

# Draught Proofing Floors and Skirting Boards

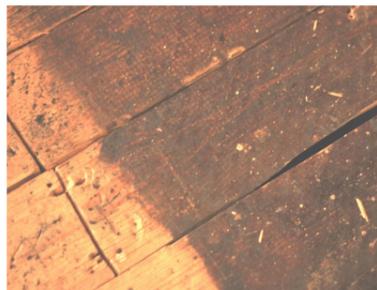
## Simple Solutions for Saving Energy: No. 7

Wooden floors can be cold, especially in old houses where gaps have appeared between floorboards or between skirting boards and the floor or wall.

**Flexible filler or caulk** can be used to seal thin gaps (similar to sealing around baths or kitchen sinks). The filler comes in 'cartridges' with a nozzle that screws on one end. The cartridges fit into a special 'sealant gun' which is used to squeeze the filler out. Ask for advice in-store if you are unsure what type of filler you need.

### How to fill gaps with filler/caulk

1. Locate the gaps you want to fill.
2. Clean surfaces with a cloth and white spirit or detergent to remove dirt, dust and grease.
3. Cut a hole in the end of the nozzle. The size of the hole determines the thickness of the filler – so make sure you cut the hole to the right size for your gap.
4. Place the cartridge into the sealant gun. Applying pressure to the 'trigger', carefully apply a bead of filler along the gap. Be careful not to apply more than you need, otherwise the next step gets messy!
5. Put on a pair of rubber gloves and dampen one of the fingers. Use your damp finger to smooth the bead and ensure it is pushed into the gap.
6. Use a damp cloth to clean up mess (before it sets!).



Some fillers give off solvent fumes as they set, so make sure the room is well ventilated for this job.



Tip: Stuff very large gaps with cardboard or rolled up newspaper to reduce the amount of filler you need to use.

### What other products are available?

"**Stop-Gap**" consists of strips of flexible plastic which are folded length ways into a V-shape and fed into gaps between floorboards. The V springs open to hold the strip in place. All you need are scissors and a piece of card to push the strip into place:

[www.stop-g-p.co.uk](http://www.stop-g-p.co.uk)

"**Draught-ex**" consists of strips of stretchy foam tubing. These are cut to length and stretched/squashed into the gaps. Different sizes are available depending on the size of the gaps: [www.draughtex.co.uk](http://www.draughtex.co.uk)

For a cheap solution, use papier mâché made from shredded paper and wallpaper paste.

A traditional method involves cutting wedge-shaped slivers of wood and hammering these into the gaps. They can then be sanded and finished, giving a professional look. This method is time consuming and a bit trickier than the other options!

### Ventilation

The space underneath a wooden floor needs to be ventilated to avoid condensation and dampness. Always ensure air bricks or vents in the floor space are unblocked. (This doesn't mean that the cold draughts have to find their way into the room!).

### Can floors be insulated?

- \* Products are available which go underneath floor covering like laminates or vinyl.
- \* Suspended wooden floors can be insulated by fixing insulation in between the joists under the floor boards. This would make a big difference, for example, to floors above unheated cellars or garages or over walkways. Fitting underfloor insulation is a job for a highly competent DIY person or a reputable tradesperson.
- \* Thick carpets and rugs can make a big difference to cold floors - as can a good pair of slippers!

**Need more help?** For online how-to videos, search on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

### Approximate costs

Filler: £3-£7 / tube  
Stop-Gap: £20 / 40m

Draught-ex:  
£25 / 40m (gaps 2-7mm wide) or  
£25 / 10m (gaps 6-11mm wide)



To find out more about improving your home's energy efficiency please visit [www.environmentcentre.com](http://www.environmentcentre.com) or contact: [DIY@environmentcentre.com](mailto:DIY@environmentcentre.com) ~ 0800 804 8601  
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