

## Keeping Winter Weather Outdoors With Sealing and Insulating Your Home

*Almost half of your energy bill goes to heating and cooling.*

One of the easiest and cost-effective ways to increase your home's energy efficiency and reduce energy bills is to seal holes, cracks and openings in your home's exterior walls to stop air moving into your home and then to add insulation to stop the loss of heat through the walls, ceiling, and even your floors.

Five steps to a better sealed house can add up to a more comfortable and efficient house this winter. Even if you have enough insulation in your walls and attic spaces, sealing leaks will improve the performance of the insulation.

1. Weather-strip and insulate your attic door or hatch cover to prevent warm air from escaping into this unheated space and out the top of your house.
2. Seal holes in the attic that lead down into the house, such as the tops of open wall and duct chases, plumbing, or electrical runs. Any hole that leads from a basement or crawlspace to the attic should be covered and sealed with spray foam – for small openings – and rigid foam board for larger openings.
3. Seal holes with caulk or spray foam where pipes, wires, and vents enter or exit your home through walls. This spray foam and caulk can be found at the hardware store and is easy to use. Be sure to check behind and under sinks!
4. Caulk window and doorframes inside your home with clear or color matched caulk to reduce drafts around these openings. If you are retrofitting an older home with double hung windows, you may find that the wall cavity behind your trim needs to have additional insulation once the old window weights are removed. Use long-lasting exterior caulk outside the home where a window or doorframe meets brick, wood, or siding.
5. Weather-strip doors and windows that do not seal tightly when closed. Openings of even a fraction of an inch inside the jamb or between double hung windows can add up to significant air openings when put together. Use foam insulation pads behind electrical outlet plates to reduce drafts.
6. Make sure your fireplace damper is closed when the fireplace is not being used and install glass doors that will further reduce air movement and loss.
7. Check for dripping hot water faucets so your water heater doesn't keep heating unused water.
8. Insulate your foundation and crawl space walls with R-19.
9. Insulate your attic or ceiling with R-38 to R-50.
10. Insulate all exterior walls with R-13 to R-19.