home you should block up unwanted gaps that let cold air in and warm air out.

Keeping the warm air in means you'll use less energy to heat your home, so you'll save money while enjoying a cosier home.

Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and most efficient ways to save energy, it can also save an average household up to £55 per year.

Old properties are particularly prone to leaking out their heat and letting in cold air through cracks and gaps, but the good news is that someone with competent DIY skills should have no problem in sealing up the leaks relatively easily and inexpensively.

DIY solutions for the most common draught spots

Windows: Install draught-proofing strips around the frame so that when the window is shut it compresses the strip. Draught-proofing brushes can be used on sash windows. Temporary secondary glazing – a thin clear plastic film shrink-wrapped onto the inside of the window frame – can provide an insulation barrier and draught proof seal. More energy efficient 'lift out' or semi-permanent secondary glazing options are also available.

Exterior doors: Brushes can be fitted along the bottom of doors. Draughts through letterboxes can be eliminated by special brushes or flaps. Install a purpose-made movable cover to keyholes.

Interior doors: Fit draught-proofing strips between the frame and door. Use moveable 'sausage' draught excluders on the floor.

Curtains: Heavy lined curtains for both windows and doors can help to alleviate draughts in the winter months.

Loft hatches: Install draught-proofing strips around the edges of the frame and insulate the hatch.

Chimneys: The openings of permanently unused chimneys can be sealed with a board and adjustable vent. Chimneys used in the winter can be temporarily blocked with a chimney balloon, inflatable beach ball or stuffed plastic bags, although these should be removed in the summer for ventilation.



Don't forget to remove any chimney obstructions before lighting the fire!

Unused extractor fan outlets:

These should be permanently blocked, possibly with additional block or brickwork.

External walls around water and waste pipes: Fill small gaps around pipework with silicon fillers. Spray expanding polyurethane foam into larger gaps.

Lighting and electrical fittings:

Seal up the gaps around the fittings with wall-filler.

Floorboards and skirting boards

These often contract, expand or move slightly with everyday use, so you should use flexible filler, decorator's caulk or silicone mastic.

Dealing with larger gaps

Cracks in the brickwork or mortar and gaps around window or door frames may require the attention of a professional builder and may indicate other underlying issues which should be investigated.

TOP TIPS

Keep these forms of internal ventilation clear for a healthy home:

- › Extractor fans
- › Under-floor grilles or airbricks
- › Wall vents
- › Window trickle vents

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