centre for sustainable energy

How to keep cold air out of your home

EasyRead version

A **draught** is when cold air blows through a room and makes you cold. The cold air gets in through cracks and gaps in windows, doors and floors.

A draughty house is uncomfortable to live in.

You pay money to heat your home. Heat can escape from the room through cracks and gaps. This is a waste of money.

This leaflet tells you some easy ways to draught-proof your house.

Windows

You can use a brush seal for sash windows.

You can seal other windows with foam, metal or plastic draught strips.

We tell you how to fit seals at the end of this leaflet.

Inside doors

Use a long, fabric covered strip that is called a snake at the bottom of the door.

Or buy a door brush for the bottom of the door. We tell you how to fit seals at the end of this leaflet.

Unused chimneys

You can buy a chimney draught excluder from DIY stores or use a plastic bag that is stuffed with other plastic bags.

Remember to take it out in summer and if you use the fire.

Around pipework

Use a silicone sealer or expanding foam from DIY stores.

Floorboards and skirting boards

You can buy different types of flexible fillers from DIY stores.

Cracks in the wall

Use a cement filler from the DIY store.

Unused extractor fans

Block the hole with expanding foam. Vent covers on the outside will stop the rain coming in.

Loft hatch

Put insulation on the top of the hatch then fit strips of draught excluder around the edges of the frame.

Lighting and electrical fittings

Use wall filler to plug any gaps.

Letterboxes

Add a flap or brushes to keep the cold air out and the warm air in. We tell you how to fit it at the end of this leaflet.

Remember

Never block boiler flues, air bricks, or window trickle vents.

Do not over draught-proof windows in kitchens and bathrooms where the moist air needs to escape, unless there is an extractor fan.

How to fit a door brush

1. Use a tape measure to see how wide the door is.

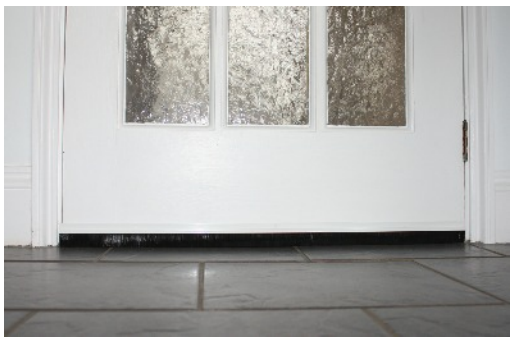
2. Use a hacksaw to cut the brush the same length you measured.

3. Hold the brush against the bottom of the door so that the brush is just touching the floor.

4. Poke a pencil through the pre-drilled holes in the excluder to make guide marks on the door to show where the screws will go.

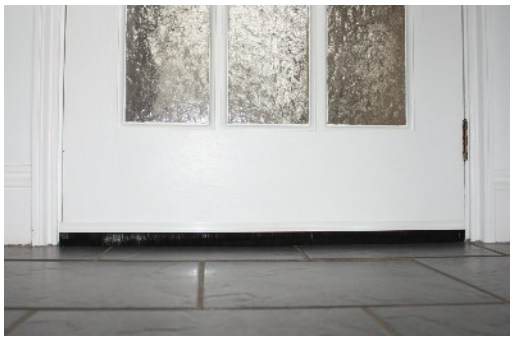
5. Drill tiny holes in the points you marked.

6. Loosely screw the excluder in place.



7. Open and close the door to check it creates a good seal.

8. If it is good, tighten the screws.



9. If it is not right, move it into a better position.

   Remember: the excluder should not be placed so low that it makes it difficult to open or close the door.

How to fit a letter box draught excluder

1. Place the draught excluder over your letterbox and use a pencil to mark the fixing points through the pre-drilled holes.

Ask a friend to hold the draught excluder in place on the door while you check that letters can pass through it.

2. Drill tiny holes at the points you marked.

3. Loosely screw the draught excluder onto the door.

4. Check that letters can pass through the brushes.

5. Tighten the screws, adjusting its position if necessary.

How to fit a foam seal around a window or door

1. Choose the right thickness.

   Foam draught excluder strips come in different thicknesses.

   It is important to get the right thickness. If it's too thick your door won't close.

   If it's too thin it won't keep out the draughts.

How to test the fit

You can test if it is the right thickness using a short length - about 50mm - as a test strip.

Stick this to the door frame (not the door itself), as close as possible to the edge nearest you.

Close the door and slip a plastic card, like a bank card, between the test strip and the door. It should be a comfortable fit.

If you have to force it, then the excluder is probably too thick.

If the card is loose and falls out, then the excluder is probably too thin.

Once you've done the test, remove the test strip.

2. Measure the frame of your door and cut the foam strip to the required lengths.

3. Clean and dry the door frame so the strip will stick properly.

4. Apply the strip to the door frame, as near to the edge as possible. Check you can still open and close the door easily.

5. You can use the same technique to seal a window using a foam seal.

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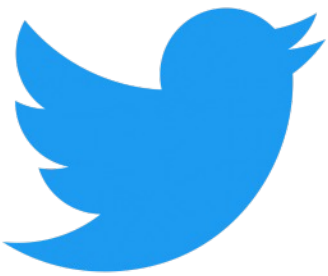
The Centre for Sustainable Energy is a charity.

To contact us for more information:

Call free: **0800 082 2234**

Email: **home.energy@cse.org.uk**

Web: **www.cse.org.uk**



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