



DIY FOR 2010



How to Insulate an Electrical Outlet:

Electrical outlets are often overlooked when homeowners start to weatherize their home, but they represent large energy and heat losses. Behind the faceplates of these outlets, are large holes that often lack insulation. Luckily, weatherizing your outlet is inexpensive and easy, so you don't need to be a handyman or spend a lot of money on parts! Insulating these outlets helps you both save money on electrical bills and become more energy efficient.

The best and easiest way to insulate your outlet is to install a gasket (also called outlet sealer or outlet insulator). Before going to the hardware store to pick up one of these, survey your home so that you know which outlets you want to weatherize. The most important outlets are the ones situated on outside walls. Also look at the shape of your outlet and measure it, so you can choose a gasket that best fits the outlets in your home.

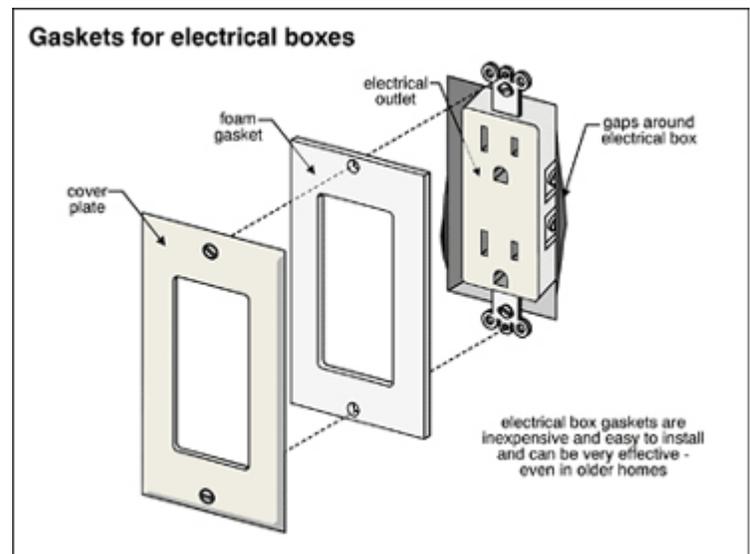
Once you have installed a gasket, there are other steps to further insulate outlets if you think your home still needs them

What you will need to insulate your outlet:

1. Screw driver
2. Foam gasket –Many models cost less than a dollar per gasket. Just make sure that you get one that matches your outlet design
3. Scissors

Directions:

1. Turn off power breakers at the circuit breaker box to prevent any electric shock. This is a very important safety precaution!
2. Unscrew the outlet cover/switch plate. Set it and the screw aside.
3. Take your gasket and place over the exposed faceplate lining up the holes so that the sockets are exposed. (You may need to cut the gasket to better fit your outlet so that sockets are fully exposed or so that it is entirely hidden behind the face plate.)
4. Replace the outlet cover and screw into place over the newly installed gasket.



Further steps to insulate your outlet:

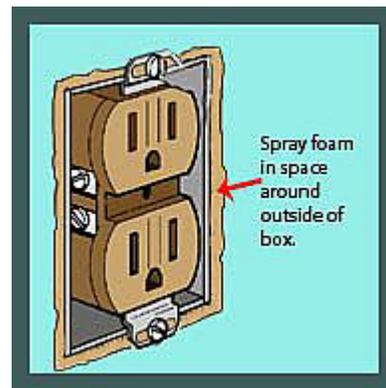
If you still think you are losing heat through an outlet, or you noticed large gaps between the electrical box and the insulation surrounding it, then you might want to take further steps to insulate the outlet. The best way to do this is through adding spray foam insulation or caulking.

What you will need to add spray foam insulation:

1. Screwdriver
2. Spray Foam Insulator
3. Rag

Directions:

1. Turn off power breakers at the circuit breaker box to prevent any electric shock.
2. Remove the outlet cover with screw driver and set cover and screw aside.
3. Spray foam between the wall and outside edge of the electrical box.
4. Use a rag to wipe up any overspray. Then replace cover.



What you will need to caulk:

1. Clean rags
2. Utility knife
3. Caulking gun
4. Siding and window sealant (come in different colors so best to try to match it to existing colors)
5. Putty knife

Directions:

1. Turn off power breakers at the circuit breaker box to prevent any electric shock.
2. Insert the sealant caulk into the compartment of the caulking gun.
3. Make a ¼- inch hole at the tip by cutting it with a utility knife
4. Caulk the seams around the outlet. To stop the flow of caulk when finished, wipe the tip of the gun with a wet rag.
5. Push the caulk into the seam using the utility knife to help create uniformity.
6. Use the wet rag to clean any extra caulk off of the wall or outlet.

No matter how many of the steps you take to insulate and seal your electrical outlet, it is making a large impact in the energy efficiency of your home. Of course the most efficient option is to combine all of the steps so that your outlet is leak proof! Remember, becoming more energy efficient will not only deliver monthly savings in your utility bill, it also decreases the amount of energy consumption, thus carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere that is contributing to climate change!

