

# DIY: Caulking Around Doors and Windows

**DIFFICULTY:** BEGINNER

**COST:** <\$30

**TIME:** 2–4 hours

**MATERIALS:**

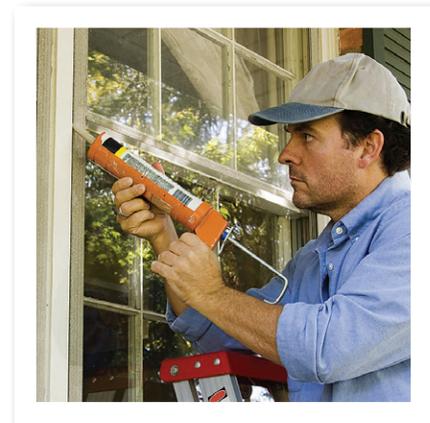
- caulk
- caulk gun
- utility knife
- ladder
- damp cloth
- paper towels

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT:**

Gloves

**FREQUENCY:** Caulk should be checked yearly, but new caulking is usually applied about every 3–5 years.

**BEFORE YOU START:** Caulking should be applied when the temperature is above 45° F with low humidity. Also, caulking may take up to 24 hours to fully dry. The best time to apply caulk is in the spring or fall when there is no rain in the forecast. Fix any broken frames, window panes, or rotting wood to prevent air and moisture from bypassing the caulking and entering your home.



**ADDITIONAL INFO**

- Many types of caulk are available and it is important to choose the right type for the environment. Silicone caulk is a good choice for outdoor use because it is waterproof and flexible and it will not shrink or crack. Consult a guide or knowledgeable person on the correct type of caulk for the job.
- When used in reference to caulking, a bead is simply a line of caulk.
- If you have an opened, but not empty, tube of caulk when you're finished, a nail or caulk saver can be used to seal the tube.

1. Locate a door or window that requires caulking. If there is old caulking present use a utility knife, screwdriver, or similar object to remove as much of the old caulk as possible. Once removed, use a damp cloth to clean the edge of any dust or debris and dry any excess water afterwards. A clean and dry surface is ideal for caulking.
2. Cut off the tip of the cartridge at a 45-degree angle. Be sure to cut an opening that is appropriate for the job at hand (cut near the top for a thin bead and further down for a thicker bead). Some cartridges have an additional seal inside the tip that needs to be punctured. A thin, sharp rod can be found on most caulk guns for this task.
3. Load the cartridge into the caulk gun and squeeze the handle until contact is made with the back of the cartridge. It is a good idea to apply a bead of caulk to a newspaper, paper towel, or something similar to get an idea of what to expect.
4. Starting at the top, hold the caulk gun at a 45-degree angle and apply constant pressure to the handle while steadily moving the caulk gun down. This will ensure maximum contact.
5. Apply a bead of caulk around the entire edge of the door or window.
6. Using your (damp) finger or a putty knife, tool the caulk. This is done by running an object like your finger along the bead to fill any gaps and push the caulk further into the edge to form a tight seal.
7. Wipe away any excess caulk with a damp cloth.

**For additional tips and information about selecting and using caulk, go to <http://energy.ces.ncsu.edu/caulk-defined/>**

