

# Keeping the cold air out

## Simple DIY draught-proofing



No-one likes to live in a draughty house. And apart from the discomfort, it's a waste of money if the heat you have paid for is escaping through gaps in the house and being replaced by cold air from outside.

The good news is that draught proofing is easy. A bit of DIY can go a long way to plugging those gaps and keeping cosy at home. You'll stop wasting money on your heating bills, and cut down on your carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions too.

So, where do the draughts come from? Most houses, particularly old ones, have cracks and gaps through which warm air goes out and cold air blows in. Not all of these can be dealt with by a DIY-er, but many can, such as the gaps between or around floorboards; around windows and doors; through the letterbox; where pipework comes through external walls; around the loft hatch; and around electrical fittings.

For more information about draught-proofing windows, see our **secondary glazing** advice sheet. Use the checklist (right) to find out where you can draught proof different areas of your home.



*Never block boiler flues, air bricks, or window trickle vents and avoid over draught-proofing windows in kitchens and bathrooms where the moist air needs to escape.*



Cutting a door brush to length

### Mind the gap

#### The most common draught-zones ... and DIY solutions to dealing with them

**Windows:** Use foam, metal or plastic draught strips (see over), or brush seals for sash windows (right). Temporary secondary glazing is another option



**Exterior doors:** Fit brush or hinged-flap draught excluders, fitted along the bottom of the doors (see over).

**Interior doors:** Cut draughts with 'snake' draught excluders (right), brushes or similar strips of material, (see over).



**Unused chimneys:** Chimney balloons are available from most DIY stores. Plastic bags stuffed with other plastic bags also work – remember to remove and let the air circulate in summer.

#### Floorboards and skirting boards:

Fill the gaps with flexible fillers, clear or brown silicone mastic, decorators' caulk or similar products.



**Cracks in walls:** Use cement or a hard-setting decorators' wall-filler.

**Redundant extractor fan outlets:** These should be blocked up.

**Loft hatches:** Use strips of draught excluding material fitted around the edges of the frame, and don't forget to insulate the hatch itself.



**Around pipework:** Apply silicone mastic, wall-filler or expanding foam as appropriate.

**Lighting and electrical fittings:** Plug the gaps around the fittings with wall-filler.

**Letterboxes:** Fit flaps or brushes to keep the cold air out and the warm air in. See over for instructions.



## How to fit a door brush

Door brushes can be easily fitted along the bottom of most doors. First, use a **tape measure** to measure the width of the door and cut the brush to the right length, using a **snips** or a **hacksaw**.

Then position the brush against the door so that it just touches the floor. Using a **pencil**, make guide marks on the door through the pre-drilled holes in the excluder to show where the screws go.

Next **drill** pilot holes in the points you marked and loosely **screw** the excluder in place.

Open and close the door to ensure it creates a good seal before tightening the screws or adjusting the height if necessary. The excluder should not be placed so low that it catches on the floor and makes it difficult to open or close the door!



## How to fit a letterbox draught-excluder

A letterbox draught-excluder is a simple way to stop warmth escaping.

First, place the draught-excluder over your letterbox mark the fixing points through the pre-drilled holes with a pencil.

Then **drill pilot holes** at the points you marked and loosely **screw** the draught-excluder onto the door, checking that letters can pass through the brushes before **tightening the screws**, and adjusting its position if necessary.



## Fixing a perimeter seal around a window or door using foam draught-excluder

Start by cutting off a 50-60mm piece of the foam draught excluder to use as a **test strip**. Stick this to the door or window frame (not the door or window itself), as close as possible to the edge nearest you.

Close the door or window and slip a credit 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 credit card is loose and falls out, then the excluder is probably too thin. Once you've done the test, remove the test strip.

When you're satisfied that you have the **right thickness of foam excluder**, measure the frame of your door or window and cut the excluder to the required lengths using a pair of **scissors**.

**Clean and dry** the door or window frame to ensure the adhesive sticks properly, then apply the foam strip to the door or window frame, as near to the edge as possible, checking that it isn't difficult to open or close the door or window!



This leaflet was originally produced by the **Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)** and reprinted in this version on behalf of SEACS.

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More energy advice leaflets at [www.cse.org.uk/advice-leaflets](http://www.cse.org.uk/advice-leaflets)



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We are a national charity (298740) that helps people change the way they think and act on energy.



The aim of the **SEACS project** is to create opportunities to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency and use clean, renewable energy. SEACS was selected under the European Cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the ERDF.

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