



DIY Draught-proofing: A guide to bill-lowering, house-warming and comfort-level-rising

Draught-proofing is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to cut the cost of energy in your home. It's a very simple concept, stop cold air coming in and prevent warm air escaping. Generally older homes are prone to more draughts, but regardless of the age of the property, unwanted gaps can make your house feel cold and cause unnecessarily high heating bills. Draughts can be found across the home including around your windows and doors, chimneys and floorboards. Luckily, a bit of easy DIY can really make a difference, so we've created this short guide to help you plug the gaps, lower your bills and increase your comfort levels.

Tools Checklist

Before you begin your DIY draught-proofing, make sure you've got the following to hand:

- Pencil—to mark drill holes
- Drill—to drill holes for the screws
- Screws—any measure below which requires screws should come with these
- Scissors—to cut stuff down to size
- Tape measure—to measure lengths and widths
- Hairdryer—to help the secondary glazing film stick
- Sharp knife—to cut stuff when scissors just won't do
- Strong tea—to help you keep going

Where are the draughts coming from?

External doors

External doors are one of the most common source of draughts as they are highly used and face wind and rain regularly. Luckily, there's a few measures to install to make sure your doors are fully insulated.

- **Draught-excluder foam-** great to stick around the frame of the door wherever there may be gaps. It comes in rolls like the one pictured and the strips can be cut down to size. First clean frame of the door so it's clear of dust. Then measure and cut the correct length of foam, peel off the tape on the foam and place the sticky side on the frame as close to the door as possible. Test that you can still open and close the door and push down the foam to make it as flat as required.





- **Door brush-** draughts coming through the bottom of your door can be fixed using a door brush like the one pictured. First measure the width of your door then cut the brush to the correct length. Hold the brush up to the bottom of the door, mark where the pre-drilled holes in the excluder go and drill through the points. Then simply screw on the brush.



- **Letterbox excluder-** An unprotected letter box can be a constant source of cold air and a letterbox excluder is as easy to fit as a draw brush. Just hold the excluder up to the door, mark where you need to drill, drill and screw on the excluder.



Windows

Similar to external doors, windows can often have gaps around the frames which let in cold air.

- **Draught-excluder foam-** similar to the gaps around your door, self-adhesive foam strips are a cheap option to plug gaps around the window. It's important to make sure the strip is the right size so you can open and close the window while still filling the gap.

- **Secondary glazing film-** if you have windows that you never open, or do not open during the winter, then temporary secondary glazing film is a suitable option. Just apply the special tape which comes with the film around the window and press the film onto it. Then warm the film using a hairdryer to remove any wrinkles or creases. Lastly use a sharp knife to trim off the surplus film around the edges.



- **Heavy lined curtains-** if you have single glazed windows and cannot afford getting them replaced, a cheaper alternative is to use thick or thermally lined curtains to help keep the draughts to a minimum. However, you must make sure to open the curtains during the day to let in the sunshine and warmth.



Chimney

During the summer months when you're not using your chimney, or if you never use it at all, your chimney can act as a source of draughts, sucking warm air out of the house while allowing cold air in.

- **Chimney draught excluder/balloon-** chimney excluders are simple to install. You simply put them up the chimney and inflate them enough to block most the draught but still allow a bit of ventilation. However, make sure to remove it if you decide to light a fire!

Internal doors

Internal doors still need draught-proofing, especially if they lead to a room you don't normally heat such as a spare room or kitchen as they keep the cold air moving into the rest of your house.

- **Draught excluders-** like the one pictured, are relatively cheap and can stop cold air rushing around the house. If you're really in a crafty mood, you can even have a go at making one yourself using fabric, a sewing kit and material to use as stuffing (i.e. fine gravel, rice, the inside of an old pillow or even laddered tights). Alternatively you can buy twin draught excluders which slide under the door and have draught excluder foam either side.



Floorboards and skirting boards

Gaps in your floors and skirting boards can often be the cause of whistling wind throughout the house and make the house feel a lot colder than it actually is.

- **Flexible fillers-** The constant expanding and contraction due to everyday use means your draught-proofing has to be flexible. Floorboard fillers are therefore often silicone based such as decorator's caulk or mastic-type products. These can also be used where the skirting meets the flooring.
- **Rugs-** Arguably the simplest way to stop draughts coming through bare floorboards is to put some rugs down to cover them. But don't forget that drafts can still come up around the rugs.

Good air flow

It's important never to block boiler flues, air bricks or extractor fans or over draught-proof windows in rooms which produce a lot of moisture such as kitchens and bathrooms. This is because good air flow and ventilation is important to make your house stay fresh and dry and avoid condensation build up which can lead to mould.

****Important notice: Although the jobs outlined above are fairly simple, as with any DIY, only tackle them if you feel confident and competent enough****