

Tips for improving existing homes



Why focus on energy efficiency

Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same task. For example, improving the energy efficiency of the thermal shell of a home or installing an energy efficient air conditioner will reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool the home. It also makes the home more comfortable to live in, cheaper to run and is better for the environment.

The following tips to make your home more energy efficient are easy to do. However, it is worth noting that once the home is well sealed, consideration may need to be given to removing moisture from inside the home, particularly if you have a gas cooker or heater. As the existing wall will most likely not be a breathable product, a build-up of moisture could result in mould issues.

1. Seal gaps

- Seal gaps around openable windows and doors by adding window and door seals. Rolls of seals can be purchased from hardware shops and cut to length.

- Seal around areas where there may be gaps, such as architraves (especially along the top of the window), all window outsides where they meet the wall, skirtings where they join the floor, and cornices.



- A really good product to use for sealing gaps is 'Fuller Ultra Clear', as it is water-based, and it goes on white and dries clear. This can be purchased from Mitre 10, not Bunnings.



- To fill large gaps, use easy-form backer rod and then cover it with Fuller Ultra Clear. It can be purchased from hardware stores.



2. Add pelmets and heavy curtains

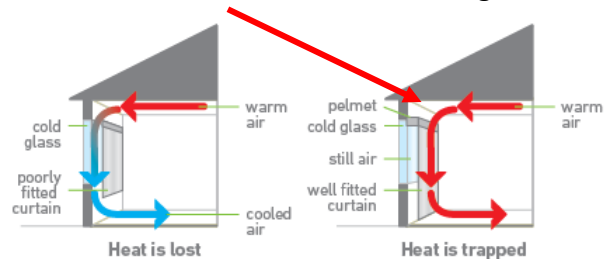
- A timber pelmet can be added just above the window or for a more refined look, a pelmet can be fixed to the ceiling. It can be recessed into the cornice, gap filled and painted.



- Curtain tracks can be ceiling mounted behind the pelmet.



- The benefits of pelmets and heavy curtains are they keep warm air in the room, and they stop cool air from the window from entering the room. Note the curtain is full length.



WINDOW COVERINGS

- Poorly fitted curtains lose heat
- Well fitted curtains with pelmet trap heat

Source: www.emporiumblinds.com.au/losing-valuable-winter-heat-windows

3. Add insulation

- Add ceiling insulation, as this will reduce heat that rises in the home from escaping into the ceiling space.
- If you can get under your floor, add insulation underneath.
- If renovating walls, add wall insulation.
- For details about installing insulation, refer to: www.ecomaster.com.au/ecomasterclass

4. Upgrade windows

- Consider retrofitting double glazed windows with good performing window frames.
- Make sure the top, bottom and side gaps between the window and structure is sealed with expanding foam.

For further information on this topic see:

- My Efficient Electric Home: www.facebook.com/groups/MyEfficientElectricHome
- Green It Yourself: www.greenityourself.com.au
- EcoMaster: www.ecomaster.com.au/ecomasterclass
- Example Case Study: www.cooeearchitecture.com.au/projects/sarahjohno