

Simple DIY draught-proofing

Draughty homes are uncomfortable. It's also a waste of money if the heat that you've paid for escapes through gaps, and cold air comes whistling in from outside.

The good news is that draught-proofing is easy and this DIY draught-proofing guide will help you plug those gaps and stay cosy at home. 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 can be dealt with by a DIY-er, but many can. These include the gaps between or around floorboards; gaps around windows and doors; the letterbox; holes where pipework comes through floors and external walls; around the loft hatch; and around electrical fittings.



A robot-themed draught-proofing 'snake' for a child's bedroom window

For more information about draught-proofing windows, see our [secondary glazing page](#).

Note: Never block boiler flues, air bricks, or window trickle vents. Avoid over draught-proofing windows in kitchens and bathrooms where the moist air needs to escape and where there is no mechanical ventilation like an extractor fan.

Mind the gap

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

Windows: Use foam, metal or plastic draught-excluder strips or flexible sealant around window frames. Use brush seals for sash windows.

Exterior doors: Use foam, metal or plastic draught-excluder strips around door frame (see over).

Fit a brush strip along the bottom of the doors (see over).

Fit a door curtain or 'snake' draught excluder (see over).

Letterboxes: Fit hinged-flaps or letterbox brushes to keep the cold air out and the warm air in (see example below) See over for instructions.

Interior doors: Reduce draughts with 'snake' draught excluders. NB that this should only be a temporary measure – while you're trying to keep warm. The gap between the

door and the floor provides airflow between rooms which reduces the build-up of moist air in rooms.

Unused chimneys: Chimney draught excluders such as chimney 'sheep' or balloons are available from most DIY stores. Remember to remove it in summer to let the air circulate and don't install on any chimneys that are in use!

Floorboards and skirting boards: Fill the gaps between floorboards with flexible sealants, draught-proofing strips, decorators' caulk or similar products.



Use silicone sealant or foam and decorators' caulk to fill any gaps along the top and bottom of skirting boards.

Cracks in walls: Use cement or a breathable wall-filler to fill any small cracks.

Redundant extractor fan outlets: These should be blocked up. This can be done with expanding foam and should then be covered over internally and externally. This can be done with vent covers or internally by adding plasterboard.

Loft hatches: Fit strips of draught-excluder around the edges of the frame, and don't forget to insulate the hatch itself with fibrous or solid board insulation.

Lighting and electrical fittings, and pipework: Fill the gaps around the fittings and pipework with expandable foam or wall-filler.



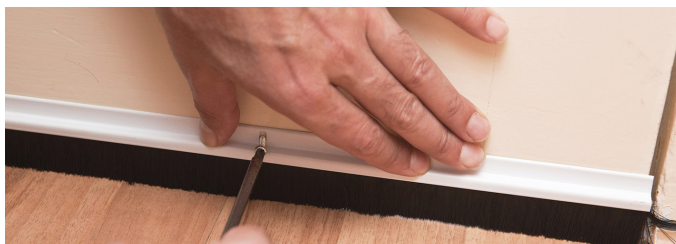
How to fit a door brush to a timber door

First, use a tape measure to measure the width of the door and cut the brush to the right length (a hacksaw is good for doing this).

Then position the brush against the door so that the brush is just touching the floor. Using a pencil, make guide marks on the door through the pre-drilled holes in the excluder to show where the screws will 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 makes it difficult to open or close the door!



How to fit a letterbox draught excluder

First, place the draught excluder over your letterbox and use a pencil to mark the fixing points through the pre-drilled holes. Maybe a friend could hold the draught-excluder in place while you check that letters can pass through it.

Drill pilot holes at the points you marked and loosely screw the draught excluder onto the door.

Check that letters can pass through the brushes before tightening the screws, adjusting its position if necessary.



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

Foam draught excluder strips come in different thicknesses, and it's important to get the right thickness otherwise either your door won't close properly, or the draught excluder won't exclude the draughts.

Ideally, you need a short length – about 50mm – to use 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 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 plastic card is loose and falls out, then the excluder is probably too thin.

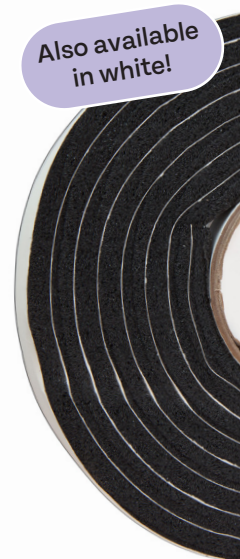
Once you've done the test, remove the test strip.

When you're satisfied that you have the right thickness of foam excluder, measure the frame of your door and cut the foam strip to the required lengths.

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

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

Also available in white!



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Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to people in central southern and southwest England.

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