

Sealing Air Leaks – Energy Saver for the Home

If you are experiencing warm air leaking into your home during the summer or out of your home in the winter, a lot of your energy dollars are being wasted. One of the quickest dollar saving tasks you can do is to caulk, seal and weather-strip all seams, cracks and openings to the outside. You can save up to 10% on your heating and cooling bill by reducing air leaks in your home.

Tips for Sealing Air Leaks

1. On a windy day, test your home for air tightness. Hold a lit incense stick next to your windows, doors, electrical boxes, plumbing fixtures, attic hatches, and other locations where there is a possible air path to the outside. If the smoke travels horizontally, you have located an air leak that needs caulking or sealing.
2. Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows that leak air.
3. Caulk and seal air leaks where plumbing duct work and electrical wires penetrate through exterior walls, floors, ceiling and cabinets.
4. Install rubber gaskets behind outlets and switch plates on exterior walls.
5. Install storm windows over single pane windows or replace them with double pane windows.
6. When the fireplace is not in use, keep the flue damper tightly closed. A chimney is designed for smoke to escape, so until you close it, air escapes 24 hours a day.
7. One of the most cost effective ways to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient is to add insulation to your attic. Adding insulation to an attic is easy and cost effective. To determine if you have enough attic insulation, measure the thickness of the insulation. If you have less than R-22 (7 inches of fiberglass or rock wool or 6 inches of cellulose) you can probably benefit from adding more insulation.

If your attic has enough insulation and your home still feels drafty in winter or too warm in summer, chances are you need to add insulation to exterior walls. This is a more expensive measure that usually requires a contractor, but may be worth the cost.