

AMERICAN HOME IMPROVEMENT'S WINTER WINDOW CHECKUP

With winter just around the corner, homeowners are wise to check their windows now, to insure their comfort (and lower heating bills) in the season ahead with a three point check up:

#1 - Visual Inspection: Look for any cracks or holes where cold air can get in. What's the condition of the weatherstripping? Is the caulk dry or cracked? If the windows are thermopane, (or double paned) are both glass surfaces intact? Is there evidence of moisture or fog between the glass panes?

#2 – Mechanical inspection: Do the windows close completely? Do both upper and lower panes seal at the top and bottom? What about the window locks? Do they lock securely to help insure a seal between the windows? What about any storm windows? Do they seal well?

#3 – Check for drafts: Do you feel airflow or cold from anywhere around the window? One way to identify a draft is to hold a lit candle near the window edges on a windy day. If you can feel air flowing you need to take steps to seal the leak but weatherstripping or caulking the leaks.

Based on their nearly 60 years in the business, American Home Improvements has compiled tips from energy.gov to help homeowners with information on weatherstripping and caulking.

Weatherstripping and Caulking

You can use weatherstripping in your home to seal air leaks around movable building components, such as doors or operable windows. For stationary components, [caulk](#) is the appropriate material for filling cracks and gaps.

Before applying weatherstripping in an existing home, you will need to [detect the air leaks](#) and [assess your ventilation needs](#) to ensure adequate indoor air quality.

Choosing Weatherstripping

Choose a type of weatherstripping that will withstand the friction, weather, temperature changes, and wear and tear associated with its location. For example, when applied to a door bottom or threshold, weatherstripping could drag on carpet or erode as a result of foot traffic. Weatherstripping in a window sash must accommodate the sliding of panes -- up and down, sideways, or out. The weatherstripping you choose should seal well when the door or window is closed but allow it to open freely.

Choose a product for each specific location. Felt and open-cell foams tend to be inexpensive, susceptible to weather, visible, and inefficient at blocking airflow. However, the ease of applying these materials may make them valuable in low-traffic areas. Vinyl, which is slightly more expensive, holds up well and resists moisture. Metals (bronze, copper, stainless steel, and aluminum) last for years and are affordable. Metal weatherstripping can also provide a nice touch to older homes where vinyl might seem out of place.

You can use more than one type of weatherstripping to seal an irregularly shaped space. Also take durability into account when comparing costs. See table below for information about the common types of weatherstripping.

Here's a link to a chart that explains various kinds of weatherstripping, where they are best used, the relative cost, along with advantages and disadvantages:

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/air-sealing-your-home/weatherstripping>

Applying Weatherstripping

To determine how much weatherstripping you will need, add the perimeters of all [windows](#) and [doors](#) to be weatherstripped, then add 5% to 10% to accommodate any waste. Also consider that weatherstripping comes in varying depths and widths.

Weatherstripping supplies and techniques range from simple to the technical. Consult the instructions on the weatherstripping package.

Here are a few basic guidelines:

- **Weatherstripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures above 20°F (-7° C).**
- **Measure the area to be weatherstripped twice before making a cut.**
- **Apply weatherstripping snugly against both surfaces. The material should compress when the window or door is shut.**

When weatherstripping doors:

- **Choose the appropriate door sweeps and thresholds for the bottom of the doors.**
- **Weatherstrip the entire door jamb.**
- **Apply one continuous strip along each side.**
- **Make sure the weatherstripping meets tightly at the corners.**
- **Use a thickness that causes the weatherstripping to press tightly between the door and the door jamb when the door closes without making it difficult to shut.**

For air sealing windows, apply weatherstripping between the sash and the frame. The weatherstripping shouldn't interfere with the operation of the window.

Need more help or want a quote on new replacement windows? Contact American Home Improvements for quick, fair, honest quote. www.AmHomeImp.com