

The GOOD, The BAD, and the UGLY...Exterior Caulking for Your Home.

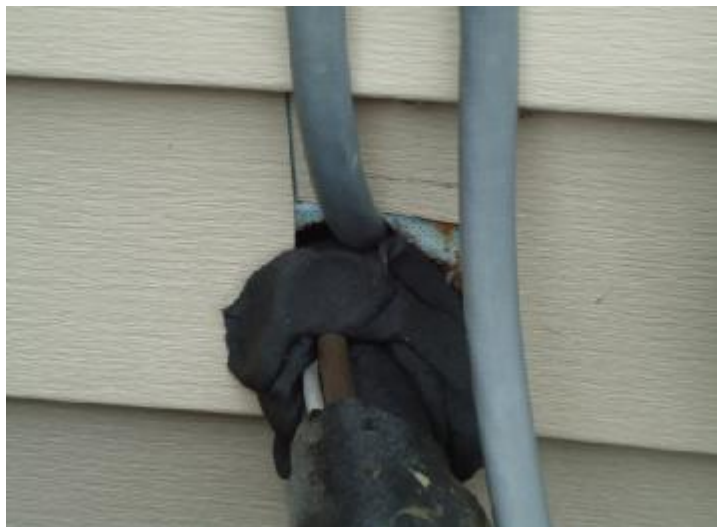


You've heard it all before. Application of caulking can save money on energy bills. It will lessen drafts at windows and doors. Filling utility service entry points keeps bugs out. It's all true! So, why don't more homeowners perform this home maintenance task and realize its benefits?

Who has the time? I'm not going to hire someone just to do that! I can do it myself, one day soon! I'm not really sure what to buy, but how hard can it be?

The fact is that few homeowners' efforts benefit the home more for the money and time spent, than proper caulking.

Start by visiting your local hardware/home center for some quick study. Knowing the type of caulk to use is critical. There are literally hundreds of choices. Don't let this overwhelm you. Grab a few tubes and READ the label. For the typical exterior door, one 10-ounce tub, using a caulking "gun", is sufficient for one door or window. The type of caulking best suitable for exterior use is generally described as "elastomeric" and adjusts with expansion and contraction throughout the seasons.



Many homeowners choose a closely-matching color for exterior use. However, for interior application around windows and doors, look for caulking that is paintable, just in case painting is desired at some time. There is an art of application for caulking. It is possible to lay a "bead" of caulking that actually holds moisture instead of creating a smooth surface for proper effect. Practice the pressure needed to squeeze the trigger and the speed of movement of the gun. Some caulking now comes in pressurized tubes, too. The greater the size of the opening of the tube nozzle the greater the amount of caulk applied. Pick an area to practice that is hidden from normal view. Remember that more is not always better. Keep a supply of wipe cloths handy to correct and smooth areas that are misapplied. Lastly, do a visual check of your caulking handiwork once a year. Products may boast years and years of useful life; but, physical structures and features can and do move over time. Any time is a good time to...get caulking!!!

Web study resources: <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-caulk-windows.html>

<http://www.dap.com> (products, caulks & sealants, indoor-outdoor)