

Facts sheet for draught-proofing in-floor heating vents

What the episode is about.

Draught-proofing ducted gas heating vents.

Why bother.

If your heating vents have been installed by a perfectionist then you may not have to do this job but many heating vents are left with gaps around the floorboards after installation. These gaps are open to the sub-floor space where it is cold and colder!

When you turn your heating system on, the warm air rushes up through the vents. This fast-moving air also draws the cold air from the sub-floor space. This means you get warm and cold air at the same time.

If you are trying to heat your house you obviously just want the warm air – that is why we need to block up the gaps open to the cold sub-floor space.

Dot-point facts.

- Draughts account for about 25% of heat loss from your home. They also make you feel cold when they gather around your ankles.
- Windows frames, doors, electrical and plumbing outlets, fire-places, chimneys, exhaust fans, vented down-lights, floorboards, skirting boards, cornices ... air can get in just about anywhere.
- A few hours spent draught-proofing and plugging all those gaps is pretty satisfying, even if not that exciting.

Drafts v's ventilation.

Drafts are uncontrolled air movement between your home and outside.

Ventilation is controlled, calculated and clever air exchange when and where you want it.

The aim with draft proofing is to make the house airtight – it is unachievable, air will always find a way in, but you can try.

What is healthy air?

Healthy air exchange is 2 total air changes every hour – that means all the air in the room is replaced twice every hour. Most Australian houses have 10 air changes every hour. European standards are much better at around 3 air changes/hour.

- Draft proofing does not mean making your home stuffy and smelly. It just means that you are in control of the air that comes into your home.
- A good airing of your home is healthy but you want to be in control of the airing.
- A good time to air your home is when the heating is off – just before you go to work or in the middle of the day if you are at home. All other times, keep your house closed and draught-proofed to keep all that precious warmth/cool in.
- This will mean your heating/cooling system doesn't have to work too hard to heat all the air in your house ALL the time.
- Your home only needs as much heat as it loses.

Draught-proofing jobs check-list.

If you love draught-proofing, there are heaps of places you can get into it. These include:

- draught excluders, or weather strips, under doors,
- draft-proofing tape or foamstrips around windows and doors
- caulking and sealing around skirtings and architraves
- plugging holes with foam core
- fitting 'draftstoppas' to extractor fans
- blocking up chimneys in Summer (and winter for ornamental fireplaces)
- sealing up ceiling and wall vents
- installing down-light covers over down-lights.

How to check your house for draughts.

- Test for drafts on a windy day – this accentuates the problem areas.
- Take an incense stick around windows, doors, skirting boards ...anywhere you suspect air is sneaking in or out.
- Watch for the waft then pounce on the problem with all your draught-proofing knowledge.