

Homes, both old and new, often have many cracks and openings, especially around windows and doors. These cracks are prime sources of heat loss by air leakage--warm air seeps out through cracks and is replaced by cold, outdoor air. Annoying drafts are present near windows or doors which need weather stripping. Most doors, for example, are fit loosely so they will open and close smoothly. A crack of only 1/8-inch all around a standard front door is equivalent to a 4-inch by 7-inch opening--something you would normally never tolerate in your home. In a properly insulated home, air leakage can account for up to one-third of the heating costs--a good reason for weather stripping and caulking windows and doors to cut down on this sheer waste of energy.

CAULKING CRACKS AND OPENINGS

Caulking is one of the easiest and most economical do-it-yourself projects to tighten a home against air leakage and, in turn, energy wastage. Caulking should be used wherever two different materials or parts of a house meet at a stationary joint, such as around windows, doors, foundation sills, chimneys, and water faucets, vents, electrical outlets and pipes.

Caulking compounds are available in standardized 11-ounce cartridges which fit conventional caulking guns. There are several basic types of caulk compound:

Elastomeric Caulks--includes silicones, polysulfides and polyurethanes. These are relatively easy to apply, give a neat bead, stick to most building surfaces, are long lasting, do not harden so will expand and contract slightly and are in the higher-cost range. Some require primers on porous surfaces. Some accept paint, others do not--follow instructions on label.

Latex, Butyl or Polyvinyl Base Caulks--easy to apply, bond to most surfaces, are moderately durable, in medium-price range. Acrylic latex in premium grade is recommended for most applications. Better quality lines offer performance guarantee, many lower-priced compounds provide no guarantee.

Oil and Resin Base Caulks--readily available; bond to wood, masonry and metal; short life (2-3 years); lowest-cost range.

Filler--oakum rope, caulking cotton, sponge rubber, fiberglass or self-sticking caulking cord should be used to fill extra wide cracks (3/8-inch or wider) before sealing with regular caulking. Insulation scraps may also be used for this purpose.

INSTALLATION

Clean area of chipping or flaking paint, dirt and deteriorated caulk before applying new caulk. Stuff filler in extra wide cracks as needed. Lay a firm bead which overlaps both sides of crack for a tight seal and firm adherence to substrate. Rough beads can be smoothed out with a moistened finger tip.

WEATHER STRIPPING DOORS

There are several types of weather stripping for doors, each with its own level of effectiveness, durability and degree of installation difficulty. Select one you feel is best for you. Installations are the same for both sides and top of door. A different, more durable material is needed for threshold.

Most types of commonly-available weather stripping for doors can be installed by the inexperienced handy-man. Generally, the following tools and supplies are needed to do a satisfactory job:

Hammer	Tin snips
Measuring tape	Hand saw
Screw driver	Hacksaw
Knife or shears	Plane
Appropriate nails, screws	

ADHESIVE-BACKED FOAM

Extremely easy to install. Invisible when door is closed. Not very durable; becomes unsightly when worn. More effective on doors than windows. Stick foam to inside face of jamb.

ROLLED VINYL WITH ALUMINUM CHANNEL BACKING

Easy to install. Visible when installed. Durable. Nail strip snugly against door on casing.

FOAM RUBBER WITH WOOD BACKING

Easy to install. Visible when installed. Not very durable. Nail strip on door casing so it fits snugly against closed door. Space nails 8-12 inches apart.

SPRING METAL

Easy to install. Invisible with door closed when installed. Extremely durable. Cut to length and tack in place. Lift outer edge of strip with screwdriver after tacking for better seal.

INTERLOCKING METAL CHANNELS

Difficult to install (alignment is critical). Visible when installed. Durable but subject to damage. Excellent seal. Cut and fit strips to head of door first; male strip on door, female on head. Then hinge side of door; male strip on jamb, female on door. Finally, lock side of door, female on jamb.

FITTED INTERLOCKING METAL CHANNELS (J-STRIPS)

Very difficult to install. Exceptionally good weather seal. Invisible when installed. Not exposed to possible damage. Should be installed by a carpenter. Note: Need router, special stapler and careful craftsmanship for proper fit.

SWEEPS

Aluminum or stainless steel with sponge, felt or vinyl. Useful for flat thresholds. May drag on carpet or rug. Cut sweep to fit 1/16-inch in from edges of door. Some sweeps are installed on inside and some outside-check instructions for your particular type.

DOOR SHOE

Useful with wooden threshold that is not worn. Very durable. Difficult to install (must remove door). Includes drip cap to shed rain. Remove door and plane or saw required amount off bottom. Cut to door width. Install by sliding vinyl out and fasten with screws.

INTERLOCKING THRESHOLD

Very difficult to install. Exceptionally good weather stripping seal. Should be installed by a skilled carpenter.

VINYL BULB THRESHOLD

Useful where there is no threshold or wooden one is worn out. Available in different heights. Difficult to install. Vinyl will wear but replacements are available. Remove door and plane or saw required amount off bottom. Be sure bevel is cut in right direction for opening.

AUTOMATIC SWEEP

Flips up when door is opened. Aluminum with vinyl, neoprene or felt drop. Useful where threshold is flat or there is no threshold. Durable. Precise adjustment important. Screw onto outside of in-swinging door. Adjust so when door closes, striker plate causes sweep to lower.

WEATHER STRIPPING WINDOWS.

The following basic hand tools are needed for completing a window weather stripping project:

Measuring tape	Tin snips or heavy-duty scissors
Screwdriver	Hammer
Appropriate nails, screws	

Reaching upper story windows may be a problem. You should be able to do all work from inside, but avoid awkward leaning out of windows when tacking weather stripping into place. If you use a ladder, observe these precautions:

- Level and block ladder
- Place ladder so space between bottom of ladder and wall is at least one-fourth of vertical length
- Have a helper steady ladder
- Carry tools and other materials in tool pocket or attached to belt to free both hands for climbing
- Raise and lower heavy materials with a rope
- Always face ladder when going up or down
- Move ladder to where work can be done without reaching far to either side of ladder.

Before starting a window weather stripping project, make sure moving parts of your windows (sash) and channels in which sash slides are sound so they will hold small nails used for securing weather stripping. If badly rotted, consider replacing entire window unit. Consult a lumberyard or window dealer for an evaluation or cost estimate.

Weather stripping for windows is available either by the running foot or in kit form for each window. In either case, list windows and measure each to find total length of weather stripping needed. Measure total distance around edges of moving parts of each window and complete list.

THIN SPRING METAL STRIPS

Made of aluminum, brass or stainless steel. Very durable. Installed in channel or window. Virtually invisible. Somewhat difficult to install, especially on tight-fitting windows. Select pre-drilled stock if possible. Installation (channel): install by moving sash to open position and sliding strip in between sash and channel. Tack in place on casing. Do not cover pulleys in upper channels. Installation (lower sash): install strips full width of sash on bottom of upper sash top rail. Installation (upper sash): Attach a strip full width of window to upper sash bottom rail. Countersink nails slightly so they do not catch on lower sash top rail.

ROLLED VINYL OR RIGID STRIP GASKET (with or without metal backing)

Visible when installed. Easy to install. Durable. Installation: nail vinyl strips on double-hung windows. A sliding window is much the same and can be treated as a double-hung window turned on its side. Casement and tilting windows should be weather stripped with vinyl nailed to window casing so roll is compressed as window closes.

PLIABLE GASKETS

Foam rubber attached with adhesive backing or flexible vinyl, rubber or felt attached with brads or staples. Easy to install. Out of sight. Breaks down and wears rather quickly. Not as effective a sealer as metal strips or rolled vinyl. Never use where friction occurs.

ADHESIVE-BACKED FOAM VINYL STRIP

Install adhesive-backed foam, on all types of windows, only where there is not friction. On double-hung windows, this is only on the bottom and top rails. Other types of windows can use foam strippers in many more places.

NOTE: Be sure to allow for waste. IF in kit form, select kit intended for your window type and size. Jalousie-type windows require a special weather stripping material—a clear vinyl channel that slips over edge of each slat of glass. Finding correct size and shape may be difficult, but installation is quick and simple.

REF: Weather Stripping and Caulking Doors and Windows

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